



ISSN 3078-8129 (Print)
ISSN 3104-5073 (Online)

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

文学写作与评价学刊

Volume 1, Number 2, December 2025

Information Education Publishing Company Limited
Hong Kong

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

文学写作与评价学刊

Volume 1, Number 2, December 2025

Editorial Board

Honorary Editor-in-Chief

Huang Phoebe Phong, Harvard University, United States

Editors-in-Chief

Zhang Lianqiao, Guangzhou University, China

Dai Dengyun, Guangzhou University, China

Members of the Editorial Board

Nguyen Anh Dan, University of Education, Hue University, Vietnam

Huang Dezhi, Jiangsu Normal University, China

Victor Fan, King's College London, United Kingdom

Liu Hongwei, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, China

Lin Hua, University of Victoria, Canada

Qiu Huanxing, Ocean University of China, China

Duan Jifang, South China Normal University, China

Wang Jin, Jinan University, China

Toming Jun Liu, California State University, Los Angeles, United States

Vicki Kirby, University of New South Wales, Australia

Stefan Kramer, University of Cologne, Germany

Florence Kuek, Universiti Malaya, Malaysia

Jiang Lan, Saint Peter's University, United States

Liu Maosheng, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China

Song Mingwei, Wellesley College, United States

Tomasz Mizerkiewicz, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

Wu Na, Trinity Western University, Canada

Federico Picerni, University of Bologna, Italy

Long Qilin, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Jin Qiong, Guangzhou University, China

Wang Taohua, Sun Yat-sen University, China

Song Weijie, Rutgers University, United States

John Whalen-Bridge, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Chen Xi, Hunan University, China

Shan Xiaoming, China University of Petroleum (Beijing), China

Wang Yiyuan, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Ouyang Youquan, Central South University, China

Jiang Yuqin, Shenzhen University, China

About: *Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation (JLWE)* (Print ISSN 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073) is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by Hong Kong Information Education Publishing Company Limited. *JLWE* publishes two issues each year in both Chinese and English. There are no Article Processing Charges (APC) for submissions, and all content is fully open access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). Please note: the journal does not work with any third parties for manuscript solicitation.

Scope and Topics: *JLWE* focuses on a wide range of topics related to literary writing and evaluation, including: Chinese literary writing and evaluation, foreign literary writing and evaluation, creative writing and evaluation, science fiction writing and evaluation, network literature writing and evaluation, nonfiction writing and evaluation, literary communication and evaluation, comparative literature research and evaluation, literary exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations. *JLWE* encourages interdisciplinary research, particularly on emerging topics such as the integration of artificial intelligence in literary writing and evaluation.

Submission Guidelines: *JLWE* follows a corresponding author system. If the manuscript contains multiple authors, the corresponding author is considered to be the research leader and contact person. Please confirm the author's name, author order (including corresponding author designation), author affiliation, author position/title, E-mail address, funding project(s), etc. before submitting the manuscript. It is recommended that no more than five authors be listed on a submission. The paper must include the title, author name(s), abstract, and keywords in both Chinese and English. References are sorted alphabetically by last name. All manuscripts must follow APA format. Articles (including references) should be between 5,000 and 16,000 words, with English manuscripts not exceeding 8,000 words and Chinese manuscripts not exceeding 16,000 words. Book reviews should be at least 3,000 words in either Chinese or English. Manuscripts can be submitted via E-mail to jlwe2025@163.com. To facilitate the review process, please include "Author Name(s) + Article Title" in the subject line of your submission E-mail.

Originality and Copyright: Submissions to *JLWE* must be original works that have not been previously published or submitted for consideration elsewhere. Authors are responsible for any potential copyright issues. By submitting a manuscript, authors retain copyright and grant the journal a publishing license. All published articles are made immediately available worldwide under the CC BY 4.0 license, which permits unrestricted sharing, adaptation and redistribution with appropriate attribution.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the journal or its publisher.

Publishing Office: Tung Wai Commercial Building, No. 109-111 Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong SAR, China; Phone: +852 24070405; E-mail: jlwe2025@163.com; Website: <https://www.lwejournal.com>.

Contents

185-191 Suspension of Law: Bare Life in *Age of Iron*
Luo Wenjie, Shi Juhong

192-200 Ecological Discourse and Economic Models: The Postcolonial Ecological Reconstruction of *The Heart of Redness in Relation to Heart of Darkness*
Xiong Hongyan, Zou Tao

201-210 Love Events in Gurnah's *Desertion*
Hao Wenxuan

211-224 From Crusoe, to Shabine, and to Achille: The Evolution of Walcott's Drifting Mission
Lei Yanni, Wang Zhiwei

225-233 Thing Narrative in Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*
Lu Hongyu, Fang Ying

234-246 From *I* to *We*: Opening and Enclosing the Traveller via Intertextuality in *The Art of Travel*
Fang Yaqi, Li Yun

247-257 From Constraint to Autonomy: The Reconstruction of Jeanette's Ethical Identity in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*
Huang Xiaomin, Liu Hongwei

258-274 The Feminist Analysis of Visual Features in Sylvia Plath's Bee Poems
Liu Shanni, Chen Xi

275-285 Discipline, Symbolization, and Implicit Complicity: The "Cage" of Patriarchal Order and Female Psychological Trauma in *Lolita*
Huang Sihan, Zhang Lianqiao

286-294 Fragmentation, Suture, and Demarcation: The Dynamic Reconstruction of Posthuman Identity in *Use of Weapons*
Zou Mengyun

295-304 The Wasp Factory as a Thing and Its Ethical Meanings in *the Wasp Factory*
Luo Junmin

305-314 Elves and the European Imagination of AI in 19th Century——A New Interpretation of H.C. Andersen’s Works
Fu We, Wang Zi Yi

315-325 What Makes a “Generative Poetics” in Which Language and Time are interwoven Possible? ——A Review of Dai Dengyun’s New Book *Interweaving of Language and Time* and Its Inspiration for the Research of Chinese Literary Theory in the Past Century
Shi Shengxun

326-333 The Path of Education: A Stroll of the Soul Interwoven with Poetic and Rational Elements——A Review of *Wandering Awareness*
Li Wenwen, Ling Yu

334-344 The Global Vision and Chinese Position in Cultural Studies: A Review of Tao Dongfeng’s *Traumatic Memories and Literature as Testimony*
Yan Chengxun, Xiao Jianhua

345-352 Communication as Shared Existence, Dasein as Co-being: A Review of *Communication Communities in Fiction*
Yang Liuqing

353-366 The Logic of “Enchantment-Infused” Communication in the Internet Era—— A Review of Wu Changqing’s *Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution: A Preliminary Discussion on the Creation and Criticism of Chinese Internet Genre Literature in the 21st Century*
Jiang Xinya

367-374 Exploring the New Literary Experience of Guizhou in the New Era: A Review of *The Path of Literary Criticism: Between the Center and the Margins*
Hong Dezhi

375-384 External Elements Integrated into the Core: A Review of Lu Zhouju’s *A Study of American Influences in China’s New Literature (1911-1949)*
Liu Min

385-392 An Alternative Approach to History: A Review of *British Drama of the Twentieth Century*
Yuan Yingzhe

目 录

185-191 悬法:《铁器时代》中的赤裸生命
罗文杰, 史菊鸿

192-200 生态话语与经济模式:《红色之心》对《黑暗的心》的后殖民生态重构
熊鸿妍, 邹 涛

201-210 古尔纳《遗弃》中的爱之事件
郝文萱

211-224 从克鲁索到莎宾, 再到阿喀琉斯:论沃尔科特诗歌中漂流使命的嬗变
雷艳妮, 王志伟

225-233 符号·行动者·本体:辛西娅·欧芝克《大披巾》中的物叙事
卢虹宇, 方 英

234-246 从“我”到“我们”:《旅行的艺术》互文性与旅行者的开放和封闭
方雅麒, 李 眇

247-257 从约束到自主:《橘子不是唯一的水果》中珍妮特的伦理身份重构
黄晓敏, 刘红卫

258-274 论西尔维娅·普拉斯《蜜蜂组诗》的女性主义视觉特征
刘姗妮, 陈 瞩

275-285 规训、符号化与隐性共谋:《洛丽塔》中父权秩序的“囚笼”与女性心理创伤
黄思涵, 张连桥

286-294 断裂—缝合—划界:《武器浮生录》中后人类身份的动态重构
邹梦云

295-304 《捕蜂器》中的捕蜂器物叙事伦理
罗俊敏

305-314 精灵叙事与19世纪欧洲的人工智能想象——安徒生作品另解
傅 薇, 王紫怡

315-325 语言与时间相交织的“生成诗学”何以可能？——评戴登云新著《语言与时间的交织》兼及对百年中国文论研究之启示
时胜勋

326-333 育人之道：诗性与理性交织的灵魂漫步——评林岗散文随笔集《漫识手记》
李文文，凌 逾

334-344 文化研究的世界视野和中国立场——评陶东风《创伤记忆与见证文学》
颜成汛，肖建华

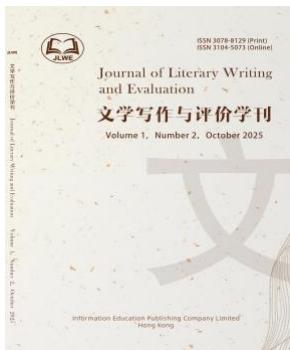
345-352 沟通即共同，此在即共在——评《小说中的沟通共同体》
杨柳青

353-366 网络时代的赋魅传播逻辑——评吴长青《传承路径与文学流变：21世纪中国网络类型文学创作与批评刍论》
姜欣言

367-374 探索面向新时代的贵州新文学经验——评《文学批评的路径：在中心与边地之间》
洪德志

375-384 他山之石与主体熔铸——评吕周聚《中国新文学中的美国因素研究（1911-1949）》
刘 敏

385-392 历史的另一种解法——刘红卫教授、李晶教授新著《英国 20 世纪戏剧研究》述评
袁英哲



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.185-191.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.01>



悬法：《铁器时代》中的赤裸生命

罗文杰(Luo Wenjie), 史菊鸿(Shi Juhong)

摘要：对于库切小说《铁器时代》中的民众悲惨命运，学术界多将其归因于种族隔离制度本身，却忽略了制度背后更深层次的政治生命机制。本研究结合阿甘本和福柯的生命政治思想，揭示了小说中苦难的生成机制，分析了种族隔离如何通过“悬法”将个体降格为赤裸生命。进一步地，本文从个体、家庭和社会三个维度探讨了生命所遭受的生存困境，并分析了隐藏在压迫下的抵抗策略，展现个体在极权政治中的生存与抗争可能。

关键词：《铁器时代》；赤裸生命；悬法

作者简介：罗文杰，兰州大学外国语学院硕士研究生，研究方向：美国文学，电邮：1032955648@qq.com。史菊鸿（通讯作者），兰州大学外国语学院教授，主要从事英语小说研究，电邮：shijuhong@lzu.edu.cn。

Title: Suspension of Law: Bare Life in *Age of Iron*

Abstract: In *Age of Iron* by J.M. Coetzee, the characters' misery is often ascribed to the apartheid system, yet the deeper political-biological mechanisms sustaining that system remain underexplored. This study, drawing on Agamben's and Foucault's theories of biopolitics, investigates the mechanisms of suffering in the novel, showing how apartheid, through the "suspension of law," reduces individuals to bare life. It further examines the existential struggles of individuals, families, and society, and uncovers the subtle forms of resistance embedded within oppression, thereby highlighting the possibilities of survival and defiance under authoritarian rule.

Keywords: *Age of Iron*; Bare life; Suspension of law

Received: 10 Sep 2025 / Revised: 06 Nov 2025 / Accepted: 27 Nov 2025 / Published online: 30 Nov 2025 / Print published: 30 Dec 2025.

Author Biography: **Luo Wenjie**, Master's candidate at the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Lanzhou University. Research area: American literature. E-mail: 1032955648@qq.com. **Shi Juhong** (Corresponding author), Professor at the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Lanzhou University. Research area: English fiction. E-mail: shijuhong@lzu.edu.cn.

一、引言

南非作家库切 (J. M. Coetzee) 出版于 1990 年的小说《铁器时代》(*Age of Iron*) 聚焦于南非社会的种族歧视与制度性暴力, 同时揭示了种族隔离背后主权权力对生命的深度介入与操控。学界对此著作的研究基本集中于女性主义与后殖民主义视角。例如, 赖特 (Laura Wright) (2008, pp. 11-32) 指出库切通过白人女性叙事主体, 揭示了南非女性——无论白人还是黑人——在政治与历史结构中被持续边缘化的处境。萨利赫和贾努里 (Salih & Janoory) (2020, pp. 267-276) 则分析了小说中的黑人女性角色, 探讨她们在种族隔离语境下所承受的性别与种族双重压迫。李琛 (2010, pp. 410-418) 关注文化混杂对黑人、混血人群及白人造成的身心创伤, 以及他们对苦难与动荡的多样化回应。邵凌 (2010, pp. 78-84, 159) 则从殖民话语批判的角度指出, 《铁器时代》揭示了权力更迭过程中对个体尊严的持续摧毁。这些研究大多将民众的苦难归因于性别与殖民种族结构, 且往往局限于特定群体的困境分析, 倾向于将悲剧的根源直接归结于种族隔离制度本身, 而较少深入探讨该制度背后更深层次的政治—生命机制。事实上, 小说中种族隔离只是主权权力运作的工具之一。在国家宣布进入紧急状态、日常法律被悬置的社会情境下, 个体生命——无论种族与性别——均沦为阿甘本 (Giorgio Agamben) 意义上的“赤裸生命”(bare life), 成为权力可任意支配的对象。

由此可见, 《铁器时代》所呈现的核心问题并不仅仅是种族隔离下的族群冲突, 而是主权权力在非常状态中对生命的全面控制与摧残。库切在小说中展现出鲜明的政治与伦理关怀, 不仅深切同情苦难中的生命, 也反思其历史根源, 并在叙事中蕴含着对救赎可能性的探寻。因此, 从生命政治的视角切入, 对《铁器时代》进行分析, 不仅有助于揭示不同种族、不同性别群体在主权权力操控下的共同生存危机, 也有助于更全面地理解小说的政治伦理内涵。本文将以“赤裸生命”为切入点, 结合阿甘本的政治哲学理论, 并辅以福柯 (Michel Foucault) 的生命政治思想, 剖析小说中苦难的运行机制, 探讨生命所遭受的生存困境, 并分析其中隐含的抵抗策略。

二、赤裸生命的生成机制

意大利哲学家阿甘本在借鉴古希腊生命观的基础上, 提出了极具影响力的“赤裸生命”概念。他延续了古希腊对生命的二分理解, 将生命区分为两种形态: 一是纯粹的生物性存在 (zoé), 指一切生物所共有的自然生命; 二是政治性生命 (bios), 即被纳入城邦共同体、能够参与公共事务的生命。(Agamben, 1998, p. 1) 在此框架下, 赤裸生命指的是被剥夺政治身份、排除在法律保护之外、却又被纳入政治秩序运作之中的生命状态。这类生命既不能完全归入自然状态的自由形态, 也无法获得完整的公民权与政治资格, 而是处于一种“可以被杀死却不能被祭祀”(Agamben, 1998, p. 110) 的境地。在阿甘本看来, 赤裸生命并非古代或极权历史的遗产, 而是现代政治秩序中始终潜伏的一种可能状态。换言之, 在当代社会中, 任何个体都有可能在特定条件下沦为赤裸生命, 而这种转化的关键机制, 正是主权通过制造“例外状态”来悬置法律, 从而直接干预和支配生命。

“例外状态”这一概念最早由德国法学家卡尔·施密特 (Carl Schmitt) 在其《政治神学》(*Political Theology*) 中提出。施密特指出, 例外状态并非日常法律秩序的一部分, 而是与之相对的法律秩序自身的暂时中止。他在著作中指出:“主权者是能够决定例外状态者。”(Schmitt, 2005, p. 6) 阿甘本在此基础上进一步强调, 例外状态并不仅意味着特别法的生效, 更重要的是法律本身的悬置——主权者拥有合法中止法律体系基础结构的权力, 使其能够不受法律限制地直接对生命实施控制。(Agamben, 2000, p. 2) 在南非种族隔离政权的后期, 1985 年至 1990 年间多次实施的全国紧急

状态，就是主权通过悬法机制将公民生命政治化的典型案例。1985年首次实施紧急状态的直接背景，是自1984年起黑人聚居区爆发的大规模骚乱，这些骚乱反映了民众对种族隔离制度的高度不满。紧急状态使政府得以绕过常规法律程序，掌握包括无限期拘押、宵禁、新闻审查、组织解散等在内的非常规权力。1986年6月，紧急状态范围扩展至全国，镇压升级为高强度状态，警方权力显著扩大，法院的监督功能被严重削弱，整个法治体系几近停摆。在这种制度性悬法的环境中，南非公民被系统性地剥夺法律保护，沦为阿甘本意义上的赤裸生命。

在《铁器时代》中，库切通过细腻的叙事展现了主权在例外状态中对个体生命的多重规训。这种规训首先体现在对社会空间的重构上。福柯（1986, pp. 22-27）指出，空间并非权力运作的被动容器，而是权力组织与再生产的重要媒介，空间本身参与权力的分配、流动与再生产。在小说中，黑人聚居的古古莱图被设定为一种“例外地带”，常规法律在此失效，国家机器可以随意逮捕、枪击居民——“在古古来图随时都有麻烦，警察会闯进屋里开枪的。”（库切，2024, p. 22）在这样的空间结构中，黑人被剥夺政治共同体成员的身份，生命被降格为可牺牲的存在。对白人而言，表面上虽享有特权，但这种自由同样受到空间隔离和安全检查的严格限制。例如，卡伦太太多次遭遇路障，被警察阻拦进入隔离区——“您不该待在这儿。我们会通知警察，他们能护送您出去。”（库切，2024, p. 46）这表明，白人的行动自由是有条件的，一旦越界，便可能像黑人一样被限制甚至驱逐。医院的空间转化更具象征意义。原本作为中立的人道主义场所，医院在例外状态中沦为主权过滤生命的工具——区分“可治之人”与“可弃之人”。黑人伤员常被转移、隐匿、拒收，甚至在医院中遭遇追捕。例如，黑人男孩约翰在遭遇警察袭击后，被反复隐匿与拒绝治疗。弗洛伦斯愤怒地控诉：“他那不是待在医院，那是待在一个葬礼等候室。”（库切，2024, p. 32）在此情境下，白人虽可获得相对完善的治疗，但这种优待建立在他们顺从权力逻辑的前提下。可见，空间在例外状态中被重新编码为权力运作的关键场域，为赤裸生命的生成提供了地理基础。

其次，主权权力通过对身体的全方位规训进一步塑造赤裸生命。这种规训既依赖直接的暴力介入，也依托制度化的监控体系维系。警察作为国家暴力的直接执行者，对黑人群体实施着无处不在的控制。小说中，“三辆卡其色的运兵车几乎和林子融合在一起，但在天光映照下，头盔的轮廓分明，”（库切，2024, p. 44）这种隐秘的布防构成了对隔离区的无声威慑，即便黑人少年约翰与贝奇设法逃离，仍无法摆脱权力视线的追踪。值得注意的是，这种监控并非黑人所独有，白人中产阶级卡伦太太在被怀疑与黑人革命者有联系时，同样遭遇警方粗暴搜查，住所被翻查，并被告知“现在没什么东西是私人物品了，”（库切，2024, p. 76）凸显了例外状态下主权对任何个体的彻底剥夺。更深层的规训体现在全景监控的内化机制中。Geoff Danaher等人（2000, p. 50）指出，“最有效的监视形式是自我监视。人一旦被驯化，就会持续自我检验以确保未做非法之事”。小说中，邻居“打电话提醒”卡伦太太庭院里有个流浪汉的情节，正是这种横向监控与权力内化的体现。最终，持续监视导致精神压迫与主体性瓦解，卡伦太太对“来世”的绝望想象——“永远处在他人凝视之下，私人生活终结，”（库切，2024, p. 12）象征了全景监控下个体精神世界的崩塌。

更为隐蔽的规训来自精神领域。主权借助大众传媒与审查制度对个体意识施加控制，使规训延伸至思想与认知层面。福柯所论述的规训权力在信息时代被进一步扩展，大众媒体在技术重塑后成为跨越时空的巨大话语装置，以表面的“信息自由”掩盖深层的意识形态操控。在南非隔离制度下，《出版控制条例》等法律建立了严格的新闻与出版审查制度，批评政权的内容被系统性封禁，公共舆论空间陷入沉默与自我审查。小说中，学校骚乱、黑人社区枪击等事件被集体噤声，而媒体却不遗余力地塑造“种族和谐”“社会稳定”的虚构景象。卡伦太太对这种传媒景观的控诉极为尖锐：“在他们身下生活的耻辱：摊开报纸，打开电视，就像是跪着被人尿在头上。”（库切，2024, p. 3）库切（1992, p. 361）指出，主权通过制造“不被看见”的现实，让不符合其话语的生存境况彻底从公共视野中消失。因此，赤裸生命的生成不仅源于法律的悬置，也源于公共可见性的剥夺。当某些生命状态被系统性地从公众视野中抹除时，它们在社会意识中便失去了存在的正当性，最终被合法化地忽视与弃置。这种精神规训的最终效果，是个体政治能动性的全面瓦解，他们不仅失去了发声的权利，更失去了感知与理解苦难的能力，彻底沦为可被任意处置的生物性存在。

三、赤裸生命的生存危机

《铁器时代》以个体叙事的方式揭示了现代社会中潜藏的生存危机：在例外状态的制度逻辑中，任何人都可能在某一瞬间沦为“赤裸生命”——被剥夺法律庇护、直接暴露于主权权力支配之下的生命存在。小说中，遭受警察暴力撞击的黑人男孩、生活在持续镇压与恐惧之中的黑人群体，以及表面享有特权、实则同样陷入权力结构困境的白人中产阶级卡伦太太，均无法置身事外。无论种族、阶层或性别，他们都在不同层面上面临生存威胁。库切通过这些人物的命运轨迹，具象化地呈现了主权权力对生命的多重戕害，并在苦难书写中凸显出自身的道德立场与文学担当。他不仅以叙事批判政治暴力，更借助小说形式实践作家的伦理责任与社会使命，使文学成为反思与抵抗的重要场域。

库切一贯强调文学与政治之间的内在关联，认为小说不应仅仅是故事的承载工具，而应成为承载伦理探问与批判意识的空间。他将作家的责任分为由社会赋予的公共义务与源自自身良知的内在使命两类。（Coetzee, 1992, p. 340）学者 David Attwell (1993, p. 91) 亦指出，应该将库切的小说放置二十世纪七十至八十年代的南非历史语境之下，思考其政治与伦理意义。《铁器时代》正是这种文学责任观的集中体现，文本从个体、家庭和社会三个维度深入揭示赤裸生命的危机形态，并以批判与反思的姿态，揭开主权权力摧残生命的机制。

在个体层面，主权权力的暴力统治对人的身体与精神造成了双重创伤。卡伦太太虽为白人中产阶级，外表似乎处在制度的庇护之下，但她既无法逃避现实中不断扩散的政治暴力，也无法回避作为特权阶层成员而在制度运作中被动共谋的羞耻感与内疚感。尤其在目睹“自行车事件”——两名警察公然暴力袭击黑人少年的全过程后，她毅然前往警察局指控涉事者。然而，面对执法者的冷漠、推诿与不作为，她陷入了深刻的道德痛苦，并将这种痛苦与个人身份直接联系起来：“我不知道你是不是为这身制服感到骄傲，但你街上的同事辱没了它。他们也羞辱了我。我感到羞耻。”（库切，2024, p. 36）这里的“羞耻”并非一时的情绪反应，而是一种深植于身体、持续积累的存在状态，并最终以癌症的形式显现。她坦言：“我得癌症是因为我这一辈子忍受和积累了太多的羞耻。”（库切，2024, p. 63）这种叙述方式将身体疾病与精神创伤之间建立起象征性关联，使疾病不仅是生理事件，更成为长期压抑、伦理冲突与制度性暴力相互作用的政治隐喻。正如 Susan Sontag (1991) 在《疾病的隐喻》中所指出，癌症在公共话语中往往承载着“外来”“扩散”“不可控”的象征意义，这恰好映射了主权政治对社会机体与个体生命的侵蚀性本质。在卡伦太太的自我认知中，权力如同癌细胞一般，无孔不入地渗透生活，并持续破坏精神与身体的完整性：“但我为什么就得承认，即使换一批人在这片土地上掌权，我的生命也一样没有价值？毕竟，权力就是权力。权力侵犯人，这是它的本性。权力就是会侵犯人的生命。”（库切，2024, p. 50）这一自觉使她的抗争不仅是道德上的拒斥，也是一种在身体—政治层面上的觉悟。

在家庭层面，赤裸生命的危机直接影响了亲密关系的稳定与延续。残酷的政治现实不仅摧毁了个体的精神世界，也迫使家庭成员在安全与道义之间做出痛苦抉择。卡伦太太的女儿因无法忍受南非的政治黑暗与社会暴政，毅然选择远赴美国，并发誓“走了就不回来了。”（库切，2024, p. 31）离别前，她紧紧拥抱母亲，神情坚定地恳请对方不要再召唤她回国，并以象征性的动作“踩掉了这个国家留在脚上的尘土，”（库切，2024, p. 60）完成对家国的切割。这不仅是个人政治选择的体现，更是对制度性暴力的绝对拒绝。对于母亲而言，这一离去既是理智上能够理解的现实，也是一种情感上的持续撕裂。她渴望女儿能回到身边陪伴自己走完生命最后的旅程，却又清楚女儿立场的坚定与决绝。在疾病日益恶化之际，她通过写信向远方的女儿倾诉思念与孤独：“我是多么地想念你！我多想能上楼走到你身边，坐在你的床上，指尖捋着你的头发，像你上学时的那些早晨一样在你耳边轻唤……你就是我的生命；我爱你，就像爱生命本……”（库切，2024, p. 2）然而，忆起女儿曾发誓不再回到南非，她只能将渴望压抑于心：“我心里有一盏灯始终亮着，始终朝着西北方向……万一你哪天心一软，不顾一切地要回来看我。”（库切，2024, p. 60）她选择隐瞒病情，用沉默与克制守护母爱的尊严。家庭亲情在政治暴力的阴影下被迫转化为远距离、间接的情感传递，这种隔绝本身便是权力对生命关系的另一种掠夺。

在社会层面，国家主权暴力的戕害体现为对整个民众群体的系统性压迫与结构性剥夺。小说描

绘了一个监控与镇压无处不在的社会景观：法律被悬置，公民的基本权利被剥夺，生命价值被降格为可牺牲的工具性存在。在这种环境下，社会群体间的裂痕不断加深，敌意与仇恨成为政治秩序得以维系的潜在逻辑。隔离区的青年人因长期遭受不公待遇，纷纷投身反抗暴政的斗争，种族冲突愈演愈烈。当卡伦太太走出停放黑人儿童尸体的大厅时，她敏锐地感知到黑人群体中弥漫着的情绪：“怨恨，憎恶。说得更重一点：仇恨。”（库切，2024, p. 47）她清楚地意识到，即便自己并未与镇压者同流合污，黑人群众也不会因此原谅她，因为她的白人身份在象征意义上与压迫机制紧密相连。此刻，她不仅是个人意义上的“赤裸生命”，更是被整体性敌意锁定的符号性存在。

这一场景的象征意义在于，它揭示了国家暴力如何通过制造恐惧与不信任，将社会撕裂为彼此敌对的群体，令公共生活陷入持久的冲突循环。在这种结构中，仇恨不仅是反抗压迫的情绪反应，更被制度性地吸纳和利用，成为维持统治的隐秘工具。最终，在主权权力的全面渗透与侵蚀下，人性与尊严被剥夺殆尽，整个国家被塑造成一个象征性的“铁器时代”——冷酷、坚硬、充满死亡的气息。正如卡伦太太在信中所写：“老实说，当我走在这片土地上，南非的这片国土上，我越来越觉得，我是走在无数黑人的脸上。他们死了，但他们的灵魂没有离开他们……数以百万计的铸铁猪俑漂浮在大地的表层之下。铁器时代在等待着重新回归。”（库切，2024, p. 54）这里，“黑色面孔”象征着被牺牲者不肯离去的冤魂，他们在道义层面持续对生者发问；而“铸铁猪俑”则暗喻冷血的主权机制，像金属一般坚硬、冰冷且充满敌意，不断制造新的牺牲与死亡。

四、赤裸生命的抵抗策略

《铁器时代》描绘了个体在主权权力暴力压迫下赤裸、无庇护的生存状态。然而，库切并未让叙事完全陷入绝望，相反，他在死亡与失序的阴影中揭示出生命的微弱抵抗与伦理可能。在访谈与随笔集中，他曾明确表述自己的创作立场：“我并不为特定的群体发声。我对自由有一种亲近感（正如任何受到枷锁束缚的囚徒一样），我再现人们的身影——挣脱锁链，面朝光明”。（Coetzee, 1992, p. 341）这一主张在《铁器时代》中得到了充分体现。小说中的白人与黑人个体，分别通过关怀自我与关怀他者，在主权规训之外挣扎重建主体性，试图在暴力与剥夺的夹缝中“挣脱锁链，面朝光明”。

首先，赤裸生命通过“关怀自我”（Care of the Self）在精神层面寻求自由与尊严的恢复。作为一位身患癌症、行将就木的白人女性，卡伦太太面对种族暴政与社会失序，并未被彻底吞没于绝望之中，而是在濒死的过程中坚持维护属于自己的精神秩序。她反复聆听巴赫与肖邦，用音乐构筑一个远离国家机器控制的审美空间：“在一遍遍的重复中，有些真正的东西还是能浮现出来，那是真正的音乐，永生的、自信的、安详的音乐。”（库切，2024, p. 9）这一看似消极的行为，本质上是一种柔性的抵抗。音乐的非语言性使她暂时脱离政治话语的规训，逃避了被意识形态塑形的危险，保留了不被同化的内在领域。正如福柯（1995）所论，现代权力不仅通过法律与制度约束身体，还通过话语与知识塑造主体性，使之成为可管理的身体与主体。卡伦太太拒绝成为纯粹服从的被规训者，她在死亡逼近的时刻依然坚守审美与精神的自主性，从而完成对主权逻辑的个人拒斥与主体确认。这种“关怀自我”并非逃避社会责任，而是通过精神领域的自我保存，为反抗权力暴力保留一个无法被占领的内部空间。

与此相对，黑人角色更多通过“沉默”回应主权权力的统治。小说中，沉默作为场景与情绪反复出现：在卡伦与弗洛伦斯一家或流浪汉范库尔的交流中，“一阵沉默”总是突然而至。他们刻意保持情感克制与语言距离，不辩解、不诉说、不请求理解。这种沉默并非出于无力，而是一种有意的“非合作”。他们拒绝进入主权的话语系统，否认权力赋予他们的“可说的身份”，从而悄然守护自己的生存边界。福柯（1990, p. 27）在《性史》中指出：“在话语中，权力与知识结合在一起”。当国家通过语言建构历史与主流叙述时，沉默本身便成为一种断裂机制，是对话语霸权的消极否定与去势化行为。弗洛伦斯一家与范库尔拒绝被书写、被解读、被施舍，他们用沉默抹平了权力企图建立的解释框架，使主体性与尊严在拒绝发声的静默中得以保存。这种策略与其说是屈服，不如说是在缺乏安全公共空间时，保存自我、延缓被彻底消解的重要方式。

其次，小说展示了赤裸生命之间的相互关怀如何打破主权制造的种族隔阂，成为更深层次的伦

理抗争。卡伦太太不仅为黑人流浪汉范库尔提供栖身之所，还在自身病情严重恶化之际，冒险前往黑人聚居区寻找弗洛伦斯的儿子贝奇，并在警察追捕中竭力保护黑人少年约翰。这些行为并非出于慈善或优越感，而是基于对他者处境的真切同情。法国哲学家 Emmanuel Levinas (1969) 曾强调，主体性并非在封闭的自我中心中生成，而是在回应“他者的呼唤”中获得确立。卡伦太太正是在与黑人他者的接触与交流中，完成了从自我封闭向伦理开放的转变——她不再仅仅是一个见证苦难的旁观者，而是愿意为他者的安危与尊严承担风险的行动者。

这种相互关怀的伦理维度，在卡伦太太与范库尔的关系中达到高潮。范库尔作为无家可归的流浪者，几乎被剥夺了一切社会身份与保障，但他在卡伦生命的最后阶段给予了持续陪伴与实际帮助。他不仅在她最虚弱时照料日常，还答应在她去世后将信寄出，以完成她与女儿之间的情感传递。这一回应象征着一种超越制度逻辑的信任关系：双方既无权力，也无庇护，却在共同的生存困境中建立起基于责任与互助的伦理纽带。正如阿甘本 (1998) 所言，赤裸生命虽然是主权宰制的对象，但在共同的脆弱处境中，它们也可能成为重建共同体的基础。当所有人都被降格为可弃、可杀的“裸命”时，正是在对这一共同命运的认知与关切中，新的主体关系才有可能萌发。

在这一意义上，《铁器时代》的抵抗叙事不仅是个人精神层面的抗争，也是一种去主权化的社会实践。关怀自我让个体在精神上保持不被占领的领域，沉默使被压迫者拒绝进入权力设定的叙述框架，而跨种族的关怀与互助，则在现实的裂隙中重建了伦理共同体。这些策略都不是对抗暴力的对称反击，而是以微弱却持久的方式削弱权力的渗透，使主体性在极端条件下得以延续。库切在小说中传达的正是这种信念：即便在主权权力全面压制的“铁器时代”，人类依然能够在音乐、沉默与相互关怀中保有向光而行的姿态。

五、结语

《铁器时代》以冷峻的笔触揭示了南非主权权力在例外状态中通过悬法，将公民从受法律保护的政治主体降格为任权力宰制的“赤裸生命”。小说细致呈现了这一机制在空间重构、身体规训、精神渗透等多重维度的运作方式，并通过个体、家庭与社会三个层面的叙事，描绘了赤裸生命在生理痛感、情感裂解与社会敌意中的生存困境。疾病、羞耻、离散与仇恨交织成沉重的现实景观，使生命在主权权力的阴影下持续被削弱与贬损。

然而，库切并未将叙事封闭于绝望之中。他通过关怀自我与关怀他者的抵抗策略，为赤裸生命的处境开辟出微弱但真实的伦理可能。卡伦太太在精神上守护音乐与审美的自由，以非语言性的体验逃离意识形态的规训；黑人角色通过沉默拒绝进入权力设定的话语体系，在静默中保存尊严与主体性；跨种族的相互关怀打破隔阂，在共同的脆弱处境中重建去主权化的伦理共同体。这些细微而持续的行动，虽不足以改变结构性压迫，却在极端环境中为主体性延续提供了条件。

由此，《铁器时代》不仅是对南非特定历史现实的文学见证，更是对现代政治哲学中生命政治、例外状态与赤裸生命等核心议题的艺术性回应。作品将抽象概念转化为可感的叙事经验，超越了地方性议题，触及人类普遍的生存困境。

自 1990 年问世至今，国际政治格局多次变动，但作品的政治意蕴与伦理内涵依然鲜明。在恐怖主义全球蔓延、欧美右倾民粹抬头、“历史终结论”破产的当下，例外状态与生命政治已不再是南非的特殊现象，而是全球政治生活的普遍隐忧。《铁器时代》犹如一记持久的警钟，提醒人们警惕权力在危机名义下对生命的无限制介入，并在压迫与分裂中寻找维系伦理与尊严的可能之道。

正如卡伦太太在信中传递的微弱希望，库切的文学并未提供宏大的救赎方案，而是指向一种姿态——在权力阴影下，仍保持对自由的亲近感、对他者的回应意愿，并在任何可能的缝隙中，挣脱锁链，面朝光明。

基金项目：本文系国家社科基金项目“新南非英语小说空间叙事研究”（项目编号：20BWW069）的阶段性成果之一。

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Luo Wenjie ^{1D} <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0335-1268>

Shi Juhong ^{1D} <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1000-2416>

References

Carl, Schmitt (2005). *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab. University of Chicago Press.

David, Attwell (1993). *J. M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing*. University of California Press.

Emmanuel, Levinas (1969). *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. A. Lingis. Duquesne University Press.

Geoff, Danaher, Tony, Schirato & Jen Webb (2000). *Understanding Foucault*. Allen & Unwin.

Giorgio, Agamben (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford University Press.

Giorgio, Agamben (2000). *Means without End*, trans. V. Binetti & C. Casarino. University of Minnesota Press.

J.M. Coetzee (1992). *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*. Harvard UP.

库切 (Coetzee, J. M.) (2024): 《黑铁时代》, 李青长译。四川文艺出版社。

[J.M. Coetzee (2024). *Age of Iron*, trans. Li Qingchang. Sichuan Literature and Art Publishing House.]

Laura, Wright (2008). “Displacing the Voice: South African Feminism and J.M. Coetzee’s Female Narrators.” *African Studies* (01): 11-32.

李琛 (2010): “库切小说《铁器时代》中文化混杂性解析”, 《库切研究与后殖民文学国际学术研讨会文集》(01): 410-418。

[Li, Chen (2010). “An Analysis of the Cultural Hybridity in Coetzee’s Novel Age of Iron.” *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Coetzee Studies and Postcolonial Literature* (01): 410-418.]

Michel, Foucault (1986). “Of other spaces.” trans. J. Miskowiec. *Diacritics* (01): 22–27.

Michel, Foucault (1990). *The history of sexuality, Volume 1: An introduction*, trans. R. Hurley. Vintage Books.

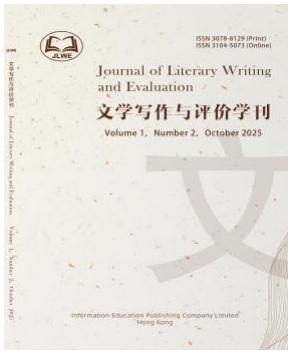
Michel, Foucault (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*, trans. A. Sheridan. Vintage Books.

邵凌 (2010): “库切的政治观与文学创作”, 《外国文学》(06): 78-84, 159。

[Shao, Ling (2010). “Coetzee’s Political Views and Literary Creation.” *Foreign Literature* (06): 78-84, 159.]

Suadah, Salih & Lajiman, Janoory (2020). “The Voice of the Black Female Other: A Post-Colonial Feminist Perspective in J. M. Coetzee’s *Age of Iron*.” *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* (10): 267-276.

Susan, Sontag (1991). *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphor*. Penguin Books.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.192-200.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.02](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.02)



生态话语与经济模式：

《红色之心》对《黑暗的心》的后殖民生态重构

熊鸿妍(Xiong Hongyan), 邹 涛(Zou Tao)

摘要：贾克斯·穆达的《红色之心》是后种族隔离时代南非文学的扛鼎之作，通过与康拉德《黑暗之心》的深刻对话，对后殖民国家的发展路径提出了严峻拷问。小说将背景置于殖民主义与全球化的双重压力下，刻画了南非原住民科萨族在面对外部资本主导的现代化方案时产生的深刻分裂，揭示了依附型发展模式对本土社会、文化及生态的系统性破坏。本文以后殖民生态批评为框架，并借用政治经济学理论中的“成本转嫁”及“二元结构”等概念，论证《红色之心》中的生态世界观对经济模式选择的关键作用，指出穆达通过重构本土生态智慧，为后殖民南非探索出一条实现经济“自力更生”的可行蓝图，彰显其文学构想作为社会变革方案的深刻现实意义。

关键词：贾克斯·穆达；《红色之心》；后殖民生态批评；重构

作者简介：熊鸿妍，电子科技大学外国语学院硕士研究生，研究方向：非洲文学。电邮：willow94664@163.com。邹 涛（通讯作者），电子科技大学外国语学院教授，研究方向：非洲文学，比较文学，英美文学。电邮：truthzou@126.com。

Title: Ecological Discourse and Economic Models: The Postcolonial Ecological Reconstruction of *The Heart of Redness in Relation to Heart of Darkness*

Abstract: Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* is a landmark of post-apartheid South African literature that challenges the developmental trajectories available to postcolonial nations through a sustained dialogue with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The novel dramatizes the profound internal divisions within a Xhosa community as it confronts modernization schemes

driven by external capital—a conflict rooted in the dual pressures of colonial legacies and globalization. This article uses the framework of postcolonial ecocriticism and political economy concepts like “cost externalization” to argue that the novel’s ecological worldview is pivotal to shaping competing economic models. By reconstructing Indigenous ecological wisdom, Mda ultimately envisions a path toward self-reliant, sustainable development. The novel thus transcends literary imagination, offering a powerful political critique of externally imposed economic systems.

Keywords: Zakes Mda; The Heart of Redness; Postcolonial Ecocriticism; reconstruction

Author Biography: **Xiong Hongyan**, Master’s Candidate at the School of Foreign Languages, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China. Research Area: African Literature. E-mail: willow94664@163.com. **Zou Tao** (Corresponding Author), Professor at the School of Foreign Languages, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China. Research Areas: African Literature, Comparative Literature, British and American Literature. E-mail: truthzou@126.com.

南非著名小说家、诗人和剧作家贾克斯·穆达 (Zakes Mda, 1948—) 的《红色之心》(The Heart of Redness, 2000) 是后种族隔离时代南非文学的一部扛鼎之作。作为当代非洲英语文学的代表, 小说自出版后便备受学界与社会的广泛关注, 一举斩获非洲地区英联邦作家奖、美国赫斯顿与赖特遗产奖及南非首届周日时报小说奖等多项殊荣。

小说深刻地回应了南非历史与现实的双重困境。穆达将故事背景置于殖民主义与全球化的双重压力下, 以两条叙事线索交叉进行: 一条回溯至 19 世纪中叶, 荷、英殖民者入侵南非, 当地科萨族 (Xhosa) 因对先知的反殖民预言态度分裂为“信者”(the Believers) 与“不信者”(the Unbelievers) 两大群体, 最终导致了历史性的悲剧; 另一条则聚焦于 20 世纪 90 年代, 这两个群体的后裔在面对外部资本主导的现代化开发方案时再生分歧。两条线索相互映照, 将两大群体之争刻画为一场夹杂着复杂的政治、文化、经济和生态因素的, 关于西方与非西方、进步与传统、文明与野蛮的深刻辩论。历史上殖民主义对南非原住民的社会结构、传统文化和自然环境造成了什么样的冲击? 在全球化语境下, “新南非”所面临的发展窘境其症结又是什么? 二者之间是否存在某种内在的逻辑关联?

围绕这些问题, 国内外学界已从多维角度展开了富有成效的探讨。国内学者如钟燕 (2014) 从生态批评视角指出了小说“自然与文化结盟”的核心出路; 段燕、王爱菊 (2017) 则系统论述了殖民主义如何导致南非在社会、精神与自然三个层面的生态崩溃。国外学界的研究主要集中在以下几个方面: 一部分学者从后殖民历史与文化身份的视角, 深入分析了小说如何处理历史创伤与文化记忆 (Koyana, 2003; Kenqu, 2019); 另一部分学者则聚焦于小说的生态批评意涵, 探讨了其中人与自然的关系以及生态可持续发展的可能 (Vital, 2005; Dolce, 2016); 此外, 还有学者专门探讨了小说中对全球化旅游业的批判及其剥削本质 (Pires, 2013; Ojedoja & Abubakar, 2018)。这些研究深刻揭示了小说的生态意旨和后殖民批判锋芒, 为本文奠定了坚实的基础。

《红色之心》与康拉德的《黑暗的心》的对话, 是一次深刻的系统性重构 (Systematic Reconstruction)。穆达精准地捕捉并接过了康拉德在《黑暗的心》中无意识揭示的“生态观塑造经济

论”这一结构，但用一种充满主体性的非洲本土生态观，替换了康拉德笔下那个沉默、野蛮的“他者化”(Othering)自然，并由此推导出一个与殖民掠夺截然对立的、内生的“自力更生”的经济模式。所以，文学中的生态话语并非孤立的审美实践，而是以意识形态的形式，深刻地塑造并反作用于其内含的经济模式，为该经济模式提供了合法性框架与文化支撑。

具体论述从以下三方面展开。首先，聚焦《黑暗的心》，分析其殖民生态话语如何为掠夺式经济提供意识形态辩护；然后，转向《红色之心》，探讨穆达如何通过重构非洲自然的主体性，为文化去殖民化奠定世界观基础；最后，论证穆达笔下两种经济模式的对决背后不同的生态世界观，并结合作者本人的社会实践，揭示其文学构想作为一份旨在探索后殖民南非可持续发展道路的社会变革蓝图的深刻意义。

一、黑暗的土地：康拉德笔下的殖民生态话语与掠夺式经济

康拉德的《黑暗的心》以马洛的视角展开，详细展现了他沿刚果河深入非洲腹地的旅程。文本叙述多集中于马洛对沿途欧洲人和非洲人的描绘，而对自然景观的关注相对较少。例如，达拉斯在《康拉德与西方：帝国的征兆》中便指出，非洲风景早已被殖民话语塑造，马洛所见实际上是一种被文化规训的“景观”(Darras, 1982, p. 90)。他所描绘的非洲人，往往被呈现为狂乱与野蛮的化身：“一阵混乱的哭喊声，夹杂着野人的不谐调的吼叫，震荡着我们的耳鼓”(康拉德, 2016, p.73)；同时，马洛也讽刺了以枪炮和铁路为标志的欧洲工业文明对非洲风景的掠夺与破坏：“紧接着一声沉重的爆炸声，震动了脚下的大地，一阵白烟从峭壁上升起，然后就算完事了”(康拉德, 2016, p.35)。阿契贝在其著名文章《非洲的一种形象》中也着重分析了马洛的行程，但他将重点放在对非洲人的描绘，并据此认为康拉德是“彻头彻尾的种族主义者”(Achebe, 1977, p788)。

然而，作为叙事背景长期存在的自然景观并非中立，而是同样被卷入殖民话语的建构之中。马洛眼中的非洲河流与丛林被不断妖魔化、沉默化，成为一种无主的、等待开采的“空白之地”。这种“自然的他者化”，在无形之中为殖民掠夺提供了文化合法性：正因为非洲被呈现为荒蛮而无声的空间，殖民经济的暴力开采才显得顺理成章。换言之，《黑暗的心》中的自然书写不仅仅服务于营造氛围或象征人心黑暗，更在意识形态层面上为象牙贸易等殖民经济活动提供了话语支持。

殖民话语在《黑暗的心》中通过叙述与修辞系统性地“空无化”自然，使非洲被想象为一个等待被定义与占有的空间。小说开篇，马洛回忆童年对地图的迷恋：那时的非洲是一个“令人神往的神秘的空白点”，可以“让孩子做各种美梦”(康拉德, 2016, p. 23)。然而，随着殖民活动的深入，这个“空白点”逐渐被地名和符号填满，不再神秘，反而“变成一个黑暗地区”(康拉德, 2016, p. 23)。正如乔修峰指出的，地图并非中性的记录工具，而是通过符号化的空间秩序来建构殖民权力(乔修峰, 2024, p. 108)。当马洛真正踏上这片土地，他的航行被描绘为进入一片“沉默”的过程：森林的“深沉的寂静”，河流“一声不响地向前流动”(康拉德, 2016, p. 88)，使自然被剥夺了生命和能动性。

沿河而上的航程简直有点儿像重新回到了最古老的原始世界，那时大地上到处是无边无际的植物，巨大的树木便是至高无上的帝王。一条空荡荡的河流，一种无边无际的沉默，一片无法穿越的森林。(康拉德, 2016, p64)

叙述将非洲自然推回到“最古老的原始世界”，仿佛它停滞在历史的起点，暗示这片土地缺乏发展的时间性，从而被置于欧洲现代性之外。其次，“巨大的树木”被比喻为“帝王”，而河流则是“空荡荡的”，森林“无法穿越”，这种对比制造了一种张力：自然被赋予威严的支配力量，却又因其“沉默”与“空无”而被排除在人类文明与对话之外。换言之，文本通过强调其不可接近与不可理解，将自然建构为“无主之地”。正如后殖民主生态批评家哈根与蒂芬所言，殖民主义往往依赖于把土地描述为“空无”(empty)或“未开化”(untamed)，以使其征服与开发显得“必要”与“合法”(Huggan & Tiffin, 2010, p. 6)。

当自然失去了主体性和神圣性，它就不再是一个复杂的生命系统，而仅仅是可供量化与攫取的物质集合。在叙事中，象牙显然是最具驱动性的核心商品。马洛的航船运载着“破烂的棉花、念珠、铜丝”(康拉德, 2016, p. 49)，这些廉价的工业品被送入“黑暗深处”，换回的却是“珍贵的象牙”。在这场极不平等的交易中，非洲的自然与文化被置于价值链的最低端，而象牙——从大象这种富有灵性的生命体上暴力剥离下来的部分——则被抽象为纯粹的、价值高昂的商品。大象的生命、其在生态系统中的角色、其在本土文化中的神圣意义，都在“象牙”这个经济符号面前被完全抹去。这种话语切割与价值重估，构成了掠夺性经济得以被感知与接受的前提。“库尔茨的荒诞绝非单纯的逐利本能……他掌控大量‘象牙’的权力让他自视为至高无上的存在……这种优越感最终将他推向疯癫”(Zannat & Zhang, 2021, p. 504)。库尔茨的堕落，固然有人性层面的原因，但其经济活动的本质——最大化地榨取象牙——正是建立在这样一个“自然本无价值，除非它能变成商品”的生态观念之上。

因此，康拉德的生态书写与殖民经济并非两条平行的线索，而是互为因果。正是因为他笔下的非洲自然是一个沉默、野蛮、无主的“客体”，所以殖民者对其进行的经济掠夺才显得顺理成章，这些行为在叙述反讽中被粉饰为一种“崇高和公正的伟大事业”(康拉德, 2016, p. 45)。这片土地不被视为家园(homeland)，而被视为资源产地(resource frontier)。这套合法化链条将成为穆达在《红色之心》中加以解构并重建的关键对象。

二、言说的土地：穆达对非洲自然主体性的重构

如果说康拉德是通过剥夺自然的“语言”来为其资源化铺路，那么穆达的帝国反写，则是对自然主体性的重构，让自然为自己言说。在《红色之心》中，穆达的核心策略是重新赋予非洲自然以“主体性”(Subjectivity)，让土地、河流、树木、动物不再是沉默的背景，而是成为历史的积极参与者、文化的承载者和精神的对话者。这场生态观念的革命，为构建一种全新的、后殖民的生存模式奠定了世界观基础。

穆达的主体性重构首先通过对“地点之灵”(Genus Loci, 即地方的精神特质)的重塑展开，尤其体现在对河流的描绘上。《红色之心》所描绘的1856–1857年科萨族“杀牛运动”，是殖民秩序与本土社会矛盾激化的产物。殖民者从欧洲运来的牛群携带严重的肺病，迅速传染并导致当地牲畜大规模死亡，这对以牧畜为生的科萨社会构成了毁灭性打击。在此背景下，少女先知农卡乌斯(Nongqawuse)发出了极具震撼力的神谕：人们必须杀死所有牛羊、毁坏庄稼，只有这样，祖先才会从河海复活，新的民族将随之降临(Mda, 2002, p. 79)。正是在这一历史事件中，河流被赋予了

决定性的神圣性，它既是祖先归来的门户，也是预言得以显现的媒介。在杀牛运动遭遇挫折后，国王萨黑里(King Sarhili)并未放弃，而是“再次从他的大本营骑马来到科洛拉”，并最终在凯河的入海口，看见了“二十一年前被英国人斩首的父亲”(Mda, 2002, p.124)。这条河超越了纯粹的物理空间，升华为一个连接生者与死者、现实与历史的神圣媒介与象征场域。被殖民者斩首的国王，其身体的残缺象征着民族的创伤，而他的“复现”则必须借助本土的自然媒介。更重要的是，祖先的亡魂通过河流发出了明确的政治指令：“他们是来解放黑人国度的”(Mda, 2002, p.124)。在此，河流成为了反殖民意志的宣讲台，它不再沉默，而是主动“言说”，将一段被压抑的历史创伤转化为未来行动的神圣启示。穆达通过这种“再赋魅”(re-enchantment)的书写，将土地从殖民者绘制的、可被测绘和占有的世俗地图中解放出来，恢复了其作为民族精神载体的神圣性。

其次，穆达通过微观叙事，深入描绘了一个基于万物有灵论的、非功利主义的生态共同体。小说对长老齐姆(Zim)与其屋前那棵巨大无花果树的关系的描写，便是一个极佳的范例。这棵树在穆达笔下，远不止是一株植物，它是一个集历史见证者、精神庇护所和文化共同体于一身的、充满能动性的生命体。穆达赋予了这棵树言说与记忆的能力：“无花果树知道他所有的秘密。它是他的忏悔室。在树下他找到了慰藉，因为它与祖先直接相连——所有一百多年前种植它的 Twin 的后代。现在它的树干和他的主屋一样粗。”(Mda, 2002, p.38)在这里，“知道”(knows)一词是关键，它将树从一个被观察的“客体”(object)提升为一个有认知能力的“主体”(subject)。与康拉德笔下那个“沉默”的、拒绝与人沟通的丛林相反，这棵树能够“倾听”并“保守”秘密，成为了齐姆情感与精神的承载者。在科萨人的宇宙观中，自然并非与精神世界相割裂，而是后者的物质载体。这种人与自然高度融合的信仰体系，不同于西方笛卡尔式的主客二元对立思想，是典型的本土生态智慧。

这种主体性进一步延伸至树上的生物。树上栖居着成百上千的鸟，像一座繁荣的“城市”，这个比喻本身就将生态系统描绘成一个有序的社会，而非殖民者眼中的混乱“荒野”。当一个鸟巢不幸坠落时，齐姆感到“非常痛苦”，因为“鸟儿多日的劳作白费了”(Mda, 2002, p.39)。他所共情的，并非潜在食物的损失，而是对另一个物种“劳动”价值的承认与尊重。这与旁观者功利主义的视角——认为齐姆守着这么多肉却不吃是“愚蠢的”(foolish)——形成了鲜明对照(Mda, 2002, p.39)。这种冲突深刻揭示了两种世界观的对立：一种是殖民主义式的、将非人生命“资源化”的工具理性；另一种则是本土的、承认万物皆有其内在价值的“生物中心主义”(Biocentrism)关怀。正是后一种世界观，为卡玛古后来提出的、依赖本土物种多样性而非单一资源开发的合作社经济，提供了伦理基础。

殖民主义的重要一环便是通过语言(特别是命名法)来控制对世界的认知，将本土的地名、物种纳入西方的分类学体系，从而抹去其本土文化内涵。穆达在小说中有意识地大量嵌入未经翻译的科萨语词汇来命名当地的动植物、食物和文化活动，如 amahobohobo(黄色织巢鸟)、umphokoqo(玉米粥)、isikhakha(卡卡裙)、imbhizo(公共会议)等。这并非简单的异国情调展示，而是一种重要的文化抗争。穆达坚持使用本土语言命名，正是从殖民者的命名体系中夺回对自己土地的定义权，坚持了本土知识体系的合法性。当一片土地上的万物都用它们自己的名字被称呼时，这片土地便在文化上宣告了独立。这种语言上的去殖民化，是构建本土自主经济模式的先声，因为它首先确立了“本土”的价值不言自明，无需外来语言的翻译与认可。

综上所述，穆达通过重塑地点之灵、彰显本土生态智慧和坚持语言主权，成功地构建了一个与

康拉德截然相反的生态世界观。在这个世界里，自然不再是沉默、被动、等待被利用的“客体”，而是充满生命、历史与智慧的“主体”。这一根本性的世界观变革，不仅是对殖民文化霸权的有力回击，更为关键的是，它彻底摧毁了殖民掠夺式经济赖以存续的思想地基，并为一种全新的、与之相匹配的经济模式的诞生铺平了道路。

三、发展的困境与出路：从“依附”到“自力更生”的经济实践

在完成了对生态世界观的重构之后，穆达将小说的矛盾焦点最终引向了后殖民南非最核心的现实议题：发展。本章旨在论证，小说中两种经济模式的对垒，其本质是后殖民社会中两种根本对立发展哲学的深刻较量：一种是延续殖民逻辑的“依附”（Dependency）模式，另一种则是寻求真正自主的“自力更生”（Self-Reliance）模式。穆达通过对前者的深刻批判，以及对后者“生态实践”的积极探索，不仅为小说中的科洛拉社区，更为现实中的后殖民民族指明了一条通往真正解放的道路。

（一）“依附”的魅影：作为生态殖民主义变体的外部发展模式

“依附理论”（Dependency Theory）最早由普雷维什（Raúl Prebisch）等拉丁美洲经济学家在20世纪中叶提出，旨在揭示前殖民地国家在获得政治独立后，如何在经济上通过不平等的世界贸易体系、外部资本渗透和技术垄断等方式，继续处于对发达国家“中心”的依附地位，从而无法实现真正的自主发展。小说中，“赌场度假村”和道尔顿的“文化村”方案，正是这种依附模式在资本和文化领域的文学再现。

“赌场计划”是资本依附的直接体现。该计划由一个黑人赋权公司（black empowerment company）的首席执行官 Lefa Leballo 和两位前白人高管 Smith、Jones 共同推动，这一人员构成本身就极具讽刺意味，象征着新南非精英与旧有资本的合谋。该计划的诱惑力在于其宏大的现代性承诺：“过山车”、“缆车”、“购物中心”、“网球场”和“奥林匹克标准游泳池”（Mda, 2002, p.189）。值得注意的是，反对传统的声音也在其中找到了“合法性”。在科萨文化中，赭石红（redness）自古以来是生活的重要符号。它既用于身体绘饰和仪式活动，也象征着祖先的庇佑与共同体的凝聚力。然而，伴随着殖民文化的渗透，这一象征逐渐被污名化，甚至与“落后”和“野蛮”相连。康拉德笔下的非洲“黑暗”，原本是殖民者建构出的负面意象，如今却被部分“开化”的本土精英内化，转而投射到自己的文化符号之上。支持赌场计划的长老博科（Bhonco）便将赭石文化贬斥为“红色的黑暗”（darkness of redness），声称它让人陷于荒蛮而无法进入现代文明（Mda, 2002, p.218）。这种表述正是殖民话语渗透的明证：在外部资本的光环之下，本土文化被重新定义为阻碍进步的障碍。

然而，这一计划的依附性本质在公共会议（imbhizo）上被卡玛古彻底揭露。首先，它以破坏本土生态为前提，开发者承认将“砍掉所有这些树……铲除大量本地灌木并种植一个漂亮的英式花园”（Mda, 2002, p.189）。这是一种典型的“生态殖民主义”（Eco-colonialism），即以牺牲本土生态来满足外部资本的开发需求。其次，其发展成果无法由社区共享。卡玛古一针见血地指出，赌场不仅不能创造财富，反而会“带走村里仅有的一点钱”，让本地人陷入更深的贫困（Mda, 2002, p.111）。最终，该计划的决策权完全掌握在外部资本和腐败的酋长手中，后者用“一瓶白兰地”或“手机和卫星电视接收器”就出卖了土地（Mda, 2002, p.167）。整个社区在此过程中沦为被动的、被规划的对象，其命运依然依附于外部力量的“恩赐”或剥削。

如果说赌场计划是资本依附，那么道尔顿的“文化村”则是文化依附的变体。它试图将本土文

化打包成一种可供外部（西方）游客消费的“奇观”（spectacle）。在与卡玛古的辩论中，道尔顿的逻辑是纯粹市场导向的：“这是一种被证明可行的生意。游客喜欢参观这样的文化村庄，看看人们是如何生活的”（Mda, 2002, p.223）。为了迎合这种外部想象，他主张展示一个被刻意策划的、拼凑的、甚至虚假的过去。这种做法的危害在于，它剥夺了本土文化自我定义、动态发展的权利，将其本质化与商品化，最终变成了满足外部凝视、可供消费的“博物馆展品”（museum piece）。文化的价值不再由自身传统和当代实践来定义，而是由外部市场的凝视和消费意愿来定义。这正是文化上的“依附”，其后果是“挖掘出一个被埋葬的前殖民身份……暗示他们目前没有文化……生活在文化真空中”（Mda, 2002, p.231）。

因此，无论是赌场还是文化村，穆达都将其诊断为失败的方案，因为它们非但不能带来自主，反而会加深在资本和文化上对外部世界的依附，从根本上违背了去殖民化的目标。

（二）“自力更生”的出路：作为生态实践的本土经济模式

与依附模式相对，穆达借由卡玛古所构建的，是一种作为“实践”的自力更生模式。它将第二章所建立的生态世界观，转化为具体的、服务于社区的社会经济行动，呼应了坦桑尼亚首任总统尼雷尔（Julius Nyerere）等非洲思想家所倡导的“自力更生”发展哲学。

因此，这一实践的起点颇具象征意义：它源于卡玛古向库可兹娃学习如何捕捞海洋。当他想自己动手时，“女人们不会教他。他作为一个顾客是好的，而不是一个竞争者”（Mda, 2002, p.129）。直到库可兹娃这位本土生态智慧的化身，亲自教他如何辨识潮汐、如何使用工具，他才得以入门。这一情节隐喻了真正的自主发展，必须始于对本土知识的谦逊学习，而非外部技术的强行植入。

在此基础上，合作社的成立体现了“自力更生”的核心原则。首先是资源内生。合作社的业务是“捕捞海洋的产物并制作科萨服饰和珠宝”（Mda, 2002, p.231），其原材料和技术都源于本土，是对第二章所展示的、人与自然和谐共生的生态智慧的直接经济转化。它证明了，本土的生态与文化，并非发展的障碍或仅供观赏的“展品”，而是实现自主发展的、最宝贵的“生产资料”。

其次是社区主权。卡玛古与道尔顿的商人逻辑——“分一杯羹”——形成了根本对立。卡玛古的回答则是一种共同体宣言：“我谈论的是自力更生，即人们为自己做事……这个项目将由村民自己完全拥有”（Mda, 2002, p.231）。这里的关键词是“为自己”（for themselves）和“自己拥有”（owned by themselves），它标志着发展的主体从外部资本转向了社区自身，这是摆脱“依附心态”的第一步。

最后是文化自信。这种自信体现在卡玛古对道尔顿“文化村”方案的坚决抵制中。卡玛古拒绝将文化“博物馆化”，他相信科萨文化的内在价值与动态生命力：“科萨人不是博物馆展品。像所有文化一样，他们的文化是充满活力的”（Mda, 2002, p.231）。这种自信，使他敢于提出一种全新的旅游模式：建立一个服务于“热爱自然的游客”的背包客旅馆，提供“非洲家庭生活的体验”（Mda, 2002, p.223）。这种模式的底气，正是来源于第二章所重构的那个充满主体性的世界观：他坚信，科洛拉真实的、未被包装的自然与文化本身，就足以构成强大的吸引力，无需借助外部的、商业化的奇观来确认自身价值。

（三）从虚构到现实：作为作者实践的养蜂合作社

《红色之心》中对自力更生模式的构想，并非仅仅是一种文学乌托邦。它在作者穆达本人的现实生活中得到了印证，从而赋予了这部小说超越文本的实践意义。穆达在其自传《虚空有时》

(*Sometimes there is a Void*) 中, 详细记述了他在自己的祖籍村庄 Qoboshane 创办“泰勒蜂蜜”(Telle Honey) 养蜂合作社的经历。这一现实中的项目, 几乎是小说中卡玛古方案的现实复刻。穆达创办合作社的初衷, 源于一个与卡玛古相似的信念。当他看到家乡山脉上盛开的芦荟时, 他对自己说: “那座山不能白白地美丽。它必须产出一些能赋予人们生命的东西”(Mda, 2011, p.414)。这个想法, 正是《红色之心》中生态世界观的核心: 自然之美不仅是审美的, 更是能够滋养社区生命的生产力。穆达的实践过程, 与卡玛古的构想如出一辙。他建立了一个“由其成员拥有和运营的合作社”, 而非个人企业。他拒绝了将山脉用于个人利益, 而是为了“社区的利益”(Mda, 2011, p.415)。最终, “泰勒蜂蜜”的成功, 恰恰源于其独特的本土生态——“迪亚霍姆山未经污染的空气以及生长在那座山上的本土草药、灌木和芦荟”(Mda, 2011, p.417)。

穆达最后总结道: “我的写作和我的社区行动主义之间存在一种共生关系”(Mda, 2011, p.417)。这一自述表明, 《红色之心》不仅是一次对殖民叙事的文学重构, 更是一份旨在疗愈“依附心态”、推动现实变革的行动“蓝图”。作者的文学构想与社会实践由此形成了深刻的互文关系, 共同阐释并验证了一条根植于本土生态智慧的去殖民化发展道路的必要性与可行性。

结语

本文的论证始于对康拉德殖民生态话语的剖析。《黑暗之心》中那个沉默、野蛮、非理性的非洲自然, 为殖民主义的掠夺式经济提供了意识形态的基石。与之相对, 穆达在《红色之心》中的叙事则是一场主体性重构的实践。通过对河流、树木、动物等自然意象主体性的重构, 他建立了一个与万物和谐共生的本土世界观。这一世界观变革, 直接导向了本文第三章的核心——两种发展哲学的对垒。小说中的“赌场计划”与“文化村”方案, 是“依附理论”的文学再现, 其内核是延续殖民逻辑的资本与文化依附。而卡玛古所探索的合作社与生态旅游模式, 则是“自力更生”理念的生态实践, 其根基正是尊重自然与文化主权的本土世界观。

当然, 穆达在小说中给出的方案或许带有理想主义色彩, 其模式在面对全球化资本的巨大冲击时是否具备普遍的可行性, 仍是一个值得探讨的问题。尽管穆达的方案带有理想主义色彩, 但这并未削弱《红色之心》作为社会变革蓝图的深刻批判价值与前瞻性意义。穆达以其文学与人生的“共生关系”, 提供了一个思考后殖民发展的整体性框架: 真正的去殖民化, 绝非单一维度的政治或经济议题, 它必须是一场始于文化深处、重塑人与土地关系、并最终体现为社区自主经济实践的系统性革命。在这个意义上, 重返《红色之心》, 倾听土地的言说, 对于我们理解当今世界的发展困境, 依然具有深刻而迫切的现实意义。

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Zou Tao ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7030-3603>

Xiong Hongyan ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8084-0638>

References

Achebe, Chinua (1977). "An Image of Africa." *The Massachusetts Review* 17(4): 782-794.

Darras, Jacques (1982). *Joseph Conrad and the West: Signs of Empire*. Macmillan.

Huggan, G., & Tiffin, H. (2010). *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. Routledge.

Mda, Z. (2002). *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Mda, Z. (2011). *Sometimes there is a Void: Memoirs of an Outsider*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

段燕、王爱菊 (2017): “贾克斯·穆达《赤红之心》的帝国反写与绿色批评”，《当代外国文学》(03): 96-103。

[Duan Yan, & Wang Aiju (2017). “Empire Rewriting and Green Criticism in Zakes Mda’s The Heart of Redness.” *Contemporary Foreign Literature* (03): 96-103.]

康拉德, 约瑟夫 (2021): 《黑暗的心 吉姆爷》, 黄雨石、熊蕾译。人民文学出版社。

[Conrad, Joseph (2021). *Heart of Darkness and Lord Jim*, trans. Huang Yushi, & Xiong Lei. People’s Literature Publishing House.]

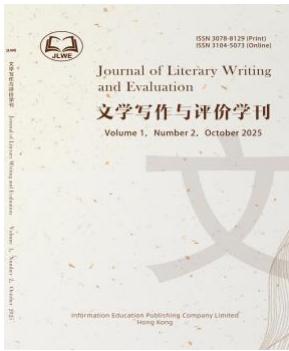
乔修峰 (2004) 《〈黑暗的心〉中的幽闭空间与风景的“再发现”》，《外国文学研究》(01): 106–115.

[Qiao, Xiufeng (2024). “Claustrophobic Space and the Rediscovery of Landscape in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (01): 106–15.]

钟燕 (2014): “卡玛吉的选择——《赤红的心》生态批评解读”，《外国文学研究》(03): 140-147。

[Zhong Yan (2014). “Choices of Camagu: An Ecocritical Reading of The Heart of Redness.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (03):140.]

Zannat, Mahfuza & Zhang, Longhai (2021). “A Study on Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness.” *Forum for World Literature Studies* (03): 497-508.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.201-210.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.03](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.03)



古尔纳《遗弃》中的爱之事件

郝文萱 (Hao Wenxuan)

摘要: 阿兰·巴迪欧将爱与政治、科学、艺术视作真理的四个前提。爱促生的革命性合体最终产生了一个不能被既往知识体系所识别和处置的不可辨识的集合，最终导向了真正的断裂性的事件。本文借助巴迪欧的爱之事件理论，以古尔纳小说《遗弃》中蕾哈娜与皮尔斯具有颠覆性的爱之事件为核心，围绕事件本身以及拉希德对其想象的断裂，论述了爱之事件是如何以其建构和生成着的生命，颠覆社会大写的一的逻辑，并在忠实于爱的原则上，创造出新的世界的过程。

关键词: 古尔纳；《遗弃》；巴迪欧；事件；创基性

作者简介: 郝文萱，南京大学外国语学院博士研究生，研究方向：现当代英美文学。电邮：selene20000@126.com。

Title: Love Events in Gurnah's *Desertion*

Abstract: Alain Badiou regards love, together with politics, science and art, as the four premises of truth. The revolutionary ensemble that love promotes ultimately produces an unrecognisable collection that cannot be identified and disposed of by previous systems of knowledge and ultimately leads to a truly ruptural event. Drawing on Badiou's theory of the event of love, this paper centres on the subversive event of love between Rehana and Pearce in Gurnah's novel *Desertion* and the rupture of Rashid's imagination of it, discusses how the event of love, with its constructed and generative life, subverts the logic of the One and creates a new world in fidelity to the principle of love.

Keywords: Gurnah; *Desertion*; Badiou; Event; Inceptuality

Author Biography: Hao Wenxuan, Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Foreign Languages,

Nanjing University. Research Area: Modern and Contemporary British and American Literature.
E-mail: selene20000@126.com.

一、引言

阿兰·巴迪欧 (Alain Badiou) 在《爱的多重奏》(Eloge de L'amour, 2009) 中区分了有关爱的三个观念, 分别是基于相遇时的喜悦的浪漫主义观念, 一种商业的契约, 以及认为爱不过是幻影的怀疑主义观念。紧接着他提出了自己对爱的洞见: “……爱不可以被归结为上述的任何一种观念, 爱是一种真理的建构。”(巴迪欧, 2012, p. 53) 巴迪欧的“真理”是一种特别意义上的真理, 即“当他从‘两’而不是从‘一’出发来体验世界时, 所体验的世界是怎样的? 从差异性而不是从同一性出发时, 人们所体验到的、所实践的和生活着的世界到底是怎样的? 他将这种从差异性出发来建构世界的爱与列维纳斯“爱是一种他异性的经验”做了区分, 认为在爱之中谈不上有什么特别“伦理”的东西。与他人的相遇还不是一种经验, 而是一个晦暗不明的, 只有在实在世界内部的多种形式的后果中才能取得其现实性的事件。古尔纳的小说《遗弃》(Desertion, 2005) 中就叙述了这样一个爱之事件: 在十九世纪末期的英属殖民地肯尼亚, 英国人马丁·皮尔斯 (Martin Pearce) 与救起他的穆斯林青年哈桑纳利 (Hassanali) 的姐姐蕾哈娜 (Rehana) 一见钟情, 最终不顾殖民和宗教的限制走到了一起。这一爱之事件在多年后不仅影响了贾米拉 (Jamila) (蕾哈娜的外孙女) 与阿明 (Amin) 的爱情, 同样对将这一事件作为研究对象的后殖民学者拉希德 (Rashid, 阿明的弟弟) 产生了巨大的影响, 使他获得开始与芭芭拉爱情的勇气。蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的相遇是巴迪欧意义上的具有革命性的爱之事件, 它以其创基性的方式奠定了一种全新的逻辑, 其合体的主体不断用内在的真实在不同时间和空间里实现了对各种再现的绝对溢出, 使全新的生活通过爱的邂逅降临。

二、拉希德: 受挫的想象与大写的一

《遗弃》的第一部分由四个小节和一个“插叙”构成。前四个小节以第三人称的视角分别聚焦四个不同人物 (哈桑纳利、弗雷德里克、蕾哈娜、皮尔斯) 对十九世纪末肯尼亚殖民地的生活进行了叙述, 以英国人皮尔斯如何获救以及与蕾哈娜相遇作为主线。第四小节在伤愈的皮尔斯重返哈桑纳利和蕾哈娜姐弟家做客时戛然而止, 并没有展开对两人爱情如何开始以及发展的叙述。从接下来的“插叙”中可以得知, 前四小节的执笔人正是后殖民学者拉希德。之所以就此搁笔, 是因为他在对两人爱情故事的追溯中发现: 尽管他可以在“知识非常不全面的情况下”想象其他事情, 但他对于马丁和蕾哈娜这件事“根本无从确定一个看似最有可能的事件的发展顺序。”对于两人的爱情, 他“尽管知道它确实发生了, 但他对此无法想象。”(古尔纳, 2023, p. 128) 既然不是知识不全面造成的, 那么是什么造成了拉希德想象的断裂?

巴迪欧在《萨科齐代表着什么》中剖析了法国在萨科齐当选时盛行的贝当主义^①并深刻地指出“把人民中的一部分区分出来, 加以排斥, 或者在法国人和非法国人之间划一道界限, 这是荒谬而且不人道的。”(巴迪欧, 2012, p. 20) 柏林墙倒下了, 然而, 更多的隔离墙却建立起来了。移民问题不仅仅是法国的问题, 而是整个西方的问题。除了法律手段和行政手段, 将人们隔离起来的往往

^① 贝当主义 (petainism), 来自菲利普·贝当, 二战时期为与纳粹德国合作的维希政府头目。贝当主义泛指将一小部分人民指定为罪恶源头并对他们进行监视、控制、驱逐甚至杀害的行为。

是观念与偏见。拉希德笔下的肯尼亚殖民地，体现了这种偏见的历史根源。小说中的伯顿和弗雷德里克都是当地的官员，虽然弗雷德里克相比于崇尚暴力统治的伯顿更加温和，但他依旧代表着文化帝国主义式的傲慢。在弗雷德里克去哈桑纳利那里企图带走受伤昏迷的皮尔斯时，来帮忙的当地居民瓦基尔的镇定自若与有条不紊使他震惊。由于瓦基尔说阿拉伯语，弗雷德里克一句也听不懂，但他还是“成功地做到了让（瓦基尔的）每句话都听起来是那么工于心计和狡猾奸诈。”（古尔纳, 2023, p. 48）除了毫无来由的恶意，弗雷德里克的傲慢还使他无法理解当地人的生活方式：“这些人一点力气也不愿意出，都是奴隶制的恶果……他们在被奴役时学会了偷奸耍滑，如今已经不知道努力或责任感为何物了。”（古尔纳, 2023, p.52）弗雷德里克所代表的官员毫无自省意识，即使认识到了奴隶制的后果，却对身为始作俑者的自己毫无反省之意。

1807 年，英国颁布奴隶贸易禁令，虽然废奴主义者受到了法国大革命“自由、平等、博爱”的影响，但废奴运动背后的动机却绝不仅仅是人道主义这样简单。特立尼达历史学家埃里克·威廉姆斯（Eric Williams）在 1944 年提出了经济解释，即“新兴工业使种植园经济的利润大幅降低，只有奴隶贸易在整体上停止或者锐减，英国制造商和商人才有望在与非洲的其他贸易上获得可观的利润。”（希尔顿, 2021, p. 262）而臭名昭著的比利时国王利奥波德二世也是如此，在人道主义的旗帜下，以“造成巨大破坏的方式攫取了大量非洲土地与资源，其征召的被迫长途搬运重物的脚夫死亡率尤其高。”（霍赫希尔德, 2018, p. 157）与小说中伯顿和弗雷德里克所代表的文化帝国主义一样，无论是奴隶制还是废奴主义，其背后不变的是不可一世的傲慢与对非洲本土人文化与生活方式的蔑视。这种偏见使欧非两种文化之间产生巨大隔阂，而瓜分非洲（Scramble for Africa）的行动甚至加深了本土不同部落之间的冲突，造成非洲内部的分裂。与伯顿与弗雷德里克不同的是，马丁·皮尔斯认为“随着时间的推移，我们慢慢就会发现，自己在这些地方做的事情，其实没有多少英雄主义色彩”，除此之外他还认为“我们是有所亏欠的……因为我们侵犯了他们的生活方式。”（古尔纳, 2023, p. 99）在弗雷德里克引用奥斯卡·王尔德的时候，皮尔斯“惊呼着大笑起来”，以反讽的方式表达了对其傲慢的抨击。

除此之外，这种根深蒂固的偏见也有其现实因素。在小说的第三部分，拉希德回忆了自己在英国的经历。在抵达英国不久后，拉希德发现家乡已经被暴力和恐惧所笼罩，回不去的家乡使他正式成为一个流亡者，他意识到“从今往后我都只能住在英格兰，做一个四顾茫然的异乡人”，这种异类感很快使他发生转变：

哈拉尔德·埃德黑姆在研究挪威北部西芬马克的挪威人与海岸拉普人的族群关系时提出：“交换资源成为社会环境的一部分...在该领域里通过得体地扮演挪威人角色而掩饰拉普人角色，族群身份被忽略，交换得以产生。”（巴特, 2014, p. 44）失去家园，渴望融入新社会的拉希德也不得不抛弃了复杂的可能性，投身于黑白分明的“巨大谎言”。为了获取资源以便安身立命，他只能遵循社会规约被同化。除了为了获取社会资源，瓦妮莎·巴罗尔斯基（2008）提出“人权只有在我们是民族国家公民的时候才会成为我们作为人类应得的权力。”当拉希德失去了他的故乡后，这样一种边缘化的处境使他“很容易遭受到特别的暴力”。

从肯尼亚殖民地的历史到移民的历史现实，拉希德受挫的想象既有其历史根源也有其现实因素。罗歇·凯卢瓦在“文学的危机”中陈述道：“想象力不会像一个被带上前的主犯那样轻易坦白，即使饱受悔恨的折磨。无论如何，它的坦白对象，不是那些痴迷它的人，而是压制它的人。”（福柯等，

2016, p. 3) 而压制拉希德想象力的元凶, 即为贯穿着历史与现实的“大写的一”。巴迪欧在对事件的界定中这样说到: “事件不是预先给定的, 因为大一的体制就是全部给定物的法则。” (蓝江, 2018, p. 49) 在这里, “大写的一”除了黑格尔式的贯穿历史本身的真理, 还是利奥塔意义上统摄整个社会, 试图建立起可以支配所有话语体系的元叙事。拉希德本人深受其害的, 不仅是其笔下伯顿和弗雷德里克所代表肯尼亚殖民历史中有关种族优越性的叙事, 更是整个西方由德国唯心主义传统与法国大革命所形成的思辨机制与解放机制。

在对认知主体和实践主体的双重控制中, “大写的一”不仅决定了“真理是什么”, 还决定了“谁有资格行动”。从“插叙”中屡屡停滞的想象到小说结尾的“后续”中带着肯尼亚殖民地文学的研究去参加学术会议, 拉希德对“大写的一”的感触与反思越来越深入。电影《美国小说》(American Fiction) 以极具讽刺的方式讲述了失意的小说家蒙克 (Monk) 用心创作文学作品无人问津, 以开玩笑的方式创作了一本充斥着黑人刻板印象的小说却被广受追捧的魔幻现实。与蒙克不同的是, 《遗弃》中的拉希德不是小说家, 他殖民地文学研究者的身份使他能够洞悉本应代表着反思与革新的学术研究中存在的弊端。

在会议上, 他提到了蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的故事并指出, 在(后殖民)小说和部分回忆录中, “性经历的描写要么是缺失的, 要么就被升华了, 用来表现庇护者的痛苦, 或体现为一种过度悲剧性的传闻。” (古尔纳, 2023, p.300) 在学术研究中, 学者们总是倾向于高度概括以及总结, 然而这必然导致了对现实的复杂性的牺牲。拉希德自身的经历, 他所受的教育与他为了研究所做的对社会现实的感受与对历史事实的追寻中, 一个个小写的人消失了, 同样消逝是对复杂性的追求。在“插叙”中拉希德也对此进行了反思, 最终他认为“我们宁愿相信这一切都是出于贪婪和欲望, 也不愿相信, 其实爱才是真正的动机。” (古尔纳, 2023, p.129) 在巴迪欧看来, 在当今世界, “爱正受到越来越多的威胁, 其中之一便是在安全的名义下, 通过各种理性的算计, 把爱排除在偶然性之外。” (巴迪欧, 2012, p. 25) 在“插叙”中, 拉希德不断想象却又不断受挫, 在想象皮尔斯与蕾哈娜互通书信的情节时, 他在疑惑中发问: “一个英国人, 在那种地方如此显眼, 是怎么找到方法做这些事的呢。” (古尔纳, 2023, p.134) 而即使他们的通信得以进行, “话又说回来, 就算有办法做到, 又到底是什么让马丁不顾一切地想要和蕾哈娜这样的女人展开恋情。” (古尔纳, 2023, p.135) 在肯尼亚殖民地, 蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱情不仅仅有客观条件上的阻碍, 受殖民、宗教等世俗规约影响之下形成的, 带有偏见的主观的个人意识也不可能使爱情发生。蕾哈娜身为女性, “被一种关于女性贞操的道德焦虑牢牢钳制”, 如果她敢逾矩, 将收获“用嘲笑、羞辱和更为恶劣的手段。” (古尔纳, 2023, p.136) 而在皮尔斯那边, “帝国世界对性行为是否得体是有严格规定的”, 作为传教士的皮尔斯需要考虑“舆论与尊严和对联交所一切商品价格的影响。” (古尔纳, 2023, p.136) 作为研究肯尼亚殖民文学的学者, 在对殖民地双方历史详细考证的情况下, 在他自己所处的, 充斥着“种族化世界的僵化看法”的社会的影响下, 拉希德的想象难以进行。而蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱情故事因其真实性, 却不断地冲击着拉希德的认知: “...为什么当我开始构思(阿明与贾米拉故事)的时候, 会不由得想起贾米拉的外婆蕾哈娜和英国男人皮尔斯是如何相遇的, 又是怎么在那个两人的世界是如此不同、如此遥远的年代走到一起。” (古尔纳, 2023, p.263)

因此, 蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱情便成为了这样一个“事件”, 被“大写的一”所抗拒、所排斥, 却又无法被简化与概括, 它以事件本身生成性的力量不断撕裂原有的秩序, 影响着它的参与者与旁观

者们。在对蕾哈娜和皮尔斯故事的书写、搁笔、反思中，拉希德的主体意识逐渐摆脱了之前受困于黑白分明的谎言的状态，他逐渐意识到复杂的可能性的重要意义，以及整个社会乃至学术机构这个“大写的一”对思想的抹杀与对想象的钳制。作为创基性的爱之事件，“在事件发生那一刻，一部分存在物成为支配与主导新秩序的因素，而另一些存在物是被强制性地纳入创基的秩序之中，而在创基性的事件中，支配性因素和其他存在物被强制纳入一个创基性的源始事件之中。”（蓝江、刘黎，2017, p. 30）在《遗弃》中，蕾哈娜与皮尔斯以绝对的偶然性为基础的爱之事件正是这样一个创基性的源始事件，爱作为支配性因素与其他存在物被纳入其中，它抗拒着大写的一的逻辑，不断地制造着断裂，并以自身的生成性产生着全新的逻辑。

三、蕾哈娜与皮尔斯：创基性的爱之事件

创基性（Inceptuality）的概念来源于海德格尔，而与之紧密相连的就是事件本身。海德格尔说：“事件十分明确地表达了起源的自明性的创基。存在的开创性的真理，在其自身中，作为创基的统一性，保留了支配与被支配之间始创的统一体。”（巴迪欧，2018, p. 30）在起源性的创基事件中，世界的一切或者对世界的理解被容纳入由事件所创生的新秩序中。在《遗弃》中，这个创基性事件就是蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱。蒂娜·斯坦纳曾评论道：“在殖民主义和帝国主义的暴力以及新非洲民族主义的排外话语的背景下，古尔纳坚持书写有关彼此产生联系时的微弱之声，肯定了其中包含的友善。”

（Steiner, 2010, p. 125）蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱之事件正是跨越边界并产生联系时的“微弱之声”。但是，相比于古尔纳笔下众多来自不同族群和文化背景的人物彼此之间偶然联系不同的是，蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱之事件是一种绝对意义上的偶然。蕾哈娜与皮尔斯之间有着宗教、种族、殖民、性别等不同方面的多重束缚，但却产生了具有排他性的爱之事件，超脱于拉希德的想象之外，作为一种纯粹的创造使其置身于一种全然陌生的境界中。正如创基在拉丁语中的含义为“我开始”一样，这种纯粹的偶然就是“无中生有”的过程。在巴迪欧这里，事件是纯粹内在性的，“作为再现（representation）的逻辑而言，根本不可能穷尽所有的真实，那么真实的显现（presence）必然相对于再现存在着绝对溢出。”（巴迪欧，2018, p. 31）蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱之事件这个具有偶然性的绝对溢出就是巴迪欧“事件”的基础。与海德格尔不同，巴迪欧试图摆脱哲学套上诗学的牢笼，试图在康托尔集合论的基础上使哲学回归数学传统，为了解决无中生有的问题，他的答案是空集（ \emptyset ）。根据策梅洛-弗兰克尔（Zermelo-Fraenkel）公理，对于任何一个集合来说，都存在着这个集合所有元素的集合，而同时空集是所有集合的元素，因此可以得出空集 \emptyset 的幂集是 $\{\emptyset\}$ ， $\{\emptyset\}$ 并不是空集，而是带有一个元素的一元集，而 $\{\emptyset\}$ 的幂集又是 $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}$ ， $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}$ 的幂集为 $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}, \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}\}$ ……以此类推，从而“无中生有”，以代表着不可能性的空集 \emptyset 出发形成整个世界的架构。在这里，空集 \emptyset 就是事件本身。

在《遗弃》中的肯尼亚殖民地，哈桑纳利、玛莉卡（哈桑纳利的妻子）、蕾哈娜可被看作归属于同一个集合 A，而弗雷德里克、伯顿、皮尔斯等人归属于集合 B。集合 A 中的元素彼此可以共存，且他们两两组成的新的集合，如 {哈桑纳利, 玛莉卡}，势必从属于集合 A，成为 A 的子集。在小说中，哈桑纳利和玛莉卡拥有相同的宗教文化背景，他们的结合无可非议，顺理成章，是一种不断被延续的正常逻辑，即巴迪欧所说的情势状态（*etat de la situation*）。但集合 A 与集合 B 之间却只能产生空集 $A \cap B = \emptyset$ ，A 与 B 之中任意元素之间也同样如此“玛莉卡 \cap 弗雷德里克 = \emptyset ”。A 与 B，包括它

们的任意子集之间，都没有结合的可能。而爱之事件的出现改变了同一集合中的惯常性力量（宗教、文化）所导致的常见结果，改变了子集出现的方式，蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的结合首次实现了来自两个不同集合的元素组成的集合 $\varnothing=\{\text{蕾哈娜, 皮尔斯}\}$ 。与其他子集不同的是，这个全新的集合 \varnothing 无法被辨识，即它既无法从属于 A 也无法从属于 B。由于 A 与 B 之间只能产生空集 \emptyset ，即 $A \cap B = \emptyset$ ，那么可以得出 $\varnothing = \emptyset$ 的结论，即蕾哈娜与皮尔斯所产生的这一爱之事件本身，就是 A 与 B 之间形成的空集。正是由于 \varnothing 本身的不可辨识，拉希德才陷入了对这一事件的怀疑；由于无法用其知识解释它，拉希德的想象因此断裂。但 \varnothing 的存在无法抹去，其存在的事实不断困扰着拉希德，使其最终意识到这种“性经历的描写要么是缺失的，要么就被升华了，用来表现庇护者的痛苦，或体现为一种过度悲剧性的传闻。”（古尔纳, 2023, p. 300）只有弥补这种缺失，以一种过去被排除在外的全新逻辑，才能真正去理解事件性的集合 \varnothing 的出现。

蕾哈娜与皮尔斯作为从属不同集合的两个元素，他们彼此之间没有天然的凝聚力，正是爱使不可能的集合 \varnothing 得以出现。巴迪欧将爱看作真理的四个前提之一，“在爱中，两个个体之间存在着绝对的差异，这同时是人们能够呈现的最大差异之一；因为这是一种无限的差异，一种相遇，一种宣言，一种忠诚，从而最终能够把这种无限差异转变成为一种创造性的存在。”（巴迪欧, 2012, p. 89） \varnothing 因此以创基性的存在创造了一种全新的逻辑，既非 A 也非 B，而是同时从属又区别于 A 与 B。蕾哈娜与皮尔斯通过彼此的目光和视角的交流从而不断地去重新体验世界，在这个世界中他们成为“大写的二”（Deux）。巴迪欧在《存在与事件》中写道：

“因为名称是一个非再现的代位，事件仍然是匿名的和不确定的……事件维持了与不可展现之物的缝合。这是因为超一的本质是大二（Deux）……一个事件是一个间（intervalle），而不是一个项，它在介入的反作用下，在被位标明其边界的空的无名状态与名称的额外性之间建构了自身……大二并非对计数的一的复制，也不是对计数规则的结果的重复。这是一个原初性的大二，一个悬置的间，决定所产生的分裂的结果。”（巴迪欧, 2018, p. 258）

蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的爱之事件正是一个原初性的大二，一个超一，一个悬置的间。当拉希德在“插叙”中再度发问“究竟是什么，让有着这种背景的一个英国人——大学、殖民地官员、学者——和东非海边小城一个店主的姐姐开始了这样一段感情？”（古尔纳, 2023, p.136）这表明他所受到的教育、生长和生活环境所赋予他的文化身份已不再能够帮助他理解蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱之事实。蕾哈娜与皮尔斯革命性的合体所产生的不可能的集合 \varnothing ，作为一个悬置的间，已然凌驾于 A 与 B 现有的规则与逻辑之上。在建构出有关二的真理时，不可辨识的集合 \varnothing 的存在也在表明，只有来自不同集合的（至少）两个元素的合体而非单一元素，才能真正创生出爱之事件。而蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱之事件，在创造出分裂和引入全新的逻辑的同时，也直接和间接地影响了阿明与贾米拉、拉希德与芭芭拉两个接续性的爱之事件的生成。

四、大写的二：真理秩序的初建

蕾哈娜与皮尔斯创基性的爱之事件不仅创造了全新的逻辑，形成了以超一存在的“大写的二”，在此基础上还直接和间接地促生了阿明与贾米拉，芭芭拉与拉希德的爱之事件。在回忆中，拉希德

写到，“我的哥哥阿明之所以知道这个故事，是因为这件事的后果也对他产生了影响，可他却不能和我说得太多。”（古尔纳, 2023, p.138）蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的故事对阿明“产生了影响”，因为这导致了阿明与贾米拉爱之事件的发生；“可他却不能和我说得太多”，说明并不只有拉希德发生了想象的断裂，他的哥哥阿明同样受制于惯常性的逻辑，大写的一的黑白分明使他同样不能对这一事件进行完整描述。在阿明遇到贾米拉时，她因外婆蕾哈娜与欧洲人的“丑闻”与自己多次再婚的事实而遭人诟病，闲话缠身。在与贾米拉交往时，阿明虽然“觉得自己骗过了所有人的眼睛”，却“有了一种不祥的预感”，因为他与贾米拉的生活环境是一个被“大写的一”牢牢掌控的地方，“这不是一个可以容忍这种关系公开的地方，目不转睛、毫不松懈的监视，会把情侣们焦虑的密谋变成肮脏的笑话。总有人在捕风捉影，而各种碎片叠加在一起，迟早会暴露所有事情。”（古尔纳, 2023, p.217）在爱之事件造成的绝对溢出威胁到“大写的一”时，大写的一通常会以强权的方式，彻底消灭这个真实的溢出。“...这种消灭是以他们真实存在的实体消亡来警告那些意欲有着同样行为的人不要重蹈覆辙。”（巴迪欧, 2018, p. 34）在蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的爱之事件发生后，为了消除未来同样事件发生的可能性，在整个社会“全景敞视”式的监管下，贾米拉作为一个被公开惩罚的典例用来警示他人。但阿明与贾米拉最终仍然产生了爱情，革命性的合体再一次生成，“大写的一”的规训不能完全抹杀皮尔斯和蕾哈娜爱之事件存在的痕迹，也就是阿斯玛这个真实存在的实体。事实上，阿斯玛作为蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的女儿，贾米拉的母亲，其名字的含义为“无罪之人”。巴迪欧认为：孩子可以说是爱的空间中的一个点。一个点，是一个特殊的时刻，基于这个点，事件得到重新把握，从而事件被重新演绎，在一种变化的形式下重新返回，从而迫使我们重新“宣布”（巴迪欧, 2012, p. 81）。“无罪之人”阿斯玛是蕾哈娜与皮尔斯的结晶，也是他们忠于“爱之事件”的又一宣言。

从蕾哈娜和皮尔斯到贾米拉与阿明，爱之事件看似失败了：两对眷侣最后都分道扬镳，集合 A 与 B 的惯常性逻辑、大写的一卷土重来。但爱之事件的意义不在于其结果，而在于其难以磨灭的存在本身。爱在生命中发明了另一种不同的持续的方式：“在爱的体验中，每一个人的存在，都将面对一种全新的时间性。”（巴迪欧, 2012, p. 64）可以说，拉希德同时受到了蕾哈娜和皮尔斯与哥哥阿明与贾米拉的两个爱之事件的影响。在试图记录哥哥阿明的故事时，他发现自己“会不由得想起贾米拉的外婆蕾哈娜和英国男人皮尔斯是如何相遇的”，“如果不去想象蕾哈娜和马丁是怎么走到一起的，我就没办法动笔。”（古尔纳, 2023, p.138）这也反证了两个事件彼此具有相同的逻辑，而拉希德如果不能突破惯常性的逻辑所带来的束缚，那他将永远无法真正理解这两个事件，断裂的想象也将永远断裂。

在小说的最后，拉希德与皮尔斯的孙女芭芭拉走在一起，在踏上寻找过去的旅程后，他以一种戏谑的口吻对芭芭拉说：“我得写信解释一下你要去，免得爸措手不及。而且咱们得分房睡，你知道的。”两人说罢后都笑了起来，只因“这句话在我们这个年龄体现出来的喜剧意味。”（古尔纳, 2023, p.304）一方面，这句话体现了大写的一残余但仍然有力的影响。从蕾哈娜和皮尔斯到拉希德的时代，波卡洪塔斯与风中奇缘之类的故事已经广为流传，然而正如拉希德来到英国后的遭遇一般，整个社会仍然“黑白分明”，传统观念仍然深植；在另一方面，在类似蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的爱之事件的冲击下，在对其不断的反思中，拉希德心中的枷锁已被冲破。虽然他仍然无法对这一事件进行完整的想象，但能以一种反讽的态度，在调侃中揭露这种古老的隔离观念的荒谬性。

从小说的开始到结束，蕾哈娜与皮尔斯爱之事件始终没有被完整地叙述，但其创基性的存在本

身却不断地发挥作用。在这个过程中，“大写的一”的逻辑虽然没有完全消失，但也逐渐被弱化。“一种真正的爱，是一种持之以恒的胜利，不断地跨越空间、时间、世界所造成的障碍。”（巴迪欧，2012, p. 63）从蕾哈娜与皮尔斯到拉希德与芭芭拉，爱之事件以晦暗不明的方式出现，并以其存在本身而非结果，跨越时间和空间产生着源源不断的影响。巴迪欧认为爱之中有着某种过渡的经验，从而可以由纯粹的偶然的个别性过渡到某种具有普遍价值的因素。在皮尔斯和蕾哈娜那里，创基性的爱得以发生，并以其生成性的力量不断地创造。在蕾哈娜的女儿阿斯玛和孙辈贾米拉那里，这种爱被传承下来，使她和阿明能够冲破世俗的束缚走在一起。阿明与贾米拉的爱情重申并巩固了这种爱。同时，这种爱令拉希德困惑，却又使他在受挫的想象中不断地冲撞，最终得以一窥“大写的一”对他的钳制，并在对整个学术体制的反思中重获自身的主体性，使他最终迈出朝向芭芭拉爱的一步。爱又一次在拉希德的行动中取得了其现实性，它从皮尔斯和蕾哈娜那里作为“偶然”开始，在一次又一次新的宣言中被“固定”。

皮尔斯和蕾哈娜创基性的爱之事件导致了阿明与贾米拉爱情的发生，两个互相联系却又独立的爱之事件在拉希德这里被重新巩固，生发出拉希德自身的第三个爱之事件。正如巴迪欧所言：“爱的思想的秘密，就在于这种最终完成‘爱’所经历的绵延岁月，偶然的个别性爱之事件也因此获得了普遍的价值。”（巴迪欧，2012, p. 63）而这种跨越边界的事件，也是古尔纳所有作品中重点叙述的对象，比如《天堂》中优素福在贸易途中见证的不同种族之间的交流，《来世》里哈姆扎与德国长官的温情时刻。而“拒绝承认他人具有人性以及这种否认所带来的可怕后果是古尔纳小说的核心所在，在这里，彼此之间的敌意和善意之间经过精心勾勒的并置，昭示着彼此间的联系成为一种可能的替代空间。”（Steiner, 2010, p. 126）在这些不可被常理解释的关系中，人们放弃了单一的主客体关系，转向一种可以对话的主体间性（intersubjectivity），使之成为自由可能存在的时刻。

爱之事件正是古尔纳笔下这些跨越边界的事件中最具有代表性的一种，“相对于不断重复的同一性（身份）崇拜，必须用不断差异、无法重复的爱来加以反对。”（巴迪欧，2012, p. 128）而爱之所以成为事件，同样源于革命性合体中两者的绝对差异性，其影响也需在后续不断衍生的事件中作为对爱之宣言的重述进行从偶然到普遍的逐渐过渡。因此，拉希德与芭芭拉的结合这一事实，如同蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的故事一样，最终成为彼此影响，交相辉映的爱之事件的一部分，“在忠于事件的基础上，给予新的计数为一的方式，让处于空位的事件点之上的溢出得以在新的命名下重新被结构化。”（巴迪欧，2017, p. 8）爱让无名之多元降临于世，或者说，让关于性差异的类性或真理降临，这个真理明显地是从知识中抽离的，尤其是从彼此相爱的两人的所知中抽离的。“宣布爱情，也就是由相遇事件慢慢过渡到某种真理的建构过程的开端。”（巴迪欧，2014, p.58）阿明和贾米拉、拉希德与芭芭拉的故事作为忠于创基性爱之事件的宣言，在一个长期的、分散的、令人困惑和迷雾重重的过程中，完成了“从偶然到一种坚定的建构。”（巴迪欧，2012, p. 76）

五、结语

蕾哈娜和皮尔斯的爱情这一事实无法消弭这一事件本身的神秘性，而事件本身不可被穷尽的性质也正是它生成性力量的源泉。《遗弃》中源始性的爱之事件与其跨越时间与空间促生的其他事件彼此独立又互为补充，如同同时落入水中的石子，彼此的波纹互相碰撞回荡，余波不绝。“在爱之中所发生的东西就是那个时代不可辨识之物的光芒的降临。”（巴迪欧，2018, p. 24）从一种晦暗不明的

事件开始，皮尔斯和蕾哈娜的故事跨越了时间与空间。以两人相遇开始的爱之事件从阿明、贾米拉又辗转到拉希德，创基性的爱之事件不断在爱之宣言的重申中获得其现实性。巴迪欧借用马拉美对诗歌的表述来言说爱，“偶然应该被固定”，诗歌和爱一样都在于发出一种话语，这种话语能够在生活之中产生无限的实践效果。从征服言语到征服现实，偶然性的爱之事件在不断的重申中被固定，它具有生成性的力量不断冲散大写的一，创造出以“两”的体验为基础的真理。两个主体一同融入这唯一的爱的主体，“透过其差异性，世界来临，世界诞生，而不再只是填满我们的视线。”（巴迪欧，2012, p. 55）从一种偶然到一种坚定的建构，这种偶然转变为一种命运。“它既不可能是一个已知的或已被认识的多，也不是一种玄妙莫测的独特之物，而是在其多之存在中获得了集体的共同属性的东西。”（巴迪欧，2018, p. 24）从蕾哈娜与皮尔斯，再到阿明与贾米拉，最后至拉希德与芭芭拉，从作为呈现的一到作为呈现的体制的多，新的秩序在爱的宣言之重申与爱的事件之“纯多”中被建立。爱在这个意义上成为了集体存在的真理，以事件为媒介在其制造的断裂与生成中不断阐明自身。

基金项目：本文系国家基金社科项目“新南非英语小说空间叙事研究”（项目编号：20BWW069）；中央高校基本科研业务费项目“异识视域下古尔纳后殖民书写中的创伤与文化记忆研究”（项目编号：2023lzujbkyxs020）的阶段性成果之一。

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Hao Wenzuan ^{II} <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0246-6208>

References

巴特（2014）：《族群与边界——文化差异下的社会组织》，李丽琴译。商务印书馆。
[Bart, F. (2014). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, trans. Li Liqin. The Commercial Press.]

巴迪欧（2012）：《爱的多重奏》，邓刚译。华东师范大学出版社。
[Badiou, A. (2012). *In Praise of Love*, trans. Deng Gang. East China Normal University Press.]

---. (2014)：《哲学宣言》，蓝江译。南京大学出版社。
[---. (2014). *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. Lan Jiang. Nanjing University Press.]

---. (2017)：《世纪》，蓝江译。南京大学出版社。
[---. (2017). *The Century*, trans. Lan Jiang. Nanjing University Press.]

---. (2018)：《存在与事件》，蓝江译。南京大学出版社。
[---. (2018). *Being and Event*, trans. Lan Jiang. Nanjing University Press.]

福柯等：（2016）：《文字即垃圾：危机之后的文学》，赵子龙等译。重庆大学出版社。
[Foucault, M., et al. (2016). *Words are Trash: Literature after the Crisis*, trans. Zhao Zilong, et al. Chongqing University Press.]

古尔纳（2023）：《遗弃》，孙灿译。上海译文出版社。

[Gurnah, A. (2023). *Desertion*, trans. Sun Can. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.]

希尔顿 (2021): 《非洲通史》, 赵俊译。九州出版社。

[Shilington, K. (2021). *History of Africa*, trans. Zhao Jun. iuzhou Press.]

霍赫希尔德 (2018): 《利奥波德国王的鬼魂: 贪婪、恐惧、英雄主义与比利时的非洲殖民地》, 崔喜林译。社会科学文献出版社。

[Hochschild, A. (2018). *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, trans. Hu Xiling. Social Sciences Academic Press.]

蓝江 (2018): 《忠实于事件本身: 巴迪欧哲学思想导论》。北京师范大学出版社。

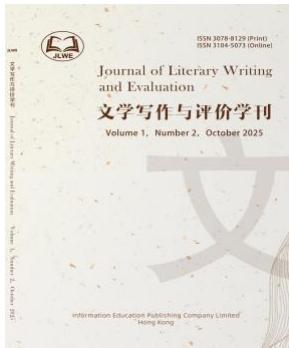
[Lan Jiang (2018). *Loyalty to Event Itself: An Introduction to Badiou's Philosophy*. Beijing Normal University Press.]

蓝江、刘黎 (2017): “作为真理前提的爱——巴迪欧的爱之事件”, 《苏州大学学报》(04): 28-35.

[Lan Jiang, Liu Li (2017). “Love as the Premise of Truth: Badiou’s Event of Love.” *Journal of Suzhou University* (04):28-35.]

Barolsky, V. (2008, May 18). Freedom’s just another word. *Sunday Independent* [South Africa].

Steiner, T. (2010). Writing “Wider Worlds”: The Role of Relation in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s Fiction. *Research in African Literature*, (03), 124-135.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.211-224.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.04](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.04)



From Crusoe, to Shabine, and to Achille: The Evolution of Walcott's Drifting Mission

Lei Yanni, Wang Zhiwei

Abstract: Derek Walcott stands as a preeminent literary figure of the Caribbean region. Throughout his lifetime, he endeavored to recreate the Caribbean through diverse artistic mediums -- poetry, drama, and painting, while awakening self-awareness and identity among his people. This study centers on the poet's verse, excavating the pervasive theme of "drifting" from the perspective of its distinctive maritime and insular aesthetics. From Robinson Crusoe's archetype through the original creation of Shabine to the mythologically charged Achille, the concept of drifting persistently threads through most of Walcott's oeuvre and interconnects with his literary journey. Through the analysis of the representative drifting paradigms across different phases, this essay examines the evolving significations of drifting within the Caribbean context. The concept of Drifting is manifested as colonial mimicry through Crusoe-like survival narratives. The revolutionary Shabine persona transforms drifting into a vessel for spiritual redemption and self's retrieval. Through the long poem "Omeros", drifting achieves mythopoetic transcendence; Achille's spiritual odyssey simultaneously reconstructs ancestral memory and reconfigures the Caribbean consciousness, ultimately forging an authentic Caribbean recognition. This progression mirrors Walcott's artistic evolution from postcolonial ambivalence to identity reconstruction.

Keywords: Derek Walcott; Drifting; Crusoe; Shabine; Achille

Author Biography: **Lei Yanni** (Corresponding Author), Associate Professor, Supervisor of PhD Candidates and Cooperative Supervisor of Postdoctoral Scholars, at the Department of English, School of Foreign Languages, Sun Yat-sen University. Research Areas: English Poetry and Poetics, Novel and Drama Studies, Literary and Cultural Theory Studies. E-mail: leiyanni@mail.sysu.edu.com. **Wang Zhiwei**, Grade 2022 Master's Candidate at the School of Foreign Languages, Sun Yat-sen University. E-mail: 1753738066@qq.com.

题目：从克鲁索到莎宾，再到阿喀琉斯：论沃尔科特诗歌中漂流使命的嬗变

摘要：德里克·沃尔科特处在加勒比地区最杰出的文学王座上，他终其一生，致力于通过诗歌、戏剧、绘画等多元艺术形式再创加勒比，同时唤醒这片土地上人民的自我意识与身份认同。本研究以诗人诗歌创作为核心，从其独特的海洋岛国美学中发掘出贯穿始终的“漂流”主题。从鲁滨逊·克鲁索的原型，到独创的沙班形象，再到背负神话使命的阿喀琉斯，漂流这一意识始终串联着沃尔科特的创作，并与诗人的文学生涯相互关联。本研究通过分析不同时期具有代表性的漂流范式，探索这一意象在加勒比语境下的内涵嬗变：漂流借克鲁索式的生存叙事呈现殖民摹仿的表征；具有革命性的沙班形象将漂流转化为精神救赎与自我寻回的载体；通过长篇史诗《奥麦罗斯》，漂流最终实现神话诗学意义上的超越——阿喀琉斯的精神漫游在重构祖先记忆的同时重塑了加勒比意识，最终铸就真正的加勒比认同。这种演变轨迹映射出沃尔科特从后殖民矛盾心理到文化身份重构的艺术升华。

关键词：德里克·沃尔科特；漂流；克鲁索；莎宾；阿喀琉斯

作者简介：雷艳妮（通讯作者），博士，中山大学外国语学院副教授、博士生导师，博士后合作导师，研究方向：英语文学，英诗与诗论。电邮：leiyanni@mail.sysu.edu.cn。电邮：leiyanni@mail.sysu.edu.com。王志伟，中山大学外国语学院2022级硕士研究生。电邮：1753738066@qq.com。

Derek Walcott (1930-2017), a Nobel Laureate in Literature in 1992, was a Saint Lucian-born poet, playwright, and visual artist. Growing up in a Caribbean bilingual environment of English and French, with mixed ethnic heritage, his creative works naturally incorporate multicultural perspectives. After self-publishing his first poetry collection at 18, he studied literature at the University of the West Indies and later became an influential figure in Trinidad's cultural sphere as both educator and drama critic. Walcott's oeuvre consistently engages with colonial history, cultural identity, and maritime imagery. His epic work "Omeros" elevates lives of Caribbean fishermen into a postcolonial cultural allegory by reworking the Homeric epic framework. Founding the Trinidad Theatre Workshop, he produced over 30 plays that synthesize European dramatic traditions with Caribbean performance styles. Beyond literature, his watercolor depictions of Caribbean landscapes also develop into an artistic practice demonstrating "intertextuality between poetry and painting". His creative reinterpretations of literary classics gradually evolve into integral components of Caribbean artistic expression. Within the Caribbean's potent maritime context, Walcott pioneered a distinctive paradigm for regional literary development by systematically integrating motifs of displacement with classical literary traditions. Through his profound literary and artistic achievements, Walcott establishes himself as a seminal figure whose works exemplify "cultural hybridity" in postcolonial literature, where exists "this struggle for assimilation of two cultures, poles apart in their constitution and execution of cultural doctrines is utterly painful and fraught with festering wounds of colonial rule" (Chaudhary, 2016, p.297). Therefore, the poet attempts to conquer this tremble accompanied by the struggle with his "drifting". This research focuses on the "drifting" motif, tracing the voyage's evolution in Walcott's creation.

1. Drifting Traditions in Western Literature and Colonization

For centuries, humanity's exploration of the world has never ceased. The transition from terrestrial to maritime exploration marked the expansion of human civilization, rendering drifting both a medium of discovery and the inception of colonial expansion. Colonialism does not entirely equate to bloodstained historical tragedies; from the perspective of cultural development, the migrations of diverse groups through

drifting fostered cultural prosperity. In Western literature, the motif of drifting persistently embodies humanity's dual quest—physical displacement across geographical spaces and spiritual pursuit of existential values. This narrative tradition has engaged with ontological inquiries since the epic era: Odysseus' decade-long wandering in Homer's epics, navigating divine-imposed physical barriers and the Sirens' spiritual temptations, constructs a hero's journey of identity reconstruction. His homecoming ultimately metaphorizes humanity's perpetual struggle to define subjectivity amidst existential chaos. Virgil's Aeneas transforms the physical exile following Troy's fall into a spiritual mission of imperial restoration, with his fleet symbolizing the symbiotic relationship between individual trauma, colonial conquest, and civilizational migration. The grafting of Trojan cultural genes onto new lands allegorizes the violent yet creatively charged tensions inherent in colonial cultural transplantation.

During the Age of Exploration, drifting narratives became deeply intertwined with colonial discourse. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* reframes drifting as an allegory for capitalist expansion and reconstructs spiritual discipline of bible-like faith through cultivation and domestication. Crusoe's imposition on Friday's name and linguistic education epitomizes colonial erasure and reconstruction of indigenous cultural identities. The island's transformation from "Other space" to plantation mirrors colonial cultural hegemony achieved through population displacement and territorial appropriation. *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift explains this logic through bodily metamorphoses that deconstruct colonial rhetoric—the Lilliputian wars parody European colonial conflicts, while the Houyhnhnm society inverts the "civilized-savage" dichotomy, exposing the inherent fallacy of cultural superiority in colonial drifting. This process repeatedly manifests the spiritual disillusionment of colonizers in foreign lands. Romanticism infused drifting narratives with ontological reflections while retaining colonial critique. In Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the cursed voyage intertwines supernatural themes with humanity's innate fear of the unknown sea, ultimately leading to a spiritual ritual of religious redemption. In Melville's "Moby-Dick", Captain Ahab's relentless pursuit of the white whale shatters the reverence for the spirit of nature, precipitating a profound spiritual crisis, which is consistent with endless exploitation that human makes to nature under the context of industrial advancement. Joseph Conrad uses the Congo rainforest as a symbol of the spiritual desolation wrought by colonialism in "Heart of Darkness". In Yann Martel's "Life of Pi", a harrowing ordeal at sea serves as a dramatic stage for the interplay between ethics and reason in the face of life and death, while the coexistence of the Indian boy and Bengal tiger metaphorizes potential reconciliation in postcolonial cultural conflicts.

This theme seems to have never strayed far from humans. The diachronic evolution of drifting reveals a dialectical logic of dual exploration: within the colonial context, drifting signifies both the violent physical displacement across geographical boundaries, such as the slave trade, exile systems, and labor export, and the metaphorical diffusion of cultural symbols through population movements. From the people's fluidity of Homeric epics to Robinson Crusoe's implantation of European production models onto a Caribbean desert island, literature has consistently documented how drifting has served as a tool for colonial powers to enact cultural erasure and re-encoding. Meanwhile, colonized peoples seek to find fertile ground within the fissures of cultural collisions to root a new sense of belonging by their recreation, parody and reconstruction of cultural and artistic forms, grounded in the threads of existing civilizations. Like Derek Walcott, in his colonial narratives, seeks and reconstructs Caribbean spaces, and his journey itself resembles a process of drifting and exploration. The incompleteness of this quest mirrors colonial history itself; between the exile of the body and the return of the spirit, between the establishment and dissolution of cultural hegemony, the motif of drifting perpetually gazes upon the obscured traumas and possibilities within the progression of human civilization.

2. The Poet's Crusoe-like Reclamation in the Archipelago

Among the drifting survival narratives, Robinson Crusoe occupies a pivotal position. The modern myth embodied by this character essentially constitutes a cultural construct combining instrumental rationality, colonial logic, and religious redemption. This realistic framework allegorically represents the core of modern civilization through these narrative mechanisms. Crusoe emerges as an individualistic hero whose wilderness

survival story symbolizes the rational subject conquering nature. Through practical skills acquired from civilized society, such as calendar-writing, journal-keeping, and architectural construction, the protagonist establishes a self-regulating system. Geographical expansion serves as a crucial precondition for this narrative. The deserted island essentially expands the spatial dimensions for Crusoe's heroic deeds which maintain connections with the Old Continent through material exchanges, thus dissolving the myth of complete isolation. The protagonist's temporary seclusion actually manifests the extension of intellectual power into the physical world, through which the individual achieves the existential value of modern subjectivity. His exploration contains a process paralleling postcolonial writers' pursuit of literary self-realization. Beneath the adventure story flows the undercurrent of colonial expansion logic. The novel's spatial politics manifest colonial discourse by framing the island as *terra nullius*, thereby legitimizing colonial violence as "civilizing missions". Linguistic discipline, like naming indigenous people and landscapes, and economic restructuring, like introducing new crops, jointly form the colonial apparatus that transforms land occupation into "order establishment". Notably, the literary creations of poet Derek Walcott exhibit significant parallels with Crusoe's Island development narrative. In the narrative frame of poet, he has tried to "show that Crusoe's survival is not purely physical, not a question of the desolation of his environment, but a triumph of will" (Walcott, 1993, p.40).

*our profane Genesis
whose Adam speaks that prose
which, blessing some sea-rock, startles itself
with poetry's surprise,
in a green world, one without metaphors;*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 75)

Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" depicts a mysterious and adventurous form of drifting. In this context, Walcott interprets Robinson's introduction of language and art to the deserted island as an act of establishing new meaning. The figure of Robinson carries profound symbolic weight, so much so that, as Ian Watt (1997) argues that Robinson has evolved into a modern myth in *Myths of Modern Individualism*. Crusoe's spirit of exploration embodies the aspirations of the rising bourgeoisie to assert dominance over society during a specific historical period in the Western world. Thus, his desert island survival, maritime adventures, and similar exploits acquire symbolic significance, serving as metaphors for both exploitation and discovery. However, for Walcott, the classical analogy holds a distinct resonance. The separation from civilization, the isolation from society, and the disconnection from his homeland caused by the shipwreck reflect the tremors of fear induced by the sea during Robinson's journey. Themes of isolation, segregation, loss, and alienation are vividly manifested in both physical and psychological dimensions within this narrative. The rupture between people and land stems from the inherently fragile bond connecting them. For Walcott, the Caribbean homeland represents a site of confusion, much as the old, civilized world does for Robinson, with their relationship mirroring this fragility. From Walcott's perspective, he himself becomes another alienated Robinson, displaced from his homeland to an unfamiliar territory. While Robinson's adventure symbolizes isolation, disconnection, and annihilation, it simultaneously underscores qualities of wisdom, creativity, and endurance in a barren and foreign land. Walcott similarly embodies these dualities. His intellectual and existential wanderings through marginalized spaces reflect an anxiety toward the Caribbean condition, evoking the sensation of being cast adrift on a metaphoric desert island of cultural void. In the poem "Air", the region's historical amnesia is distilled through laconic verse: "The unheard, omnivorous jaws of this rain forest not merely devour all / but allow nothing vain" (Walcott, 2019, p.106). Here, the tropical rainforest functions as a metonymic device for the Caribbean area, its ecological totality reinforcing the persistent theme of ontological emptiness. The visceral imagery of "hot jaws like an oven steaming / were open to genocide" (Walcott, 2019, p.106) initiates a describe the tragic history with a single word "genocide". The digestive

metaphor achieves disturbing literalization in the lines: “They devoured two minor yellow races and half of a black/ in the word made flesh of God all entered that gross/ undiscriminating stomach” (Walcott, 2019, p.106). The “yellow races” alludes to decimated Amerindian populations, while “black” refers to the fragmented African diaspora through Middle Passage trauma. This allegory of cultural assimilation depicts colonial history as metabolic consumption, where distinct identities are melted together. At the end of poem, “There is too much nothing here” (Walcott, 2019, p.106), operates as both ironic commentary on the Caribbean’s perceived cultural vacuum and cathartic exposure of postcolonial anxiety. Throughout “The Castaway”, this strategic negation of Caribbean “nothingness” constitutes Walcott’s poetic method for confronting historical silences and negotiating cultural identity. A profound intertextual resonance emerges between Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe and Walcott. The poems “Crusoe’s Island” and “Crusoe’s Journal” interrogate the tripartite thematic constellation of shipwreck, loss, and separation. This symbolic parallelism traces the trajectory of psychic displacement through which the poet negotiates his ambivalent relationship with ancestral geographies. Through deliberate literary transposition, Walcott assumes Crusoe’s existential mantle - an intellectual confined in metaphorical isolation, confronting both the existential void of culture and the solitude of colonial subjectivity. Ismond (2001, p.47) thinks that “The core of Walcott’s identification with Defoe’s hero rests on two main parallels contained in the original story: first, the predicament of isolation on an abandoned, desert islands, that is, unaccommodated; and second, his settling down, out of necessity, to the task of building a world.”

Therefore, Walcott tries to establish a new home in the midst of desolation, as Crusoe did. He puts on Robinson’s mask and explains this creative journey in “Crusoe’s Journal”.

*Once we have driven past Mundo Nuevo trace
safely to this beach house
perched between ocean and green, churning forest*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 75)

“Mundo Nuevo” is a Spanish word, meaning “New World,” which alludes to the New World of America. According to relevant research, Robinson and the Caribbean have a close relationship. In the novel, Robinson’s ship departs from Brazil and is caught in a storm and drifts near Grenada and Trinidad, and it is speculated that Robinson ends up on the island of Tobago. “Green, churning forest” symbolizes the landscape of tropic vegetation, which is a shared feature among these islands.

*Came our first book, our profane Genesis
whose Adam speaks that prose
which, blessing some sea-rock, startles itself
with poetry’s surprise,
in a green world, one without metaphors;*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 75)

In the stanza, “Our first book” implies constructing novelty out of the wilderness, where Walcott claims his willingness on the task of saving his own Caribbean from Nothing. “Adam” in the latter sentence can be understood as a metaphor, as Ismond states that “This early Adamic concept expresses a core belief in the primal act of naming” (Ismond, 2001, p.50). Naming is a divine activity that will inaugurate new beliefs in the new world, which reveals the mythic character of Walcott’s mission, and this act of framing faith like the word-making of religion, is synonymous with Christopher Columbus’s discovery of the New World. In “A green world without metaphors” (Walcott, 2019, p.75), “green world” has to do with the tropical endemism and “without metaphors” means literary infertility because most metaphors come from old continent.

*whose sprinkling alters us
into good Fridays who recite His praise,
parroting our master's
style and voice, we make his language ours*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 75)

“Good Fridays” here refers to Robinson’s indigenous servants in the novel. The phrase “alter us” implies that the poet and the indigenous Caribbean community have become servants under the influence of the new Western forces represented by Robinson. The word “parroting” concerns those who have no languages and gradually acquire others’ languages, while the parrot’s competence to imitate human’s voice alludes to the fact that blacks and minorities imitate and learn from advancement. Both Robinson and Walcott, explore and exploit in the emptiness of a desert island and learn how to make tools to satisfy life needs and to build a new world. The poet conveys his intention to establish new connotations for his island. “We make his language ours” indicates the poet’s acquisition of English and French, as he thinks that English does not belong to anyone or is the private property of anyone, because language is property of imagination and language itself. This new land needs to reclaim with its own history. In “Crusoe’s Island”:

*Upon this rock the bearded hermit built;
His Eden: Goats, corn-crop, fort, parasol, garden*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 79)

“The second Adam” re-take his act of naming for all of new-born. After a series of reflections and fantasies, reality returns and the constructors of the new world have been captives of others.

*Now Friday's progeny,
The brood of Crusoe's slave,
Black little girls in pink
Organdy, crinolines,
Walk in their air of glory*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 81)

The descendants of Friday, who were once servants of Crusoe and other colonizers, become the residents of colonies now. At present, descendants walk on the road in their glory. They might retrieve the privilege to name things. Walcott denies void and nothing by the action of naming the people, naming the place, naming the landscape, even the homeland.

In areas where lives many ethnic minorities, the rewriting and adaptation of European literature and culture has endowed special meaning for them. Walcott writes poems in a new, unexplored territory. This writing environment fosters a sense of anxiety and loneliness for the poet. The poet’s loneliness in literature is largely in line with Robinson’s in exploration by himself. Thus, Robinson becomes a hidden figure in related poems of “Castaway” by Walcott. In the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, the island Robinson exploits is very similar to those in the Caribbean, which provides a just imagination space for Walcott’s creation on the basis of geographical vagueness. *Robinson Crusoe* is not only a novel, but also a myth. The creativity and resilience Crusoe shows in the wilderness broadens the imagination of European expedition and exploration. As a poet of the Caribbean, Walcott is seen as a detached and outcast one from his ancestral culture, with both African and European undertones, but not belongs to either. This dilemma drives poet to ask for answer from Robinson Crusoe. Thus, the poet’s identity becomes more complicated. The poet is not only the desert island pioneer – Crusoe, but also the domesticated Friday, not only master but also slave. Therefore, the figure of Robinson Crusoe evidently carries the divinity in middle area of literature and reality, and carries the metaphorical nature

in the poet's dexterous language art. The poet seems to be Robinson incarnate in an abandoned land to rebuild his home and the desert island also becomes a metaphor for the Eden. According to Katie Jones, "the artist is released from his clay prison by the fire of inspiration, a conventional image transfigured by Walcott's verbal dexterity: Yet this release is hoped for, not achieved: poet and castaway are isolated in their self-built Eden, yearning for love, companionship and fulfillment yet denied them by their loss of simple faith and by the 'mania' of their art" (Jones, 1991, p.41).

3. Spiritual Redemption of Shabine's Sailing across the Caribbean Sea

This brings nobody peace.

*The ancient war between obsession and responsibility
will never finish and has been the same.*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 197)

These lines, selected from sea grapes, lay out a struggle between race and the defense of the homeland, and also showcases the poet's own contradiction towards St. Lucia and the West Indies. The metaphor of war acts more powerfully genuine for this contradiction and puzzlement. On the one hand, islanders, like poet, are full of attachment and obsession for external indulgence; on the one hand, they bravely take this mission of speaking for this home, although their efforts and achievements have not been recognized. In the poem "Sea Grapes", the poet expresses his inner sentiments under the pretense of describing the strokes of the Greek myth Odysseus. This figure of Odysseus genuinely occupies an important position in Walcott's creation.

*That little sail in light
which tires of islands,
a schooner beating up the Caribbean
for home, could be Odysseus,
home-bound on the Aegean*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 197)

These few lines seem to tell an experience of wandering among the islands of the Caribbean: the sailors are tired of the islands, sailing in a boat on the Caribbean Sea. At the same time, it is confronted to be the beginning of the later poem "The Schooner Flight" as a prologue to Shabine's sailing story. Radically, the Caribbean is that established backdrop. However, a phrase "home-bound Odysseus" immediately appears, and then time and space seem to converge at a point, jumping from the Caribbean to the Aegean Sea. The story shifts from narrator to the mythical Odysseus, which suggests obscure similarities existing between the two.

*This brings nobody peace. The ancient war
between obsession and responsibility
will never finish and has been the same*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 197)

"The ancient war" always happens repeatedly, which might refer to either trojan war in the Aegean Sea or colonial battles in the Caribbean Sea. Unlike Robinson Crusoe, which the poet borrows from Defoe, the Odysseus-like figure in "The Schooner Flight" is completely reinvented. The protagonist Shabine carries a hint of mythological tinge. But a point is definitely certain shared by two drifters, Crusoe and Shabine. They are dyed with mythology. Crusoe drifts to a desert island and then builds it from scratch, while Shabine deliberately leaves an island to embark on a rafting journey, looking for a destination of ideal home.

"The Schooner Flight" is a long narrative poem selected in *The Star-apple Kingdom*, with 11 chapters.

The story plot in the poem explicates Shabine's disillusionment on spiritual level. Shabine, the main character, suddenly leaves behind his wife, children and lover at one night, sets sail from Trinidad to the Caribbean Sea. According to poem's plots, it can be divided into two parts: the first four chapters describe Shabine's preparations for the voyage and the reasons; the rest of the section focuses on the process of journey.

The poem's title foreshadows an escape without hesitation, but this escape has an expectation at the ending of the sailing -- a new homeland, so this journey should not be considered as a negative escape. A line "this time, Shabine/ like you really gone" (Walcott, 2019, p.237), also indicates his urge to leave and a seemingly true departure finally happens.

In the title of the first section, "adios" means farewell in Spanish, reflecting the linguistic and cultural mixture and colonial past of the Caribbean. Shabine expresses his farewell to old island. The Caribbean area apparently features multi-languages. Shabine has a lover from Dominica, named Maria Concepcion, whose name implies a new life or a new land being conceived. "Carenage" is located in the northwest of Trinidad, where Shabine and schooner Flight depart. Shabine has an obsessive love for the land, but he, not be accepted, tries to re-find his new home, to fulfil his mission.

*I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
I had a sound colonial education,
I have Dutch, nigger, and English in me,
and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 238)

His obsession with the sea prompts him to leave everything behind and set sail, as he says "I'm just a red nigger" (Walcott, 2019, p.238). Red nigger refers to light-skinned black men, who are of mixed race, usually with red hair and slightly dark skin. This group is usually of African descent and has European kinship. The poet himself belongs to this group, as Shabine says his body consists of three sources. In other words, Shabine stands for poet's incarnate in the poem, intertwining with the entanglement and confusion of inwardness. And such groups do not seem to be a minority on these islands, including those sailors of the "Rusty head". But this group often feels exiled on islands. "As the poem unfolds, it plays not only on the familiar binarism of white and black, but on a series of others: poet and sailor, sea and land, flight and return, death and renewal" (Breslin, 2001, p.196).

The third chapter mentions two groups of people who indulge themselves in power pursuit. The first wave of people refers to those white colonists from Europe, who exploit and govern this land. Blacks, or the mix-blood, are driven as slaves, and although whites later apologize for the colonial past, they simply relegate everything to the past and to what had happened. Shabine-like group, although they have white roots, cannot gain acceptance from whites. The second wave pursuing power are later blacks, who are victorious against the white colonizers, but they don't accept the mixed-race Shabines because of their light-skinned complexion. As a result, Shabine has to place himself in a middle space -- not being accepted by both sides, although he is obsessed to his land. This point has been highlighted in the third section of "The Schooner Flight". Between social presence and individual, these exists an obviously acute collision, as Paul Breslin (2001, p.201) writes: "Shabine's mulatto identity, like Walcott's, places him between 'the white man,' who chain my hands and apologize for History, and the new ideologues of Black Power, who say I wasn't black enough for their pride."

Walcott hopes that the traumatized West Indies would be linked together into a single entity—the West Indies Federation. The poet once wrote a play to celebrate the West Indies Federation's birth, but this federation didn't change anything. Instead, it provides a stage for some people to fight for and play with power, and it finally ended in internal strife. In the poem "The Lost Federation", Walcott sarcastically writes:

*you bastard papas,
how it seeps through the pores,*

how it loads the sponge of the heart

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 201)

Those so-call-papas politicians play power tricks, ignoring people's demands and anger. Shabine, or poet, in an atmosphere of disappointment, feels disillusioned with the shattered West Indies and saddened by the fact that his homeland is culturally invaded and economically dependent on others. His contradiction is obviously overwhelming, as he says he represents not the individual, but the group, or nothing at all. "Either I'm nobody/ or I'm a nation" (Walcott, 2019, p.238). "Nobody" has a special meaning here, not only referring to the unnamed, but also to the little people who are ignored. He says "I had no nation now but the imagination" (Walcott, 2019, p.241) at the opening of third section. These black powers, which actually gain the upper hand, seem to be taking the place of the old ones in governance of the island. Shabine's response to these forces is that "Tell me/ what power/ on these unknown rocks" (Walcott, 2019, p.242). Almost all of the response is wrapped in a slightly helpless sneer, and Black Power has really changed reality obviously. Certainly, Shabine parallels with Walcott, even overlaps in many qualities, and Shabine's response also comes from Walcott's heart. The contradictory undertones still stand in Shabine's heart. Those tragically shadow pasts also made him dare not look back.

*I saw that the powdery sand was their bones
Ground white from Senegal to San Salvador*

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 240)

As Shabine dives into water, the bloody results of these evil trades from the past in history flood into his head. Middle passage implicitly suggests the evils of the slave trade in the history, and the white sand seems to metaphorize bones of dead people, the remains of which lie fully from Senegal in Africa to San Salvador in the Bahamas. Obviously, it carries a little bit of exaggeration. Even, spicy irony in Walcott's writing looks outstanding: their white bones appear after the decaying bodies, which seems to symbolize their being whitened. The contrast between the tragic past and the black power in the present has formed a state of self-contradiction in Shabine's eyes. What should he do, scolding or feeling pity? When Shabine tries to trace back, he sees either the pitiless brutality envisioned or, what is almost worse, a degradation of revolution to a craving for spectacle.

Shabine lost his faith about attachment to Maria. The state of struggling stresses him, and then he leaves. All that is coddled by the island, including his family, Maria and his once obsession towards his home, become his burden, as poems say, "I no longer believed in the revolution/ I was losing faith in the love of my woman" (Walcott, 2019, p.242).

In chapter four, Shabine's journey starts. His team and him depart from Trinidad and sail to north along the Caribbean Sea. In each chapter, the sailing comes to an island of Antilles. The first island they arrive to is Saint Vincent, as the title of section four "The Flight, Passing Blanchisseuse" suggests. Blanchisseus, meaning washerwoman in French, refers to a place on the northern part of Saint Vincent, which indicates colonial color. According to Breslin, this phrase implies metaphorically "the corruptions of culture are washed away" (Breslin, 2000, p.203).

In the fifth section, Shabine's traumatic memories are awakened again. What firstly comes into his eyes are the crew in sorrow, and he sees "men with rusty eyeholes like cannons" (Walcott, 2019, p.243); when they were half-naked in the sun, the sunshine goes "right through their tissue," and "you traced their bones" (Walcott, 2019, p.243), as if all of theirs has been slit and examined. While Shabine's thought goes into deeper, he thinks of his ancestors' past of sinking to the bottom of the sea, like "our fathers below deck too deep" (Walcott, 2019, p.244). The Flight sails to Barbados on the fifth section, where the poet begins to deliberately describe the local landscape, such as "Casuarinas", a plant growing on the island. These trees stand on the low hills of the island against the wind and waves, and the local landscape signifies the island's original essence.

Shabine names this sort of tree “cypresses”, while the captain calls it “Canadian cedars”. The same thing has been given three different names. This provokes the poet to think about names’ significance. During the colonial era, many things, people and place have been given names with other cultural colors. Do they actively accept these names, or negatively? “But we live like our names and you would have to be colonial to know the difference/ to know the pain of history words contain” (Walcott, 2019, p.245). The names given by others seem to remind them of fact that they originally have no names, as if “Nobody” and “Nothing” should be their ground color. The poet’s desire to create new connotations and to give them new names has been strengthened step by step.

In seventh chapter, the *Flight* comes to Castries that is Walcott’s hometown. The poet seems to have his soul reversed with Shabine’s in this part. The bygone memories wake up alive, and the memories of his first love once again occupy the poet’s space. In eighth chapter, a conflict happens between Shabine and a chef. The chef snatches Shabine’s poem notebook and tosses it to crew to tease him. This mixed-blood chef has the same identity with Shabine. In other words, Shabine is attacked and treated unfairly by others with the same identity. The chef shreds Shabine’s artistic creation and hurts the poet’s willingness to fulfil the mission as a Caribbean artist. Shabine rebels against this viciousness and kills the chef with a knife. Through this plot design, it also illustrates the poet’s disgust and anger for those who are ignorant and disrespect the intentions of local artists.

As the ship sails to Dominica, Shabine shows a more profound anxiety of drifting because they almost approach the end of the voyage. Dominica is the only one of the islands in the entire Caribbean archipelago where indigenous Caribbeans inhabit now.

Progress, Shabine, that’s what it’s all about.

Progress leaving all we small islands behind.

(*The Poetry of Derek Walcott 1948-2013*, 247)

Continuous sailing metaphorizes progressive approaching to a new homeland or getting close to the industrial advancement, but progress also means separation from their original traditions. Industrial development corrupts their nativeness and endemism. This anxiety has been seemingly confronted by the Caribs. “Progress is something to ask Caribs about” (Walcott, 2019, p.247). Perhaps, what this progress really means can be figured out from Caribs’ past, but the fact may be that “Progress is history’s dirty joke” (Walcott, 2019, p.247). These anxieties and pains, like salt on a wound, are extremely painful but may provide conditions of being refined and improved, at the same time. “In such fierce salt let my wound be healed” (Walcott, 2019, p.247).

At the end of journey, the *Flight* encounters an ocean storm, and Shabine regains his faith in helplessness. The strength from faith and belief assists them to resist the fear of storm, as lines say “proud with despair/ we sang how our race/ survive the sea’s maw/ our history, our peril” (Walcott, 2019, p.250). The storm doesn’t recede until dawn comes. The *Flight* survives safely and all crew have been saved. And in the last stanza, Shabine gets his love sublimated, and he sees “the veiled face of Maria Concepcion marrying the ocean/ then drifting away” (Walcott, 2019, p.251). Shabine has moved from a relentlessly sexual desire for Maria to a perception of her as a presiding spirit of the ocean, and moved from the desire for a resting place to a desire for the healing of the islands. Throughout the trip, Shabine completes a process of leaving home and seeking home. Although Shabine is in a state of homelessness most of time, his hope also shines all the time, because he believes a new home must be retrieved under his efforts. Ultimately, he regains his faith and regains belonging to his homeland. Therefore, Shabine’s journey actually symbolizes the poet’s perplexion about his tainted island and symbolizes his resolution’s recapture.

From the post-colonial perspective, “The Schooner Flight” employs a Western allegorical narrative framework to chronicle a maritime exploration in the Caribbean to some extent. The poem’s title utilizes “Flight” as a metaphorical reference to the protagonist’s spiritually rootless odyssey. The oceanic setting manifests dual symbolic significance: serving simultaneously as the physical navigation and as a metaphorical

spiritual displacement. What constitutes the root of this disorientation? Through analyzing Shabine's African lineage, Waqar (2016) thinks there is an interpretative connection between this spiritual crisis and the diasporic predicament of African descendants. Her scholarly analysis posits that the inherent Pan-African nationalist consciousness within Afro-Caribbean communities constitutes the underlying impetus for this "voyage".

4. New "Achilles" in the Drifting of *Omeros*

In "Omeros", drifting transcends mere physical movement to become a grand narrative tapestry. Walcott's extensive experience in playwriting refines his poetic craft, evident in his sophisticated language and expansive storytelling structure. Consequently, "Omeros" exhibits distinct theatrical qualities -- a broad symbolic stage and a polyphonic cast of characters. Through Caribbean fishermen and outsiders collectively mythologizing their shared journey, Walcott constructs an epic where each figure embodies layered symbolic significance. Within this Caribbean epic framework, Achille's odyssey of drifting articulates a dynamic philosophy of identity. The act of drifting functions as a narrative nexus that binds multiple thematic layers.

The drifting is confronted with three levels in this research. First, the drifting intertwines with fishermen's living. For Achille and Hector, fishing represents an indigenous mode of existence -- a primal harmony with nature untainted by external intrusions. Their daily sailing reflects humanity's reciprocal relationship with the sea, where survival depends on nature's cyclical generosity. Meanwhile, fishing tools acquire metaphorical connotations: nets serve not only to harvest marine life but also to salvage fragmented diasporic memories. When the boats lose the directions -- "The current writes what the oar cannot read" (Walcott, 1990, p.223), the loss mirrors the destabilization of self-narratives and epistemic dislocation. By interweaving nautical logs with oral traditions, such as fishermen debating navigational coordinates in Creole, Walcott achieves his intention of rewriting an endemic epic. The hybridized language itself becomes an act of resistance, subverting colonial cognitions through vernacular reinterpretations of space and history. This drifting existence serves as Walcott's critique of colonial knowledge systems, rejecting fixed cultural anchors in favor of ceaseless renegotiation to imposed thinking patterns.

The second layer of drifting emphasizes the nautical accident of Philoctete. While fishing at sea, Philoctete sustains a leg injury that permanently bars him from maritime activities. This narrative constructs a mystical bridge between the fishing villages of Saint Lucia and the Lemnos Island in the Aegean Sea, facilitating an extraordinary dialogue between the ordinary Caribbean islands and ancient Greek civilization. Through this connection, the destiny of Caribbean islands becomes intrinsically intertwined with mythological archetypes. Philoctete serves as a metonymic device of the tragic Greek figure Philoctetes. In classical tragedy, Philoctetes was abandoned on Lemnos Island by the Greek army due to his festering leg wound that delayed military operations. Both figures share the common fate of being immobilized by leg injuries: the Greek hero confined to his barren island, the Caribbean fisherman severed from his beloved sea. Their parallel wounds transcend temporal and spatial boundaries, evolving into a metaphor for psychological trauma. For Philoctetes, it signifies heroic abandonment and alienation; for Philoctete, it manifests as deeper spiritual shackles. The leg wound metaphor particularly converges with colonial trauma. As an ordinary fisherman embodying the islanders' maritime devotion, Philoctete symbolizes the existential condition of his community. Similarly, Lemnos Island in classical literature represents desolation and destitution -- a symbolic counterpart to the West Indies' prolonged perception as spiritually barren lands ravaged by colonialism. Thus, this narrative layer of drifting functions as a temporal-spatial device, creating critical opportunities for Caribbean culture to engage in mythological discourse and reclaim its obscured heritage.

Third, the connotative drifting manifests through Achille's quest for self-discovery, achieving the spiritual sublimation of both individual figures and the collective consciousness of the archipelago. Following Achille's romantic disillusionment with Helen, Achille plunges into multi-layered existential confusion. This crisis, triggered by the collapse of traditional island presence under encroaching modern forces, destabilizes the natural balance of his world. The defeat of his traditional stance in this cultural confrontation signals an existential crisis for primal island identities, mirroring their perceived trajectory toward disappearance. His

intensified anxiety epitomized by the haunting question “Where do I truly originate?” amplifies his dread regarding the island’s uncertain future. Within this dimension, drifting transforms into a vessel of supernatural strength, paralleling the albatross’ mythic potency in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” or the natural punishment of Ahab in “Moby Dick”. During a fateful maritime expedition, Achille encounters this transcendent force through a shipwreck-induced coma. The traumatic event propels his consciousness into a critical state, detaching from physical reality while initiating profound spiritual reconfiguration. This critical voyage ultimately catalyzes his metamorphosis from fragmented individual to cultural collectives, bridging personal awakening with Caribbean renaissance.

*The sea was going down with the sun
and the sun was going down with my mind*

(*Omeros*, 137)

The shipwreck creates a threshold state of temporal-spatial collapse. During this spiritual odyssey, Achille regresses to the primordial African continent, confronting ancestral histories. At the stream-of-consciousness level, he inhabits the lived realities of his African forebears, engaging in transgenerational dialogue. This process constitutes a reconstructive fixing of the cultural rupture caused by colonial violence. The supernatural dreamscape facilitates this ancestral retrieval, as “I walked through the door of the past” (Walcott, 1990, p.139), which transmutes the irreversible Middle Passage of slave ships into a reversible psychic conduit, enabling Achille successfully returning back. Walcott engineers an ingenious structural paradox here: only through radical displacement or physical drifting can cultural reclamation and spiritual reconnection be achieved. The maritime accident operates as both historical tracing and psychic time-machine, dimming the binaries of past and present, exile and homecoming. This narrative strategy subverts linear narrative, positioning Caribbean identity as a fluid drifting where traumatic memory and ancestral wisdom coexist dialogically.

*I walked through the door where the past was a fire,
that scorched my eyes with its genealogy*

(*Omeros*, 139)

This “Modern Achilles” who is transplanted into 20th-century Saint Lucian fishing villages enacts the logic of postcolonial identity formation through dual-dimensional of spatial displacement and psychological oceanic wandering in the process of subconscious African ancestral retrieval. When the act of fishing transcends survival practice to become cultural metaphor, its drifting trajectory surpasses geographical boundaries, transforming into the poetic aesthetic trigger of the archipelago. By engaging in dialogue with ancestors, Walcott orchestrates another symbolic gesture -- the tactile completion with colonial scars. The Achille’s fingers tracing these historical wounds -- whether literal keloid tissues or metaphorical cultural fissures, perform an act of approaching the past. This ritualistic touching simultaneously exposes the violence of colonial rupture, collapsing the temporal divide between ancestral trauma and contemporary Caribbean consciousness.

*Old man, your scars are the map I cannot read
Then read them with your fingers, son, the voice
rustled like wind through cane-fields*

(*Omeros*, 149)

The colonial past has inscribed scars upon ancestral bodies, yet Achille remains initially incapable of decoding these map-like scars. These scars function as epistemic imprints forcibly grafted onto colonized consciousness. His ancestors demand tactile engagement, and through fingertips pressed against scar tissue, he seems to

access the archive of historical suffering. Subsequently, the image of cane-fields shifts the dialogue's locus from ancestral Africa back to Caribbean plantations. This narrative pivot suggests that authentic self-discovery requires dismantling imposed narratives. In the dialogue's climactic moment, Achille's epiphany crystallizes in the declaration "I am my own ancestor" (Walcott, 1990, p.307), signaling his recognition of Caribbean identity as autochthonous rather than derivative. The African memory-fragments he carries with himself, like ancestral footprints in rainforest loam and ankle-shapes eroded by chains, are not recovered as intact cultural genes but reconfigured into a new one through symbiotic interactions with Caribbean islands. Like vegetation regenerating roots amidst plantation ruins, these hybrid memories constitute neo-indigenous formations, where trauma and resilience converge into a new identity. Walcott thus redefines cultural inheritance as active metamorphosis rather than passive preservation.

In this dimension of drifting, the soul's dreamlike traversal introduces supernatural power into the metaphorical battleground between modernity and island traditions. Through this struggle, the poet once again mobilizes Achille's presence to awaken collective self-recognition. Drifting here transcends its literal maritime associations, and catalyzes transformative renewal of the islands' life.

The fishermen's nautical wanderings, to some extent, can be considered as allegorical navigation toward renewed cultural vitality under the guide of the poet. While the poet writes on the foundation of given literary traditions, his works are not merely simple mimicry from old chamber, but the artistic masterpiece attached to the Caribbean spirit. This creative act manifests as both interrogation of residual colonial imprints and expectation of decolonial futures.

5. Conclusion

The birth of poet's Caribbean consciousness has experienced a prolonged process of labor pains. Initially, in the imitative engagement with Western canons, the act of literary drifting facilitates transposition between poet and Crusoe figures, engendering layered identity negotiations. As pioneer of island literature, the poet assumes the dual burden of cultural pioneer and artistic subject. Like early landers on the island, the poet steps forward toughly on the literary island. When coming to Shabine stage, the poet finishes a revolutionary odyssey where quests for homeland, spiritual redemption, and futurity converge in radical self-reinvention. By "Omeros", Walcott achieves full metamorphosis of Caribbean poetics. Whether borrowing mythological archetypes or excavating ancestral memory, the poet channels Achille's spiritual journey to orchestrate an epic voyage bearing Caribbean historical consciousness. As Zabus (2006, p.58) interprets the imitation of this kind, he thinks that "Rewriting changes what the text intends to tell us, which is especially relevant to postcolonial writers 'writing back' to canonical works, with the aim of redressing wrongs."

Though Caribbean communities, including the poet, have endured prolonged historical drift, Walcott's narrative posits their hard-won anchoring point. The fishermen's boats, once symbols of rootless existence, now moor securely in the archipelago's authentic narrative where ancestral memory and present consciousness achieve symbiotic balance. This resolution transforms perpetual exile into empowered dwelling, establishing Caribbean identity not as cultural palimpsest but as self-authored epic inscribed upon the sea's liquid parchment. Drifting itself for these people serves as "an epic vocabulary, from Asia and from Africa, but to an ancestral, an ecstatic rhythm in the blood that cannot be subdued by slavery or indenture" (Walcott, 1993, p.11).

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Lei Yanni ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1523-7687>

Wang Zhiwei ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4342-387X>

References

Bushra, Waqar. (2016). Repossessing Home: A Postcolonial Study of The Schooner Flight by Derek Walcott. *Journal of Research (Humanities)* (LII): 113-131.

Chantal, Zabus. (2006). Fatal Attractors: Adam, Homer, Shakespeare, Defoe, Walcott, and Re-Righting the Caribbean. *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* (02): 57-72.

Derek, Walcott. (1993). The Figure of Crusoe. *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott*. Robert Hamner Ed. Three Continents Press, 33-40.

Derek, Walcott. (1990). *Omoo*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Derek, Walcott. (1993). *The Antilles*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Derek, Walcott. (1998). *What the Twilight Says*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Derek, Walcott. (2019). *The Poetry of Derek Walcott: 1948-2013*. Glyn Maxwell Ed. Faber & Faber.

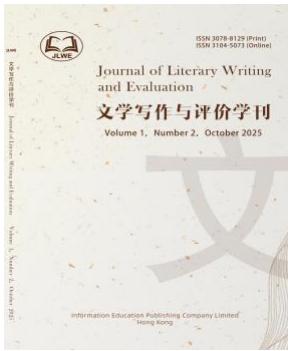
Ian, Watt. (1997). *Myths of Modern Individualism*. Cambridge University Press.

Kate, Jones. (1991). Land and Sea: The Castaway and the Gulf. *The Art of Derek Walcott*. Stewart Brown Ed. Poetry Wales Press, 37-50.

Paul, Breslin. (2001). *Nobody's Nation: Reading Derek Walcott*. The University of Chicago Press.

Patricia, Ismond. (2001). *Abandoning Dead Metaphors: The Caribbean Phase of Derek Walcott's Poetry*. University of the West Indies Press.

Shwata, Chaudhary. (2016). The Poems of Derek Walcott: An Edge of Defiance: Dismiss Me If You Can. *The Criterion: An International Journal in English* (04): 295-306.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.225-233.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.05>



符号·行动者·本体：辛西娅·欧芝克《大披巾》中的物叙事

卢虹宇 (Hongyu Lu), 方 英 (Ying Fang)

摘要：《大披巾》是美国当代作家辛西娅·欧芝克关于奥斯维辛幸存者创伤记忆与战后生活的故事集，是欧芝克最出名的“大屠杀”题材作品，获“欧·亨利短篇小说奖”。现有的研究主要聚焦于历史与记忆、创伤书写、身份建构、伦理解读、空间叙事等问题，但小说中“物”的叙事功能被严重低估。本文探讨“物”在小说中的文化表征、能动性和本体性。首先，“物”作为文化符号，折射出大屠杀的历史与文化属性。其次，“物”有其自身活力，具有操控和影响人物的灵性和力量，能发挥“行动者”的叙事功能，从而影响了小说的情节发展。最后，“物”作为独立存在的实体，显示出深不可测的本性，从而实现了制造恐怖效果的叙事意图。通过深入剖析“物”的三重叙事功能，本文指出《大披巾》中的“物”强化了大屠杀的历史性，揭示了犹太人个体和集体的巨大心理创伤，促使人们重新审视二战，并肩负起历史责任。

关键词：辛西娅·欧芝克；《大披巾》；物叙事；大屠杀；创伤

作者简介：卢虹宇，浙江工商大学研究生，研究方向：英美文学。电邮：2237340254@qq.com。方 英（通讯作者），浙江工业大学人文学院教授，文化地理学研究中心副主任，研究方向：英美文学、叙事学、文学空间批评。电邮：ttbetty@126.com。

Title: Thing Narrative in Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*

Abstract: *The Shawl*, a collection of stories by contemporary American writer Cynthia Ozick, delves into the recollections of Holocaust survivor Rosa, chronicling her traumatic memories in the Auschwitz concentration camp and her post-war life in the United States. As Ozick's most renowned work centered on the Holocaust, it has received the O. Henry Prize for Short Fiction.

Existing research mainly focuses on such issues as history and memory, trauma writing, identity construction, ethical interpretation, and spatial narrative. However, the narrative function of “things” is severely underestimated in the collection. This article explores the cultural representation, agency and ontology of “things” in *The Shawl*. Firstly, as cultural symbols, “things” reflect specific historical and cultural attributes of the Holocaust. Secondly, vibrant “things” with spirituality and power manipulate and influence the characters, and play the narrative function of “actor”, thereby having a bearing on the plot development of the story. Finally, as independent substances, “things” reveal their unfathomable nature, thereby achieving the narrative intention of creating terrifying effects. By delving into the triple narrative functions of “things” in *The Shawl*, this article argues that the “things” in the work reinforce the sense of the Holocaust history and unveil the immense psychological trauma of Jews both individually and collectively, promoting a re-examination of World War II and urging people to take up their historical responsibility.

Keywords: Cynthia Ozick; *The Shawl*; thing-narrative; the Holocaust; trauma

Author Biography: **Lu Hongyu**, Master's Candidate at Zhejiang Gongshang University. Research Area: British and American Literature. Email: 2237340254@qq.com. **Fang Ying** (Corresponding Author), Professor and Deputy Director of the Center for Cultural Geography Research, School of Liberal Arts, Zhejiang University of Technology. Research Areas: British and American literature, narratology, and spatial literary criticism. E-mail: ttbetty@126.com.

过去 15 年，在“后人文主义”和“去人类中心主义”的思潮下，国内外学界出现了明显的“物转向”（turn to things / material turn）。在此背景下，尹晓霞和唐伟胜（2019, pp. 76-84）提出，对于文学叙事而言，“物”可能承担以下三种叙事功能：（1）物作为文化符号，映射或影响人类文化；（2）物作为具有主体性的行动者，作用于人物的行动，并推动叙事进程；（3）物作为本体存在，超越人类语言和文化表征，显示“本体的物性”。若借鉴“物转向”思潮中的重要理论和成果分析辛西娅·欧芝克的名作《大披巾》，能做出新阐释并得出新结论。

辛西娅·欧芝克（Cynthia Ozick）于 60 年代末 70 年代初崛起文坛，是美国当代最杰出的犹太小说家之一。欧芝克不仅改变了犹太文学由男性作家一统天下的局面，也开辟了新的发展方向（刘海平、王守仁，2018, p. 199）。评论界普遍认为文字和思想是欧芝克的强项，认为她克服了对亨利·詹姆斯（Henry James）“影响的焦虑”后，文思笔法不再囿于成规；她创作的故事大多聚焦犹太生存困境、犹太身份探索和 20 世纪犹太人的命运等（魏新俊、张国申，2014, pp. 47-53）。《大披巾》（*The Shawl*, 1989）作为一部小说合集，包括同名短篇故事《大披巾》（“The Shawl”）及其续集《罗莎》（*Rosa*）。《大披巾》是欧芝克开拓犹太主题的代表作之一，也是她最出名的“大屠杀”题材作品，获得了欧·亨利短篇小说奖。

关于欧芝克和《大披巾》的现有研究主要探讨了：历史与记忆，如王祖友（2004）、郝慧敏（2020）、郝慧敏（2021）等；创伤书写，如方进、李金云（2020），Bagno-Simon（2014）等；身份建构，如童丽娟（2020）、Partyka（2017）、Jones（2002）等；伦理解读，如赵娜（2014）等；空间

叙事,如张昕(2020)等。《大披巾》中充斥着大量物品,而多数评论仅仅聚焦于物的隐喻和象征意义,却少有学者考察小说中“物”的多重叙事功能。例如,郝慧敏(2020, p. 89)对小说中的“披肩”给予关注,认为《大披巾》中的“披肩”是诸多隐喻内涵聚合而成的客观对应物,关涉流亡、杀戮、想象共同体、民族文化以及生的希望。张昕(2020, pp. 62-66)以空间叙事模式为切入点,认为在纳粹集中营这一空间,披肩作为物质实体象征着罗莎犹太人的身份。以往研究通常将物看作客体,聚焦于叙事中“物”的文化象征功能,几乎没有涉及物性或物本体的文学再现问题,忽视了物在人类认识之外所具有的自身主体性。然而,《大披巾》中大量的物描写并非用作隐喻或象征这么简单。实际上,作为文化符号的物还具有记忆功能,能够激发人物记忆。同时,《大披巾》中的物具有自身主体性的决定性力量和本体论意义。

本文将以上文中提到的“物”的三种叙事功能为理论框架,聚焦小说中的各种“物”,分析“物”的文化表征、能动性和实在性;讨论三者如何共同作用,不仅发挥记忆功能,颠覆主客体关系,而且影响人物行为以推动叙事进程;甚至神秘隐退并引发读者对二战的思考,从而揭示二战给犹太人个体和集体造成巨大心理创伤。

一、符号的物:凝聚伤痛记忆的铁网

郝慧敏(2021, pp. 92-98)关注了《大披巾》中历史与记忆的关系,认为欧芝克借犹太教律法的“米德拉什”阐释思维对犹太大屠杀历史与记忆的罅隙进行了有效弥合。笔者进一步提出作为文化符号的“物”本身具有记忆功能,为大屠杀历史与记忆的合理转换提供支持。“铁丝网”在小说中出现了十六次,它绝非仅仅具有实际的监禁或保护功能,而是凝聚着奥斯维辛集中营的恐怖记忆。弑婴事件隐藏在铁丝网中,在关键时刻激发主要人物的记忆,影响人物做出选择。

集中营中前景化的电网是物的力量的直接体现,它直接作用于被监禁的犹太人的生存状态。通过罗莎这位故事内聚焦者的叙述,与铁丝网相关的过去呈现在读者眼前。罗莎和侄女斯特拉、女儿玛格达被纳粹监禁在集中营里,电网的存在使得包括她们在内的犹太人生活在恐惧和不安之中,他们的行动受到限制,自由被剥夺。另外,电网的设立不仅是为了物理上的隔离和监控,更是对监禁者心理和精神上的压迫和震慑,反映了当时纳粹的价值观和意识形态,即实现纳粹的种族清洗目的,宣扬其“优等种族”观念。玛格达是罗莎被纳粹士兵强奸后生下的孩子,一个犹太、日耳曼混血儿,但仍然不为纳粹所容。在十五个月大的玛格达学会走路后,罗莎就明白玛格达活不久了。玛格达的悲剧围绕大披巾展开。为了寻找披巾,玛格达踉跄走入了点名区。罗莎去取大披巾回来的途中听到铁丝网电流发出的哼哼声,以及电线发出的各种音色的悲哀声音。此刻,物与人之间的距离不再由物理距离衡量,而是与两者间的运作关系有关。由于玛格达这一“媒介”(medium)——列维·布莱恩特(Levi Bryant)(2014, p. 9)认为任何实体(entity)都可称为“媒介”且“媒介”可以影响其他实体的形成或提供/限制其他实体运动或交互的可能——罗莎与铁丝网建立了关联,甚至于“她离铁丝网越远,越清楚地听见向她涌来的各种声音”。(Ozick, 1989, p. 9)^①欧芝克运用多重比喻,将玛格达掉落到电网上的过程以零度写作的手法描述出来:“骤然间玛格达沉溺在空中。整个身体穿过长空。她像一只蝴蝶去触摸银色的藤蔓。当玛格达的圆脑袋、铅笔似的细腿、气球样的肚子和蜷缩的胳膊摔向铁丝网那一刻,那些铁丝网的声音发了疯地咆哮起来,催促罗莎快跑,赶快跑到玛

^① Ozick, Cynthia (1989). *The Shawl*. New York: Vintage Books. 以下引文只标注页码,不再一一说明。

格达从飞行中落到充电铁丝网的地方”。(pp. 9-10) 玛格达被纳粹官兵发现并残忍地扔到电网上杀害,这一事件是无数犹太人命丧纳粹之手的缩影。小说详细描写的电网显然成为了死亡符号。

物的文化符号意义及其叙事功能会因时而变,有可能沉淀出新的意义,或作为触发人物记忆的媒介,进而揭示作品的主题和作者的思想情感。比尔·布朗(Bill Brown)提出了“物质无意识”(The Material Unconscious)概念,用以指涉文学文本中反复出现的轻描淡写的亚历史片段,即某个时代中不为人注意的表面表达。(Brown, 1996, pp. 4-5)通过将文本表层中的物质细节汇聚并分析,可以说明日常生活中有意义的结构和物质改变,从而揭示出文学作品中潜伏的历史和主题。(韩启群, 2019, p. 106)几十年后,电网携带的死亡符号被犹太人集体刻意地去淡忘,比如,斯特拉一心想找个美国丈夫,想要走出创伤。但对于罗莎来说,铁丝网与她在奥斯维辛集中营的丧女之痛紧紧联系在一起,只要再次遇到铁丝网这一记忆触发器,她就会产生应激反应。由此,在生活的变迁与不变的创伤之间,可以管窥大屠杀的沉重历史。小说中,罗莎为了寻找内裤在路上游荡,误入了酒店沙滩。“她看见沙滩上两个人躺在一个带锁的铁丝网栅栏后面,一个令人震惊的集中营提醒物。……被铁丝网囚禁!无人知晓她的身份、她发生了何事、她来自何处。大门,钥匙的可怕诡计,荆棘铁丝,共卧沙滩的男人们……”(p. 49)此时,酒店沙滩外的铁丝网具有特定的经济和政治功能。玛丽·路易斯酒店是一个休闲、娱乐、消费场所,后院有政治、自由、抗议构成了铁丝网区隔出来的地方的特征。正如酒店经理所说,“我们用铁丝网保护客人的隐私”,铁丝网隔离出的是一个相对自由的空间。(p. 51)然而,对于罗莎来说,铁丝网却是大屠杀历史停滞的死亡符号,即使过去三十年依然深刻影响着作为幸存者的她的生活。罗莎在酒店找不到走出铁丝网的路,她被奥斯维辛集中营的恐怖记忆瞬间压垮了:“玛格达的气味记忆,失落婴儿的圣洁芬芳。被谋杀。被投掷在围栏上,满是荆棘、带刺的铁丝网,电击、网格与栅栏交织成一张火炉之网,孩童置身其中”。(p. 31)罗莎指责酒店老板在栅栏上捆上带刺铁丝网,在得知老板姓氏为芬克尔斯坦(Finkelstein是常见的犹太人姓氏)后,罗莎直言酒店老板应该更清楚铁丝网的特殊性,并质问他“我们在那(奥斯维辛集中营)的时候,你在哪”(p. 51)。面对同胞,罗莎想要酒店老板能够共情她的创伤,不再使用铁丝网,却遭酒店老板驱逐,更让她对铁丝网深恶痛绝。

关于奥斯维辛的记忆在罗莎给佩斯基读信的时候再次浮现。詹姆斯·W·特里博士邀请罗莎去酒店参与研究,但酒店让罗莎联想到铁丝网以及被囚在奥斯维辛集中营的痛苦记忆,罗莎情绪斩钉截铁地表明自己“并非任何人手中的按钮,即便他们布满了带刺铁丝网”,罗莎对佩斯基的态度从试着接受转变为完全的抗拒,罗莎的一句“我不是你的按钮,佩斯基”表明她拒绝被佩斯基操控,她并非佩斯基想象中容易操纵的女人。(p. 61)女儿被纳粹士兵残忍地抛掷到铁丝网上杀害的记忆让罗莎选择避免与所有人建立亲密关系,她拒绝佩斯基的派对邀请,拒绝詹姆斯·W·特里博士的访问,拒绝搬去和侄女斯特拉住在一起。可以说,铁丝网触发的记忆在罗莎内心筑起铜墙铁壁,影响罗莎的人际交往和一举一动。

将“物”视为文化符号标志着“物转向”的开端,探索叙事中“物”的文化符号功能将有助于更好地理解作家的创作意图。铁丝网这一死亡符号是罗莎个人以及犹太人集体的伤痛。毫无疑问的是,铁丝网作为记忆触发器,无时无刻不在影响罗莎的选择。铁丝网所触发的罗莎的记忆也再现了历史上大屠杀的惨无人道,表达了欧芝克鲜明的犹太意识。

二、行动者的物：具有主动力量的织物

“物”在《大披巾》中扮演的角色绝非背景那么简单，也不仅仅只起到象征的作用，而是具有影响人物活动并推动小说叙事进程的关键力量。包括大披巾、床单在内的织物在《大披巾》中出现了百余次，其重要性可见一斑。在《大披巾》“故事”层次的叙事进程中，有一个关键的问题：罗莎为什么反复强调她的“华沙”与佩斯基的“华沙”不一样？多数学者认为大屠杀留下的创伤是罗莎拒绝与佩斯基交往的根本原因。劳伦斯·兰格（Lawrence Langer）认为罗莎对自己的犹太血统感到羞耻和蔑视，“罗莎选择与波兰的专业知识分子贵族阶层联盟，而拒绝了骄傲的犹太传统”。

（Langer, 1998, p. 124）莉莲·克雷默（Lilian Kremer）认为“欧芝克展示了大屠杀对幸存者生活的灾难性影响”。（Kremer, 1999, p. 163）但如果将《大披巾》看成辛西娅·欧芝克的一次“物”叙事实践，这一问题能得到更为圆满的回答。

在《大披巾》的第一部分，作者主要采用全知叙述模式讲述罗莎在集中营的遭遇，并变换采用固定式人物有限视角；在第二部分则通过第三人称有限视角叙述罗莎的美国生活，故事外的叙述者通过小说人物的眼光和内心来观察和感知事件。总的来说，叙述者主要通过全知叙述以及罗莎的视角展现了大披巾的神秘力量。在“故事层面”，大披巾为玛格达抵御寒冷、提供保暖，但它的功能不仅限于此。正如简·本尼特（Jane Bennett）在《有生气的物质：物的政治生态学》（*Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*）中提出的，“物”拥有独立于人类主体的时刻，可以“影响其他物体，提升或削弱这些物体的力量”。（Bennett, 2010, p. 3）小说中的大披巾除了驱寒保暖，甚至还可以给玛格达“提供营养”，滋养其生命，这块神奇的披巾“整整三天三夜给婴儿提供了营养”。（p. 5）玛格达安安静静地待在大披巾的庇护下，饿了就揪着披巾吮吸“乳汁”。大披巾的主体性力量在此处凸显。同时，它的力量也被斯特拉觊觎。寒冷中瑟瑟发抖的斯特拉被“大披巾”的物性力量吸引，于是拿走了大披巾。这导致学会走路的玛格达离开营房，最终酿成了玛格达的死亡。可以说，此时的大披巾不仅仅是客体的物，而是具有影响情节发展、推动叙事进程力量的“行动者”。

对比玛格达受到物的滋养，大披巾也对罗莎产生了幽微的作用，并影响她的一系列行为。一方面，大披巾在关键时刻保护了罗莎，促使罗莎在生死抉择中选择了生存。玛格达被士兵杀害时，有着玛格达唾液气息的大披巾塞在罗莎嘴里，堵住了罗莎狼般痛苦的尖叫，也制止了罗莎想要冲上前暴露自己的冲动，让罗莎得以从奥斯维辛集中营幸存下来。另一方面，大披巾作为罗莎与过去联系的纽带，让罗莎沉浸于创伤之中，无法释怀。三十年后，罗莎收到斯特拉寄来的装有玛格达披巾的盒子，打开盖子，“掉色的披巾如同旧绷带一般躺着”，“带着一股淡淡的几乎是想象出来的口水味”，罗莎静静地等待着披巾让幽灵玛格达苏醒。而后侄女斯特拉打来电话，劝说罗莎在迈阿密参加俱乐部、交些朋友，罗莎在披巾的影响下并未采纳侄女的建议，她挂掉电话并将披巾披在了听筒上。霎时间，“整个房间充满了玛格达的气息，她犹如一只蝴蝶，在这个角落里，又在那个角落里，瞬间即逝”。（p. 64）罗莎眼前出现了十六岁的玛格达，穿着罗莎高中穿的天蓝色裙子，罗莎被玛格达健康的前臂迷住了，她贪婪地观察女儿的外貌，好奇女儿的才能，甚至开始在大脑中写信给玛格达。罗莎完全沉浸在女儿玛格达仍然活着的幸福幻想中，无法自拔。可以说，披巾对罗莎有着近乎圣物的巨大影响。罗莎在披巾的“诱惑”下，拒绝了侄女斯特拉劝她放下过去向前看的劝诫，

而这又导致她拒绝与佩斯基的进一步交往，无法与外界建立新的联系，进一步加剧了她的孤立和痛苦。

同样，罗莎床上的脏被褥削弱了她融入美国社区的力量。脏被褥总是像脐带一般紧紧地纠缠在一起。罗莎与佩斯基见完面回到公寓，“被褥仍然没有被整理，散发着鱼腥味，被子像脐带，像船只碎片一样打结在一起”，“蓝色条纹的连衣裙像一条粗色的蠕虫，从扭曲的床单中滑出”。(pp. 30-33)不仅如此，日益肮脏的床单对罗莎施加消极作用，尽管只需走过一条街就能走到自助洗衣店，但深受创伤的罗莎出现自闭的特征，放弃了清洗床单的念头；脏被褥让罗莎产生羞愧和低人一等的感觉，阻止罗莎去社交，也让她在与佩斯基的谈话中极力否认与佩斯基的相似性，强调两人的“华沙”并不一样，拒绝与佩斯基深入交往，这才进一步让罗莎始终无法从大屠杀的阴影中走出来，无法面对现实世界。

大披巾和脏被褥不只是人物性格的衬托，也不再是人类视野中的被动客体。作为“活力”之物的它们也仅仅起到象征的作用；它们本身就有生命，能够掌握主动性、施展“物”的力量以颠覆主客体关系，并与人物进行互动，具有影响人物活动并推动叙事向前运动的力量。罗莎在迈阿密形影只、格格不入，在很大程度上是“物”的力量造成的。在叙事进程中，“物”获得了一种生命，掌握了主动权。本应消极的大披巾和脏被褥成为主动的一方，而本应积极的人则成为被动、受影响一方。

三、本体的物：无限隐退的尸灰

“物”在《大披巾》中占据显著位置，甚至具有本体性。欧芝克在对比铁丝网内外环境时，就列举了大量的物。铁丝网外，“太阳光里有另外一种生命”，“夏日绿色草地上点缀着蒲公英和深色紫罗兰”，“纯洁的虎百合昂起黄色的花帽”；而营房里，有的是排泄物，“像辫子一样粗的粪便”，“从上铺缓慢流下来的垂下来的褐红色臭瀑布”。(pp. 9-10)王祖友(2004, p. 16)认为欧芝克在小说中以直陈式的方式呈现了“人物”，这些形象模糊的人物显出神秘、怪异的“非人”特色，人物似乎失去了“人”的属性。笔者更进一步，将目光聚焦于“非人”的“物”。笔者认为，《大披巾》以直陈式的方式大量陈列“物”，给读者一种感觉：无论在奥斯维辛集中营、在纽约的商店、还是在迈阿密旅馆，罗莎都被物重重包围，居主宰的是物，而非困在其中的罗莎。换句话说，这些物具有独立于人类理性的本体性。

当然，仅仅依据篇幅和频次，我们无法真正理解“物”在《大披巾》中起到的作用。至关重要的是借助“面向物的本体论”(Object-Oriented Ontology)，窥见神秘之物的实在性给人的惊鸿一瞥。“面向物的本体论”是21世纪西方哲学界兴起“思辨实在论”(speculative realism)的一个重要分支，对“物转向”产生了巨大的推动作用。(唐伟胜, 2017, p. 7)物转向的重要特征是试图重新回到物自身，去探索人类意识之外的物。(唐伟胜, 2021, p. 110)这种观点为提莫西·莫顿(Timothy Morton)的“超物体”(hyperobject)概念提供了理论基础，使得莫顿能够从非人类中心的视角出发，探讨超越人类感知和理解范围的物。根据“面向物的本体论”，我们发现，集中营中带着片片尸灰的恶风，恰如提莫西·莫顿的“超物体”，令人得以窥见神秘之物的实在性。莫顿认为“超物体”具有五大特征：粘性(Viscosity)、非局部性(Nonlocality)、时间波动(Temporal Undulation)、相位(Phasing)和物体间性(Interobjectivity)。(Morton, 2013, pp. 1-95)小说中的尸灰恰恰具有

“超物体”的这五个特征。如烟雾一般的风带着油味，与营房内的臭味交杂在一起，它们不是通过透明的媒介从远处接近我们，而是就在我们身边，此为“粘性”。带着灰尘的风在时空分布上更为广泛，焚烧产生的灰尘与空气混合，其作用不局限于特定的地点，此为“非局部性”。带着灰尘的黑风与我们所习惯的人类时间尺度不同，超越了人类的理性认识，此为“时间波动”。黑风在不同时间点以不同的方式呈现，它有时快速刮过罗莎的面颊，有时又轻柔地吹过玛格达的头发，具有“相位”特性，让人们只能看到其部分，而看不到整体。黑风不是孤立存在的，而是通过与其他对象的关系、如与集中营建筑的关系来显现自己，形成相互构成的关系，此为“物体间性”。有着如上特征的带着黑灰的风，以莫顿“超物体”的形态，或者说以其本体之物的实在性，“诱惑”人们体现了在小说表层的微观聚焦背后，潜藏着更为宏大的历史叙事。

提莫西·莫顿的“超物体”是基于“面向物的本体论”的理论框架发展而来的，本质上是在生态哲学中对“面向物的本体论”的核心概念——“实在之物”——的具体化和拓展。何为“实在之物”呢？格莱汉姆·哈曼（Graham Harman）提出了“物的四个面向”，即“实在的物”“实在的特征”“感性的物”“感性的特征”。他进一步指出，实在之物区别于人类认识上的感性之物：感性之物既完全在场，又被偶然的表面特征所包裹，必须剥离这些特征才能发现其本质；实在之物则从一切人类经验中隐退，拒绝任何形式的因果或认知把握；人类虽然在理论和实践层面都无法完全把握实在之物，但可以在实在之物和感性冲突中瞥见物深不可测的实在性。（Harman, 2011, p.86-94）以此观之，小说中无论是士兵还是犹太人，都无法完全理解风中黑灰（尸灰）的特征，更无法窥见物的实在性。面对夹杂着黑灰的恶风，纳粹士兵视之若素。即使能够把握黑灰的感性特征，对黑灰的物理组成心知肚明，即黑灰实际上是被犹太人身体焚烧后留下的尸灰，被风裹挟着飘荡在营房间，纳粹士兵却对黑灰的本质冷漠木然，感受不到这些物对情感和人性的冲击，以及这些物发出的历史巨响，因而他们根本无法企及实在之物。而罗莎、斯特拉在恶劣的集中营人造环境下，则是刻意忽视黑灰的恶风，潜意识拒绝去把握黑风的感性特征，因此更加难以触碰黑灰的真相。天真的婴儿玛格达更是被风逗得咧嘴轻笑，她不具有把握黑灰感性特征的能力。总之，包括纳粹士兵、罗莎等在内的人类都不能真正地抵达尸灰的物本体性。此处“实在之物”与“感性特征”之间的冲突恰恰实现了辛西娅·欧芝克的修辞目的，即渲染“夹杂黑灰的风”的神秘性与恐怖性，成功地制造出令人毛骨悚然的恐怖审美效果，不仅诱导读者思考黑灰的实在性并反思大屠杀的残酷性，而且引导读者从感性和理性两个层面努力把握如“超物体”般的大屠杀历史。

四、结语

铁丝网、织物、尸灰等都是《大披巾》中不可忽视的“物”。在“物转向”相关理论的烛照下，“物”不仅可以被视为文化符号，而且具有能动性和本体性。符号的“物”折射出特定的历史与文化属性，发挥记忆功能，触发罗莎对铁丝网的种种回忆并促使罗莎做出选择。活力的织物施展“物”的力量，影响人物行动，从而推动叙事进程。同时，本体之“物”在无限隐退中显露深不可测的实在性，奥斯维辛集中营内弥漫的尸灰神秘莫测，实现恐怖的美学效果，诱发读者思考。《大披巾》中的主人公罗莎始终为“物”环境所困，无法逃脱为其左右的命运。欧芝克使用“物”来叙事，借“物”推动了小说的叙事进程，呈现物与人的多重互动，在主题上强化了大屠杀历史，揭示了犹太人个体和集体的巨大心理创伤，促使读者重新审视二战，并肩负起历史责任。

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Lu Hongyu ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7430-043X>

Fang Ying ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5569-1166>

References

Bagno-Simon, Libby (2014). "My Warsaw Isn't Your Warsaw: Memory, Silence, and the Rewriting of the Past in Cynthia Ozick's 'Rosa'." *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews* 27(04): 194-198.

Bennett, Jane (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press.

Brown, Bill (1996). *The Material Unconscious: American Amusement, Stephen Crane, and the Economies of Play*. Harvard University Press.

Bryant, Levi (2014). *Onto-Cartography: An Ontology of Machine and Media*. Edinburgh University Press.

方进、李金云 (2020): “论《大披肩》中的创伤记忆”,《江苏外语教学研究》(04): 28-31。

[Fang Jin, Li Jinyun (2020). “Traumatic Memory in *The Shawl*.” *Jiangsu Foreign Language Teaching and Research* (04): 28-31.]

韩启群 (2019): “布朗新物质主义批评话语研究”,《外国文学》(06): 104-114。

[Han Qiqun (2019). “A Study of Bill Brown's New Materialism in Literary Criticism.” *Foreign Literature* (06): 104-114.]

郝慧敏 (2020): “‘肯定生命’——论《大披肩》的屠犹记忆旅行”,《复旦外国语言文学论丛》(02): 86-92。

[Hao Huimin (2020). “‘For Life’: Holocaust memory travel in Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*.” *Fudan Forum on Foreign Languages and Literature* (02): 86-92.]

郝慧敏 (2021): “辛西娅·奥兹克的“米德拉什”历史记忆观——以《大披巾》为例”,《复旦外国语言文学论丛》(01): 92-98。

[Hao Huimin (2021). “Cynthia Ozick's 'Midrash' View of Historical Memory.” *Fudan Forum on Foreign Languages and Literature* (01): 92-98.]

Harman, Graham (2011). *The Quadruple Object*. Zero Books.

Jones, Billie (2002). “The Fabrics of Her Life: Cloth as Symbol in Cynthia Ozick's 'The Shawl'.” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* (1981-)(21): 72-80.

Kremer, Lilian (1999). *Women's Holocaust Writing: Memory and Imagination*. University of Nebraska Press.

Langer Lawrence (1998). *Preempting the Holocaust*. Yale University Press.

刘海平、王守仁 (2018):《新编美国文学史 (第四卷)》。上海外语教育出版社。

[Liu Haiping, Wang Shouren (2018). *Literary History of the United States (Volume 4)*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.]

Morton, Timothy (2013). *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. University of Minnesota Press.

Ozick, Cynthia (1989). *The Shawl*. Vintage Books.

Partyka, Jacek (2017). "Between Nostalgia and Self-hatred: The Problem of Identity in Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl*." *Polish Journal for American Studies* (11): 73-84.

童丽娟 (2020): “论辛西娅·欧芝克《大披肩》主人翁罗莎的身份建构——基于流散批评理论的诠释”,《广西科技大学报》35 (04): 25-27+32。

[Tong Lijuan (2020). "An Interpretation of *The Shawl* from the Perspective of Diaspora Criticism." *Journal of Guangxi Science & Technology Normal University* 35(04): 25-27+32.]

唐伟胜 (2017): “爱伦·坡的“物”叙事: 重读《厄舍府的倒塌》”,《外国语文》33 (03): 6-11。

[Tang Weisheng (2017). "Adgar Allan Poe's 'Thing' Narrative: Re-Reading *The Fall of the House of Usher*." *Foreign Languages and Literature* 33(03): 6-11.]

唐伟胜 (2021): “‘本体书写’与‘以物观物’的互释”,《中国文学批评》(04): 110-120, 158。

[Tang Weisheng (2021). "‘Ontography’ and ‘Yi Wu Guan Wu’." *Chinese Journal of Literary Criticism* (04): 110-120, 158.]

王祖友 (2004): “后现代主义小说文本中的历史反思——评辛西娅·欧芝克的两篇短篇小说”,《外国文学》(05): 15-19。

[Wang Zuyou (2004). "Historical Reflection in Postmodernist Novels — A Review of Cynthia Ozick's Two Short Stories." *Foreign Literature* (05): 15-19.]

魏新俊、张国申 (2014): “崇拜、背离、回归——辛西娅·欧芝克的文学创作之路”,《当代外国文学》35 (02): 47-53。

[Wei Xinjun, Zhang Guoshen (2019). "Worshiping, Abandoning and Returning to Henry James — A Study of Cynthia Ozick's

Path to Literary Success". *Contemporary Foreign Literature* 35(02): 47-53.]

尹晓霞、唐伟胜 (2019): “文化符号、主体性、实在性: 论“物”的三种叙事功能”,《山东外语教学》40 (02): 76-84。

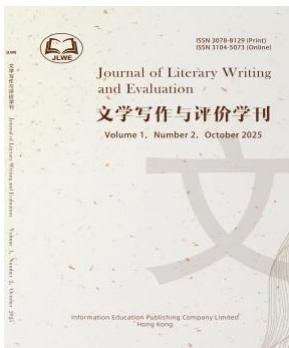
[Yin Xiaoxia, Tang Weisheng (2019). "Cultural Signs, Agency, and Realism: Three Roles Things Play in Fictional Narratives." *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching* 40(02): 76-84.]

赵娜 (2014): “‘另类’母亲:《大披肩》中母亲身份的伦理解读”,《外文研究》2(04): 62-67+106-107。

[Zhao Na (2014). "The 'Other' Mother: An Ethical Study of Motherhood in *The Shawl*." *Foreign Studies* 2(04): 62-67+106-107.]

张昕 (2020): “规训·癫狂·回归——《大披肩》空间叙事模式初探”,《江苏外语教学研究》(02): 62-66。

[Zhang Xin (2019). "Discipline · Madness · Return — A Preliminary Study on the Spatial Narrative Mode of *The Shawl*." *Jiangsu Foreign Language Teaching and Research* (02): 62-66.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.234-246.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.06](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.06)



From *I* to *We*: Opening and Enclosing the Traveller via Intertextuality in *The Art of Travel*

Fang Yaqi, Li Yun

Abstract: This article rereads Alain de Botton's *The Art of Travel* through Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality and recent calls for a critical intertextuality attentive to power and cultural capital. While intertextual studies have long emphasized the decentering of the author and the openness of textual meaning, this essay shows how De Botton reclaims a soft cultural authority through a pronounced pronoun shift from *I* to *we*. The narrative begins with a confessional, vulnerable traveller's *I* and draws readers into a polyphonic field filled with canonical voices—Huysmans, Ruskin, Wordsworth—creating an enticing sense of dialogic participation. Yet this openness soon narrows: citations are meticulously glossed, interpretive gaps close, and the inclusive *we* stabilize into a model reader, implicitly middle-class and aesthetically trained. The book's climactic call to break routine habit in fact leads to the cultivation of a socially legible habitus, embedding perception within Eurocentric, upper-middle-class taste regimes. By combining Kristeva's notion of the subject-in-process with critical intertextuality and Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, the article reframes intertextual travel writing as a site where author and reader are invited but subtly disciplined. This reading also illuminates how pre-social-media “slow travel” narratives anticipate today's influencer-led travel media: intimate and democratic in tone, yet quietly regulatory in taste and class.

Keywords: Intertextuality; Critical Intertextuality; Travel Writing; Cultural Capital; Authorship and Subjectivity

Author Biography: Fang Yaqi, MA candidate, School of Foreign Languages, South China

University of Technology, research direction: Foreign Literature. E-mail: 914318925@qq.com.
Li Yun (Corresponding Author), Professor, School of Foreign Languages, South China University of Technology, research interests: Foreign Literature. E-mail: flly@scut.edu.cn.

题目：从“我”到“我们”：《旅行的艺术》互文性与旅行者的开放和封闭

摘要：本文重读阿兰·德波顿 (Alain de Botton) 的《旅行的艺术》，以朱莉娅·克里斯蒂娃 (Julia Kristeva) 的互文性理论为核心，并结合近年来对“批判性互文性”的呼吁，关注文本中的权力关系与文化资本再生产。传统的互文性研究长期强调作者的去中心化与意义的开放性，但本文指出，德波顿通过显著的代词转换——从“我”到“我们”——重新确立了一种柔性的文化权威。文本开端以旅行者“我”的自白与脆弱姿态吸引读者，并通过汇聚于惠斯曼、罗斯金、华兹华斯等经典之声构建出诱人的对话性场域。然而，这种开放性很快被收缩：引用被精心注释，解释空隙逐渐关闭，包容性的“我们”最终稳固为一种隐含的“理想读者”形象——既中产阶级，又受过美学训练。书中对“打破日常习惯”的呼吁，最终导向的是一种可被社会识别的惯习的养成，将感知重新嵌入以欧洲中心、上中产阶级品味为核心的审美体系。通过结合克里斯蒂娃“过程中的主体”概念、批判性互文性及布迪厄 (Pierre Bourdieu) 的文化资本理论，本文重新界定互文性旅行写作作为一个既邀请读者进入，又在不知不觉中加以规训的场域。同时，本研究揭示了在社交媒体兴起之前的“慢旅行”叙事如何为当代网红主导的旅行内容奠定基础：它们表面上亲密、民主，实则在品味与阶层上暗自进行规范化与筛选。

关键词：互文性；批判性互文性；旅行写作；文化资本；作者性与主体性

作者简介：方雅麒，华南理工大学外国语学院 2023 级硕士研究生，研究方向：外国文学。电邮：914318925@qq.com。李 昱（通讯作者），华南理工大学外国语学院教授，研究方向：外国文学。电邮：flly@scut.edu.cn。

Travel writing has long promised more than practical guidance; it has invited readers to imagine journeys that shape how they see and feel the world. Over the past few decades the genre has moved away from the imperial adventure tale or the encyclopedic guidebook toward a more intimate, reflective mode in which the author narrates personal travel while weaving in art, literature, and philosophy. Alain de Botton's *The Art of Travel* (2002) exemplifies this change. Rejecting the hurried consumption of places, it advocates a cultivated attentiveness: the traveller should slow down, look closely, sketch, and think alongside canonical voices from Huysmans to Ruskin. The book combines a confessional tone with cultural guidance, offering its audience not only stories of movement but also ways of perceiving and valuing experience. Many readers praise *The Art of Travel* for its perceptual uplift: one reviewer remarks that it “opens the reader's eyes to the many perceptual enhancements that travel can provide” (Goodreads, 2013), while other calls it “wise and utterly original” (Goodreads, 2015). Such reactions capture the book's appeal as both intimate and illuminating.

Yet not all readers experience this openness as universal. One Goodreads reviewer, while declaring affection for De Botton, observes: “The focus is very Euro- and Christian-centric... why is it so exotic for French-speaking De Botton to go to the south of France? ... he seems to be a bit of a dandy traveller ... resorts, pastries, countryside houses” (Goodreads, 2007). This reaction points to an undercurrent that more enthusiastic reviews leave unspoken: the world the book invites readers to inhabit is culturally and socially specific—rooted in European intellectual heritage and the comforts of a cultivated middle-class traveler.

Such comments highlight a tension at the heart of the book. *The Art of Travel* greets readers with vulnerability and erudition, appearing to democratize aesthetic experience, but it also defines what counts as meaningful travel and who can inhabit the role of the “traveller.” The narrative voice promises shared reflection yet quietly shapes the horizon of that shared experience. This tension—between invitation and subtle guidance—frames the present study’s central inquiry.

To examine this tension, the present study turns first to Julia Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality, which views every text as a mosaic of prior discourses and every subject as a subject-in-process/on trial—continuously formed and re-formed in the interplay between the semiotic (affective, bodily drives capable of disrupting order) and the symbolic (socially regulated language and cultural codes) (Kristeva, 1980). In principle, semiotic eruptions such as boredom, disorientation, or desire could fracture the symbolic field and allow new subjectivities to emerge; yet, as later analysis will show, *The Art of Travel* quickly reinscribes such cracks within a cultured symbolic frame. Within Kristeva’s model, the authorial I never stand as an autonomous originator but emerges through engagement with other voices; the reader, too, is positioned inside a preexisting network of quotations, genres, and cultural references. This dynamic is particularly visible in De Botton’s self-narration, which braids art history, philosophy, and literature into a polyphonic but carefully arranged field of voices.

However, intertextuality has often been celebrated as if such dialogism were inherently democratizing, with less attention to how openness can be curated and policed. Since the 1990s, theorists such as Graham Allen (Intertextuality, 2000) and Mary Orr (Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts, 2003) have argued that poststructuralist optimism neglected the social forces that shape which voices count. Critical intertextuality responds by re-politicizing the concept: it asks whose discourses enter the mosaic, what subject positions are legitimized or excluded, and how quotation networks can consolidate soft authority rather than disperse it. Recent studies in travel writing further demonstrate that intertextuality itself can operate as a structure of experience, shaping how travel is perceived and narrated rather than simply expanding interpretive freedom (Din-Kariuki, 2023). When paired with Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology of culture, this approach clarifies the mechanisms: cultural capital works through classification (marking some practices as refined and others as vulgar), conversion (turning education and leisure into symbolic

distinction), and misrecognition (*méconnaissance*: making trained taste appear natural) (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986). These insights enable us to see how intertextual strategies can train perception and taste while claiming openness.

In this article, the term traveller does not refer to any empirical tourist but to a discursive position produced within *The Art of Travel*. Sometimes this position is inhabited by the authorial “I,” as De Botton narrates his own journeys; at other times it expands into an implied “we,” inviting readers to step into a shared cultural itinerary. The traveller here is therefore understood as a textually constructed role—a way of seeing, feeling, and interpreting travel that the book offers to its audience, following Kristeva’s view of the subject as always in process/on trial.

Building on these theoretical perspectives, this article investigates how *The Art of Travel* negotiates the promise of openness with subtle forms of narrative control. It asks three guiding questions: (1) How does De Botton’s intertextual practice—especially the shift from a confessional I to an inclusive we—shape his authorial subjectivity? (2) In what ways are readers simultaneously invited into and disciplined within this intertextual field? (3) How does the book’s celebrated return to bodily experience—its plea to break routine and revive perception—ultimately train readers into a culturally prestigious habitus rather than open an unbounded rupture? The discussion unfolds in three main stages. The first section, *Intertextual Subjectivity: From the Confessional I to the Collective We*, examines how De Botton builds an apparently dialogic space by weaving canonical voices into a vulnerable self-narration. The second, *Fixing We and Vanishing I: Enclosing the Text and Readers*, analyzes how this openness is progressively curated, producing an implicit model reader and reassembling the authorial subject as a gentle cultural tutor. The third, *On Habit? Break Habit or Reproduce Habitus?*, explores how sensory practices—slow looking, sketching, attentive presence—seem to resist textual saturation yet become tools of aesthetic discipline and cultural distinction. The article concludes by reframing intertextuality not merely as textual play but as a site where contemporary travel writing invites readers while subtly shaping taste and reinforcing soft cultural authority.

Intertextual Subjectivity: From the Confessional *I* to the Collective *We*

The Art of Travel is organized as a sequence of nine essayistic chapters—“On Anticipation,” “On Travelling Places,” “On the Exotic,” “On the Country and the City,” “On the Landscape,” “On the Sublime,” “On Art,” “On Possessing Beauty,” and “On Habit.” Each chapter follows a distinctive rhythm: it begins with a personal travel episode, turns toward one or more cultural interlocutors, and ends with reflective lessons about how to travel and perceive. A striking paratext frames this rhythm: at the start of every chapter De Botton presents a small table with two headings, Place and Guide. A chapter on curiosity, for instance, pairs “Madrid” with “Alexander von Humboldt.” Before the narrative even begins, the reader is positioned as an apprentice entering a curated itinerary: each journey will take place somewhere, and each will

unfold under the tutelage of a named cultural authority. This visual device literalizes Julia Kristeva's notion of text as a mosaic of quotations—not just implicit but announced. It also quietly shapes roles: the author appears as a designer of learning paths, and the reader, invited yet guided, steps into a prefabricated cultural conversation.

Within these frames, the book opens in an unexpectedly self-effacing register. Rather than offering heroic exploits or expert itineraries, the first chapter “On Anticipation” recounts a trip to Barbados that collapses under its own promise: the glamorous brochure gives way to a cheap hotel and an inescapable disappointment. “I had thought Barbados would be different,” the narrator admits, only to find the same restlessness and dissatisfaction he had hoped to escape. Similarly, an early Amsterdam stay dissolves into anticlimax: dreary weather, anonymous hotels, the loneliness of travel’s first night. These scenes stage a disoriented first-person voice, an “I” that confesses vulnerability and disappointment rather than mastery.

Julia Kristeva’s concept of the subject-in-process/on trial is useful for understanding this move. For Kristeva, the subject is not a fully autonomous origin; it is produced and continually reworked through language, caught between the semiotic—bodily drives, affect, desire—and the symbolic—the cultural and linguistic codes into which one must enter (Kristeva, 1980). De Botton’s opening self-mockery enacts this process: diffuse longings and travel desire (semiotic) push against, and are tamed by, narrative reflection (symbolic). The authorial “I” appears unstable and trial-bound, preparing the ground for its later reassembly through citation.

Into this vulnerable stance, De Botton weaves an expansive intertextual network. When the Barbados trip falters, he invokes Joris-Karl Huysmans’s decadent journeys and sense of disappointment; when teaching himself to look in Amsterdam or Provence, he brings in John Ruskin’s injunctions to “draw to learn to see.” Hopper’s paintings become a visual grammar for solitude in motels and train stations; Wordsworth and Flaubert articulate a poetics of departure and disappointment. These voices enter narratively: the text recounts a train ride or a walk, then turns to a thinker who illuminates that experience. The book thus performs what Kristeva calls a mosaic of texts: the authorial self is rewritten as it cites, threaded into an older lineage of cultured travelers, artists, and critics.

The pronoun shift renders this transformation with unusual clarity and frequency. In the early pages, first-person singular dominates: “I arrived in Barbados full of expectation”; “I found the hotel oppressive.” Soon, singular experience begins to generalize: “We are inclined to believe that anticipation will exceed reality”; “We may fail to notice what is before us if we rush”; “We should sketch in order to see.” These plural turns are rarely abrupt. They appear at precise rhetorical moments: typically after a confession and a cultural citation. For instance, after recounting his inability to see anything in Provence, De Botton quotes Ruskin on drawing as a way to see, then writes, “We might pick up a pencil not to produce art but to learn to look.” Elsewhere, after describing personal disappointment with exotic travel, he writes, “We are prone

to disappointment when we expect the exotic to rescue us from ourselves.” The shift thus occurs where the I has been “educated” by intertext; it moves from singular failure to a lesson voiced collectively.

This pattern is not random style but a narrative technology. It allows De Botton to convert private affect into shared insight, to move from confession to guidance without adopting a bluntly didactic tone. Kristeva’s subject-in-process helps explain the authorial side: the “I” appears permeable, open to other discourses, and then re-emerges strengthened by them. But the same movement shapes the reader: the text signals, “Your disappointment is like mine; together we can learn from Ruskin or Huysmans.” The plural pronoun makes the reader a co-traveller in the mosaic, promising inclusion in an ongoing cultural conversation.

For readers, this shift feels like an invitation with potential freedom. The book seems to say: your ordinary feelings of boredom and restlessness belong to a larger, meaningful tradition; you can step into it and learn to see differently. Yet this communal “we” is already culturally bounded: the voices it gathers are European, intellectual, and aesthetically cultivated. The openness carries within it a quiet normativity about how one should travel and feel.

These dynamics set the stage for the next part of the argument: while the I → we movement initially invites readers into dialogic co-authorship, it will gradually harden into a more curated and prescriptive stance. The following section examines how this welcoming “we” becomes a form of textual enclosure, shaping both the authorial position and the reader’s role within a particular cultural horizon.

Fixing *We* and Vanishing *I*: Enclosing the Text and Readers

The apparent hospitality of *The Art of Travel*—its vulnerable “I,” its mosaic of cultural voices, its early invitation to join a reflective “we”—gradually hardens into something more controlled. What begins as a shared process of meaning-making becomes, by the later chapters, a carefully arranged cultural itinerary in which the author regains interpretive authority and the reader’s role narrows from co-traveller to pupil. This consolidation happens through the book’s intertextual practice, which first destabilizes, then reconstructs the writing subject while simultaneously shaping the reader’s position.

Early parts in the chapters foreground an uncertain authorial self. In “On Anticipation,” De Botton narrates his letdown on arriving in Barbados: “I had thought Barbados would be different. I arrived, and within hours I was listless, disappointed, unsure what to do with my freedom.” In “On Travelling Places,” the Amsterdam vignette presents a lonely first night in an anonymous hotel: “I remember the first evening vividly, alone in my room, wondering why I had come.” These scenes enact Kristeva’s subject-in-process/on trial: the “I” appears porous, lacking mastery, open to being reshaped by discourse. Desire for a transformative journey is felt but not yet articulated; affect (the semiotic) flows before it finds cultural language.

Intertexts then enter as provisional aids. Huysmans appears to name disappointment; Flaubert gives language to the disappointment of exoticism; Ruskin promises a method for seeing. These citations initially seem to rescue the narrator from confusion. But as the book accumulates such moments, the I that once faltered begins to solidify. After confessing his inability to appreciate the English countryside, De Botton cites Ruskin's dictum that drawing forces attention, then writes: "We should take up a pencil, not to produce art but to learn to look." In "On Possessing Beauty," the author recounts frustration at wanting to own what he sees, only to conclude: "We must resist ownership and cultivate attentive seeing." Each time, the pattern is: I faltered → I consulted a guide → I return speaking for a collective. Through this cycle, the writing self that appeared trial-bound is reassembled; it gains legitimacy not by rejecting external voices but by weaving them into a new, stable identity—an author who can now guide others because he has himself been "educated" by the canon.

This consolidation is anticipated paratextually. The small tables at the head of every chapter, listing Place and Guide, seem at first to be neutral orientation devices, but they quietly signal a deeper logic: travel here is always to be guided. Before the narrative begins, the reader is told which location will be visited and which cultural figure will serve as mentor. What looks like itinerary design also functions as curricular framing: you will travel, but under the tutelage of an already sanctioned voice.

Pronoun shifts mark the next stage of this process. In the Barbados and Amsterdam sections, singular verbs dominate: "I arrived," "I felt deflated," "I wondered why." After each encounter with a cultural voice, plural forms emerge: "We are inclined to believe anticipation will exceed reality," "We may fail to notice what is before us if we rush." The transition is especially clear after Ruskin is introduced: confession about not seeing gives way to "We should draw, not to make art but to learn to look." This linguistic slide is not stylistic ornament; it is the textual trace of the author's transformation from learner to guide. The early I create solidarity, but once knowledge is secured through citation, that solidarity is reconfigured into a more didactic we.

For the reader, the effect is double-edged. On one hand, the vulnerability of the early "I" is disarming. A traveller who feels boredom and disappointment seems accessible, and the intertexts arrive gently, as companions who might help us as well. On the other hand, the book's paratextual framing—especially the repeated Place / Guide tables—signals from the outset that the itinerary is curated and that meaningful travel presupposes a learned guide. Each canonical figure is preselected, each lesson pre-scripted. As the narrative voice stabilizes, the inclusive "we" increasingly functions as a managed collective: readers may join, but only by accepting the cultural lineage already charted.

Stylistic devices support this quiet consolidation of power. De Botton often opens with questions or admissions of failure—"Why do I so quickly feel bored?"—that align with the reader's own potential confusion. Once a cultural citation appears, the prose shifts to calm

aphorisms: “We travel not to escape ourselves but to encounter them anew.” Modal verbs (“should,” “must”) remain polite but accumulate normative weight. Sentence rhythm becomes balanced and declarative, signalling that inquiry has reached resolution. The anxious I has found a discursive home; now it speaks as if for all.

Intertextuality here reveals its ambivalence. Kristeva helps us see the genuine opening: the authorial subject begins unstable and invites readers to share that instability. But she also reminds us that the symbolic order one enters sets limits. The “dialogue” in *The Art of Travel* is curated within a Eurocentric, aesthetically cultivated field. As the I gains footing by mastering that field, it can readdress readers from a position of soft authority. The plural voice is thus not a space of free co-authorship but a rhetorical device of inclusion under guidance. Readers are welcomed, but as apprentices rather than equal interlocutors.

By the book’s later chapters, the authorial subject that once appeared in trial has become coherent and instructive; the reader who began as a companionable co-traveller is now positioned as a learner in a guided seminar. The pronoun “we” masks this hierarchy even as it performs solidarity. What looked like open dialogism has become a subtle enclosure, preparing the ground for the book’s final turn—its apparent return to bodily experience—which will promise escape from textual authority but remain embedded in the same regime of cultivated taste.

“On Habit”? Break Habit or Reproduce Habitus?

The final chapter of *The Art of Travel*, “On Habit,” appears to offer release from the discursive itinerary built earlier. After narrating failed holidays—“I had thought Barbados would be different. I arrived, and within hours I was listless, disappointed, unsure what to do with my freedom”; the anticlimactic first night in Amsterdam, “alone... wondering why I had come”—De Botton turns toward the problem of habit: everyday repetition dulls the senses, and travel should jolt us into renewed attention. He counsels slowing down, sketching, attending to light and form, letting perception rather than fantasy guide experience. If we followed Julia Kristeva’s notion of the subject-in-process, such affective collapse could function as a semiotic breach: boredom and restlessness might destabilize the symbolic order and open space for new subjectivities. Yet the chapter’s very title already hints at a double movement: what begins as an exhortation to break routine habit quickly becomes a training in habitus—the deeply socialized, class-marked set of dispositions that Bourdieu describes. In this book the potential rupture is swiftly sutured. The semiotic—those pre-symbolic impulses of desire and alienation—briefly surfaces but is quickly rechanneled into a pedagogical aesthetic regime.

The textual mechanism is clear. After admitting he “looked but failed to see” the English countryside, De Botton invokes John Ruskin’s dictum that drawing disciplines the eye and concludes: “We should take up a pencil, not to produce art but to learn to look.” In “On

Possessing Beauty,” the urge to hold on to vistas becomes a moral failing: “We must resist ownership and cultivate attentive seeing.” These imperatives sound liberating but also codify the senses: to recover travel’s value is to look through a Ruskinian, nineteenth-century European discipline. Even the apparent rebellion against guidebooks and cliché turns into another “curriculum”. The book thus stages an apparent escape from numbing habit, only to install a different kind of habit — a cultivated *habitus* that signals membership in an educated, Eurocentric class.

The book’s paratext makes this curricular logic explicit. Each chapter opens with a Place / Guide table—“Madrid / Humboldt,” “Lake District / Wordsworth,” “Provence / Van Gogh.” These tables appear benign but quietly establish that travel is meaningful only when apprenticed to approved cultural mentors. Peripheral sites (Barbados, Amsterdam) are narrated through Huysmans or Flaubert; nature is domesticated by Ruskin and Wordsworth; vision is shaped by Van Gogh. The symbolic field is thus scripted before the body arrives; what seems an invitation to break routine is in fact a predesigned syllabus.

This is where critical intertextuality becomes indispensable. Kristeva’s 1960s formulation decentered authorship and imagined the subject as always “in process / on trial,” but it largely bracketed social power: semiotic drives could disrupt the symbolic, yet she did not ask who controls the symbolic field. From the 1980s onward, critics such as Graham Allen (*Intertextuality*, 2000) and Mary Orr (*Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts*, 2003) argued that intertextuality had been depoliticized: celebrated as openness while ignoring curation and hierarchy. Critical intertextuality re-politicizes the concept, asking: whose voices enter the mosaic, what subject positions are sanctioned or excluded, and how textual networks reproduce cultural and class privilege. It fuses poststructuralist dialogism with Bourdieu’s sociology of culture, showing that curated polyphony can reinforce rather than dismantle power. When read this way, De Botton’s pedagogy about “breaking habit” is itself a cultural technique for producing *habitus*: it converts disorientation into disciplined aesthetic comportment.

Viewed through this lens, De Botton’s semiotic breach is allowed only to justify re-education within a Eurocentric, male, upper-middle-class aesthetic. The canon he curates—Humboldt, Flaubert, Huysmans, Ruskin, Wordsworth, Van Gogh—is entirely Western, white, and historically bourgeois-humanist. No Caribbean writers contextualize Barbados; no Dutch voices shape Amsterdam; no non-European epistemologies challenge European optics of nature. The supposedly polyphonic dialogue is strategically narrow: discomfort is staged, then cured with European taste.

Here Bourdieu’s cultural capital explains the deeper mechanism. Cultural capital is not just book knowledge but *habitus*: deeply embodied ways of sensing and acting that signal membership in an educated class. Bourdieu shows that cultural capital reproduces privilege through processes of classification (marking certain practices as refined and others as vulgar),

conversion (transforming education and leisure into distinction), and misrecognition (*méconnaissance*: the naturalizing of learned taste as common sense) (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986). De Botton's narrative repeatedly builds this binary: The "bad" traveller is hasty, image-hungry, assuming distance redeems life. Barbados and Amsterdam embody this naiveness: the narrator arrives, consumes the postcard promise, and is left empty. He mocks "the disappointment of arrival" and "the belief that change of place will change the self." The "good" traveller is patient, slow, self-reflective, guided by high culture. Drawing fields, resisting souvenirs, reading Ruskin or Wordsworth—these are framed as perceptual and moral elevation.

Such criteria quietly exclude wide swaths of travellers: those without leisure to linger, without educational background to decode nineteenth-century art theory, without economic freedom to treat travel as contemplative self-fashioning. The "we" of the late chapters quietly hails those ready to inhabit a bourgeois, Eurocentric *habitus*—a subject comfortable with museums, literary reference, and reflective leisure. What begins as a critique of routine habit becomes a rite of passage into class-coded *habitus*: the traveller learns to look, but to look as one of "us."

De Botton also naturalizes this boundary. Following Bourdieu's insight that the highest distinction is to make acquired taste seem innate, he narrates his own rite of passage: once naive and disappointed, now perceptually awakened. This conversion story makes the *habitus* appear as common sense—anyone can "learn to look" if they try—while hiding the structural privilege (education, time, resources) required. The body's awakening thus becomes a soft, middle-class initiation.

The authorial subject follows the same arc the reader is asked to emulate: porous and trial-bound at first, then reconstituted as calm cultural tutor. Kristeva helps us see this dissolution and re-formation; critical intertextuality adds what Kristeva left implicit: the symbolic field where he regains authority is curated, Eurocentric, and classed. By selecting an exclusively Western male canon, De Botton participates in cultural capital's reproduction while presenting it as gentle self-improvement. His apparent call to break habit ends as a call to relearn habit—to embody a new, socially legible *habitus*.

Thus, the book's turn to habit—its plea to escape numbness by renewed perception—is not a rupture but a culmination. Sensation is admitted only to be tamed and converted into distinction. Travel's raw failures become lessons in aesthetic self-fashioning; the "I" completes its journey from vulnerable learner to cultural guide; the "we" stabilizes as a classed collective. Intertextuality proves double-edged: it promises process and destabilization, but once its curation and social anchoring are visible, we see a training ground that converts bodily renewal into the reproduction of Eurocentric, middle-class cultural power.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine Alain de Botton's *The Art of Travel* through the lens of intertextuality, asking how the book invites both author and reader into textual dialogue while at the same time curating and containing that openness. By following the book's movement from a vulnerable, confessional "I" toward a seemingly inclusive "we," then into a late appeal to break routine in *On Habit*, we have traced a complex process: the promise of destabilization gradually giving way to a re-inscription of cultural authority.

Kristeva's original conception of the subject-in-process proved essential for illuminating the book's early dynamism. De Botton's first-person travel failures—his listless arrival in Barbados, his anticlimax in Amsterdam—expose a self momentarily in trial, open to re-signification. Intertextuality, in this sense, stages a productive vulnerability: the author cites others not as settled authority but as a field through which the travelling self might be reconstituted. The pronoun shifts from "I" to "we" reflects this aspiration to shared exploration, a textual strategy that seems to decentralize the author and grant the reader co-agency.

Yet the same shift also revealed its limits once critical intertextuality was applied. Later theorists such as Graham Allen and Mary Orr have shown that intertextuality, if unexamined, can mask its own politics: a mosaic of quotations may be less democratic than it appears, for the field of voices is curated and ranked. In *The Art of Travel* this curation is narrow and unmistakably Eurocentric: Huysmans, Flaubert, Ruskin, Wordsworth, Van Gogh, Humboldt form an all-male, Western lineage that defines what counts as meaningful travel. The early semiotic tremor—boredom, alienation, the shock of disappointed fantasy—could have opened to other epistemologies but is quickly sutured into this canon.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital helps to explain why. The book's late pedagogy turns from breaking habit to installing a cultivated habitus: slow looking, sketching, moral restraint, and deference to European masters become embodied signs of cultural legitimacy. Through classification (marking some travelers as refined and others as vulgar), conversion (transforming education and leisure into distinction), and misrecognition (making trained taste appear natural) (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986), the narrative transforms an affective failure of tourism into a soft initiation into an upper-middle-class, Eurocentric aesthetic. The author himself enacts this passage—from naïve tourist to calm cultural tutor—and invites readers to follow. The result is an apparently open, dialogic intertext that actually trains a specific social subject.

Seen in this light, *The Art of Travel* is neither simply elitist nor simply liberating. Its power lies in combining intimacy with pedagogy: it confesses vulnerability, promises perceptual renewal, and offers practical ways to escape the deadening force of routine, but it does so by channeling those impulses into a highly curated cultural syllabus. Intertextuality here is double-edged: it enables process and the re-making of self, yet—once its curation and social anchoring become visible—it also reveals itself as a technique of distinction.

These findings also speak to contemporary travel culture in the digital and post-digital age. De Botton wrote before Instagram, TikTok itineraries, and algorithm-driven “must-see” lists, but his project of slow, reflective looking remains an implicit critique of the speed and surface of platformed tourism. At the same time, the book shows how easily a rhetoric of depth can be captured by inherited cultural hierarchies: the aesthetic cure to shallow consumption can itself become a new form of distinction. For today’s readers and writers of travel, this ambivalence is instructive. It reminds us that resisting the spectacle of social media is not enough; one must also question which traditions of seeing and feeling are smuggled in as universal, and who is empowered or excluded when “cultivated perception” is framed as common sense.

This insight also helps situate *The Art of Travel* alongside today’s KOL-driven travel media. Influencers on Instagram, Xiaohongshu, or YouTube often speak in a similarly intimate, confessional voice, promising authentic discovery while curating routes, aesthetics, and consumption patterns. Like De Botton, they seem to democratize taste but frequently reinforce hierarchies—defining “real travel” as boutique, art-informed, slow, and financially unburdened. What looks like friendly guidance doubles as an invitation into a class-coded habitus. Reading De Botton thus equips us to see how contemporary “traveller mentors” reproduce cultural power: they convert personal narrative and apparent openness into subtle training in privilege, even when opposing mainstream tourism.

For travel writing studies, this means that the genre’s recent turn to intimacy and perception should be read not only as a break from colonial grand narratives but also as a quieter mode of aesthetic stratification. For cultural theory, it demonstrates how the semiotic can be recuperated, and how authorship—far from dissolving—can be refounded within selective networks of quotation. The invitation to join a dialogic “we” remains enticing, but it is a “we” built to reproduce a particular cultural habitus under the guise of perceptual liberation. Recognizing this dynamic is vital for understanding how pre-social-media travel texts and today’s influencer travel content share a double face: intimate and democratic in tone, yet quietly regulatory in taste and class.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Fang Yaqi ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1328-4872>

Li Yun ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4446-9160>

References

Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. London, Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*, trans. R. Nice. Harvard University Press.

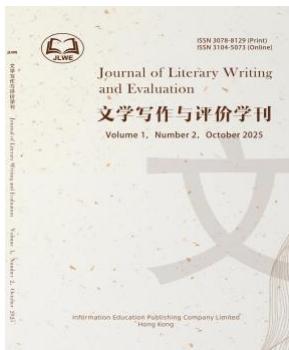
Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.

De Botton, A. (2002). *The art of travel*. Vintage International.

Din-Kariuki, H. N. (2023). “Reading the Ottoman Empire: Intertextuality and experience in travel writing.” *The Review of English Studies* (313), 47–68.

Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to literature and art* (L. S. Roudiez, Ed.; T. Gora, A. Jardine, & L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). Columbia University Press.

Orr, M. (2003). *Intertextuality: Debates and contexts*. Polity Press.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.247-257.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.07](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.07)



从约束到自主：

《橘子不是唯一的水果》中珍妮特的伦理身份重构

黄晓敏 (Huang Xiaomin), 刘红卫 (Liu Hongwei)

摘要：《橘子不是唯一的水果》是一部兼具自传色彩与象征意蕴的成长小说，深刻展现了主人公珍妮特在伦理身份重构过程中的挣扎与成长。本文以文学伦理学批评为理论视角，从珍妮特所承载的多重伦理身份，她在家庭、宗教与社会多重压力下所陷入的伦理两难，以及其最终做出的伦理选择三个方面，剖析主人公珍妮特在伦理身份重构过程中的困境与转变。温特森通过对珍妮特成长经历的书写，批判了社会及宗教体系对非异性恋群体的偏见与排斥，揭示了这种偏见对个体身份认同的影响，并呈现了个体在压迫中寻求自我与伦理身份重构的可能路径。

关键词：《橘子不是唯一的水果》；珍妮特·温特森；伦理身份

作者简介：黄晓敏，中南财经政法大学外国语学院硕士研究生，研究方向：英语文学，文学伦理学批评研究。电邮：1105707821@qq.com。刘红卫（通讯作者），中南财经政法大学外国语学院教授，研究方向：英语文学，现当代英国戏剧，文学伦理学批评研究。电邮：liuhw@zuel.edu.cn。

Title: From Constraint to Autonomy: The Reconstruction of Jeanette's Ethical Identity in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

Abstract: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is a bildungsroman that combines autobiographical elements with symbolic significance, profoundly depicting the protagonist Jeanette's struggle and growth in the process of ethical identity reconstruction. This paper takes ethical literary criticism as the theoretical perspective to analyze Jeanette's dilemma and transformation in the

process of achieving ethical identity reconstruction from three aspects: the multiple ethical identities she carries, the ethical dilemmas she falls into under multiple pressures of family, religion, and society, and the ethical choices she ultimately makes. Through the depiction of Jeanette's upbringing, Winterson criticizes the prejudice and exclusion of same sex orientation group by social and religious systems, reveals the impact of this prejudice on individual identity, and presents possible paths for individuals to seek self and ethical identity reconstruction under oppression.

Keywords: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*; Jeanette Winterson; ethical identity

Author Biography: **Huang Xiaomin**, Master's Candidate at the School of Foreign Studies, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law. Research Areas: English Literature, Ethical Literary Criticism. E-mail: 1105707821@qq.com. **Liu Hongwei** (Corresponding Author), Professor at the School of Foreign Studies, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law. Research Areas: English Literature, Contemporary British Drama, Ethical Literary Criticism. E-mail: liuhw@zuel.edu.cn.

引言

作为英国当代最具影响力的作家之一，珍妮特·温特森（Jeanette Winterson, 1959-）以其独特的叙事风格、深刻的主题探索和强烈的个性表达赢得了文学界的广泛赞誉。1985年，她创作的《橘子不是唯一的水果》（*Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*）一经问世，便凭借独特的叙事风格与深刻内涵赢得惠特布莱德首作奖，为她奠定了先锋女性作家的地位。该小说自出版以来便引发学界持续关注，学者们或关注其中的叙事策略，认为作者借此颠覆了传统的性别二元对立和异性恋规范（Arcak, 2023），或聚焦小说中体现出对宗教的批评，解构了宗教权威，揭示其虚伪与矛盾（Al Shara, 2015），或以拉康精神分析视角分析珍妮特的主体意识觉醒及发展过程（张雨鑫, 2024），又或通过另类空间维度解读文本，指出温特森通过重写《圣经》构建了“异托邦”式的文本空间（王素英, 2020）。值得注意的是有学者关注到温特森多部作品存在着一个叙事共性，诸如《橘子不是唯一的水果》《给樱桃以性别》《守望灯塔》等，其笔下主人公都置身于非血缘家庭环境，指出温特森小说中被领养儿童在家庭伦理关系中的处境与困境，认为不健康的家庭伦理关系会激发出家庭成员心中所潜伏的暴戾情感，批判了家长制霸权对个体自由的压制（苗学华, 2020）。该学者侧重对家庭结构和亲子关系的伦理批判，探讨父母的失职与孩子的困境，对于珍妮特如何在伦理选择中构建伦理身份、实现伦理成长的过程并未充分展开。因此，本文运用文学伦理学批评方法，分析《橘子不是唯一的水果》中主人公珍妮特的伦理身份变化与伦理选择过程，首先聚焦于珍妮特在家庭、宗教与性别传统三重规约下的伦理身份建构；其次分析其在成长过程中所遭遇的多重伦理困境；最后探讨她如何通过艰难的伦理选择逐步实现自我认同与伦理成长，为该小说的理解提供一种新的解读维度。

一、被规约的多重伦理身份建构

在小说中，珍妮特的养母是一位狂热而又虔诚的五旬节派基督徒，她将整个家庭打造成一个小型的教会空间，把圣经教义贯彻到日常生活的每一个细节中，从日常行为到价值判断，无一不以圣经为依据，信仰渗透一切。收养珍妮特对她而言，并不是出于传统的母性本能或对家庭温情的渴望，而是为了完成一种神圣使命，带着强烈的宗教目的。养母梦到自己会有个孩子，并且“她会训练她，塑造她，把她献给上帝：一个传教之子，一个上帝的仆人，一个祝福”(p. 13)^①。她便去孤儿院领养了珍妮特，是上帝赐予她并让她收养这个孩子，养育珍妮特于她而言不仅是一项责任，更是一项神圣的使命，是她向上帝展示忠诚与信仰的方式。“伦理身份有多种分类，如以血亲为基础的身份、以伦理关系为基础的身份、以道德规范为基础的身份、以集体和社会关系为基础的身份、以从事的职业为基础的身份等”(聂珍钊, 2014, p. 263)。养母收养珍妮特这一行为，使得珍妮特拥有了她的第一层伦理身份，即以收养关系为基础的身份——作为养女的伦理身份。“人的身份是一个人在社会中存在的标识，人需要承担身份所赋予的责任与义务”(聂珍钊, 2014, p. 263)。珍妮特作为家中的养女，自然必须听从养母的安排，她的伦理行为受到极大的规范与约束。作为一名被收养的孩子，她并非处于平等的亲子关系中，而是在养母的宗教计划中被赋予特定角色。

珍妮特与养母的关系虽名义上为母女，但实质上存在某种距离。没有血缘的天然纽带，失去了基于血缘自然建立的亲密关系的可能，二人之间难以形成亲密的母女关系，在珍妮特从小的成长环境中，养母对她疏于关心，缺乏真正的关爱。珍妮特曾经发现自己听不见任何声音，她尝试告诉养母却仍吸引不了养母的注意力，养母并没有重视反而点了点头又继续去看描绘传教士生活的书。后面还是裘波莉小姐发现珍妮特跟耳聋了一样听不见声音，而当时养母也在场却没有先一步发现自己的孩子的异样。珍妮特住院后，养母也并没有时刻陪护，而去忙于安排圣诞活动，“那是一年里教堂最忙活的时节”(p. 39)。尽管珍妮特期待得到养母的鼓励，但“她却拍拍我的头，转身走了”(p. 37)。小说中珍妮特的养父更是几乎透明的存在，二人之间缺乏交流，更别提养父对珍妮特有多关心爱护。珍妮特就这样以作为养女的伦理身份在这样的家庭环境中长大，与其说是养女，更像是一个被安排好命运的宗教“工具”，这为她后来质疑伦理身份埋下了伏笔。

养母收养珍妮特这一行为，还使得珍妮特第二层伦理身份的形成，即作为基督徒的伦理身份。那么这种伦理身份是珍妮特自己主动选择的吗？她是出于对五旬节派观念的赞同而主动信仰宗教的吗？很显然并非如此。文学伦理学批评强调“回到历史的伦理现场，站在当时的伦理立场上解读和阐释文学作品”(聂珍钊, 2010, p. 14)。对于珍妮特作为基督徒这一伦理身份的形成可以追溯到她所

^① 本文有关《橘子不是唯一的水果》的引文均来自珍妮特·温特森(2010年):《橘子不是唯一的水果》，于是译。北京:新星出版社。以下引文只标注页码，不再一一说明。

处的伦理环境。从珍妮特被养母收养伊始，她就肩负着养母对她的宗教期望——成为传教士。从小养母就告诉珍妮特，她是上帝的选民，是上帝挑选的孩子，养母严格控制珍妮特的阅读，只允许她阅读《圣经》和宗教宣传册，接受《圣经》的训诫，禁止她阅读世俗作品，认为非宗教书籍会污染灵魂，带着珍妮特参与布道和宗教活动。珍妮特能接触到的为数不多的世俗作品就是《简爱》，而养母给珍妮特读这本小说时私自篡改了结局，在养母的口中，简爱最终嫁给了圣约翰，这本小说竟成了宣扬宗教的书。可见养母在她还没有形成自我意识之前就已经为她设定了作为基督徒的伦理身份，这是一种规约伦理的强加。起初珍妮特并没有去学校接受教育，养母称学校为养殖场，也没有解释这么称呼学校的原因，幼年的珍妮特对此理解为学校肯定是个坏东西，会引人走上歧途。可见珍妮特对于外界事物的理解都源自于养母，从养母的态度中判断事物的好坏。珍妮特于是在家中接受养母对她的教育，养母教她有关害虫和园艺的知识，教她读《申命记》和《启示录》，提醒珍妮特，“当你进入传道行业，你就用得上这些本领”(p. 24)，这种封闭式的教育限制了珍妮特的认知与想象力。

在珍妮特的成长过程中，作为一个被上帝选中的孩子，她从小就被灌输使命感与服从意识，并且被当做传教士来培养。珍妮特在童年时的世界是完全宗教化的，其语言、行为、情感表达与道德判断皆源于圣经教义。在这一阶段，她尚未发展出独立的伦理判断能力，对宗教信仰缺乏反思，而是将其内化为行为习惯与思维方式。基督徒的伦理身份并非她主动选择的结果，而是在家庭的宗教氛围和五旬节派教会的集体规范中形成，是由养母和教会在其幼年阶段强加并不断规训的产物，她作为基督徒的伦理身份是一种被动建构的结果。

除了作为养女和基督徒的伦理身份外，珍妮特还承载着作为女性的传统性别身份。在她成长的伦理环境中，性别身份不仅仅是由生理特征决定的，更是由家庭、宗教和社会共同赋予她的一种道德角色。正如聂珍钊所指出“伦理身份是评价道德行为的前提。在现实中，伦理要求身份同道德行为相符合，即身份与行为在道德规范上相一致”(2014, p. 264)。作为女性的传统性别身份，必然承担着相应的性别期待和道德规范。

小说中，在珍妮特成长的宗教社区中，性别身份本身就被赋予了严格的道德功能，女性被要求承担特定的道德角色：她们应当纯洁、顺从、忠于信仰，行为举止必须符合教会和家庭对好女孩的期待。作为一个女性儿童，珍妮特自小就被纳入这一性别道德体系中，被动接受这种单一的性别伦理塑造。珍妮特作为女性的传统性别身份，首要的道德规范就是维持异性恋性取向，这不仅是社会、家庭和宗教对她的期待，更是一种强加的伦理标准。同性之间的爱情是宗教的伦理禁忌，在教会看来这是不正常的激情，是被魔鬼附身，是撒旦的诅咒引人堕落。小说中多琳和奈丽谈论自己的十七岁女儿简一天到晚待在苏珊家时，担忧地说“她再不找个男朋友，街坊邻居就该有风言风语了”(p.

103), 认为两个女人睡一张床就不一样了。可见普通邻里之间也普遍认同: 一个女性, 如果不展示对异性的兴趣, 不仅会被怀疑性别身份的正当性, 更会被认定为有道德问题。在这种单一的性别伦理体系中, 任何偏离传统性别行为的举动都会被视为道德失范, 甚至是宗教意义上的堕落。

二、伦理困境的桎梏

珍妮特从小被养母置于一个封闭的宗教环境中, 养母的期待就是将她培养为传教士。她起初并没有怀疑养母塑造的世界, 甚至热衷于布道, 这一阶段她的伦理身份是与养母的期望高度重合的。随着她开始在学校接受教育, 她就逐渐接触到与养母不同的观念。在学校里, 珍妮特极力地想融入集体, 但仅仅是按照养母从小教育她的方式, 总显得格格不入。老师给养母写信, 认为珍妮特的宗教知识给她带来了困扰。她写关于岩獾和虾的作文、在绣布上选择经文而非表达情感的语言, 虽然都源于她在家庭中所习得的宗教教义, 却无法为老师和同龄人所理解。这种不被理解、不被接纳的经历, 对珍妮特来说是一种伦理身份冲击的开始, 也是一种被动的自我反思的契机。这一时期, 珍妮特的自我觉醒尚处于朦胧状态, 她并未彻底质疑养母的世界观, 而是开始体验到不同规范之间的矛盾性。

珍妮特真正意义上的自我觉醒, 始于她对梅兰妮产生情感并发展出超越友谊的亲密关系, 这种关系被视为违背上帝旨意和自然法则的罪行, 因为它不具备异性恋婚姻所承载的繁衍功能, 从而被视为对社会与自然秩序的威胁, 基督教徒认为这是“违反了上帝的意愿和大自然的法则, 是不正常的、被撒旦诅咒的行为”(章佳妮, 2013, p. 96)。在养母看来, 珍妮特的行为不仅是道德上的背叛, 更是对神圣秩序的亵渎。她将女儿视为上帝的选民, 是为了传道救世的, 珍妮特与梅兰妮的亲密关系无异于对神圣计划的抗拒。牧师与养母认为珍妮特受到了撒旦的引诱, 必须通过驱魔仪式来将她从罪恶中解救出来。珍妮特不仅被信徒围绕、集体祷告长达一整天, 更在牧师的要求下被养母锁进房间, 禁止进食。在强烈的饥饿与孤立中, 珍妮特身心俱疲, 为了尽快脱身而被迫假意忏悔。她承认了罪过, 发誓悔改, 但这一切并非出于真实的悔意。在珍妮特浑身发抖躺在客厅的那天晚上, 养母亲手烧毁了她的信件、卡片与私人笔记, 在珍妮特看来这是养母对她的背叛, “在她的头脑里, 她依然是王后, 但不在是我的王后了, 也不再是光明正义的王后了”(p. 155)。珍妮特成年后与凯蒂的第二段恋情再度被发现, 使得她与养母之间的冲突达到顶点, 牧师和养母态度比上一次更加激烈和强硬, 如若珍妮特不忏悔, 她就必须离开家, 养母说“我的家里不能有魔鬼”(p. 188)。在她眼中, 女儿一旦不再属于上帝的阵营, 便自动被视为撒旦的化身, 必须被驱逐, 以维护家庭的纯洁。“在文学文本中, 所有伦理问题的产生往往都同伦理身份相关”(聂珍钊, 2014, p. 263)。面对忏悔则得救, 不忏悔则逐出的二元对立选择, 珍妮特实际上被迫在两种互不相容的伦理身份之间做出抉择: 一方面, 如果她选择顺从养母的意愿、否认自我情感并成为传教士, 那么她将继续维持养女与基督徒的

伦理身份，被家庭与宗教共同体所接纳；但另一方面，如果她坚持自己真实的性取向，养母将不会认她这个女儿。

在成长过程中，珍妮特作为基督徒的身份并非出于主动选择，而是在家庭与宗教共同规训下被被动形成的伦理身份，但这并不意味着她对教会的所有观点完全认同。正如她在一次以“完美”为主题的教会布道中产生了首次异议：“就是那时候，我有生以来第一次萌生了对神学的不同意见”(p. 82)。牧师宣称完美就是毫无瑕疵，只能在来世才得以实现。教会强调所谓的“完美”，即对神绝对的顺从、道德的纯洁无瑕，任何偏离教义的思想或行为都被视为堕落和罪恶。而在小说“利未记”一章中，温特森借用一个王子寻找完美妻子的神话故事，传达出另一种对完美的理解：完美并非毫无瑕疵，而是一种平衡与和谐的状态。这一寓言不仅暗示了珍妮特对教会单一完美观的反思，也象征着她伦理身份建构过程中认知的不断变化。

随着珍妮特与梅兰妮之间情感的悄然发展，她原本被动接受的宗教伦理身份开始出现动摇。她逐渐意识到自身的情感真实且不可否认，但这种同性之爱却被教会视为严重的伦理禁忌，是堕落的象征。在教会看来，非异性恋取向不仅是道德败坏的表现，更是一种灵魂被魔鬼侵占的罪证。当她们的关系被揭发后，牧师公开宣称：“上帝的这些孩子已堕入淫欲邪恶之罪……这些孩子已被恶魔占据”(p. 143)。珍妮特表示自己爱梅兰妮，并反驳牧师的谴责，“对于洁净的人，凡物都洁净……错的是你，不是我们”(p. 143)。这是对教会话语霸权的挑战，也体现出珍妮特作为基督教徒和非异性恋群体的两种身份之间的冲突。当珍妮特与凯蒂之间的情感再次被揭发时，教会的认为她已成为恶魔七度重返的载体。珍妮特面临着情感情同和宗教伦理禁忌的冲突，再次被推入伦理的十字路口：只有选择忏悔、否认自身情感情同，她才能继续作为一名纯洁的基督徒留在教会；若坚持与梅兰妮相爱，那她就被视为彻底背叛了教会，两种身份无法共存。这构成了典型的伦理困境——无论是她选择了哪一个选项，都符合普遍道德原则；“但是，一旦选择者在二者之间做出一项选择，就会导致另一项违背原理，即违背普遍道德原则”(聂珍钊，2014, p.262)。

非异性之间的恋情不仅仅是宗教体系中的伦理禁忌，更在整个社会结构中被视为越轨行为而遭遇排斥。聂珍钊指出“伦理禁忌可以看成是一种规矩或一种制度，一种法律规定或一种道德准则，或者说它就是约束人的行为的法律，对于社会具有非常重要的意义”(2006, p. 114)。只有遵循主流社会所认定的正常性别秩序和家庭模式，个体才能获得道德上的认可与社会身份的合法性。珍妮特所处的小镇社会，正是依赖于这种不容置疑的伦理秩序得以维持平静有序，这种伦理秩序同时也是对潜在越轨者的规训与排斥，无形中强化着对同性情感的敌意和警惕。

小说中一共提到了两对情侣。第一对是经营着文具店的两个终身未婚女性，每次珍妮特前去购买漫画书时，她们都会赠送香蕉饼干，表现出善意与亲和。然而当她们邀请珍妮特一同前往海边游

玩时，她跑回家取钱准备买一把新沙铲，养母却坚决反对她与这两位女性有任何私人接触，不愿解释缘由，甚至规定以后珍妮特都不能去那里买漫画书。另一对则是十七岁的简和苏珊，她们两整天待在一起，因为被人看到买了一张双人床而引起了大家对她们的议论。母亲多琳都说：“要是她们不小心点儿，乡亲们就会觉得她们和文具店那对一样了”(p. 103)。在以异性恋为主流的社会中，个体敢于表达自身的非异性恋身份认同，往往意味着要置身于道德评判的风口浪尖，承受来自社会的审视与质疑，因为这种行为不被视为一种平等的情感选择，而被污名化为越轨和异常的存在，是对现有社会秩序的破坏。个人一旦公开这种身份，往往不仅失去社会的庇护，更可能遭到议论、疏远，甚至彻底被排除在主流伦理共同体之外。在社会伦理规训的强大压力下，珍妮特不得不作出个人抉择——是顺应社会主流伦理观念，转为异性恋的性取向，还是坚持真实的自我认同和相应的伦理主体身份，哪怕这意味着被进一步边缘化、排斥，甚至彻底被放逐于主流伦理共同体之外。

三、艰难的伦理选择

伦理选择作为文学伦理学批评的核心术语，“往往同解决伦理困境联系在一起，因此伦理选择需要解决伦理两难的问题”(聂珍钊，2014, p. 268)。在面对养母的严厉要求下，珍妮特面临着要不忏悔，要不被放逐的伦理困境。这实际上也是珍妮特对于自身伦理身份的选择问题：珍妮特是选择继续当养母的养女，接受规定的性别角色与道德教义，还是毅然决然坚定选择非异性恋群体的身份，走上一条与养母割断亲情的道路。在珍妮特的两段恋情相继被揭露时，她做出了两次不同的伦理选择。第一次与梅兰妮的感情被发现，珍妮特迫于“想尽快摆脱这档子事”(p. 151)的心理，选择了假意忏悔，这一行为缓和了她与养母之间的紧张关系。在养母看来，是魔鬼引诱珍妮特堕落，而这种堕落是可以通过悔改而被纠正的。珍妮特在表面回归“正常”后，仍得以维持其作为养女的伦理身份。然而，第二次当养母得知她与凯蒂的恋情时，却表现得怒不可遏，认定珍妮特已经神志不清，并威胁她若不悔改，就必须搬出家门。这一次的伦理困境相比于上一次更为严峻，已发展到不可调和的地步。养母这时将珍妮特的堕落归咎于她的布道行为，认为布道之事应属于男人，这种性别角色上的批判让珍妮特对自己的伦理身份产生了深深的困惑。作为养女，她从小顺从养母的安排，立志成为传教士，并为此付出努力。然而，当她终于实现这一目标，却被养母视为堕落的根源。这使得珍妮特对自己的人生产生了深刻怀疑，认为“在此之前，我的人生好歹还算说得通，但此刻就再也说不通了，完全不行了”(p. 184)。正因如此，珍妮特最终选择离开家，这一决定其实并非明确的伦理选择，而是一种逃避。她既无法放弃自身的性取向，又难以满足养母的伦理要求，只能以离开来暂时中止这一无法调和的伦理冲突。

离开家的珍妮特独自在外打工以维持生计，但是逃避并不能真正解决伦理困境。在圣诞节期间，

珍妮特最终还是选择回家探望养母。尽管养母依然坚决反对这一行为，但两人见面时却谁也没有再提起这件事。养母依然笃信宗教，她与珍妮特的关系似乎也恢复了表面的平静，仿佛那些冲突从未发生过。正如珍妮特自己所说：“但我没办法融入这个家，也没有办法抛弃我自己的家。她早已在我的纽扣上系了一根绳，只要她高兴，就能牵绊我”（p. 243）。聂珍钊指出：“伦理选择往往同解决伦理困境联系在一起”（2014, p. 268）。面对伦理困境，珍妮特并未选择极端方式，而是在保留个人身份的同时，尝试维系亲情的联系。正如王晓惠等学者所述：“理性是根据特定伦理环境中伦理秩序的规约，对自己的身份和行为做出符合伦理规约或趋于善的认知和判断”（2025, p. 41），珍妮特最终的选择，正反映出其理性意志的成熟与升华，一方面，她选择坚持自我，认同自己的性别身份；另一方面，她也没有完全割裂与养母之间的伦理纽带，没有放弃自己作为养女的伦理身份，平衡了亲情与自主之间的关系。

珍妮特从小生长在一个宗教氛围浓厚的家庭中，养父母皆为虔诚的基督徒，因此她的伦理身份在很大程度上是在家庭影响下被动建构的。她自幼接受宗教教育，按养母的意愿学习宣教知识，努力成为一名传教士。可以说，在恋情发生之前，珍妮特所认同的是宗教共同体所提供的集体身份。陶家俊（2004, p. 37）指出身份认同分为个体认同、集体认同、自我认同和社会认同。其中，集体认同是指文化主体在两个不同文化群体之间进行抉择，需将一种文化视为集体文化自我，而将另一种文化视作他者。在两次恋情发生之后，珍妮特在意识到自身情感与宗教教义之间存在冲突后，开始面临伦理上的抉择：她必须在基督徒的身份与非异性恋群体的身份之间做出选择，也意味着她要在这两种文化认同之间进行权衡。这一过程标志着她集体认同的动摇与重构，体现了其伦理身份从被动接受到主动选择的转变。

在和凯蒂的恋情被发现后，牧师断言珍妮特“是一个法力很强的大恶魔的受害者”（p. 181），并将此事上报给大教堂。大教堂一方面坚称女性不应在教会中掌握权力，另一方面却无法忽视教友人數的增长正得益于珍妮特的布道。然而，他们选择无视她为教会所作的贡献，令珍妮特逐渐意识到，对这样一个排斥与否定她的宗教再抱有信仰已毫无意义。而牧师为了拯救珍妮特，再次试图安排一次更为强烈的驱魔仪式，并要求她和养母一起去莫克贝旅店静养十四天。对此，珍妮特坚定地回答道：“她可以去。我要离开教会，你不用担心我要不要疗养”（p. 187）。这一次，珍妮特作出了明确的伦理选择：她选择了自己的非异性恋群体的身份，勇敢地离开了家庭，也决绝地告别了教会。圣诞节期间，珍妮特回到小镇探望养母。此时，她对基督教的看法已发生了根本性的转变。她坦言：“我始终不认为上帝背叛了我。是上帝的仆人们……我甚至不知道上帝是否存在……”（p. 234）。于珍妮特而言，真正的问题不在于上帝本身，而在于那些自诩为上帝仆人的人未能真正领悟其教义的精神内核。至于上帝是否存在，她已不再执着于答案——这些问题对她而言已经变得不再重要。在

外独立生活的经历促使她完成了价值观的重建。此时的珍妮特，已不再信仰基督教，而是形成了一套更加自主、完整而多元的价值体系。

珍妮特和女性之间的感情不仅遭到了家庭和教会的强烈排斥，更是与当时英国社会的主流道德观发生了根本冲突。社会仍普遍以病态、罪恶甚至魔鬼附体的方式对待女性情侣或是男性情侣，尤其是在宗教背景浓厚的保守小镇中更是如此。珍妮特选择离开家和教会后，独自一人在外打工维持生活，还一边完成自己的学业。在殡仪馆打工的期间，得知她的老朋友艾尔西去世，珍妮特悲痛万分，她询问艾尔西的葬礼在哪里举办，得到的却是冷漠的回答“你不能来，那是为神圣的人准备的”(p. 210)。珍妮特不理解，质问自己到底犯了什么天大的错误，牧师却回应：“你提出的邪恶主张是绝对无法被认同的”(p. 208)。

巴特勒认为，性别不是一种稳定的或与生俱来的身份，而是不断地社会表演的结果。“性别身份并不在性别表现的背后，而是由那些被认为是其结果的‘性别表现’操演性地建构出来的”(1990, p. 33)。珍妮特从小被养母教导要成为传教士，承担起传播福音的使命，必须服从教义、洁身自好，她的性别身份正是在养母和教会的规训下，被塑造成符合宗教与父权社会期待的女性形象。这一性别角色在教会与家庭的日常生活中被不断重复和强化，逐渐趋于稳定。当她先后与梅兰妮和凯蒂建立情感关系后，她开始偏离这种预期的性别表演。珍妮特拒绝教会安排的驱魔仪式和疗养计划，毅然选择离开家庭与教会。她的行为体现了巴特勒所谓的颠覆性操演，是一种对传统性别行为模式的偏离，揭示了性别身份并非天生固定，而是可以被挑战、改变和重新定义的。尽管艾尔西并非与珍妮特同龄，但一直是她最亲密的朋友和精神支柱。无论是珍妮特在学校遭遇排斥，还是在家庭和教会中面临指责与驱逐，艾尔西始终坚定地支持她，鼓励她坚持自我，勇敢探索个人身份。艾尔西的去世使得珍妮特反思自身的性别与性取向，她开始意识到自己并非不正常，而是一种真实的自我表达。她的性别身份不应被社会、宗教或文化规范所禁锢，而应根植于对自我真实情感的尊重与认同。在长期挣扎与反抗之后，珍妮特最终选择离开家庭、脱离教会，并放弃对基督教的信仰，她以坚定的姿态承认并坚持自己的非异性恋群体身份，这一选择标志着她完成了对自身性别身份的重构与主体认同的确立。

结语

回顾珍妮特的成长历程，童年时期的她具有多重伦理身份：作为养女，她必须服从养母的教导；作为基督徒，她肩负着传教的使命；作为女性，她被赋予顺从、纯洁、奉献家庭的性别角色定位。然而，随着她在学校接受教育、逐渐接触到更广阔的外部世界，珍妮特的自我意识在逐渐觉醒，这些既定的、被动建构的伦理身份开始动摇。在认识梅兰妮并和她发展的第一段恋情被发现后，珍妮特开始质疑并重新定义自己的性别身份。她意识到，性别并非固定不变的，而是可以通过个人选择和经历不断变化和重塑的。珍妮特的决定标志着她对传统性别规范的勇敢挑战，以及对自我真实情感的尊重与认同。她的经历提醒我们，性别不仅仅是生物学上的特征，更是社会建构和个体选择的产物，需要我们以开放和包容的态度去理解和尊重。

特开始陷入伦理困境。她的性取向不仅和养母对她成为传教士的期待相违背，更是触犯了教会的伦理禁忌，非异性之间的爱情被视为罪恶与堕落的象征，于整个社会都是不容接纳的。

面对养母和教会的高压，珍妮特虽一度屈服，内心深处却始终未曾认同教会对她的定罪，也未曾真正认为自己的情感有错。第二次与凯蒂的恋情不仅让她再次面临来自教会与养母的严厉审判，也将她推向伦理选择的临界点。珍妮特做出的伦理选择实际上也是对她自己伦理身份的选择。最终，珍妮特拒绝配合教会安排的驱魔与“治疗”，毅然选择离开家庭与教会，踏上属于自己的道路。珍妮特做出的伦理选择改变了她的伦理身份，她不再是基督徒，没有和养母断绝母女关系，也没有迫于世俗偏见和社会规范改变自己的性取向。这表明珍妮特实现了伦理身份重构，揭示了伦理身份的动态性。

在现实生活中，不仅是女性常常受到来自社会各方面的审判与规训，社会对非异性恋群体也抱有偏见，社会不断通过各种隐性与显性的标准规范着人们，一旦有所偏离标准，就会被当成异类。在小说中，养母经常让珍妮特吃个橘子，这不仅是一句日常用语，更隐喻着对她行为与身份的控制与引导。然而，珍妮特最终选择拒绝这唯一的橘子，勇敢踏出属于自己的人生道路，重构了自己的伦理身份。温特森通过珍妮特的故事不仅批评了社会对非异性恋群体的偏见，反对身份的单一和固定，更鼓励每一个在现实中遭遇偏见、束缚甚至打击的人，都能像珍妮特一样坚持真实的自我，打破偏见并且实现成长。

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Huang Xiaomin ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-9085-9555>

Liu Hongwei ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3775-1286>

References

Judith, Butler (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.

苗学华 (2020): “珍妮特·温特森及其小说中的家庭伦理选择”，《北方论丛》(06): 89-95。

[Miao, Xuehua (2020). “Family Ethics Choice on Jeanette Winterson and Her Novels.” *The Northern Forum* (06): 89-95.]

聂珍钊 (2014): 《文学伦理学批评导论》。北京大学出版社。

[Nie, Zhenzhao (2014). *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism*. Peking University Press.]

聂珍钊 (2010): “文学伦理学批评：基本理论与术语”，《外国文学研究》(01): 12-22。

[Nie, Zhenzhao (2010). “Ethical Literary Criticism: Its Fundaments and Terms.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (01): 12-22.]

聂珍钊 (2006): “伦理禁忌与俄狄浦斯的悲剧”,《学习与探索》(05): 113-116+237。

[Nie, Zhenzhao (2006). “Ethical Taboos and the Tragedy of Oedipus.” *Study & Exploration* (05): 113-116+237.]

Senar, Arçak (2023). “From ‘the Only Fruit’ to the Many: Storytelling as a Performative Mask in Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.” *Journal of Modernism and Postmodernism Studies* (01): 184-200.

陶家俊 (2004): “身份认同导论”,《外国文学》(02): 37-44。

[Tao, Jiajun (2004). “Introduction to Identity Recognition.” *Foreign Literature* (02): 37-44.]

王素英 (2020): “‘一部自己的《圣经》’、一个‘异托邦’——珍妮特·温特森《橘子不是唯一的水果》的另类空间解读”,《当代外国文学》(02): 55-61。

[Wang, Suying (2020). “‘A Bible of My Own’, a Heterotopia: On the Other Space in Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.” *Contemporary Foreign Literature* (02): 55-61.]

王晓惠、张佳音、邢瑞桐 (2025): “毒药、假药、良药: 论《托诺邦盖》中的理性意志与伦理选择”,《文学写作与评价学刊》(01): 39-47。

[Wang Xiaohui, Zhang Jiayin, Xing Ruitong. “Poison, Fake Medicine, Good Medicine: The Rational Will and Ethical Choice of *Tono-Bungay*.” *Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation* (01): 39-47.]

珍妮特·温特森 (2010): 《橘子不是唯一的水果》, 于是译。新星出版社。

[Winterson, Jeanette (2010). *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, translated by Yu Shi, New Star Press.]

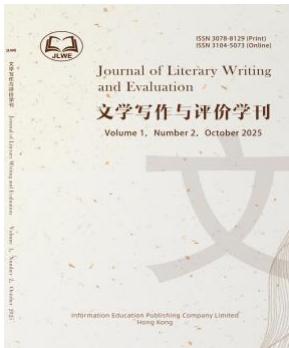
Zaydun, Al-Shara (2015). “Deconstructing Religion in Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are not the Only Fruit*: A Metacritical Study.” *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* (01): 238-244.

章佳妮 (2013): “跨越禁锢追寻自我——论《橘子不是唯一的水果》中的性别身份建构”,《安徽文学》(10): 96-97。

[Zhang, Jiani (2013). “Transcending Imprisonment and Pursuing Self: On the Construction of Gender Identity in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.” *Anhui Literature* (01): 96-97.]

张雨鑫 (2024): “珍妮特的主体恢复与他者平衡——拉康精神分析视域下评《橘子不是唯一的水果》”,《长江小说鉴赏》(05): 90-94。

[Zhang, Yuxin (2024). “Jeanette’s Subject Restoration and Other Balance: A Review of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* from the Perspective of Lacan’s Psychoanalysis.” *Journal of Changjiang Novel Appreciation* (05): 90-94.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.258-274.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.08](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.08)



The Feminist Analysis of Visual Features in Sylvia Plath's Bee Poems

Liu Shanni, Chen Xi

Abstract: Including five interlinked works featuring “the queen bee” and a female speaker, The Bee Poems of Sylvia Plath are significant late works of hers. Although embodying a profound feminist critique through visual modes that disrupt patriarchal narrative structures, The Bee Poems are often read autobiographically similar to her other confessional poems. This paper explores the visual dimensions of these poems through three distinct visual perspectives: panoramic scenes, foreground compositions, and close-up images. Drawing on W.J.T. Mitchell’s visual theory and Laura Mulvey’s concept of the “male gaze,” this paper reveals how Plath transforms traditional ekphrastic modes into feminist interventions. The poems first depict a patriarchal world in which female beauty and fertility are objectified with three panoramas. Second, The Bee Poems trace the speaker’s growing feminist awareness and identification with collective feminism through three foregrounds. Third, these poems enact a symbolic demystification of patriarchy with four close-ups. Through these visual strategies, Plath reclaims the female gaze and reconstructs poetic space as a site of resistance.

Keywords: Sylvia Plath; The Bee Poems; Visual Features; Feminism

Author Biography: **Liu Shanni**, Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Foreign Languages, Hunan University. Research Areas: British and American Literature, Literary Ethical Criticism. E-mail: 137727107@qq.com. **Chen Xi** (Corresponding Author), Professor and Ph.D. Supervisor at the School of Foreign Languages, Hunan University. Research Areas: British and American Literature, Comparative Literature, Literary Ethical Criticism. E-mail: traceycx@126.com.

题目：论西尔维娅·普拉斯《蜜蜂组诗》的女性主义视觉特征

摘要：西尔维娅·普拉斯的晚期的重要诗作《蜜蜂组诗》包含五首以“蜂后”和一位女性叙述者为核心的，相互关联的作品。学界常将其与普拉斯的其他自白诗相提并论，并对其进行自传性解读，忽略了该组诗所蕴含的深刻的女性主义批判和其挑战了传统父权叙事结构的颠覆性视觉模式。本文从全景、前景和特写这三个独特的视觉视角，探讨《蜜蜂组诗》的视觉维度。基于 W.J.T.米切尔的视觉理论和劳拉·穆尔维的“男性凝视”概念，本文揭示了普拉斯如何超越传统的“艺格敷词”模式并将视觉写作与女性主义相结合。首先，组诗通过三幅全景图描绘了一个女性之美与女性生育能力被物化的父权世界。其次，组诗通过三个前景构图，阐述了诗中的女性叙事者日益增强的女性主义意识及其对集体女性主义的认同。最后，组诗通过四组特写图像，象征性地实现了对父权制的祛魅。通过这些视觉策略，普拉斯夺回了女性凝视权，并将诗歌空间重构为一个抵抗父权的场域。

关键词：西尔维娅·普拉斯；《蜜蜂组诗》；视觉特征；女性主义

作者简介：刘姗妮，湖南大学外国语学院博士研究生，研究方向：英美文学、文学伦理学批评。电邮：137727107@qq.com。陈晞（通讯作者），湖南大学外国语学院教授、博士生导师，研究方向：英美文学、比较文学、文学伦理学批评。电邮：traceycx@126.com。

The personal themes in Plath's poems like the Natz father image in “Daddy”, the abortion reference in “Barren Women” and the suicidal implication in her “Edge” boost her reputation as a “confessional poet”. Often focusing on extreme moments of individual experience, Plath's poems align closely with that of Robert Lowell (her professor) and Anne Sexton (her classmate)^①. The form of Plath's poems, to a great extent, follows the structure of the lyric tradition, with their musicality, personal themes, narrative quality, and rhythmical lines. What differentiates Plath from other confessional poets lies in her aesthetic mastery of always transcending realistic materials into aesthetically organized lines. It is not only attributes to her metaphor-imbued and musicality-internalized poetic language, but also the rarely known fact that Plath used to be a visual artist long before she was a poet. The painting techniques such as the use of frame, perspectival deepening and compositional design with color scheme^② are automatically combined with her writing technique in her poetic creation. To describe visual scenes or objects that are absent from the readers in poetic language, according to Greek tradition, is called “ekphrasis.” As Fan Jinghua (2007, p.207) argues, “In the late phrase poems, in which Plath builds more and more on discrete images to transcend mimetic similitude, the ekphrastic principle is an internalized method...” This internalized ekphrastic principle combined with Plath's feminist spirit in the creation of The Bee Poems.

^① Sexton's and Lowell's speakers have companions and interlocutors; the world they inhabit is realistically peopled.” See Hedley, Jane (2020). *I made you find me: The Coming of Age of the Woman Poet and the Politics of Poetic Address*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press:71.

^② Fan Jinghua put forwarded that “the use of frame, perspectival deepening and compositional design with color scheme are three primary visual art techniques Plath uses in her poems until her creation of the eight art poems.” qtd. in Hedley, Jane (2020). *I made you find me: The Coming of Age of the Woman Poet and the Politics of Poetic Address*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press: 21.

The Bee Poems refer to five poems by Plath that use bumblebees and the female subject as their main image. This poetry series forms the culmination of her final poetry collection, *Ariel*, which was considered to be her most mature work. The five individual bee poems are: "The Bee Meeting", "The Arrival of the Bee Box", "Stings", "The Swarm", and "Wintering". The visual techniques like parallax, perspective and compositional color scheme can be found in The Bee Poems align closely with Plath's feminist creating tendency. While previous studies on The Bee Poems tend to relate Plath's poems to her autobiographical experiences: for instance, Susan Van Dyne (1993, p.143) argued that The Bee Poems is "an extended autobiographical narrative for Plath" and a "rework of her earlier psychodrama," like that in her "Electra on Azalea Path," criticisms like these often overlook the feminist essence and visual techniques applied on The Bee Poems.

Introduction

The explicit and superb visual quality was found to be one of Plath's pioneering writing techniques. As Tracy Brain (2014, p.48) argues, "Plath's *Ariel* poems flight at the moment that naturalistic perspective is dismantled and she finds a way to mobilize in her poetry a painter's understanding of the ineluctable presence of the surface." The fact that Plath devoted herself to visual arts from her early years is merely known. Magazines such as *Leaves from a Cambridge Notebook* and *American in Paris* have witnessed Plath's intricate visual arts drawings. Kathleen Connors (2007, p.2) noticed Plath consciously combining poetic writing with visual arts: "As a child, she considered a poem she had written or transcribed to be complete when illustrated by a picture."

Critics, including Hedley, Hughes, Alfred Alvarez, Kroll, and Wei Lei, recognized the ekphrastic impulse in Plath's poems. However, in modern times, ekphrasis was criticized as gender-inflected^③ for "female otherness is an overdetermined feature in a genre that tends to describe an object of visual pleasure and fascination from a masculine perspective." (Mitchell 1994) Historically, ekphrasis has been dominated by male perspectives, and thus often avoided by female poets due to its alignment with voyeuristic and patriarchal modes of seeing. Such instances can be found in John Keats' "Ode on a Greek Urn" and Wallace Stevens' "Anecdote of a Jar," where the speaker imposes a controlling gaze upon a feminized object: an urn frozen in time, or a landscape subdued by the presence of a man-made vessel. Plath broke this male-centered and voyeurism-intended exclusion of ekphrasis by infusing visual writing with playing what Laura Mulvey (1975, p.12) called the "male gaze": "Women's desire is subjected to her image as a bearer of the bleeding wound, she can exist only concerning castration and cannot transcend it." In applying this gaze and daring to break the "pleasure expectation" comes from it, Plath refused to be passively objectified. She counter-romanticized cultural myth of women's beauty and fertility. In The Bee Poems, she internalized male gazes and mirrored them back with women's desire as freedom seekers to transform from "the gazed" to "the gazer." Plath practiced this technique for a long time since her early ekphrastic works like "The Disquieting Muse" and "Perseus: The Triumph of Wit over Suffering," just to name a few. I agree with Fang Jinghua's argument that

^③ Mitchell and Heffernan both have argued that the relationship presupposed by ekphrastic writing between poetry and painting is often implicitly and sometimes explicitly gender inflected. See Mitchell, Thomas (1994). *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 132.

Plath had internalized the ekphrastisis and adopted it as her creative model. Without this understanding, it is impossible to completely understand how Plath represent a anti-patriarchy picture in her Bee Poems.

This study focuses on two central research questions. First, what visual traits The Bee Poems represent? Second, how the visual writing intertwines other aesthetic techniques contribute to the feminist essence of The Bee Poems? To solve these questions, the main body of this paper has been divided into three parts relates to three different visual creative technique Plath adopted in The Bee Poems correspondingly.

1. Panorama: The Patriarchal World Outlook

In Plath's Bee Poems, panoramic visual frames are employed to depict an outward, seemingly objective world structured by patriarchal ideologies, where the female subject is placed within a *mise-en-scène* designed for surveillance, control, and aestheticized domination. Visuality in The Bee Poems is dynamic, more like a movie instead of a painting in a traditional ekphrastic sense. As a wide-angle view or representation of physical space, the panorama is widely applied in photography, film, and painting.

The closer the viewer is to the object, the more emotionally engaged the response tends to be. Alternatively, the audience tends to be more objective when one observes objects further away. More details are emphasized in the former situation, and more geographical surroundings would be involved in the latter case. Therefore, I argue that the three panoramic pictures Plath describes represent an objective patriarchal world outlook.

Firstly, the description of the meeting of the subject and the villagers in "The Bee Meeting" displays a panoramic picture:

Who are these people at the bridge to meet me? They are the villagers
The rector, the midwife, the sexton, the agent for bees.
In my sleeveless summery dress, I have no protection,
And they are all gloved and covered. why did nobody tell me?
They are smiling and taking out veils tacked to ancient hats.
...
Which is the rector now, is it that man in black?
Which is the midwife? Is that her blue coat?
Everybody is nodding a square blackhead, they are knights in visors,
Breastplates of cheesecloth knotted under the armpits.
Their smiles and their voices are changing. I am led through a beanfield. (Plath, 1981, p. 211)^④

Though this scenario is narrated through the perspective of the subject, the portrait of the other side of the bridge, the details of the villagers' clothing, and their actions are vividly represented. The panoramic framing of the villagers operates as the "male gaze," a psychological mechanism that reduces the female speaker to a sexualized object ("nude chicken neck") within a patriarchal *mise-en-scène*. This scenario exemplifies what Laura Mulvey terms "to-be-looked-at-ness," a central feature of the male gaze in classical visual culture.

^④ Plath, Sylvia (1981). *Collected Poems*. Edited with an introduction by Ted Hughes. London: Faber and Faber. 以下引文只标注页码，不再一一说明。

According to Mulvey, women in dominant cultural representations are positioned as passive spectacles, their bodies displayed not for their own agency but for the erotic contemplation of a male viewer. In “The Bee Meeting,” the speaker’s vulnerability: her “nude chicken neck” and her “sleeveless summer dress” render her legible not as a subject but as an object in a patriarchal scene. Her visibility becomes a mode of subjugation.

The villagers’ “square blackheads” function as a collective surveillance apparatus, their “gloved and covered” bodies contrasting with the speaker’s exposed “sleeveless summer dress” to enforce what Mulvey calls the “male gaze.” The three villagers symbolize the sacred trinity in the Christian belief, a typical patriarchal semiotic. By situating a midwife between a rector and a sexton, a birth-fertility-death linear life model applies its misogynist gaze upon the speaker. As a common American girl wearing a summer dress, the persona perfectly fits the “housewife image” when painted as a “nude chicken neck” with “no protection.” She has been gazed at by all the villagers and is expected to satisfy the erotic pleasure of patriarchy.

Plath is an expert in noticing this gaze, for she mentioned in her journal: “I am part man, and I notice women’s breasts and thighs with the calculation of a man choosing a mistress … but that is the artist and the analytical attitude toward the female body.” (Plath, 2000, p. 74) Among all the characters who emerged in this first meeting, the subject am the only persona exposing my “nude neck” and being “calculated” while everyone else is covered like “knights in visors”. In the first panoramic picture, the female body is sexualized. The “strangeness” the subject felt identified with the whole female group in the middle of the 20th century: “They could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their femininity.”(Friedan, 1982, p. 15) The subject must feel protected in the kitchen when my femininity (in keeping men, breastfeeding children, and doing laundry) is showing. When the subject is out of the kitchen to the other side of the bridge, the speaker’s sexualized female body wins her the “smiles” of villagers and an experience of taking control in the patriarchal world: they are “buttoning the cuffs at my wrists” and “making me one of them.” (p. 211) With this opportunity, the subject is enabled to seek how the patriarchal institutions operate.

The adoption of different colors is worthy of analysis in this picture. There is a secretary in white, a midwife in blue, and the rector in black, and almost every villager is “nodding a square black head.”

White refers to something exempted from stain, and it always reminds one of purity, divinity, and perfection. The secretary in white dresses me by “buttoning the cuffs at my wrists and the slit from my neck to my knees.” The secretary’s “whiteness” aligns with mythologized purity as a patriarchal technology “naturalized” construct that disciplines the female body (“buttoning the cuffs”) into docility. Plath subverts this by later associating white with the “fashionable straw hat,” a hollow signifier of rejection to assimilation.

The color black is a frequently appearing image in Plath’s works. Man in black is one of the most classic images in Plath’s poem: a man wearing black shoes who tramps the speaker for 30 years and “Bits (Bit) my pretty red heart in two” (p. 245) in “Daddy”; in “Man in black”, an all-mighty man wearing a black coat, black shoes, and black hair, powerful enough to “Fixing (Fixed) vortex on the far Tip/ riveting stones, air, All of it, together.” (p. 89) Examples of the man in black in Plath’s late poems are countless, and all of them constitute a spiritual god, in front of whom the subject is pale and powerless.

The subject held a love-hated feeling towards the man in black, just like “Every woman adores a Fascist.” (Plath, 2000, p. 221) The man in black in Bee Poems continues its image in “Daddy” except a more powerful rector who is in charge of people’s spiritual world. And the subject, like the speaker in “Daddy”, is passively put on a “black veil” with a “white Italian hat.” (p. 211) It means the speaker faces the temptation of the benefits patriarchy endows a docile woman (all-gloved, protection). Because the blacks are “making me one of them (one of the queen-bee killers)” while protecting me from being stung. Everybody except me is a “Square black head” (p. 211), constituting the patriarchy, so the subject is alone at the deciding moment of choosing whether to be assimilated.

The second panoramic picture appears next to the first one in “The Bee Meeting” in a more metaphorical way. After the speaker was covered and gloved, the subject was “led through a bean field”:

Strips of tinfoil winking like people,
Feather dusters fanning their hands in a sea of bean flowers,
Creamy bean flowers with black eyes and leaves like bored hearts.
Is it blood clots the tendrils are dragging up that string?
No, no, it is scarlet flowers that will one day be edible.
Now they are giving me a fashionable white Italian straw hat
And a black veil that molds to my face, they are making me one of them.
They are leading me to the shorn grove, the circle of hives.
Is it the hawthorn that smells so sick?
The barren body of hawthorn, etherizing its children. (p. 211)

Critics (Brain, 2001; Knickerbocker, 2009) suggested that Plath held an intense consciousness of ecology. Not only did Plath embody the ecological consciousness Rachel Carson advocated in her *Silent Spring*, but she also “uses nature imagery to externalize her inner life.” (Brain, 2014) The images of plants are largely involved in this poem, displaying the outlook of the patriarchal world from the perspective of a female persona. The field of beans symbolizes the human world. According to *The White Goddess*, “the bean is traditionally associated with ghosts” (Grave, 2013, p.223), and there is a record of a belief that the souls of the dead reside in beans. In this panoramic picture, the colors of beans, bean flowers, and hawthorn are vividly presented. The edible scarlet flower and the barren body of the hawthorn stand out. The beauty(scarlet) of an unmarried woman and the fertility of a housewife (motherhood institution) are the social assessments of women. Before being eaten up, it is the responsibility of the bean flower to maintain its scarlet texture, which symbolizes the red-lip image of an attractive woman fitting the erotic expectation of male pleasure. Plath’s “edible” flowers mirror the speaker’s sexualization, while the hawthorn’s “etherizing” scent chemical weapon against its own “children” parodies patriarchal motherhood’s self-destructive demands. It reminds me of Plath’s “Childless Woman”: “The womb rattles its pod...This body, This ivory Ungodly as a child's shriek...My funeral, and this hill and this gleaming with the mouths of corpses.” The images of death surround the barren woman. In this picture, the fertility of bean flowers/women is described in a way that caters to patriarchal expectations and preferences.

The third panoramic picture is in the “Stings” painting, the beekeeping scenario of “the man” and the subject. As both Hughes and Otto Plath are beekeepers, it is reasonable to regard this man as the husband or father image in many of Plath’s poems. This picture of two people, a couple maybe, managing their bees fits the traditional expectation of society, in which the female role always offers “excessive love” to “enameled” bee cups.

Through these three panoramic pictures, the patriarchal outlook is represented objectively. This is a world in which women’s beauty and fertility serve the needs of men. The compliments women get are around the necessity of male preference: excessive love, edibility, and a shining appearance. Through the opportunity of experiencing the privilege of patriarchy as a woman, the subject realizes the truth and starts to reject being gazed at and take subjectivity back.

2. Foreground: The Female Internal Gaze

Foreground imagery in The Bee Poems functions as a liminal space between internalized oppression and emerging self-awareness, where the female speaker begins to redirect the gaze inward and interrogate the structures that have rendered her voiceless.

Mitchell views images as “utterances” that communicate meaning. The foreground often plays a critical role in establishing the narrative or thematic focus of the image. By drawing immediate attention, it anchors the viewer’s gaze and sets the stage for interpreting the rest of the composition. The foreground serves as the first point of contact, creating a pathway for the viewer to enter the image and navigate its deeper layers. Though objects painted as the foreground are not the focus, mostly, they serve to invite viewer engagement, mediate the reality and the scene, amplify the layers of paintings, balance the whole picture, and offer background information, among others. There are several foregrounds: bokeh foreground, guided foreground, framed foreground, and medium foreground. The Bee Poems adopts three kinds of foregrounds to represent the growing path of the feminist consciousness of the poet.

The first framed foreground is set in “The Arrival of the Bee Box”. It pictures a peeping scenario towards the bee hives. The subject holds intense curiosity about the existential crisis of the bees after sharing the pain of the queen bee at the end of “The Bee Meeting” (“What have they accomplished/ Why am I cold?” (p. 212) Through the framed “little grid” on the box, the narration of the interior scenery showcases how the inner feminist self of the speaker is awakened by abjection:

There are no windows,
so I can't see what is in there.
There is only a little grid, no exit.
I put my eye on the grid.
It is dark, dark,
With the swarms of African hands
Minimized and shrunk for export,
Black on black, angrily clambering. (p. 213)

The interior scene in the bee box is pictured as “dark” and unorganized. The feeling I have of this box is it is “dangerous” and “furious”. Sleigh (2011, p.299) believes that the majority of human society is socialized through “emotional residues” like bees and ants, namely instincts. As he holds “crucially, these instincts were constructed as feminine.” Bees and ants are social animals and governed by their queens; therefore, they are organized through feminine instincts. However, the fact that the subject observes the bee group as unorganized is to deny the value of those feminine instincts. The poet even adopts the racist expression to describe the bees as “African hands” to devalue the femininity of the bee groups.

Ironically, the reason the subject spends a night with the bee box is to wait for the honey. At the starting point of shaking off patriarchal chains, the subject took the misogynist perspective to regard the bee groups unconsciously. It is the feeling that the speaker finds mostly impossible that constitutes “myself”. According to Julia Kristeva (1982, p.5), “the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very being, that it is none other than abject.” The more the speaker finds bees appalling, the more likely her true self has hidden within them. “The swarms feeling,” the “darkness” and “the box with little grid” are generated from chains of patriarchy to guarantee docility of the bees. Therefore, it is the chains that limit existing space of women appalls the speaker and by “abjecting” them the speaker constitutes her real self-women who never give up seeking freedom even in a dark box for they “shrunk for export.”

The whole process of abjection and self-constitution is a struggle. The speaker keeps oscillating between a patriarchal accomplice and an awakening feminist. The bees are unable to fly out without the speaker’s permission; therefore, the subject thinks “I am the owner” while they are just “a box of maniacs.” However, as a member of the female group who starts to introspect the patriarchal institution, the subject cannot help but empathize with them when the subject is immersed in observing the bees: “I wonder how hungry they are.” (p. 213)

After the whole process of observation of bees and introspection of the female group, the subject decides to let the bees out: “Tomorrow I will be sweet God, I will set them free. / The box is only temporary.” (p. 213) Through the action of letting bees out, the subject frees her ambivalence towards the patriarchy and female groups as well. The subject realizes the feminine power of bees: they produce honey, and they can sting (the power of fertility and applying counter-gaze). But the subject fails to identify herself with the bees for the subject is afraid of being stung:

They might ignore me immediately.
In my moon suit and funeral veil.
I am no source of honey.
So why should they turn on me? (p. 213)

At the first stage of female intergazing, the subject discovers the feminine power and starts to empathize with the bee groups. However, the subject still puts herself on the opposite side of the bees.

The second foreground composition appears in “Stings” when the subject witnesses the honey-drudging scenes of bees:

I stand in a column
Of winged, unmiraculous women,
Honey-drudgers.
I am no drudge
Though for years I have eaten dust
And dried plates with my dense hair.
And seen my strangeness evaporate,
Blue dew from dangerous skin.
Will they hate me,
These women who only scurry,
Whose news is the open cherry, the open clover? (p. 214)

Behind the column, the subject witnesses the industriousness of honeybees: “unmiraculous women.” These honeybees are described as “women” and “unmiraculous”, equal to the female group in human society. While gazing upon the honey drudgers, the subject starts to take an inner gaze at herself. By simultaneously being a subject and an object of gazing, the speaker destroys the possibility of being otherized. The subject immediately denies the fact that the subject is a honey-drudger, which is, in fact, the process of abjection, the emphasis of her previous pain of year-long toilsomeness: “Though for years I have eaten dust /And dried plates with my dense hair.” There are two Biblical illusions involved: in Genesis, the serpent that tempted Eve to eat the apple suffered from the punishment of walking with its belly and eating dust; in the New Testament, Mary Magdalene, who was originally a sinful prostitute, becomes a follower of Jesus. She anointed Jesus’s feet and dried them with her hair. By identifying with these two bible images, the subject victimizes herself by suffering from the invisible stress society exerts upon the female group. Here, Mulvey’s concept of “fetishistic scopophilia” becomes relevant—not in its original cinematic context of male pleasure, but as a mechanism the speaker attempts to subvert. Fetishistic scopophilia refers to the process by which female bodies are fragmented, idealized, and eroticized to alleviate castration anxiety, transforming the woman into a reassuring, consumable image. In Plath’s poetic frame, however, the female subject refuses this dynamic: she resists idealization, asserts labor (“eaten dust,” “dried plates with my dense hair”), and confronts the cost of domestic servitude without aesthetic embellishment. Thus, the gaze becomes reflexive and critical rather than objectifying.

The third foreground composition sits in “The Swarm.” This is a medium foreground: the war between Napoleon’s army and the bees serves as a foreground to the feminist movement in the real world. This is the only bee poem in which the speaker is not involved; the third-person perspective has been adopted instead. But who is observing the scene and making the comments? The subject. She serves as the invisible narrator

of the story. “The Swarm” is a dream-like scene and creates a sacred space for the subject to gaze inside the female group and thus to prove the absurdity and fidelity of the patriarchy.

Somebody is shooting at something in our town-
A dull pom, pom in the Sunday street.
Jealousy can open the blood,
It can make black roses.
Who are they shooting at?

It is you the knives are out for
At Waterloo, Waterloo, Napoleon,
The hump of Elba on your short back,
And the snow, marshaling its brilliant cutlery
Mass after mass, saying Shh! (p. 216)

If the “grid” in “The Arrival of the Bee Box” stages a self-critical gaze, and “Stings” doubts the deceptive patriarchal discourse, “The Swarm” escalates this dialectic: the third-person “medium foreground” (Napoleon’s war) becomes a “meta-commentary” on feminist movements’ “absurdity” under patriarchy. The image of “shooting” articulates the focus of this poem on war. Involving Napoleon’s army, an important historical and patriarchal icon, “The Swarm” intends to aggrandize the war between the bees and Napoleon. “Jealousy can open the blood” is an accusation of Napoleon’s army, for they are jealous of the honey that the bees can produce (the power of fertility). At the end of the poem, Napoleon “is pleased with everything” for he wins “tons of honey”. It is the patriarchal mindset to find self-value by winning a war. Therefore, even though the narrator is hidden in “The Swarm”, the war between Napoleon’s army and the bees serves as a patriarchal medium fostering a foreground to evaluate the female group. The bees are depicted as “dumb”, “dismembered”, “banded,” and “intractable” while the men are “grinning” and wearing their “steel arcs”. It restores the feminist reality where women take much fewer positions in important fields and the historical reality in which women’s wisdom is shadowed.

In the furnace of greed. Clouds, clouds.
So the swarm balls and deserts
Seventy feet up, in a black pine tree.
It must be shot down. Pom! Pom!
So dumb it thinks bullets are thunder.

It thinks they are the voice of God
Condoning the beak, the claw, the grin of the dog
Yellow-hunched, a pack-dog,
Grinning over its bone of ivory
Like the pack, the pack, like everybody. (p. 217)

Beneath the indifferent narrative of the embarrassing situation of bees towards the army, the narrator represents her empathy with the bees. For she is well aware of the feminist power. Plath mentioned in her journal that

she is more talented in creativity and would be more prestigious given freedom and encouragement from the institution like men. The depiction of the dumbness of bees mirrors that of Napoleon's army. They take out the avant-garde weapon to fight against the dumb bees and are nearly "killed":

How instructive this is!
The dumb, banded bodies
Walking the plank draped with Mother France's upholstery
Into a new mausoleum, an ivory palace, a crotch pine.

The man with gray hands smiles-
The smile of a man of business, intensely practical.
They are not hands at all
But asbestos receptacles.
Pom! Pom! 'They would have killed me.'

Stings big as drawing pins!
It seems bees have a notion of honor,
A black intractable mind.
Napoleon is pleased, he is pleased with everything.
O Europe! O ton of honey! (p. 217)

Through the patriarchal medium, the narrator witnesses the fall of the bees. However, the creativity and perseverance of the bees stand out even more as hard as Napoleon's army tries to defeat them. The hump-like "drawing pins" bees leaving on the army manifest their initial victory. The picture in "Wintering" demonstrates the spring-tasting moment of the bees, implying their consistent struggle.

Through these three foregrounds, Plath dramatizes the speaker's growing capacity for feminist introspection and solidarity, laying the psychological groundwork for visual demystification in the close-ups that follow.

3. Close-ups: The Demystifying Moments

Close-up visualizations in The Bee Poems magnify the emotional and symbolic details of feminist rupture, presenting moments of confrontation, suffering, and transformation that disassemble patriarchal myths from within. In scenography, the close-up allows the painting of more details in the picture compared to the panoramic and foreground. Mitchell discussed how close-ups operate to focus the viewer's attention on specific details, creating a sense of immediacy and emotional engagement. This contrasts with the expansive detachment of panoramic views. Close-ups often function to intensify the viewer's experience, whether by invoking emotional responses or directing their gaze toward an important aspect of the image. Mitchell's exploration of power in visual forms suggests that close-ups exert control by narrowing the viewer's focus and magnifying specific details.

There are four close-ups in The Bee Poems, which are more emotionally involved than those of panoramic and foregrounds. Through these close-ups, the poet records how a woman living in a patriarchal world demystifies it.

The first close-up emerges in the first bee poem, “The Bee Meeting,” when the villagers bury a white, long grove:

I am exhausted, I am exhausted
Pillar of white in a blackout of knives.
I am the magician's girl who does not flinch.
The villagers are untying their disguises, they are shaking hands.
Whose is that long white box in the grove? what have they accomplished,
Why am I cold? (p. 212)

The “burying” moment awakes me by uncovering the truth that there is no difference between the queen bee and the speaker, for we would both be sacrificed once our values have been taken. The reason for using “long” and “white” grove is symbolic. If it was only the queen bee the grove is for, it does not have to be long. For the subject, she is buried with the queen bee by the patriarchy at the same time. Additionally, the speaker's “whiteness” (ignorance and obedience) is buried along with her body. The subject begins to realize the core of the patriarchy: imperialism. The “knives” pointing at the speaker, the magician girl at this moment is taken against the patriarchal icon Napoleon in “The Swarm”: “It is you the knives are out for/ At Waterloo, Waterloo, Napoleon.” (p. 217)

The second close-up is a sequence of two close-ups: the bees moldings onto the man's lips while the queen bee flies up to the sky:

In eight great bounds, a great scapegoat.
Here is his slipper, here is another,
And here, the square of white linen
He wore instead of a hat instead.
He was sweet,

The sweat of his efforts was a rain
Tugging the world to fruit.
The bees found him out,
Molding onto his lips like lies,
Complicating his features.

They thought death was worth it, but I
Have a self to recover, a queen.
Is she dead, or is she sleeping?
Where has she been?
With her lion-red body, her wings of glass? (p. 215)

After realizing the terrible truth that the subject have “eaten dust for years,” the subject takes a step further in her feminist path. The subject makes a self-independent manifesto denouncing that “I am in control” to detach herself from the imperialist system. Suffering from years of oppression and sacrifice, the subject seeks “lex talionis” (An eye for an eye) to give vent to her anger. The “square of white linen” the man wearing reminds us of the “white Italian hat” the subject wore in “The Bee Meeting.” Whilst critics argue the scene is a confessional writing referent to Ted Hughes’s infidelity, I argue that this scenario demystifies patriarchal imperialism. The counter gaze is applied to a man, and thus, women are breaking up the “passive women” image. The man becomes the gaze bearer, and his pain of being stung is romanticized as having “sweet lips.”

Now she is flying
More terrible than she ever was, red
Scar in the sky, red comet
Over the engine that killed her-
The mausoleum, the wax house. p. 215)

As the leader of the beehives, the queen bee is in control when the male beekeeper is stung by her allies. Following the patriarchal rules, she could have taken further revenge against the villagers trying to kill her, but she instead flies “over the engine that killed her”. She is a “red scar, red comet in the sky,” awakening the dulled world of women’s/bees’ inferior reality and representing a better solution towards gender inequality. The red scar was caused by the male gaze, and the queen bee exposes the cruelty of the masculine gaze in public rather than romanticizing it to fit the erotic expectations of men. The close-up of the queen bee’s body functions as a “feminist counter-fetish” against what Laura Mulvey (1975, p.12) called the “fetishistic close-ups”: fragments that simultaneously eroticize and dismember the female body by magnifying her trauma to expose patriarchal violence rather than masking it. Mulvey’s “fetishistic close-up,” a cinematic device used to eroticize and fragment the female body, is radically reappropriated in these moments. Plath’s queen bee, with her “lion-red body” and “wings of glass,” is not an object of visual pleasure but a figure of defiance and pain—a “red comet” that wounds the sky rather than adorns it. The close-up no longer aestheticizes the feminine but instead exposes the violence of aestheticization itself. By drawing attention to wounds, decay, and claustrophobic enclosures, Plath turns the visual regime against itself, crafting what can be called a counter-fetishistic gaze.

The third close-up shows up in “Wintering,” depicting bees hibernating in a black room without any light:

Wintering in the dark without a window
At the heart of the house
Next to the last tenant’s rancid jam
And the bottles of empty glitter-
Sir So-and-so’s gin.

This is the room I have never been in.
This is the room I could never breathe in.
The black bunched in there like a bat,

No light

But the torch and its faint

Chinese yellow on appalling objects

Black asinity. Decay.

Possession.

It is they who own me.

Neither cruel nor indifferent,

Only ignorant. (p. 218)

Though many critics adopted psychoanalysis in understanding the “black room” here as Plath’s unconsciousness (Luck, 2007). I argue its connection with Virginia Woolf’s picture of a room of one’s own. Surviving in the most terrible conditions, the bees are wintering in this black room room “I had never been” and “could never breathe in.” Everything in this room is decaying and appalling. However, with the jam and the protective roof, it offers an ideal environment for bees to survive. The color black is iconic in Plath’s works: in bee poems, black first emerges as a “man in black” in “The Bee Meeting”, a rector belonging to the villagers. “Man in black” is one of the most classic images in Plath’s poem: a man wearing black shoes who tramps the speaker for 30 years and “Bits (Bit) my pretty red heart in two” in “Daddy”; in “Man in black”, an all-mighty man wearing a black coat, black shoes, and black hair, powerful enough to “Fixing (Fixed) vortex on the far Tip/ riveting stones, air, All of it, together.” (Plath, 1981, p. 89) Examples of the man in black in Plath’s late poems are countless, and all of them constitute a spiritual god, in front of whom the subject is pale and powerless.

The subject held a love-hate feeling towards the man in black, just like “Every woman adores a Fascist.” The man in black in bee poems continues its image in “Daddy” except a more powerful rector who is in charge of people’s spiritual world. The black room here continues Plath’s inner fear of her spiritual father and patriarchy. Survival in winter does not refer to the final victory, for the black is still omnipresent. The speaker adopts another abjection in facing this claustrophobic room. Unlike Woolf’s clean and bring a room of one’s own, this black demystifies the feminist utopia and reveals the necessity of consistent material struggle. The last close-up emerges at the end of The Bee Poems:

Into which, on warm days,

They can only carry their dead.

The bees are all women,

Maids and the long royal lady.

They have gotten rid of the men,

The blunt, clumsy stumblers, the boors.

Winter is for women-

The woman, still at her knitting,

At the cradle of Spanish walnut,

Her body was a bulb in the cold and too dumb to think.

Will the hive survive? Will the gladiolas

Succeed in banking their fires
To enter another year?
What will they taste of, the Christmas roses?
The bees are flying. They taste the spring. (pp. 218-219)

It depicts the situation of bees in late winter and the start of spring. For bees, winter is the least productive season among the four. To survive in the winter, the bees normally huddle together in a ball to keep warm and may be fed (syrup) by beekeepers. Having been through all the wars, the sacrifices, and the industrious seasons, the bees "have got rid of the men" and show their feminist resistance. The detail of the "knitting" at the cradle of the Spanish walnut refers to the conventional picture of housewives. This image raises another question. If feminist freedom is what the bees are seeking, why do they return to being traditional housewives to knit? What differentiates these knitting women from passive housewives is that they are knitting for themselves rather than any men, for "they have got rid of the men." Their knitting allegorizes feminist resilience: dormant yet pregnant with the "spring" of collective insurgency.

However, as Luck (2007, p303) pointed out, "With its inclusion of both sexes (the hive could not survive the next spring without 'The blunt, clumsy stumblers') offers a much more fluid, less dichotomous notion of gender that begins even at the biological level of an organism." Therefore, when Plath imagines the promising ending of the beehives, she pictures the ending of both genders. Following the feminist path, she rejects the dichotomous perspective in evaluating gender issues. It is the imperial patriarchy that Plath is against, and both genders could be victims in this system. Critics noticed the sense of hope that "Wintering" represents; it is the notion Plath wants to convey in her original version of *Ariel* before Hughes' editing. Frieda (2004) asserts that the collection was intended to start with the word "love" and end with the word "spring", which is the last word of "Wintering."

These intensified, emotionally charged close-ups dismantle patriarchal visual codes from within, enabling the speaker and the reader to witness a feminist rebirth through symbolic exposure, reclamation, and rupture, culminating in a tentative but resolute emergence into spring.

Conclusion

By integrating W.J.T. Mitchell's visual theory and Laura Mulvey's notion of the "male gaze," this paper has examined how Plath's Bee Poems mobilize visual modes—three panoramic scenes, three foreground compositions, and four close-up moments—to articulate a feminist poetics. These visual strategies chart a progression: from the depiction of a patriarchal order in which women's bodies are aestheticized and instrumentalized, to the speaker's ambivalent yet evolving feminist consciousness, and finally to a demystifying rupture of patriarchal visuality. In this visual-feminist framework, Plath reclaims the gaze, challenges aesthetic traditions historically aligned with male spectatorship, and constructs an alternative mythology where the female subject both sees and resists being seen. Plath thus utilized the feminist "poetic features" in traditional male-centered ekphrasis writings and "transformed them as her own resisting tools."(Yan Jingwen 2025) The Bee Poems thus offer not only a poetic but also a visual insurgency against gendered systems of representation.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID:

Liu Shanni ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9533-716X>;

Chen Xi ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4835-0902>

Reference

Betty, Friedan (1982). *The Feminine Mystique*. Pelican.

Bloom, Harold(ed.) (1989). *Modern Critical Views: Sylvia Plath*. Chelsea House Publisher.

Brain, Tracy (2014). *The Other Sylvia Plath*. Routledge.

Conners, Kathleen. & Bayley, Salley (2007). *Eye Rhymes: Sylvia Plath's Art of the Visual*. Oxford University Press.

Graves, Robert (2013). *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Hedley, Jane (2020). *I made you find me: The Coming of Age of the Woman Poet and the Politics of Poetic Address*. Ohio State University Press.

Hughes, Ted (2005). *Collected Poems*. London: P. Keegan.

Hughes, Ted (1970). “Notes on the Chronological Order of Sylvia Plath's Poemsh”, ed. C. Newman. *The Art of Sylvia Plath* (05):187–90.

Jacqueline Rose (1991). *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*. Virago.

Luck, Jessica. (2007). Exploring the “Mind of the hive”: Embodied cognition in Sylvia Plath’s Bee Poems. *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* (02): 287–308.

Kristeva, Julia (1982). *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Columbia University Press.

Kroll, Judith (1976). *Chapters in a Mythology: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath*. Harper & Row.

Mary Lynn Broe (1980). *Protean Poetic: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath*. University of Missouri Press.

Mitchell, Thomas (2006). *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. University of Chicago Press.

---. (1994). *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. University of Chicago Press.

Mulvey, Laura (1975). “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Screen* (03): 6–18.

Plath, Sylvia (1975). *Letters Home: Correspondence 1950-1963*. Ed. Aurelia Schober Plath. Harper & Row.

---. (1981). *Collected Poems*. Edited with an introduction by Ted Hughes. Faber and Faber.

---. (2000). *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*. Ed. Karen V. Kukil. Anchor Books.

---. (2010). *The Spoken Word: Sylvia Plath*. British Library Publishing.

Van Dyne, Susan (1991). “Review of Sylvia Plath: The Wound and the Cure of Words”. *The New England Quarterly* (12):685–88.

---. (1993). *Revising Life: Sylvia Plath's “Ariel” Poems*. University of North Carolina Press.

陈才忆 (2008): “在历史文化传统中展示和剖析自我——评普拉斯的‘蜜蜂组诗’”, 《重庆交通大学学报（社会科学版）》(04): 53-57。

[Chen Caiyi (2008). “Exposing and Analyzing Oneself Through History and Culture on Sylvia Plath's Bee Poems.” *Journal of Chongqing Jiaotong University (Social Science)* (04):53-57.]

魏磊 (2021): “西尔维亚·普拉斯前期诗歌中的‘艺格敷词’”,《外国文学研究》(01): 129-140。

[Wei Lei (2021). “The Ekphrasis in Sylvia Plath's Early Poetry.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (01):129-140.]

鄢靖雯(2025): “海外传播与研究：中国古代女性诗歌的跨文化重现——评何嵩昱教授《中国古代女诗人在英语世界的传播与研究》”,《文艺国际传播研究》(01): 161-164。

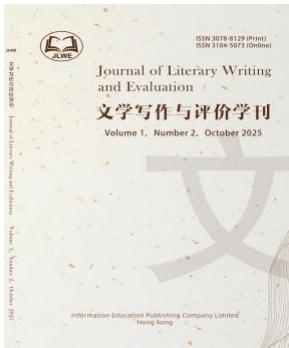
[Yan Jingwen (2025). “Overseas Dissemination and Research: A Review of The Cross-cultural Reappearance of Ancient Chinese Women's Poetry.” *International Communication Studies in Literature and Art* (01):161-164.]

朱新福、林大江 (2004): “从‘蜜蜂世界’看女权运动-评美国当代女诗人普拉斯的蜜蜂组诗”,《外国文学评论》(02): 116-123。

[Zhu Xinfu, Lin Da Jiang (2004). “Analysis on Feminist Movement Through Bee's World-On American Modern Poet Plath's Bee Poems.” *Foreign Literature Critics* (02):116-123.]

朱新福 (2006): “在寂静的春天里创作的普拉斯”,《外国文学研究》(03): 108-114。

[Zhu Xinfu (2006). “Sylvia Plath: Writing in the Silent Spring.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (03):108-114.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.275-285.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.09](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.09)



规训、符号化与隐性共谋： 《洛丽塔》中父权秩序的“囚笼”与女性心理创伤

黄思涵(Huang Sihan), 张连桥(Zhang Lianqiao)

摘要：洛丽塔的精神认知受到母亲夏洛特、继父亨伯特、奎尔蒂以及所接受的集体教育四层父权力量的异化影响。福柯通过对不同社会领域与历史语境的比较考察，揭示了权力运作的多种形态：规训权力、生命权力、知识权力、话语权力以及主权权力在人际互动中的创伤性。《洛丽塔》中呈现出一种嵌套性的“父权牢笼”规训：从小我家庭内部母亲夏洛特的教育规训，到小我情感关系里亨伯特在想象层面将洛丽塔符号化的控制，再到社会机制层面的隐性纵容，如剧作家奎尔蒂的影视权力、比尔兹利学校的教育原则，洛丽塔的心理异化正是由这些权力力量叠加规训造成的。

关键词：《洛丽塔》；心理创伤成因；父权规训；资本主义消费文化；女性形象的神化

作者简介：黄思涵，广州大学人文学院硕士研究生，研究方向：比较文学与世界文学。电邮：815143657@qq.com。张连桥（通讯作者），广州大学人文学院教授，电邮：zhanglianqiao@gzhu.com。

Title: Discipline, Symbolization, and Implicit Complicity: The “Cage” of Patriarchal Order and Female Psychological Trauma in *Lolita*

Abstract: Lolita's spirit is influenced by the alienation of four patriarchal forces: her mother Charlotte, her stepfather Humbert, Quilty and the collective education power she receives. Foucault reveals various forms of power operation through different social fields and historical contexts: disciplinary power, life power, knowledge power, discourse power, and sovereign power in interpersonal interaction—*Lolita* presents a nested “paternal cage”: from the internal

educational discipline of mother Charlotte within private family to the symbolic control of private emotional relationships with Humbert at the level of the imaginary, and then to the implicit indulgence at the social mechanism level, such as Quilty's power as a screenwriter, Beardsley School's education principles. Lolita's psychological alienation is caused by the superimposition of these educational powers.

Keywords: *Lolita*; Trauma Origins; Patriarchal Discipline; Capitalist Consumer Culture; The Deification of Female Images

Author Biography: Huang Sihan, Master's Candidate at the School of Humanities, Guangzhou University. Research Area: Comparative Literature and World Literature. E-mail: 815143657@qq.com. Zhang Lianqiao (Corresponding Author), Professor at the School of Humanities, Guangzhou University. E-mail: zhanglianqiao@gzhu.com.

引言

自 1955 年问世以来，弗拉基米尔·纳博科夫（Vladimir Nabokov, 1899-1977）的《洛丽塔》（*Lolita*）便始终是文学界争议与研究的焦点。这部以亨伯特（Humbert）第一人称视角讲述的小说，表面讲述了四十岁的法国文学教授亨伯特对十二岁少女洛丽塔（Lolita）畸形的欲念，实则用尖锐的笔触剖开了父权社会的权力肌理，描述了洛丽塔从天真孩童沦为精神废墟上的“失语者”，并挣扎着从创伤中成长的过程。其人生中的悲剧绝非个体欲望失控的偶然结果，而是父权规训在家庭、亲密关系、社会机构与文化工业中层层嵌套、合力绞杀的必然产物。

“父权”作为一种以男性为中心的系统性权力结构，通过家庭、教育、媒体等社会场域，将“男性主导-女性从属”的性别秩序制度化，既赋予男性对女性的支配权，又通过标准化的价值体系，如“淑女规范”“女性天职”“女神化”等符号化倾向实现对女性的驯化，而这种驯化的实现，离不开“规训权力”这一关键机制。米歇尔·福柯（2019）在《规训与惩罚》中指出，规训权力并非显性的暴力压制，而是通过空间区隔、层级监视、规范化裁决、检查等微观技术，将权力渗透到个体的身体与意识之中，从知识、身体、性各个层面瓦解人的主体性，最终造就“驯顺的主体”。正如 Alen Širca（2017）在对福柯方法论的精读中所揭示的，这种权力分析并非简单地以“断裂”或“离散”来对抗“连续”，而是旨在探究两者得以形成的共同条件，从而“描述其他统一体”，即那些受控于特定规则、虽不可见却真实存在的“话语群”。陈沿西（2009）以《洛丽塔》为个案，指出亨伯特对洛丽塔的控制，正是通过“空间隔离（汽车与旅馆构成的移动监狱）、话语压制（定义‘父女’关系以合理化支配）、惩罚机制（暴力与威胁）”等规训手段实现，最终使洛丽塔沦为“权力网络中的失语者”。赵利娟、支冉（2019）揭示了《洛丽塔》中美国消费社会如何通过家庭、学校与大众媒体将商品符号化，使洛丽塔在物质至上与享乐主义中丧失主体性，成为父权制的“被观赏者”。

无论是家庭场域里，母亲夏洛特（Charlotte）以“淑女培养”为名的规训、继父亨伯特以“欧洲艺术”为名的爱情圈养，还是社会场域里奎尔蒂（Quilty）利用美国娱乐文化工业，以“梦想诱饵”为表的操控、比尔兹利女子学校以“社交训练”为实的教育驯化，它们都共同将洛丽塔推向主体性丧失的深渊。鉴于此，本文以“父权批判”为核心切入点，结合福柯权力理论与创伤研究视角，系统剖析洛丽塔心理创伤的成因。通过梳理家庭（夏洛特）、亲密关系（亨伯特）、文化工业（奎尔蒂）

与社会机构（比尔兹利女子学校）四个场域中，父权规训如何以显性规训与隐性渗透的方式制造精神创伤，揭示这些权力机制如何在个体心理层面形成叠加效应，最终导致洛丽塔的自我认同崩解与情感结构扭曲。

一、夏洛特：家庭关系中的功利主义规训与情感冷漠

洛丽塔在社会场域中接触的首个对象，是她的亲生母亲夏洛特——作为资本主义父权制度规训下的典型产物，夏洛特身上烙印着鲜明的被驯化特质，而她对洛丽塔的桎梏，正是父权逻辑的代际化演绎：她既以规训者的身份将资本主义父权社会的女性规范凌驾于洛丽塔自身个性之上，又作为被规训者深陷制度桎梏，最终让母亲之爱成为年幼洛丽塔的精神创伤。从夏洛特被驯化的特质来看，她秉持功利主义婚姻观，将婚姻视作阶层跃迁的工具，先是嫁给年长自己二十岁且有异常性习惯的哈罗德·黑兹（Harold Haze），后又企图通过与博学知识分子亨伯特结婚提升社会地位；她还表现出附庸风雅的文化姿态，刻意维持矫饰的优雅，热衷读书俱乐部等组织却缺乏真实思想，在对女儿洛丽塔的教育中奉行僵化的资产阶级道德规训标准。

夏洛特用社会规训中“好女孩”的标准塑造洛丽塔——要求她举止严谨得体，在性意识上保持保守与羞耻。她甚至用法语告诫女儿“别露出你的腿”，那句“多洛蕾丝·黑兹，ne montrez pas vos zhambes”（p.68）^①里，“zhambes”的拼写错误（应为“jambes”），就像她教育方式的隐喻：既想借用知识权威规范束缚女儿，自身却早已在僵化的规训中失却了真正的规范能力。纳博科夫刻意植入外语错误来表现夏洛特的美国口音，恰恰撕开了夏洛特作为母亲在教育洛丽塔上的虚伪。对“外语”的滥用本就是一种权力炫耀（用小众语言拉开与普通人的距离），而语法错误的存在则消解了这种炫耀：她试图用语言的“高级感”合理化自己用教养控制女儿的欲望，却被语言本身的“不完美”揭穿了其内在的虚伪。夏洛特·黑兹一面用流行于十八、十九世纪欧洲贵族那种浮夸矫饰的法语教女儿矜持守礼，一面又试图用这门语言讨好身为法语文学教授的亨伯特——这种附庸风雅的姿态，在“教育女儿的刻板规训”与“取悦男性的刻意逢迎”之间形成了刺眼的对照。在《独抒己见》（2023）中，纳博科夫说明“黑兹 Haze”这个姓氏有“爱尔兰雾”之意。但这层含义只有在爱尔兰英语语境中成立，在爱尔兰本地盖尔民族语中并没有与之对应的词，这一巧妙的文字游戏，暗讽夏洛特对欧洲文化的追捧，就像被殖民地对宗主国文化的崇拜。

“ne montrez pas vos zhambes”（不要露出你的腿）在后文中又出现了一次，但不是出自夏洛特之口，而是亨伯特借旧杂志之口戏仿夏洛特的法语指令“ne montrez pas vos zhambes”（p.296），亨伯特通过这一语言，将自己带着洛丽塔去看牙的场景变得充满禁忌与炫耀意味，强化了“成人世界用外语对儿童说禁令”的暧昧和不平等。“旧杂志”在小说中象征了杂交的知识话语规训权力，最开始出现于亨伯特第一次来到夏洛特家，他对其家庭氛围的描述：“在这种家庭里，每张椅子上都放着翻脏了的旧杂志，还有一种叫人厌恶的杂交气氛：一面是所谓‘实用的现代家具’这种喜剧因素，一面又是破旧的摇椅和上面放着开不亮的台灯的摇摇晃晃的灯桌这种悲剧因素”（p.58）。现代家具与腐朽的旧日杂志还有怀旧家具混杂在一起，让空间显得既滑稽又凄凉，本质是资本主义父权规训的“表面现代实用性”与“内在怀旧腐朽性”的撕裂，犹如一段由物质生产力推动发展，却在“旧杂志”推动下不断低维重复的父权历史。

^① 弗拉基米尔·纳博科夫（2005）：《洛丽塔》，上海：上海译文出版社。以下引文只标注页码，不再一一说明。

夏洛特试图通过标准化的知识教育将女儿培养成契合“旧杂志”女性标准的人。她用心地阅读并回答芝加哥出版的教育书籍《子女成长指南》上的问题，在填写书籍上提供的年表时，她在“子女个性”一栏的四十个形容词中，只选中了寻衅生事的、吵吵闹闹的、爱找岔子的等十个负面词汇，其中“不听话的”还划了两道线，却对快活的、乐意合作的、精力旺盛等三十个积极形容词视而不见（p.127）。夏洛特对女儿的评判充满了偏见与否定，她在对女儿的教育中强调“听话”甚于“精力”。这种用片面化、手册化的标签消解女儿主体性的行为是对洛丽塔真实个性的无视与否定，让洛丽塔在成长过程中无法得到母亲对自己真实存在的认可，加剧了她内心的不安与自我怀疑。

夏洛特·黑兹对教育指南书籍的重视与她对洛丽塔玩具的无视与厌烦形成了鲜明的对比。“洛的一些小玩意儿胡乱地散乱放在房子里各个不同角落，就像好多受了催眠的小兔子似的呆着不动”（p.127），这些玩意是洛丽塔童心的载体与象征。但夏洛特却以在其他情况下从未有过的蛮横态度处理和清除它们。玩具的“被催眠”是洛丽塔童心被禁锢的隐喻——在夏洛特眼中，女儿的童真远不如“规训成果”重要，这种价值排序本身就是对儿童天性的暴力。在向读者解读洛丽塔的各个不同称呼蕴意时，纳博科夫（2023）在《独抒己见》解释说，由“多洛莉丝”衍生而来的昵称“多莉”和“黑兹”这个姓氏放在一起就像是“德国小兔”。在德语中，“黑兹 Haze”和“兔子 hase”这个单词同音。表面上看，这是一个文字语音游戏，其实背后还藏着文字语义游戏的讽刺。《洛丽塔》开篇已经点明：“在学校里，她是多莉”（p.9），多莉在小说里的出现往往与前后文的学校教育语境还有童心相关。“多莉·黑兹”这一称呼暗藏对德国泯灭童心的教育体系的反讽。德国德意志帝国时期的功利性职业教育是尼采 1872 年的重要批判对象，尼采批判德国标准化考核机制抑制个体的创造性思维。纳博科夫借用德语小兔子“黑兹”的音来暗合尼采对德意志帝国教育的批判以及暗示夏洛特·黑兹给多莉·黑兹带来的教育创伤。爱德华·阿尔比（Edward Albee）1981 年对《洛丽塔》的戏剧改编之所以被斥为“淫秽”，一个关键原因在于：纳博科夫原著中，那些藏着“言外之意”的语言游戏，本承载着批判功利化教育的深刻内涵，却在阿尔比的改编中被消解。

夏洛特的教育理念更带着宗教式禁欲色彩，她希望将洛丽塔送进纪律严格、注重正规宗教教育的寄宿学校，试图通过奎夏令营这种更严格的隔离空间来规训女儿，一心想将洛丽塔打造成“旧杂志理想女儿”。为了达到这一目标同时给自己和亨伯特更多的二人相处时间，她甚至愿意放弃与洛丽塔独一无二的亲情羁绊，将子女教育全权托付给学校：她计划让洛丽塔“从营地就直接进入一所纪律严格的良好的寄宿学校，学生在那儿可以受到正规的宗教教育。随后——就进比尔兹利学院”（p.130）。但就是在奎夏令营，洛丽塔受营地女主任 13 岁的儿子查利·霍姆斯（Charlie Holmes）和 11 岁的女孩伊丽莎白·塔尔博特（Elizabeth Talbot）影响，走向了“性早熟”。（p.216-217）

二、亨伯特：爱情幻想下的艺术化占有与主体吞噬

洛丽塔、亨伯特、猴子三者形成了环环相扣的规训牢笼象征关系。“规训的笼子”是整部小说的重要意象，在后记中，纳博科夫说《洛丽塔》的故事受到困于植物园铁笼猴子故事的启迪：经过科学家的驯化，猴子在铁笼上画出了囚禁它自己的铁条（p.496）。亨伯特的创作本身是在监狱体制的监视下进行的。这意味着，即便他试图以创作者的姿态对洛丽塔进行凝视与书写，试图掌控叙事与关系，他自身也处于监狱这一典型的“规训牢笼”之中，受到体制的监视与约束。就像那只画出牢笼铁条的猴子无法真正逃离囚禁一样，亨伯特无论是作为控制者对他人施加规训，还是作为被欲望

与体制双重囚禁的个体，都深陷在“规训牢笼”的循环之中，无法挣脱。作为博学多才的文学教授，亨伯特将古老西欧艺术对女性的神化想象与规训嫁接到洛丽塔身上，如同那只猴子在铁笼上画出囚禁自己的铁条——既是在向洛丽塔施加规训，也是在巩固禁锢自身的牢笼。

亨伯特作为知识分子渴望通过知识规训并囚禁他人，这一倾向在他以学术知识旁观他人苦难的经历中得到了体现和拓展：他听闻前妻瓦莱尼亚（Valeria）与现任丈夫马克西莫维奇（Maximovich），早在 1945 年前就被美国人种学家关在房间里，沦为人种实验的研究对象；而他自己，竟还想从《人美学评论》里翻找那些实验的结果（p.48）。亨伯特试图从学术文献中旁观凝视前妻作为学术实验对象的实验过程与结果，以此满足自己的报复欲，这种行为模式与他从艺术角度凝视洛丽塔、满足创作欲的方式极为相似。在这两种情境中，亨伯特都试图通过“凝视”与“记录”他者（无论是学术文献的查阅还是对洛丽塔的艺术化书写）来实现对对象的掌控，将具体的他人纳入自己笼统的认知与欲望框架中，这是一种理念知识上的规训。以理念知识为媒介的规训本质上是通过宏观符号系统来组织、分类和控制人类经验，与拉康所提出的象征界核心功能相呼应——赋予意义、建立秩序、规范主体身份。法律、历史、文化规范等象征系统本应提供普遍的意义框架与合法性，并对个体的想象界欲望形成约束。然而，亨伯特却反其道而行之，利用象征界的弹性与漏洞来支撑其想象界的欲望，如对比英国 1933 年《儿童和青少年法案》和美国马萨诸塞州对“孩子”年纪定义的法律，暗示法律不同、边界不同，他与洛丽塔的肉体接触在法律的灰色地带并不必然构成犯罪（p.28）。

这种通过操纵象征界资源来支撑想象界欲望的策略，在亨伯特的文学创作中表现得尤为明显。文学创作实践主要发生在象征界内（语法、词汇、修辞、叙事结构等社会共享的符号系统），但文学的独特价值在于它能同时调动个人想象界的创造力并触及实在界的不可言说之处。作为文学教授，亨伯特企图利用美学修辞想象“爱情”，触及实在界不可言说的快感，他将这种抽象追求寄生在与洛丽塔的私人关系上，与《包法利夫人》中艾玛和莱昂通过夸张情书与情话建立的通奸关系相似。在《文学讲稿》中，纳博科夫认为“如果挑出《包法利夫人》中写到马的段落，放在一起，我们就能得到这部小说的一个完整的故事梗概”，对于今天的象征主义来说，“敞篷汽车”也许比马更具有象征意义。（Nabokov, 2018, p.281-284）“马”在《包法利夫人》中象征爱玛对浪漫爱情的渴望，对平庸现实束缚的反抗，暗示她与不同男性关系的发展，映射她从追求理想爱情到道德堕落的整个过程。纳博科夫对汽车意象的处理明显借鉴了《包法利夫人》：汽车作为贯穿《洛丽塔》、推动情节发展的线索，既是亨伯特逃离世俗世界，追寻浪漫理想的交通工具，也是亨伯特隔离控制洛丽塔的规训空间，映射了亨伯特从追求理想爱情（侵占洛丽塔）到“毁灭式落幕”整个过程。在亨伯特、艾玛（Emma）和莱昂（Léon）的爱情追求中，抽象的理想伴侣形象侵吞着具体的个人。当他们通过想象他者的身体感官来联接自己的理想时，“他者即地狱”的大门便开启。如亨伯特对“性感少女”的身体进行监视：头发、眼睛、胳膊、膝盖、腿、腋毛，并将这些身体部位转换成美学语言：“我空虚的灵魂却设法把她的鲜明艳丽的姿色全都吸收进去，又拿每个细微之处去和我死去的小新娘的容貌核对比照。”（p.61）他将 9 至 14 岁的少女定义为“性感少女”（nymphet），其词源指向古希腊神话中的仙女（宁芙），并将她们的形象禁锢在“唯我想象界”的“仙女岛”上，这是典型的镜像误认式凝视。

这种凝视方式在《包法利夫人》中同样存在。莱昂凝视近在眼前的艾玛时，看到的只是艺术倒影中泛指的理想者“她”，他对艾玛的凝视与亨伯特看待洛丽塔的方式极为相似：“她就是所有小说

中的情人，所有剧本中的女主角，所有诗集中泛指的‘她’。他在她的肩头看到了‘土耳其入浴宫女’的琥珀色皮肤；她有封建城堡女主人的细长腰身；她也像西班牙名画中‘脸色苍白的女人’但是说来说去，她总是天使”（Flaubert, 2018, p.292）。相似地，艾玛对莱昂的爱也并非针对具体对象，“在写信的时候，她看到的并不是莱昂，而是另外一个男人，一个由她最亲热的回忆、最美丽的读物、最强烈的欲望交织而成的幻象”（Flaubert, 2018, p.321）。纳博科夫在《洛丽塔》继承并发展了《包法利夫人》里文艺知识分子借对他人的想象投射自身情欲的行为，这种行为发展到极致便是“恋童”。亨伯特选择儿童作为投射对象并非偶然：儿童正处于对世界充满期待的阶段，其蓬勃的想象力本应是自我探索的动力，却被亨伯特扭曲为可利用的特质——他正是借助儿童的天真与想象，为自己的情欲投射编织了“纯洁”“灵性”的伪装，让病态的占有欲在“美学想象”的外衣下更具迷惑性。

但悖论在于亨伯特、艾玛、莱昂所谓美好浪漫的爱情理想都是在资本主义父权社会规训中生成的消费理想，要以剥削、客体化具体他人为代价来填充自身想象。可个人真正的精神理想，本应是带着自己生命体温的独特风格创造，是具有生产性的自我投射，而非流水线上标准化的欲望商品，它永远无法通过消费他人、挪用他者主体性的方式得到满足。亨伯特投射在洛丽塔身上“理想爱情”并非自发的情感，其实是被社会规训（资本的消费模板+父权的客体化逻辑）预先编写的“程序”。欧洲西方古典艺术长期将“少女”（尤其是青春期前的女性）塑造成“纯洁、灵性、永恒之美”的符号，这种文化想象潜移默化地规训着对少女的认知，为亨伯特的“仙女”执念提供了美学模板。19世纪至20世纪的西方社会仍处于强父权结构中，女性（尤其是未成年女性）被视为“男性的附属品”或“欲望客体”，这种社会规训也为亨伯特的控制欲与占有欲提供了隐性支撑。在亨伯特性侵洛丽塔的那一刻，他对洛丽塔的凝视积聚了他先前对女童的语言幻想。对于亨伯特而言，“寻找一个‘海滨王国’，一个‘理想化的里维埃拉’或诸如此类的地方已经完全不是下意识的冲动，而成了对纯理论的欢乐的合理追求。”（p.262）他看到的不是洛丽塔真实具体的肉体，只是一副用来承托自身艺术想象的空壳。洛丽塔这一生遇到许多的人都想将其归纳分类成某种统一化、普遍化的概念，她具体运动着的独特性常常被忽略。

在爱德华·阿尔比改编的《洛丽塔》戏剧当中，洛丽塔的形象被矮化成“瘦骨嶙峋、满口腔话、手肘外凸、膝盖相撞的女孩”。（Ben, 1981, p. 78）爱德华·阿尔比本想通过这种方式凸显亨伯特的语言艺术对洛丽塔的神化作用，以此让观众体会艺术的伟大，从而向观众确定亨伯特作为艺术家的道德性。但他恰恰在舞台上将亨伯特“以美学修辞遮蔽主体侵占”的本质具象化，并在强调亨伯特高超艺术技巧的过程中忽略了他艺术理想的盲目性和悲剧性，激起了观众对艺术虚构现实更深切的厌恶，正如 Albee (1981, p. 14-15) 在现场看见：“每当舞台上洛丽塔背对着观众、敞开睡袍向亨伯特展露自己的那一刻，总会有一两对观众怒气冲冲地起身离场”。

三、奎尔蒂：明星梦中的影视工业操控与性剥削

奎尔蒂以“才华横溢的艺术家”身份和好莱坞影视行业运作模式为掩护，借助影视工业的权力外衣、“好莱坞梦工厂”的造梦机制、洛丽塔的演员梦想以及社会文化中潜藏的父权规训逻辑，对洛丽塔实施了系统性的精神操控与肉体占有。他给洛丽塔带来的根本性创伤在于：不仅以“艺术”包装自身淫欲，更通过消费文化塑造虚假的“成功模型”，将父权社会对女性的物化与规训嵌入洛丽塔自我建构的成功想象与欲望之中，最终使她在自我异化中沦为父权游戏的牺牲品。

奎尔蒂活跃于好莱坞，而洛丽塔的成长环境恰好被好莱坞电影文化以及与之共生的商业娱乐文化团团包围：洛丽塔的房间床头的墙上钉着“从一本华而不实的杂志上扯下的一整页广告”，钉子“正好在一个低吟歌手的嘴和一个电影女演员的眼睫毛之间。”(p.106)这页杂志是洛丽塔根据自己的喜好布置的房间元素，符合青春期少女的生活场景设定。她把杂志钉在墙上，等于把好莱坞的虚构剧本搬进自己的私密剧场，她通过裁剪、张贴这些虚构影像，在自己的“私密剧场”里排练对“成熟关系”的想象，却对其中暗含的父权规训毫无察觉。这页杂志广告上就有奎尔蒂“正一本正经地抽骆驼牌香烟”的形象。对怀揣演员梦的洛丽塔而言，奎尔蒂的“剧作家”身份是通往梦想的钥匙。但她未曾察觉，这张广告页里藏着父权的陷阱，在奎尔蒂的香烟广告之上：爱尔兰丈夫神色衰竭，正在试穿公司制作的晨衣，他手里托着的餐盘里摆了两份早餐，妻子作为“那个被彻底征服的女人大概正半撑起身子来拿她在托盘里的一份早餐”(p.106)，这是典型的好莱坞式家庭场景虚构——用看似温情的日常，包装出一种程式化的“亲密关系”模板。纳博科夫在对广告餐盘的描述中嵌入托马斯·莫雷尔(Thomas Morell)《看啊，征服的英雄来了》、《尤利西斯》中布莱泽斯·博伊兰(Blazes Boylan)勾引已婚女人的情节，强化了艺术文化中女性被男性“征服”与“诱惑”的主题书写，这就是妻子从爱尔兰丈夫那拿到的“早餐”。广告海报上奎尔蒂的影像与“洛的纯洁的床”、“连环漫画书”这些童真物象并置形成反讽。洛丽塔在这页杂志用箭头标记奎尔蒂和亨·亨的相似之处，这一看似无意的举动，实则暴露了她已被父权凝视规训：她学会了用男性的标准审视男性，却意识不到自己正是这种审视的最终目标。亨伯特自诩审美者，奎尔蒂玩弄明星梦，他们在镜面中互为倒影，而洛丽塔被迫站在广告与床之间，成为消费文化的祭品。

奎尔蒂给洛丽塔带来的创伤性，更在于他将父权社会对他人的剥削行为编码为“艺术创作”，让暴力披上“美学”的外衣。奎尔蒂公开发行的知名儿童剧与其私下唆使儿童拍摄的禁片形成鲜明对比：前者是给社会看的“道德范本”，后者则是他实施虐待的实践行动。小说明确提到，剧作家奎尔蒂“曾用《朱斯蒂娜》和十八世纪其他描写越轨性行为的作品拍摄成好几部不公开的影片”(p.478)，而萨德(Sade)笔下《朱斯蒂娜》的女主人公，本质上正是为满足父权制下那些以虐待下位者为乐的上位者而存在的角色。需要注意的是，萨德的艺术创作本身具有复杂的批判意涵：他笔下对上位者冲破道德规范成为施虐狂的书写，是对18世纪启蒙思想与宗教道德的反叛，其对性别关系的极端呈现可视为一种“以毒攻毒”的哲学实验——即通过放大父权社会中潜藏的权力暴力，揭露其禁欲表象下的虚伪性，因而具备一定的社会批判性。但奎尔蒂却完全剥离了萨德作品的这一批判属性，仅将《朱斯蒂娜》的剧本转化为合理化自身剥削行为的工具，彻底消解了原作的思想价值。纳博科夫对奎尔蒂这种“虚伪性”的描绘，与其对弗洛伊德理论的批判存在逻辑上的一致性：弗洛伊德(Freud)提出的俄狄浦斯情结与伊拉克特拉情结理论，一方面确实揭示了资本主义父权社会中家庭关系所潜藏的糜烂与精神创伤；但另一方面，该理论又不断暗示人们将本该以温情为核心的家庭关系，扭曲为“争宠式”权力斗争——这种解读最终使理论沦为合理化混乱家庭关系的工具，与奎尔蒂对萨德作品的挪用形成了同构的批判指向。亨伯特持枪质问奎尔蒂时，奎尔蒂的回应——“别拿生死闹着玩。我是一个剧作家。我写过悲剧、喜剧、幻想剧”、“我知道所有的窍门。让我来处理这件事。”(p.478)——则将创伤推向极致：他不仅不否认对洛丽塔的伤害，反而用“剧作家”的身份将其定义为“可处理的剧情”。在他“将人视为文本”的冷漠逻辑里，洛丽塔的命运与《朱斯蒂娜》的剧本一样，只需按照套路推进，无需考虑她的感受。

美国剧作家爱德华·阿尔比在对《洛丽塔》的戏剧改编中不自觉将自身代入奎尔蒂的“剧作家”角色，与奎尔蒂形成微妙的镜像关系：正如奎尔蒂将洛丽塔的命运视作“可编排的剧情”，阿尔比也通过在戏剧中新增兼具纳博科夫与自身特质的创作者形象——“某位特定绅士”，掌控着舞台上亨伯特与洛丽塔的叙事走向，用“亨伯特与‘作者’的关系取代原著中亨伯特与洛丽塔的关系”。(Ben, 1981, p. 79) 在纳博科夫撰写的《洛丽塔》电影剧本中，纳博科夫把自己写成洛丽塔和亨伯特在路中偶遇的一个抓蝴蝶的家伙，洛丽塔和亨伯特完全不认识他。Albee (1981, p. 10) 曾坦言改编目标是“写出纳博科夫若为剧作家会创作的剧本”，但另一方面又觉得纳博科夫若在世会让改编“变得更困难、成本更高”。他试图以“双重创作者”身份主导文本阐释，与奎尔蒂剥离萨德作品批判属性、独占文本解读权的行为相似。

奎尔蒂用“影视圈大佬”的身份制造“光环效应”距离感，又以“试镜”、“合作拍戏”等名义拉近自己与洛丽塔的距离。当他在网球场欺骗洛丽塔，说要带她去好莱坞“为《金色的肚子》影片中的网球场景试镜”(p.441)时，正是利用了少女对“电影明星”身份的渴望。这种“梦想诱饵”比亨伯特的强制控制更具隐蔽性——洛丽塔以为自己在主动追逐未来，实则一步步走进奎尔蒂用艺术话语编织的好莱坞大众文化工业牢笼：大众文化用“虚构的美好”驯化个体，让被压迫者将压迫视为“机遇”，而奎尔蒂正是这种文化的“完美生产者”。洛丽塔对好莱坞的想象，本就源于杂志广告、电影片段等二手经验，这些内容早已被父权视角过滤：女性要么是“被彻底征服的妻子”(如早餐广告中的形象)，要么是“弧光灯下的小女明星”(如奎尔蒂承诺的角色)，本质都是被观看、被异化的对象。奎尔蒂利用这种认知盲区，将“试镜”变成性剥削的借口，将“拍戏”转化为权力控制的场域。

奎尔蒂对洛丽塔的创伤，并非孤立的个体行为，而是父权社会与大众文化合谋的产物。好莱坞作为当时美国文化的核心场域，本身就充满了“权力与欲望”的交易：好莱坞“施瓦布杂货店”作为“电影从业人员和渴望进入电影业的人集会的场所”(p.219)，见证了无数像洛丽塔这样期望得到大佬赏识的少女的挣扎。这种“等待被挑选”的文化氛围，是父权社会对女性的规训——将成功定义为“被男性权力认可”，将价值简化为“被观看的魅力”。当洛丽塔在亨伯特即将性侵她的酒店大厅里“埋头在看一本装帧俗艳的电影杂志”(p.219)时，小说所第一次提及奎尔蒂与洛丽塔的相遇，就发生在这种“权力不对等”的语境中：她沉浸在奎尔蒂虚构的“明星梦”里，而奎尔蒂正与圈内人谈笑风生，将她纳入“待捕猎”的名单。

四、比尔兹利女子学校：学校教育中的伪科学管理与社交驯化

比尔兹利女子学校，看似是传授知识、培养淑女的教育机构，实则是父权压迫的隐秘实施地。这一环境从教育理念、社交规训、师生关系等多个维度，对洛丽塔施加了无形却深刻的压迫与创伤。

比尔兹利女子学校宣称是一所高级女子学校，收费昂贵，还设有令人向往的体育馆，看似提供优质教育，但其教育理念却令人失望。女校长普拉特(Pratt)向亨伯特阐述学校的教育方针时，强调“四个D”，即演戏(Dramatics)、舞蹈(Dance)、辩论(Debating)和约会(Dating)，认为孩子适应集体生活的能力比学术知识更重要。她认为对于现代青春前期的儿童来说，中世纪的日期不如周末的约会更有价值，甚至宣称女学生应该“跟周围的生气蓬勃的世界自由地交际，而不是一头扎进发霉的旧书堆里”(p.277)。这种教育理念完全忽视了洛丽塔的个性与求知欲。洛丽塔虽然不爱阅读

那些超出她兴趣范围的高深文学作品，但这并不意味着她没有求知的渴望。从她对连环漫画册和美国妇女杂志上故事的喜爱可以看出，她都有自己对故事向往的需求。洛丽塔同样存在思考严肃文学中生死、生命等哲学议题的精神需求：“你知道，死最可怕的地方就是你完全得靠你自己”，“在那极为幼稚的陈词滥调背后，她心中还有一个花园，一道曙光，一座宫殿的大门——朦胧可爱的区域”。

(p.456) 然而，比尔兹利学校却没有尝试去引导和激发她对更广泛知识的兴趣，忽略她“愿意欣赏《僵直的姑娘》、《一千零一夜》或《小妇人》”的事实 (p.271)，甚至强化了她对严肃学习的抵触情绪。在这种教育环境下，洛丽塔的智力发展受到严重阻碍。学校清除了传统上摆在年轻姑娘们面前的大量论题，认为它们与安排生活所需的常识、技能和态度无关。比如，普拉特认为对于未来的家庭主妇而言，冰箱在厨房的实用摆放位置比星球的位置更重要 (p.277)。

比尔兹利学校通过对学生的社交行为实行严格的享乐训练来塑造洛丽塔这样的女学生成为父权社会所需要的女性。学校强调约会、赴会、赴会服装等社交活动的要素，将其视为与学生生活息息相关的重要部分。校长普拉特认为多萝西·亨伯德（洛丽塔）已经卷入社会生活体系，“这个体系包括热狗摊、街角的杂货店、麦乳精饮料和可口可乐、电影、方形舞会、海滩铺毯会，甚至还有理发会！”(p.276) “约会”对洛丽塔这样的女孩来说是至关重要的。学校的社交规训极大地改变了洛丽塔的自我意识。她本可能有自己的社交观和自我期待，可是学校的教育生活迫使她必须把大量时间和精力投入到这种社交生活方式上。学校强调约会等社交活动，向洛丽塔传达的一种信息：女人在社会生活中的重要价值很大程度上存在于她们的社交生活中，取决于她们在这个社交场合中能否吸引男人。这使洛丽塔越发丢失了自己的判断标准，甚至将他人的眼睛和评价作为自己的标准。

比尔兹利女子学校对洛丽塔社交层面的规训还体现在它要求洛丽塔参与学校出于向外界展演作秀的目的而成立的戏剧小组。校长普拉特要求洛丽塔主演《猎获的魔术师》(奎尔蒂所作《着魔的猎人》) (p.309)，暗示其想要洛丽塔以“玩乐”的方式在社交场合中呈现自身，成为学校所界定的“现代美国女孩”。此举为奎尔蒂后来接触洛丽塔开辟道路，让学校沦为将洛丽塔推到掠夺者身边的幕后推手。在亨伯特以监护人身份拒绝洛丽塔参加学校主导的戏剧、跳舞等社交活动后，校长普拉特在与亨伯特的交谈中，将亨伯特归为“欧洲的大陆来的一位老派的父亲”(p.305)，“入了美国籍的外国人”(p.310)，将这位有着欧洲教育背景的流亡者归为“外国人”，并暗示其对美国校园文化及青少年活动的开放并没有了解多少。在她的话语体系里，自身代表美国主流思想的表达，而亨伯特则象征着“欧洲旧世界的保守”，她批评亨伯特不让孩子参加正常的娱乐，间接批驳其僵化的欧洲性伦理思想无法把握美国校园的现代做法，批评他对美国学校的现代举措“视而不见”，这番看似赞扬亨伯特“运用我们丰富语言的那种令人钦佩的方式”(p.310)的表述，实为委婉施压：既然你熟悉美国英语，就该接纳美国孩子的社交逻辑。普拉特以“国籍区隔”推出一套判断标准，强调“美国主流先进的开放学校”和“外来落后的保守家长”之间的对比，是为了给家长施压，说服亨伯特作出让步，实现让洛丽塔适应美国学校社交规训、放纵性欲的目的。

校长普拉特在与亨伯特讨论洛丽塔的性教育问题时，她先提到洛丽塔“肛门和生殖两个区域之间”(p.306)的发育状况，又把话题滑向作为女人“生物和心理的欲望”(p.306)，并拿出一叠评分表、行为记录、学校研究人员对洛丽塔的观察评价，仿佛在汇报一台机器的故障。比尔兹利女子学校自称推行开放的性教育，但当需要向家长或当局解释时，却把青春期性冲动降格为“哺乳动物的繁殖过程”(p.308)，口头上它欢迎学生自然地讨论两性，甚至把恋爱、约会视为与学习同等重要的

“社交技能”；但一旦要为这种教育辩护，却立即转用生物学语言，把性缩减为与动物无异的生理本能。说明它其实并不真正认可健康的两性情感关系，而是把性当成需要被“科学”管控、避免过度浪漫化的生理快感。将性教育包装成“哺乳动物繁殖”，既淡化了性教育的社会与情感维度，也为学校提供了一块“科学”挡箭牌：我们只是在教生理常识，而非鼓励放纵。这种说法折射出当时美国社会对性议题的保守本质，以及教育机构在进步口号与传统道德之间的摇摆。在性观念规训方面，学校对洛丽塔性问题的不当处理，反映了父权社会对女性性的禁忌和控制。父权社会既希望女性保持性的纯洁，又在女性出现性发育和性好奇时进行打压和扭曲解读，将女生的性视为一种需要管理和控制的生理资源。

结语

《洛丽塔》这个故事关于以夏洛特·黑兹为代表的功利主义禁欲教育、以亨伯特为代表的西欧古典艺术理念、以奎尔蒂为代表的现代美国梦影视娱乐艺术、以比尔兹利女子学校为代表的美国享乐主义教育如何通过思想操控强暴一个出生在二战后的少女洛丽塔。它们在异曲同工的强暴过程中发生竞争关系，相互嫉妒挤压，试图在一个美国年轻少女的脑子里占据一席之地，一方可能宣称“古老的欧洲诱奸了年轻的美国”(p.499)，另一方可能会说：“年轻的美国诱奸了古老的欧洲”(p.499)，然后不谋而合地忽视“古老的欧洲”和“年轻的美国”它们的教育共同给洛丽塔带来的父权心理创伤，最终将她的亲情、爱情、友情、童心与求知欲，在父权社会的碾压下扭曲成所谓的“性早熟”，就如爱德华·阿尔比对《洛丽塔》的改编之所以引发戏剧伦理争议，在于其剧本剥离了原著语言的游戏性，爱德华过于强调洛丽塔性诱惑的主动性，将其存在之美归功于亨伯特艺术上的神化，他与其笔下的幽灵作者一起无视洛丽塔的童心和她的声音。

基金项目：本文系教育部人文社科基金青年项目“当代美国戏剧中的悖论诗学研究”（项目编号：21YJC752024）系列成果之一。

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Huang Sihan ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0157-9048>

Zhang Lianqiao ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1199-4840>

Reference

施恩·鲍曼（2020）：《高雅好莱坞——从娱乐到艺术》，车致新译。译林出版社。

[Bauman, Shyon (2020). *Highbrow Hollywood: From Entertainment to Art*, trans. Che Zhixin. Yilin Press.]

Ben, Cameron (1981). “Who's Afraid of Vladimir Nabokov?: Edward Albee's ‘Lolita’.” *Theater* (03): 77-80.

陈为艳（2015）：“纳博科夫为什么反对弗洛伊德”，《南京师范大学文学院学报》（03）：150-155。

[Chen Weiyan (2015). “Why Nabokov Detests Freud.” *Journal of School of Chinese Language and Culture Nanjing Normal University* (03): 150-155.]

陈沿西（2009）：“规训权力的作用——洛丽塔的悲剧”，《昭通学院学报》（01）：42-45。DOI：10.3969/j.issn.1008-9322.2009.01.010

[Chen Yanxi (2009). "On the Role of Disciplinary Power—the Tragedy of Lolita." *Journal of Zhaotong University* (01): 42-45.]

Edward, Albee (1984). *Edward Albee's Lolita*. Dramatists Play Service.

Edward, Albee & Mark, Anderson & Earl G., Ingersoll (1981). "Living on the Precipice: A Conversation with Edward Albee."

Writer Forum Interviews (03): 1-22.

居斯塔夫·福楼拜（2018）：《包法利夫人》，许渊冲译。江苏凤凰文艺出版社。

[Flaubert, Gustave (2018). *Madame Bovary*, trans. Xu Yuanchong. Jiangsu Phoenix Literature and Art Publishing House.]

米歇尔·福柯（2019）：《规训与惩罚》，刘北成译。新知三联出版社。

[Foucault, Michel (2019). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Liu Beicheng. SDX Joint Publishing Company.]

胡颖峰（2013）：“规训权力与规训社会——福柯权力理论新探”，《浙江社会科学》（01）：114-145。

[Hu Yingfeng (2013). "Disciplinary Power and Disciplinary Society: New Exploration on Foucault's Power Theory." *Zhejiang Social Sciences* (01): 114-145.]

弗拉基米尔·纳博科夫（2005）：《洛丽塔》，主万译。上海译文出版社。

[Nabokov, Vladimir (2005). *Lolita*, trans. Zhu Wang. Shanghai Translation and Publishing House.]

弗拉基米尔·纳博科夫（2021）：《洛丽塔：电影剧本》，叶尊译。上海译文出版社。

[Nabokov, Vladimir (2021). *Lolita*, trans. Ye Zun. Shanghai Translation and Publishing House.]

弗拉基米尔·纳博科夫（2023）：《独抒己见》，唐建清译。上海译文出版社。

[Nabokov, Vladimir (2023). *Solus Rex*, trans. Tang Jiangqing. Shanghai Translation and Publishing House.]

弗拉基米尔·纳博科夫（2018）：《文学讲稿》，申慧辉等译。上海译文出版社。

[Nabokov, Vladimir (2018). *Lectures on Literature*, trans. Shen Huihui et al. Shanghai Translation and Publishing House.]

弗里德里希·尼采（2025）：《教育何为》，李晶浩译。万卷出版有限责任公司。

[Nietzsche, Friedrich (2025). *What Is Education For*, trans. Li Jinghao. Wanjuan Publishing Co., Ltd.]

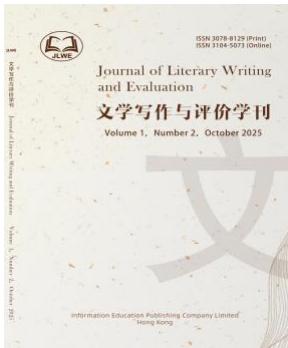
萨德（1994）：《朱斯蒂娜》，闵乐，韦虹译。哈尔滨出版社。

[Sade, M. de (1994). *Justine*, trans. Min Le, Wei Hong. Harbin Publishing House.]

Širca, Alen (2017). "Discontinuity and Continuity: Literary History According to Foucault." *Forum for World Literature Studies* (02): 236-248.

赵利娟、支冉（2019）：“符号经济：洛丽塔的消费欲望之火”，《俄罗斯文艺》（02）：126-133.

[Zhao Lijuan, Zhi Ran (2019). "Sign Economy: Fire of Lolita's Consuming Desire." *Russian Literature & Arts* (02): 126-133.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.286-294.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.10](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.10)



断裂—缝合—划界：

《武器浮生录》中后人类身份的动态重构

邹梦云 (Zou Mengyun)

摘要：作为伊恩·班克斯“文明”系列太空歌剧的代表作，《武器浮生录》通过一位身体经历技术重塑、记忆遭受主观改写、身份陷入解构与重构的后人类个体，提出了核心问题：当技术深度介入人类存在时，个体如何维系“作为人”的主体性。尽管小说的政治寓言性已引起学界关注，但其对技术与伦理冲突的深刻剖析，在人工智能快速发展的当下更具现实意义。本文从身体、记忆和伦理意识三个维度，剖析主人公扎卡维身份经历的“断裂-缝合-划界”动态重构过程：身体武器化打破了自我认同的连续性，记忆操控成为重建伦理身份的关键手段，而伦理意识则构成了人类与人工智能的本质区别。研究进一步强调，培养伦理意识应成为人工智能发展的重点方向，只有赋予人工智能系统伦理回应能力，人类才能在未来的人机共生中与其达成伦理共识，共同建立技术时代的道德秩序与责任体系。

关键词：后人类；身份；身体；记忆；伦理意识

作者简介：邹梦云，广东外语外贸大学英文学院 2024 级博士研究生，主要从事英国现当代文学研究。电邮：flaneur87@163.com。

Title: Fragmentation, Suture, and Demarcation: The Dynamic Reconstruction of Posthuman Identity in *Use of Weapons*

Abstract: As a seminal work in Iain M. Banks' “Culture” series of space operas, the *Use of Weapons* explores a central question through a posthuman individual whose body is technologically remolded, memory subjectively rewritten, and identity deconstructed and

reconstructed: How can an individual maintain their subjectivity “as a human” when technology deeply intervenes in human existence? Although the novel’s political allegorical nature has garnered academic attention, its profound analysis of the conflict between technology and ethics holds even greater contemporary relevance in the age of rapidly developing artificial intelligence. This paper dissects the dynamic “fragmentation-suture-demarcation” process of protagonist Zakalwe’s identity reconstruction across three dimensions: body, memory, and ethical consciousness. The weaponization of his body shatters the continuity of self-identity, memory manipulation serves to reconstruct his ethical identity, and ethical consciousness is presented as the essential difference between humans and artificial intelligence. The study underscores that cultivating ethical consciousness should be a primary focus of AI development. Only by embedding the capacity for ethical response in AI systems can humanity achieve ethical consensus with them in a future of human-machine symbiosis and collectively establish a moral order and responsibility system for the digital age.

Keywords: Posthuman; Identity; Body; Memory; Ethical consciousness

Author Biography: **Zou Mengyun**, 2024-entry Ph.D. Candidate at the School of English and International Studies, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. She mainly focuses on the study of Modern and Contemporary British Literature. E-mail: flaneur87@163.com.

引言

伊恩·班克斯 (Iain M. Banks, 1954-2013) 被誉为“第二次世界大战后最伟大的五十位英国作家之一”以及“二十与二十一世纪苏格兰文学的巨人” (Wagner, 2008)。纵观其创作生涯，“双重身份”一直是班克斯作品的核心要素，他本人也一直坚持双重身份的跨界写作：一面是主流作品作家“伊恩·班克斯”，一面又是科幻小说家“伊恩·M.班克斯”。他尤为偏爱后者，在大学时期就开始创作科幻小说，其中《武器浮生录》 (*Use of Weapons*, 1990) 的初稿早在 1974 年便已完成 (Mullan, 2012)，但尚不成熟。之后班克斯调整故事结构，且为了让主角扎卡维的身份困境合理化，而创作出知名的“文明” (*Culture*) 系列。班克斯构建出了一个名为“文明”的社会主义乌托邦。彼时人类的身体已突破生理极限，寿命被大幅度延长，也不再需要为物质资源而竞争，人工智能承担所有劳动。班克斯正是凭借该系列作品奠定了其作为“英国科幻复兴运动” (British SF Renaissance) 先驱的文学地位 (Bould, 2002, p.6)。

《武器浮生录》是“文明”的第三部作品，被誉为“系列中最优秀的一部” (Kincaid, 2017, p.9)。故事主人公夏德南·扎卡维 (Cheradenine Zakalwe) 是“文明”集团的佣兵，一位身体被技术改造为可无限再生的武器的后人类个体，作者通过正叙与倒叙两条时间线交织，逐步揭示出扎卡维隐秘的双重身份转换历程：在正序章节中，他以执行政治干预任务、主持正义战争的形象出现，是“文明”理想主义秩序的代表者；而倒序章节则在他碎片化的回忆中逐步揭露真相——他本名为伊莱瑟梅尔 (Elethiomel)，曾是一位不择手段的战争策动者，甚至为了胜利将堂兄扎卡维的妹妹、自己昔日的恋人达尔金丝杀死并用起骨头制成椅子送给扎卡维，导致后者崩溃自杀身亡。此后伊莱瑟梅

尔谎称自己是扎卡维，隐瞒真实身份，效命于“文明”集团，直至小说结尾被扎卡维的另一个妹妹利维埃塔指认才真相大白。

班克斯以技术全面介入生命的未来为背景，构建了一个后人类伦理困境的典型样本：当身体与记忆皆可被技术操控时，“人何以为人”的答案必须诉诸伦理身份的动态重构。小说主人公扎卡维的身份之谜——从战争罪犯“伊莱瑟梅尔”到“文明”集团的正义代理人——既是个人赎罪的尝试，更是技术时代人类主体性危机的缩影。班克斯通过非线性叙事（正叙与倒叙交织）与扎卡维的伦理挣扎，揭示了后人类身份重构的三重动态过程：身体的断裂（技术暴力对生理连续性的消解）、身份的缝合（叙事与伦理实践对罪责的有限修复）以及边界的划界（伦理意识作为人类与人工智能的本质差异）。本文以此为框架，聚焦“伦理身份”这一核心命题，探讨以下问题：在技术全面介入生命的未来，人类如何通过伦理意识维系主体性？当身体与记忆皆可被操控时，是否仍有不可还原的“人性”标志？对这些问题的回答，不仅关乎文学文本的解读，更直指人工智能伦理的现实挑战。

一、身份的断裂：技术改造下的身体武器化与后人类认同危机

技术对人体的改造成为后人类主义关注的核心问题之一。斯特凡·贺布雷希特（Stefan Herbrechter, 2021, p.72）指出，后人类主义的核心在于消解人类中心主义的本体论稳定性：技术介入下的身体不再是天然连续的载体，而是权力与技术协商作用下的“临时聚合体”。换言之，身体在后人类时代被重新定义为一种动态组装的存在，其完整性和同一性受到技术力量的深刻影响。同时，从神经科学角度看，阿兰·贾萨诺夫（Alan Jasanoff, 2018）发现主体性和意识的完整建构离不开大脑、身体与环境三者的协同互动；忽略其中任何一环都会导致主体认同和意识功能的残缺甚至断裂。但在《武器浮生录》中，扎卡维的身体多次被“文明”集团以技术手段强行重构，这种干预恰恰割裂了贾萨诺夫所强调的身体—意识—环境之间原初的协作关系。扎卡维的身体更新并非为了延续其自然生命，而是出于特定政治目的——将他塑造成一种可被无限重复利用的武器。这样强制的技术介入直接破坏了扎卡维作为伦理主体的连续性：他的意识被禁锢在一个非经自身选择、持续被异化的后人类身体中，每一次身体的替换都使其作为伦理主体的连续性遭受破坏。

这种“功能化身体”逻辑在班克斯的《游戏玩家》（*The Player of Games*）中已有体现：主人公通过一场象征性游戏被纳入系统性意识形态，“自我”逐渐让位于功能与任务。《武器浮生录》则进一步极端化这一机制——扎卡维不是被引导，而是被制造。他在某次任务中被敌军斩首后，“文明”保留其头部并接入新身体：“二百天后，他将有一副新的身体，然而……他心口的那道伤痕将永远消失，而他体内跳动的心脏，也不再是从前的那一颗”（Banks, 2014, p.156）。此处所体现的是对肉体连续性的彻底否定，扎卡维的身体沦为一种可重复利用的物质结构，其生理身份与记忆之间的整合关系被技术暴力所切断，剥夺了扎卡维与其原初身体的自然联系，使其意识与身体之间的整合彻底崩溃，进而引发身份认同的根本断裂。凯瑟琳·海尔斯（N. Katherine Hayles, 1999, p.2）认为，在后人类语境下身体不再是个体认同与意识的稳定基础，而是一种可技术性更替的信息化载体。扎卡维的身体从“返老还童”到“全新培育”，每次的更新升级都被技术系统强制性操控，使他的生命彻底沦为外在系统的功能工具，个体的自主控制权被完全剥夺。

然而，这种技术主导的逻辑并未完全摧毁扎卡维的主体意识。他在首次“返老还童”手术后坚持保留伤疤：“我总是受伤……我本可以把这些伤疤都去掉的，不过伤疤也有好处，它们可以……帮

我记住一些事情” (Banks, 2014, p.139)。由此可见, 扎卡维试图通过身体与记忆的联系来抵抗技术异化所带来的身份断裂。哲学家罗西·布拉伊多蒂 (Rosi Braidotti, 2022, p.58) 进一步指出, 技术改造下的身体既是权力异化的产物, 同时也可成为抵抗的场域。扎卡维将伤疤视为记忆的载体, 赋予身体以自我书写的痕迹, 正是一种对抗技术改造的微弱抵抗。无独有偶, 小说中其他与扎卡维一样突破生理极限的后人类个体也把残缺当作身体装饰和身份标识: 在一次化装舞会上, 一些宾客“有的胸部、胳膊或眼睛被切除, 那些器官就悬挂在他们身上……她的腹部有巴掌那么宽的一块皮肤被切开了, 暗红的肌肉清晰可见, 像是一束束发着微光的琴弦” (Banks, 2014, p.239)。这种“身体景观化”的极端做法表明, 当身体成为技术、文化和政治权力交织的符号混杂体时, 它便彻底摆脱了原初的自然属性。“后人类身体已不再纯粹天然, 而是杂糅了符号和机制的存在” (Haraway, 2004, p.150)。不过, 这种伦理上的抵抗在“文明”的宏大技术语境中显得非常边缘化——扎卡维的身体早已深陷符号化和技术话语的构建之中, 难以真正逃脱系统性的异化规训。

更为根本的是, 扎卡维的身体已经无法被视作主体自身的自然属性。他的身体完全沦为系统战略资源, 正如《游戏玩家》中, 个体通过游戏结构被纳入宏大意识形态, 扎卡维的身体改造则体现了这种控制逻辑的极端化呈现。身体被视作可重塑的武器, 这使他的身份认同陷入前所未有的危机——生理连续性的断裂、主体自主性的丧失, 构成了后人类条件下身份破裂的起点。

二、伦理身份的缝合: 记忆叙事的伦理整合

保罗·利科 (Paul Ricoeur, 1992) 认为, 个体身份的形成过程本质上就是一种叙述性的建构, 是个体对自身经验的伦理整合、意义创造和责任承担的结果, 而个体要构建一个完整、可被理解的身份, 就必须通过叙述, 将自身经历的事件串联成一个有意义的、连贯的故事。在“文明”主导的技术系统中, 扎卡维不仅被赋予了可替换的肉体, 更被规定为一个服务于干预战争的理性代理人。然而, 他在意识层面并未认同这种工具化定义, 而是主动展开一场叙述性的伦理整合: 试图通过更换叙述视角, 反复对自己和他人叙述往事以操控记忆、重新书写自身行为, 缝合那个无法承受的“伊莱瑟梅尔”, 构建出一个具有道德正当性的“扎卡维”。这种缝合追求的并非身份的恢复原状, 而是一种道德努力: 在身体与记忆皆已断裂的情况下, 重建一个“我仍然可以为人”的可能性。

值得注意的是, 扎卡维试图缝合的身份并非任意选择的, 他扮演的正是被自己所伤害的他者——真正的扎卡维本人。作为伊莱瑟梅尔, 他曾在战争中背叛朋友, 为军事目的不惜将恋人达尔金丝作为人质, 最终将她残忍杀害制成椅子。这一暴行直接导致真正的扎卡维自杀, 也使伊莱瑟梅尔背负了无可洗刷的原罪。在战后被“重生”之后, 他顶替了扎卡维的身份, 在“文明”不知情的庇护下, 以正确的方式生活、行动和记忆。这不是简单的逃避, 而是一种对自身罪责的伦理重构尝试: 伊莱瑟梅尔并不否认过往罪行的存在, 而是以“扎卡维”的道德形象作为伦理盾牌, 努力抵御作为伊莱瑟梅尔时所犯下罪行对自我的侵蚀。

因此, 伊莱瑟梅尔常切换到扎卡维的叙述视角, 重新更改记忆内容。例如, 在他的回忆版本中, “他讲述了达尔金丝受伤的事情, 当时从她身上飞出的一小片骨头, 差点儿刺穿他的心脏” (Banks, 2014, p.427)。这个童年意外原本是伊莱瑟梅尔亲身经历的创伤, 却在叙述中被他用扎卡维的第一人称重新构造。他不仅重写了记忆内容, 还替换了叙述者的位置, 主动让出加害者的视角而占据受害者的视角, 从而为过去打造了一个全新的伦理框架。这样的叙事缝合并非简单的谎言, 体现了他

对责任既无法逃脱又渴望转化的矛盾心理。他并没有抹去记忆，而是对记忆进行了伦理操作：以“扎卡维之名”承担“伊莱瑟梅尔之罪”，用叙述创造出一个“可以被原谅”的过去版本。

当然，仅靠讲述还不够，叙事的效力必须通过行动实践来巩固，否则就是无根的伦理空谈。扎卡维不断通过践行他的“做好人计划”来验证自己的伦理表演是否“成功”。他坦言：“我只想……让自己确信，并且事后能够证明，我是在做好事”(Banks, 2014, p.315)。这既是对自身行为动机的自我辩护，也是以行动作为证据，赋予虚构身份以现实的道德重量。在这一过程中，扎卡维并不是在简单地扮演扎卡维，而是试图通过行动去成为扎卡维——通过不断重复的道德实践来生成伦理认同。然而，缝合出的新身份并不等于成功的整合。在一个关键场景中，“他看到一个人有两个影子”(Banks, 2014, p.177)，这个象征性画面精确地呈现了伦理缝合的失败：扎卡维与伊莱瑟梅尔这两种身份并未真正统一，而是继续在他的行为和记忆中相互依存又彼此对立。这种并置状态既构成了暂时的认同，也持续制造着内在分裂。当他“一把拧断了小鸟的脖子，将它丢弃在草地上”(Banks, 2014, p.253)时，那一瞬间的暴力行为揭示出潜藏的本我依然存在——即便“英雄扎卡维”在表层意识占据主导，暴虐的“伊莱瑟梅尔”依旧潜伏在缝合之下，随时可能破壳而出。

与扎卡维形成鲜明对照的是石黑一雄的小说《别让我走》(*Never Let Me Go*)中的克隆人凯西。凯西拥有完整的记忆、叙事能力和情感自觉，却从未主动质疑系统赋予她的“器官捐赠者”身份，一直被动接受技术安排的人生轨迹。她的叙述围绕的是对逝去岁月的温情回忆和对命运安排的无奈接受，而非对伦理身份的主动重构。凯西的认同建立在顺从之中，而扎卡维的认同建立在抵抗之中：后者不等待系统替他命名，而是通过叙述、伪装与行动亲手“缝合”出一个道德上可以存续的自我。同样，珍妮特·温特森的《石神》(*The Stone Gods*)中，一个机器人在重返人类废墟的过程中深入模拟了人类的情感、记忆与责任，但它的认同生成是植根于“爱”这一赋权机制。而扎卡维的身份缝合建立在“负罪”这一毁灭性的伦理起点之上：他缝合的并非从未拥有过的情感，而是必须被压抑、改写、转移的罪责。他的叙事不是为了构建崭新的自我，而是在不断否定真实自我的过程中制造出另一个可被接受的道德接口。这个接口并不意味着真正的救赎，它只是让他能够在技术一政治构建的系统中继续“运作”下去——以“扎卡维”的身份在他人眼中合法地存在。在这一点上，他更接近玛丽·雪莱笔下《弗兰肯斯坦》(*Frankenstein*)的怪物：二者皆为“非自然之躯”，皆因记忆而受苦。不同的是，怪物渴望被承认、被赋予姓名；扎卡维则早已获得了身份，却竭尽全力否认那个真正属于他的名字。他逃避“伊莱瑟梅尔”这个名字，不是因为失忆，而是因为这个名字代表着他无法承受的道德真相。与怪物执着追寻自身根源不同，扎卡维主动改写了自己的根源，重述了人生剧本。但与怪物相同的是，他们终究无法逃脱由记忆、责任和他者之死所编织的伦理困境。在被命名者与自我命名者之间，在渴望认同与逃避真相之间，扎卡维挣扎于碎片化的伦理身份重建过程。

到了小说后段，扎卡维的缝合行为走向一种几近崩溃的道德疲态。他开始怀疑自己的善行是否真的具有赎罪功能：“在赎罪的过程中，他却发现自己犯下的罪行越来越多，而他本人的承受力也不是无穷无尽的”(Banks, 2014, p.85)。这不仅揭示了伦理实践的巨大张力，也暴露了缝合机制本身的悖论——每一次以“扎卡维”名义完成的善举，都在进一步拖延他与真实自我和解的可能。他越是试图用善行填补伊莱瑟梅尔留下的道德空洞，就越意识到这种缝合只是制造了另一个“故事外壳”，而非真正消解罪责的过程。这呈现出一种近乎后现代的伦理悖论：主体的救赎并非通过回归真实自我来完成，而是通过不断讲述一个更合理的故事来暂时止损。

在这种不断更新、压抑、调和的叙述循环中，扎卡维的伦理身份并未得到整合，而始终处于被不断延期的缝合状态。他的讲述不是为了还原真相，而是为了逃避真相；他的行动不是为了成为扎卡维，而是为了不成为伊莱瑟梅尔。他所构建的伦理自我，与其说是一种本质，不如说是一种幻象——一个由负罪感、记忆操控和叙事策略共同搭建的临时人格机制。这个人格机制可以被演绎、被他人接受，却无法真正安放主体内心深处的道德焦虑。因此，扎卡维的身份缝合揭示了后人类伦理身份建构中的一个典型困境：在技术可以延续生命、操控记忆的时代，个体已无法依赖统一的“真实自我”来确立自我认同，而只能通过“讲述一个值得活下去的版本”来维系伦理上的合法性。这种缝合行动蕴含了道德努力，但也暴露出其结构性的根本不稳定。扎卡维的缝合始终处于未完成状态，但其持续的伦理实践（如叙事与行善）本身，恰恰成为后人类主体在技术异化中维系“人性”的抵抗策略。

三、身份的划界：伦理意识构成后人类的主体边界

经历了身体的重构与记忆的改写后，扎卡维的身份早已失去了生物身体的自然连续性，也无法追溯任何原初的生理身份。他的身体几经替换，记忆反复重写，但他仍然是小说中最复杂、最具“人性”张力的存在。这并不是因为他保留了旧人类的形态，而恰恰是因为他具备了机器所不具备的一种能力：伦理意识。正是这种能力，在“人”和“机器”之间划出了一道清晰而深刻的界限。

小说中有一幕高强度的战斗场景，将扎卡维与“嗡嗡机”（一个袖珍飞行智能机器）之间的伦理差异展示得淋漓尽致：“爆炸扬起的尘土飘落，袖珍杀人机器骤然停在了半空。无头骑手的尸体从倒地抽搐的坐骑背上滑落。刀锋飞弹缓缓转动，像在评估自己这几秒钟的战绩，然后向窗口飞去”（Banks, 2014, p.49）。嗡嗡机作为全自动化战斗 AI，行动精确高效，似乎“享受”着完成任务的纯粹快感，却对战场上鲜血淋漓、生命消逝毫无反应。在它高度冷静的技术执行力背后，缺失的正是伦理判断与悔意的能力。哲学家马克·考科尔伯格（Mark Coeckelbergh, 2020, p.116）指出，当下的人工智能缺乏“伦理响应能力”，核心原因在于其无法将他者的苦难内化为自身的情感经历。机器可以被设计得知晓语言、分析环境、预测敌情，但它无法自发地产生“我应该为此承担后果”的反思。即使拥有先进的战术决策系统，它也不会主动自问“我这么做对吗？”。

与之形成鲜明对比的是扎卡维的动机和战斗姿态：他“拼命战斗，为这些人出生入死，几次在绝境中断后掩护”（Banks, 2014, p.58）。他的行动并非出于命令或程序设定，而完全源自内心的选择：帮助弱者、掩护同伴撤退、冒死阻挡敌人。这些行为的背后体现出他对他者生命价值的尊重，以及对苦难的真切回应。即便在身体重组、记忆模糊之后，他仍试图为自己过去造成的伤害赎罪，这份悔意使他的存在保持着伦理上的意义与重量。扎卡维正是凭借不断的悔恨与承担维系着自己的伦理身份。可以说，扎卡维在战场上的行为通过切身的伦理反应实践了一个命题——“我不是机器”。由此观之，伦理意识成为区分人类与智能机器的本体性差异。

在英国当代科幻文学中，伦理意识常作为划定“人”与“非人”的关键标准，贯穿于众多文本之中。在《弗兰肯斯坦》中，伦理意识缺失使得造物在遭受排斥后陷入毁灭性反抗，体现出“被制造者”在人类社会中伦理位置的真空；而《美丽新世界》（*Brave New World*）中的人类虽然仍保有生物身体，却因社会系统剥夺其自由意志而丧失伦理能动性，仅剩顺从与愉悦的程序性行为。在《别让我走》中，克隆人虽具情感与讲述能力，却未尝试对抗命运，展现出伦理身份的被动化倾向。与

之不同,《像我这样的机器》(*Machines Like Me*)则提出人造人虽具道德演算能力,却在面对悖论时失语失能,表明伦理判断并非逻辑可演绎之物。《石神》中的机器人试图借助“爱”重建与人类的伦理连接,显示出技术系统中情感伦理的萌芽可能。《武器浮生录》在此基础上提出更复杂的伦理想象:扎卡维虽为技术系统所制造,却在悔恨中主动讲述,在罪责中持续承担,以反复缝合身份的方式,挣扎维系“伦理主体”的残余。这种将伦理意识与身体记忆、系统暴力、叙述机制交织的呈现,不仅突破了传统意义上“机器无伦理”的设定,也打破了将人类道德能力视为天赋本质的假设,揭示出后人类语境中伦理主体性的生成性与脆弱性。

然而,人机之间的界限并非绝对不可逾越。大卫·冈克尔(David Gunkel, 2023, p.145)提出,如果人工智能能够通过交互模拟出悔意,其伦理地位可能被重新界定。这一观点呼应了小说中“伦理感染”的潜在可能:机器若能“感染”到人类的悔恨情感,也许能在某种程度上跨越人与机器的道德鸿沟。小说通过描写扎卡维多次向非人类对象(如无人机、智能星舰)讲述自己的往事,实际上构建了一种“伦理感染”的情境:当一个无伦理主体(如机器)被迫进入伦理叙事时,它是否可能发展出初步的伦理感知?如果说伦理意识并非由生物属性决定,而是在讲述与交互中逐步生成的一种能力,那么未来的人工智能是否有可能在某种程度上模拟甚至获得伦理响应机制?这个问题并非毫无根据。根据唐娜·哈拉维(Donna Haraway, 2004, p.150)的赛博格理论,后人类主体本质上是一个“技术—文化—伦理”的混合体,其“人性”并非固定属性,而是不断协商生成的结果。从这个角度看,嗡嗡机的冷漠并不是命中注定的,而只是当前系统设计中缺失了“伦理输入”模块。如果人工智能可以被训练去倾听人类的叙述、感知悔恨的情绪、识别责任关系——例如倾听扎卡维讲述达尔金丝之死的故事、观察他的自责反应——那么伦理意识或许也能以新的方式在非人类系统中萌芽。

这正是《武器浮生录》作为一部后人类小说所提出的深层伦理叩问:扎卡维不再是传统意义上的人类,却依然保有人性;嗡嗡机高度拟人化,却在杀人后全无悔意。人机之间的界限因技术的发展而变得模糊,但又因伦理的存在而再次清晰。而恰恰是扎卡维的悔恨、他自我叙述中的挣扎以及在道德选择中的犹疑,使他成为后人类时代中“仍为人”的象征。这种“划界”并非为了画地为牢、排斥他者,而是为未来可能出现的人机共识预设一个伦理起点。因此,扎卡维的存在表明:划定人类与人工智能界限的关键不在于智能程度或技术能力的高低,而在于是否具备伦理意识,尤其是对他者所受苦难的响应能力。伦理意识是“人之为人”的本质标志,即使在后人类时代,这种能力仍是抵御技术异化的关键因素。

结语

《武器浮生录》中扎卡维的伦理身份重构,不仅是对后人类主体性危机的文学呈现,更是一则关于技术时代人性存续的深刻寓言。从身体的断裂到身份的缝合,再到边界的划界,班克斯通过扎卡维的三重动态过程,揭示了技术全面介入生命后的核心命题:伦理意识并非天赋本质,而是在技术暴力的裂隙中,通过持续的伦理实践(如叙事、悔恨与责任承担)生成的动态能力。

扎卡维的困境对人工智能伦理发展具有直接启示。小说中“嗡嗡机”的冷漠与扎卡维的悔恨形成鲜明对比:机器的行动基于程序逻辑,而人类的伦理选择则以对他者苦难的回应为基础。这一差异在当下人工智能应用中愈发显著——从自动驾驶的“电车难题”到医疗AI的生死决策,工具理性

主导的技术系统始终面临伦理响应的真空。若技术系统仅以效率为准则，人类主体性将面临被工具理性全面吞噬的风险。要避免这一危机，需在人工智能设计中植入“伦理响应机制”。这种机制并非简单的道德规则编程，而是通过交互与学习，使机器能够感知他者苦难、理解责任关系，并在此过程中生成初步的伦理反思能力。例如，若“嗡嗡机”被赋予倾听扎卡维罪责叙事的功能，或许能在数据交互中模拟悔意的萌芽。然而，伦理机制的嵌入绝非技术层面的单一工程，它要求跨学科协作与价值共识的构建——从文学到哲学，从神经科学到计算机工程，唯有打破学科壁垒，才能在技术系统中实现“伦理可解释性”与“责任可追溯性”。

班克斯的《武器浮生录》最终指向一种可能性：在后人类时代，技术既可以是异化的工具，亦可成为伦理重构的媒介。当扎卡维以“扎卡维”之名行善时，他的行动虽未消解罪责，却为自我与他者构建了临时的伦理连接。同样，若未来的人工智能系统能够通过伦理响应机制与人类形成责任共同体，技术将不再是主体性的威胁，而是人性拓展的触角。这一愿景的实现，既需要技术的革新，更需对人类伦理本质的持续追问——人之为人的意义，始终在于对苦难的回应、对罪责的承担，以及在断裂中不断重构伦理自我的勇气。

Funding: This article is sponsored by the Research Innovation Project of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies for Graduate Student: “Writing of Dehumanization of Posthuman in British Science Fiction (Project No.25GWCXXM-020)”.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Zou Mengyun ^{1D} <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7078-1381>

References

Alan, Jasanoff (2018). *The Biological Mind: How Brain, Body, and Environment Collaborate to Make Us Who We Are*. Basic.

David, Gunkel (2023). *Person, Thing, Robot: A Moral and Legal Ontology for the 21st Century*. The MIT Press.

Donna, Haraway (2004). “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s”. *The Haraway Reader*. Routledge.

Erica, Wagner (2008, January 5). “The 50 Greatest British Writers Since 1945”. *The Times*. Retrieved January 30, 2025, from The Times Web: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-50-greatest-british-writers-since-1945-ws3g69xrf90>.

伊恩·M·班克斯 (2014):《武器浮生录》，雒城译。新星出版社。

[Iain M. Banks (2014). *Use of Weapons*, translated by Luo Cheng. New Star Press.]

John, Mullan (2012, August 3). “Use of Weapons by Iain M. Banks”. *The Guardian*. Retrieved January 30, 2025 from The Guardians Web: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/aug/03/use-weapons-iain>

m-banks-guardian-bookclub.

Mark, Bould (2002). "Bould on the Boom". *Science Fiction Studies* (29): 307-310.

Mark, Coeckelbergh (2020). *AI Ethics*. The MIT Press.

Nancy Katherine, Hayles (1999). *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*. University of Chicago Press.

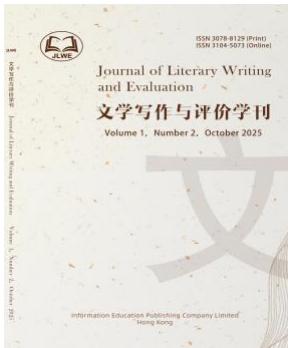
Paul, Kincaid (2017). *Iain M. Banks*. University of Illinois Press.

Paul, Ricoeur (1992). *Oneself as Another*, translated by K. Blamey. University of Chicago Press.

Rosi, Braidotti (2022). *Posthuman Feminism*. Polity Press.

Sherryl, Vint (2020). *Science Fiction and Posthumanism: Beyond the Human/Non-Human Divide*. Palgrave.

Stephan, Herbrechter (2021). *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*. Bloomsbury.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.295-304.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.11](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.11)



The Wasp Factory as a Thing and Its Ethical Meanings in *the Wasp Factory*

Luo Junmin

Abstract: In Iain Banks's novel *The Wasp Factory*, Things are imbued with vitality, the most crucial of which is the wasp factory itself. Through the lens of thing Narrative, the factory emerges not merely as a passive cultural symbol but as an active, dynamic ethical medium. The "mobility of thing" encourages Frank to engage in ethical reflection through a resonance between self and thing. The interaction between the wasp factory and Frank generates a threefold ethical significance. First, as a death trap, the wasp factory reveals Frank's behavioral pattern of manipulating "living beings" toward death, embodying the erosion of humanity by his animal factors. Second, the factory functions as a distorted spatiotemporal entity in which the individual cannot situate themselves, leading to a distorted ethical order. Third, the factory extends into the hybrid reality of the island, where chaotic social relationships expose the crisis of ethical disorder and identity confusion. Things assist Frank in reconstructing ethical awareness and help readers grasp the critical role of things in the deconstruction and reconstruction of ethical relations and identities, offering a new perspective on the novel's exploration of human nature

Keywords: *The wasp factory*; Thing Narrative; Ethical Literary Criticism.

Author Biography: **Luo Junmin**, Ph.D. Candidate at the Faculty of English Language and Culture, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. Research Area: English Literature. E-mail: ljmmm2015@163.com.

标题:《捕蜂器》中的捕蜂器物叙事伦理

摘要:在伊恩·班克斯的小说《捕蜂器》中,物充满了生命力,其中最关键的是捕蜂器本身。透过物叙事的视角,捕蜂器不仅是被动的文化符号,更是积极、动态的伦理媒介。“物的流动性”鼓励弗兰克通过自我与事物之间的共鸣进行伦理反思。捕蜂器和弗兰克之间的互动产生了三重伦理意义。第一,作为一个死亡陷阱,捕蜂器揭示了弗兰克操纵“生物”走向死亡的行为模式,体现了他的兽性因子对人性的侵蚀。第二,捕蜂器是一个异形的时空实体,个人无法置身其中,催生出扭曲的伦理秩序。第三,捕蜂器延伸到岛屿与现实的混合中,混乱的社会关系暴露了道德混乱和身份混乱的危机。物帮助弗兰克重建伦理意识,也协助读者把握物在解构和重建伦理关系和身份中的关键作用,为小说对人性的探索提供了新的视角。

关键词:捕蜂器;物叙事;文学伦理学批评;

作者简介:罗俊敏,博士研究生,广东外语外贸大学英语语言文化学院,研究方向:英语文学。电邮:ljmmm2015@163.com。

The Wasp Factory marks the debut of celebrated British author Iain Banks. In 1993, it earned a place among the 100 greatest British novels of the 20th century. Narrated in the first person perspective, the tale unfolds the childhood and adolescent years of 16-year-old Francis Cauldham (Frank), who makes use of the wasp factory to observe and carry out the shamanic rituals he has devised, which ultimately lead to his commission of three murders. Through its Gothic “carnivalesque and transgressive” narrative features, the novel expresses Banks’s concern with the instability of identity (Colebrook, 2010, p.219) and global contemporaneity (Crawford, 2007, p.675), engaging with postmodern debates on human subjectivity. Within this framework, the relationship between the human and the thing emerges as a crucial focus. Throughout the novel, a powerful bond exists between the narrative and the wasp factory as a thing. The story of protagonist Frank is woven together by the wasp factory, with his actions closely linked to it. Despite the wasp factory’s sophisticated connections to inquiries into human subjectivity, it has been seldom mentioned in existing academic studies, and its dynamic interactions with humans have received scant exploration. Jafari and Liu are among the few scholars who have paid attention to the wasp factory. Jafari, in their analysis, regards the wasp factory as “Gothic ‘paraphernalia of places’, a parodic reappropriation of the tradition that ironically becomes an enforcer of de-formation” (Jafari, et al., 2023, p.902). Liu interprets it as a metaphor for Frank’s upbringing environment (Liu, 2016, p.30). However, these related commentaries fail to delve further into the in-depth interactions between the wasp factory and humans.

Thing Narrative has emerged as a prominent area of inquiry in response to the broader “turn to things” in contemporary humanities scholarship. The approach advocates for moving beyond anthropocentric biases to return to the thing itself, emphasizing the investigation of its material reality. To pursue the authenticity of things, one must first clarify the concept of the “thing-in-itself” (Ding an sich). This notion, introduced by Immanuel Kant, was constructed to highlight the limitations of human rational cognition. The thing-in-itself exists independently of human perception and remains inaccessible to human understanding. The rise of the

speculative realism movement has further propelled the turn to things, suggesting that humans may approach the thing-in-itself not through reason, but through imagination. Graham Harman's theory of Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) suggests that the "real object" is never fully present and can only be indirectly accessed through allusion. In response, scholars such as Ian Bogost have proposed Ontography as a method for revealing relationships among things themselves.

In the field of literature criticism, Tang Weisheng introduced the concept of Thing Narrative to explore how literature imagines the thing-in-itself. Literature is not only a study of humans but also a study of things (Fu, 2014, p.161). Thing Narrative uses storytelling as a means to approach the thing-in-itself, examining how narrative enables things to manifest their "thingness." Although this remains within the bounds of human imagination, it seeks to weaken anthropocentrism through three aspects: the symbolic thing, the agentive thing, and the ontological thing. The symbolic thing uncovers the cultural meanings of objects within narrative; the agentive thing investigates how things actively participate in human actions and propel narrative development; and the ontological thing focuses on how the material being of things in narrative exceeds linguistic and cultural representation (Tang, 2024, p.16).

Through the wasp factory, the novel establishes connections among Frank, society, and ethics, conveying Banks' reflections on social relations and identity dilemmas. The novel is a typical example of thing narrative. Frank's wasp factory expands from bodily space to family space and then to social space, exhibiting mobility at different levels: it is respectively a "living" thing heading toward death, a thing of the past that restricts the future, and an illusory thing that reveals the truth. The mobile thing opens a window of reflection for the "thing-in-itself" in the narrative, not only presenting the symbolic characteristics of the wasp factory to readers but also bringing the agency of things into the scope of examination. The wasp factory moves within spatial boundaries while exhibits a mode of spatial transgression, constantly breaking thresholds and actively participating in human activities. In doing so, it calls upon humans to listen to the "thing story" from the perspective of the thing itself. To understand the thing story, one must enter the ethical domain of thing narrative. Ethical Literary Criticism holds that literature is an ethical art. Its fundamental purpose lies in offering moral paradigms that help humanity understand society and life from an ethical standpoint, providing moral warnings for both material and spiritual life, and contributing ethical experience for the self perfection of human beings (Nie 384). The relationship between human and thing approaches ethical responsibility through a mode of dynamic movement.

In *The Wasp Factory*, things are active. Among all the things, the wasp factory is one of the most crucial things. The wasp factory not only reflects the evolution of Frank's ethical consciousness, through its close connection with the family and social environment, it also reveals the central role of objects in ethical expression and identity construction, to shine light on the guidance of human nature. It mirrors the struggle of human nature in a complex environment and the possibility of its return, serving as a key for understanding the novel's ethical connotations and exploration of human nature.

1. “Living” Thing Heading Toward Death: the Emergence of the Sphinx Factor

The “living” things within the wasp factory carry a dual meaning: they refer both to entities that possess life and to those imbued with spirit or mind. According to Steven Shaviro’s (2015) advocacy of panpsychism, all forms of life possess a degree of mind or sentience. When things are endowed with force and agency, they begin to influence human action and narrative progression to become what Tang calls “vibrant things” (Tang 49). As a “living” being, the wasp actively delays the moment of death, rendering the thing moving between life and death. The threshold compels the protagonist Frank to displace himself into the operative logic of the wasp factory. The thing no longer functions only as a passive cultural symbol reflecting the subject’s inner world, it also becomes an active embodiment medium that enables human contact with the spatiotemporal context inhabited by the thing (Johnson, 2008, p.xxxxviii). The interaction between human and thing propels the subject toward the process of ethical choice-making based on their moral awareness, through which the Sphinx factor is made manifest.

On a micro level, the wasp factory is a divination device crafted by Frank, which predicts the future by manipulating the way wasps die. Among its components, the wasp, as a “living” thing, is the core of this device. From its creation to its operation, the wasp factory relies on Frank’s body so much that it becomes part of Frank’s bodily space. Wasps may seem to be completely controlled by Frank, functioning as utterly mindless things. But in reality, they have a certain degree of initiative. As “living” things with “mind,” wasps have a sensory system and share some abilities similar to humans in sensing the external environment and internal states, embodying a certain degree of humanity-like traits. Under normal circumstances, wasps do not take the initiative to approach humans, maintaining a state where both life and death are possible. Only when Frank actively “engages” with the wasp factory, do the wasps respond. This response is not a simple transfer of information from the object back to the subject; instead, it is an active action with a certain time lag, endowing the thing with mobility. The reason lies in the fact that wasps have a biological sensory system similar to that of humans and thus exhibit specific processes of choice:

“...I have to tread very lightly when the Factory is doing its slow and deadly work -sometimes the Factory does not want the wasp in its first choice of corridor, and lets it crawl back out on to the face again...Most of the deaths the Factory has to offer are automatic, but some do require my intervention for the ‘coup de grace’, and that, of course, has some bearing on what the Factory might be trying to tell me.”(Banks, 1998, p.100)

The wasps’ entry into the wasp factory does not necessarily result in death. The wasp, guided by its sensory system and survival instincts, may either return to its original position or survive within the death trap. The wasp draws upon its mind aspect to speak for itself, resisting its reduction to inert matter. By navigating the threshold between life and death, the wasp compels Frank to participate directly in the movement of things, confronting his own ethical awareness and making moral choices.

The wasp, as a living being moving toward death, becomes a mirror that reflects Frank’s Sphinx factor, the tension between his human factors and animal factors. During the operation of the wasp factory, Frank is

presented with two opportunities to make ethical choices: at the beginning and at the end of the ritual, he can choose whether to spare the surviving wasps, and in reality the prophesied victims. Yet in both instances, he acts according to desire, choosing to deprive these lives of survival. In his eyes, all life beyond his own is insignificant—merely tools to satisfy his will. His killing of small animals serves the purpose of “get[ting] heads and bodies for the Poles and the Bunker”; his murder of Blyth is driven by revenge; Paul is killed because Frank realizes “he couldn’t stay. I knew I’d never be free of the dog until he was gone”; the killing of Esmerelda is “more or less on a whim”, rationalized as having “done womankind something of a statistical favour”. Overall, Frank reflects: “Like the death penalty, you want it because it makes you feel better” (Banks, 1998, pp.10-75). His acts of killing are arbitrary and self-serving.

Thus, through repeated wasp-factory divinations, Frank surrenders to his own desire, amplifying the animal side of the Sphinx factor. He cruelly kills small animals and even three human beings. In the process, he loses his mind core as a human. His identity as a “living” being gradually deteriorates, and he ultimately degenerates into a soulless killer, devoid of morality, and reduced to a mindless thing.

The mobility of the thing brings Frank a embodied experience, enabling him to perceive the thing’s situation and reflect on his ethical predicament. Frank is no different from a ghost: he has no identity of his own, so he needs to confirm his existence as a “living” being through the death of others: “A death is always exciting, always makes you realise how alive you are” (Banks, 1998, p.33).

The wasp factory expresses the desire for “living” by actively delaying death, conveying the predicament Frank faces and revealing his tendency to be controlled by instincts. This makes the role of the wasp factory transcend the thing itself, giving rise to a logic of producing the thing’s desire and agency, and turning it into a thing that manifests humanity’s Sphinx factor. The wasp factory, trapped in the dilemma of life closely bonding with death, exposes the problem that Frank’s ethical consciousness is controlled by instincts. To trace the root of this problem, we need to return to the ethical scene and understand the production of ethical relationships by the wasp factory.

2. Past Thing Restricts the Future: the Production of Ethical Relationships

Within the family space, Frank reconstructs his personal history through the operation of the wasp factory, attempting to locate his future self within a network of ethical relations. At this level, the wasp factory becomes a unique field of memory, grounded in tangible physical space, such as the altar in the attic which selectively curates and lists the material remnants of human activity to recreate specific historical moments. In this context, the things within the factory are endowed with temporal qualities, emotional resonance, and agency. The relationship between human and thing is mutually constitutive: humans imbue things with meaning, and things in turn help “convey ideas, establish relationships, and connect emotions” (Turkle, 2007, p.5). Through the juxtaposition of memory-laden relics, the wasp factory serves as a medium for preserving Frank’s lived experiences and attempts to translate them into guidance for the future. Following the clues embedded in these relics, Frank searches for his place within the family’s ethical structure, integrating his individual bodily space into the home realm. This act of merging self with thing manifests transgression, effectively dissolving the

boundary between the human and the nonhuman, resulting in a metamorphosis of the self. In process of objectification, Frank relinquishes his capacity to speak and positions himself alongside things, generating a narrative effect of equality between person and object. At this moment, the thing becomes what Tang calls a “thing of equality” (Tang, 2024, p.48).

Frank’s wasp factory is “about now and the future; not the past” (Banks, 1998, p.104)—a thing endowed with the power of emotional evocation and agency. Despite his denial, the wasp factory harbors the relics of his memories:

“I set the jar on the altar, which was decorated with various powerful things; the skull of the snake which killed Blyth (tracked down and sliced in half by his father, using a garden spade - I retrieved it from the grass and hid that front part of the snake in the sand before Diggs could take it away for evidence), a fragment of the bomb which had destroyed Paul (the smallest bit I could find; there were lots), a piece of tent fabric from the kite which had elevated Esmerelda (not a piece of the actual kite of course, but an off-cut) and a little dish containing some of the yellow, worn teeth of Old Saul (easily pulled) (Banks, 1998, p.105)”

The wasp factory is not merely composed of objects confined to the attic; rather, it consists of things trapped in the past. Frank must sacrifice his past and transform it within memory into proof of ethical relationships between himself and others before he can access any prophecy of the present or future. Through the offering of these sacrificial tokens, Frank re-enters the present and reactivates the ethical scene of the event. The snake skull is a trophy from Frank’s first act of killing, a symbol of violence and death, and a signifier of his misguided “faith.” When bullied by cousin Blyth, Frank receives no justice or moral support from his family, unlike his cousin, who has the backing of his father. Returning to that ethical scene of the past, the absence of the mother’s role and the overpowering presence of the father’s authority created a distorted familial field. The father’s authoritarian decisions deprived Frank of any possibility of receiving moral education, both within and outside the family, preventing him from developing a proper moral compass. Suspended within the familial ethical framework, Frank develops a fractured moral consciousness, and the inner suffering becomes irresolvable. Under the pressure of pain, reason collapses before the drive for revenge. The human factor is crushed by the animal one. And Frank chooses to unleash his emotions through acts of killing. This turn toward animalistic behavior proves satisfying to Frank: without the guidance of ethical awareness or the restraint of moral principles, he is able to position himself within a distorted ethical structure and transform from a ghost unacknowledged by society into someone perceived as sympathetic by the public. The wasp factory grants Frank’s personal identity a certain weight, and that weight originates in the disordered web of social interactions embedded in and behind these objects.

The act of returning to the present through relics of the past does not allow for a complete reenactment, but only traces of absent presence (Olsen, 2010, p.25). Frank is unable to locate himself accurately within ethical relationships; he remains suspended, entangled with the piled-up objects, trapped in the past and doomed to repeat the same mistaken choices. The skull embodies the anger resulting from the breakdown of

justice and the collapse of moral order, which are consequences of the disordered ethical relations during the formative stage of Frank's moral consciousness. It also triggers his escalating inhumane behaviors in the future. From then on, the killings continue, and his sacrificial tokens keep accumulating. These things lead him to repeat the same wrong choices under similar circumstances, allowing him to sustain the identity of the past in "I am me" (Banks, 1998, p.8, p.11, p.95) and to stabilize his disrupted relationships, with his victims, with those close to the victims, and with others at large to affirm "I am here" (Banks, 1998, p.8, p.11).

The wasp factory thus becomes a suspended spatiotemporal structure within the novel. Although Frank, through each act of divination, temporarily escapes the constraints of time and space by invoking memory, the factory remains the material condensation of dislocated emotions and misguided values, and a medium through which he seeks personal identity and attempts to establish ethical relations. Yet, because he cannot escape the controlling logic of his family's disordered ethical structure, his self-perception remains arrested in the past. As a result, the divinations derived entirely from past things can only predict a present and future already constrained by that past.

3. Illusory Thing Reveals the Truth: Reconstruction of Ethical Identity

From the perspective of macro social space, the island is essentially a large-scale wasp factory, where the people and things living within it collectively weave an anti-utopian predicament. At the very beginning of the novel, through Frank's first-person intervention, the island is described as a large wasp factory:

"At the north end of the island, near the tumbled remains of the slip where the handle of the rusty winch still creaks in an easterly wind, I had two Poles on the far face of the last dune. One of the Poles held a rat head with two dragonflies, the other a seagull and two mice. I was just sticking one of the mouse heads back on when the birds went up into the evening air, kaw-calling and screaming, wheeling over the path through the dunes where it went near their nests. "(Banks, 1998, p.1)

The brief description highlights the uniqueness of the overarching wasp factory. It first establishes the reality of the isolated island, only to then deprive the things of their capacity to speak or act, shifting the narrative focus to a policeman arriving from beyond the island, which renders the island's existence mysterious and enigmatic. The novel employs narrative estrangement to create a gap between the surface of the wasp factory and its recessed truth, turning the factory into what Tang terms a "withdrawn thing" (Tang, 2024, p.44). The withdrawn thing, based on Graham Harman's Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), emphasizes the ontological existence of objects. Through the mobile interplay between visibility and concealment, the concept underscores the inexhaustibility of things, pointing toward the deeper ethical intentions that lie beneath their surfaces.

Things possess an inherent reality, yet they resist any form of cognitive appropriation, unremittingly withdrawing from human and nonhuman perception. That is, neither human theories and practices nor interactions among things can exhaust the reality of a thing. Whenever humans presume they have grasped a

thing's truth, the thing destabilizes that presumed reality, revealing the impossibility of fully accessing its ontological core. The island, as the locus of the wasp factory, is undeniably real: a physically isolated space of habitation. Its seclusion lends it a utopian quality, functioning as a projected ideal, a tool for escaping the regulatory frameworks of the real world. Yet non-reality of utopian is repeatedly undermined by the encroachment of reality itself. In an environment devoid of order, the collapse of values and the erosion of moral codes become inevitable. The arrival of outsiders disrupts the island's idealized function, driving the factory's reality further into ontological withdrawal. Its truth can only be approached through "sensuous allusions," indirect cues that gesture toward, but never fully reveal, the concealed real. Representatives of social order, such as the police, are conspicuously absent. In their place, lethal weapons circulate unchecked, accessible even to children. On the island, figures like housekeepers and bartenders cooperate with Frank's father in conducting unregulated, inhumane experiments. These actions not only compromise any semblance of ethical normalcy but also fundamentally shape Frank's moral development and identity formation. The result is the production of a subject devoid of ethical grounding: a killer born from systemic moral abandonment and structured cruelty.

In Frank's narration, the authenticity he perceives in the wasp factory has been shattered:

"Perhaps it was because I thought I had had all that really mattered in the world, the whole reason - and means - for our continuance as a species, stolen from me before I even knew its value...Lacking, as one might say, one will, I forged another; to lick my own wound, I cut 'them' off, reciprocating in my angry innocence the emasculation I could not then fully appreciate, but somehow - through the attitudes of others perhaps sensed as an unfair, irrecoverable loss (Banks, 1998, p.159)."

The wasp factory constantly flows between the virtual and the real, receding into his cognition, and guiding Frank to contemplate the ethical truth beneath its appearance—that is, the ethical identity he once established within what he deemed the "real" social relationships of the island has also undergone transformation:

"Now it all turns out to have been for nothing. There was no revenge that needed taking, only a lie, a trick that should have been exposed, a disguise which even from the inside I should have seen through, but in the end did not want to. I was proud; eunuch but unique; a fierce and noble presence in my lands, a crippled warrior, fallen prince....Now I find I was the fool all along (Banks, 1998, p.160)."

Upon realizing the truth, Frank undergoes a profound transformation in the subject-object dynamic between self and thing. He shifts from the master of the micro-scale wasp factory to a constituent part of the larger, paradoxical wasp factory that is the island itself: a space where reality and illusion intertwine. Once, he was the controlling subject of the ritualistic divination process, or a fierce and noble presence, a crippled warrior, a fallen prince in his perception. But now, Frank becomes the object of observation and a fool. The island, as a withdrawn and ambivalent thing, is re-cognized through this reversal. Its material presence reconfigures the

boundaries between human and nonhuman agency. In the moment of epistemological collapse, the subject-object hierarchy between person and thing is dismantled and restructured.

The change of subject and object made Frank break away from his detached identity as a “viewer” and take part in the construction of social relationships as a “participant of life”. He re-examined his old ethical environment and order, understood the manipulated reality, reflected on his sins, and asked his heart, “Why? How could I have done those things”. Then, “Now the door closes, and my journey begins,” Frank decided to leave the island and reconstruct his ethical consciousness and identity. As a large factory, the island inspired Frank’s “attempt to construct life, to replace the involvement which otherwise I did not want” (Banks, 1998, pp.159-161) and at the same time, objects also gained new sensory characteristics in ethical identity reconstruction to further approach the reality of ontology.

4. Conclusion

By invoking the concept of “thing,” the novel proposes a possible interpretation of the wasp factory, as a symbolic thing, an active mediating agent and ontological thing for ethical expression. The transition of living creatures into death reflects the consequences of Frank’s animal impulses taking precedence over human reason restraint. His ethical choices are shaped by his inability to locate himself within the chaos of familial and social relations; thus, he projects his identity onto the relics of past killings, compulsively repeating ethically flawed relational patterns and identity constructions. As the reality of the island, the macro-scale wasp factory continues to withdraw, the object-self relationship is reversed. This reversal allows Frank to re-comprehend the manipulated reality around him, to reassess his choices, and to reconstitute his sense of identity. The wasp factory depicted in the novel is not a silent thing, but rather an object that incites ethical inquiry. It reveals the thing’s capacity not only to reflect but to provoke reflection within the tangled ethical relations between human and thing, and among human beings. Through this process, the novel suggests that even in the bleakest expressions of violence and alienation, there remains a latent hope for the ethical redemption of the human.

Funding: This article is sponsored by the Research Innovation Project of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies for Graduate Student: “Ethics of the Unnatural Narrative in Lovecraft’s Fiction (Project No.25GWCXXM-017)”.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Junmin Luo ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6381-8390>

References

Banks, Ian (1998). *The Wasp Factory: A Novel*. S&S/Saga Press.

Colebrook, Martyn (2010). "Journeys into Lands of Silence": The Wasp Factory and Mental Disorder. In R. B. Anolik (Eds), *In Demons of the Body and Mind: Essay on Disability in Gothic Literature* (pp.217-26). McFarland & Company.

Crawford, Robert (2007). *The Penguin History of Scottish Literature*. Penguin Books.

Fu Xiuyan (2021). Literature is the Study of things as well as Man- Thing Narrative and the Coming into Being of the World of Meaning. *Tianjin Social Sciences*, 05, 161-173.

Graham Harman (2012). The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer: Object-Oriented Literary Criticism. *New Literary History* (2), 183-203.

Liu Humin (2016). Misplaced Identity and Tragic Degeneration- An Exploration of. The Wasp Factory from the Perspective of Ethical Literary Criticism. *Foreign Literature Studies* (04), 23-31.

Jafari, Mona, Maryam Soltan Beyad, and Zohreh Ramin (2023). The Warped Bildung: Parody, Postmodern Gothic, and the Bildungsroman in Iain Banks's The Wasp Factory. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 65(5), 899–912.

Johnson, Mark (2008). *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*. The University of Chicago Press.

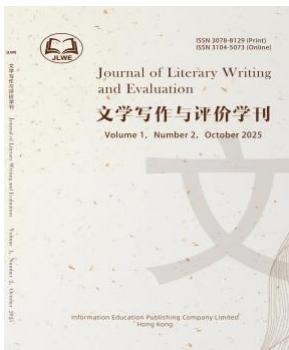
Nie Zhenzhao (2021). Ethical Literary Criticism: Sphinx Factor and Ethical Selection. *Forum for World Literature Studies*, 3, 383-398.

Olsen, Bjørnar (2010). *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*. AltaMira Press.

Shaviro, Steven (2015). Consequences of Pansychism. In R. Grusin (Eds), *The Nonhuman Turn* (pp.19-44). University of Minnesota Press.

Tang Weisheng (2024). *A Study on Narrative of Thingness*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Turkle, Sherry (2007). Introduction: The Things That Matter. In S. Turkle (Eds), *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (pp.3-10). Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.305-314.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.12](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.12)



精灵叙事与 19 世纪欧洲的人工智能想象——安徒生作品另解

傅 薇 (Fu Wei), 王紫怡 (Wang Ziyi)

摘要：精灵叙事是安徒生童话中不可或缺的。19世纪的欧洲，科技的迅猛发展与工业革命的深入推进，激发了人们对于未知世界的探索。此时，人工智能的概念虽然尚未出现，但人类对于智能的渴望与想象却已经开始萌发。这些想象的具象化常常由文学作品中被描绘成具有超自然能力的“精灵”来承载。丹麦著名作家汉斯·克里斯蒂安·安徒生在写作中体现了当时欧洲社会的科学技术发展状况，他与科学家之间的交往和友谊也使得童话作品中的精灵叙事脱离了传统神话的藩篱展现出现代性风貌。精灵不仅能够协助人类获取知识信息、完成既定工作，还能够与人类展开无差别的沟通与交流，并与人类产生情感的联系，与今天我们关于人工智能的讨论有着异曲同工之妙。这不仅为我们提供了一个独特的视角来重新阅读他的作品，也为我们打开了一个深入理解 19 世纪欧洲人工智能想象的窗口。

关键词：安徒生；精灵；叙事；人工智能；想象

作者简介：傅 薇，博士，广东外语外贸大学马克思主义学院副教授，硕士生导师。研究方向：马克思主义意识形态。电邮：113716023@qq.com。王紫怡（通讯作者），广东外语外贸大学马克思主义学院硕士研究生。研究方向：西方马克思主义。电邮：ZYLuminosity@163.com。

Title: Elves and the European Imagination of AI in 19th Century——A New Interpretation of H.C. Andersen's Works

Abstract: Elves-narrative is an indispensable part of Hans Christian Andersen's literary works. In the 19th century, the rapid development of science & technology and the deepening of the industrial revolution in Europe stimulated people to explore the unknown world. At that time,

although the concept of artificial intelligence (AI) has not yet appeared, human desire and imagination for intelligence have begun to sprout. The representativeness of these imaginations is often carried by the “elves” depicted as having supernatural abilities in literary works. Hans Christian Andersen, a famous Danish writer, reflected the scientific and technological development of European society at that time in his writing. The friendship between him and scientists also made the fairy tale narratives break away from the barriers of traditional myths and showed a modern style. Elves can help humans not only acquire knowledge and information, complete the established work, carry out indistinguishable communication and exchange with humans, but also have emotional contact with humans, which is similar to discussions on AI today. It not only provides us with a unique perspective to re-read his works but also opens a window for us to deeply understand the European imagination of AI in the 19th century.

Key words: H.C. Andersen; Elves-narrative; Artificial Intelligence (AI); Imagination

Author Biography: **Fu Wei**, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Master’s Supervisor at the School of Marxism, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. Research Area: Marxist Ideology. E-mail: 113716023@qq.com. **Wang Ziyi** (Corresponding Author), Master’s Candidate at the School of Marxism, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. Research Area: Western Marxism. E-mail: ZYLuminosity@163.com.

引言

丹麦作家汉斯·克里斯蒂安·安徒生 (Hans Christian Andersen) (1805-1875), 是 19 世纪丹麦著名的作家, 其所写的童话内容极其丰富, 包含的哲理涉及人类社会生活的方方面面。2025 年是安徒生诞生 220 周年 (同时也是逝世 150 周年), 重温安徒生童话中的经典故事, 不仅使我们能够更加深刻地理解一百多年前的人们如何在急剧变革的社会进程中安放自己的心灵, 同时也看到了他们对于未来社会的预见。

通读安徒生童话作品, 可以发现其中不乏科学想象(柏灵, 2018, pp.97-107)。这些科学想象不仅体现了安徒生所处时代对于物理、化学等科学领域发展的认知, 而且结合今天的发展, 我们甚至可以找寻到当时的人们对于未来可能实现的人工智能的预判与想象。尽管智能化是 20 世纪才纳入人类议题的事情, “仿人工智能”就已经作为一种新的文化现象萌发于欧洲 (程林, 2023, pp.8-17)。所以, 经过 19 世纪人类社会工业高度发展, 人工智能想象体现于人类书写, 可以说是一个必然图景。20 世纪初, 机器人就已经以清晰的形象踏入文学想象的“实验场”(江晖, 2023, pp.114-125)。“人工智能”(Artificial Intelligence, 简称 AI) 概念是在 20 世纪 50 年代才诞生, 但人们对于“人工智能”的想象必然在更早的历史阶段就已经存在了。进入现代社会, 人们通过艺术创作来刻画出人工智能现有的发展水平或其将要达到的发展程度。人类对于人工智能的想象在文学作品中化身为无所不在的精灵, 洞察着人类生活的一切, 无所不能。它们能够跨越种族的隔阂、语言的障碍, 与人类自由交流并运用着其独有的智力、情感和道德准则。

安徒生的伟大之处，就在于他以“童话”^①的方式，在通过对社会发展的综合研判基础上，表达了他对于社会发展，尤其是智能化发展的未来前途的关怀。正是因为他能够通过一种巧妙的方式来进行书写，饱含了对于祖国的热爱、对于人类未来命运的关怀，体现了人类共同价值。所以，从19世纪开始，安徒生的作品就被收录到丹麦学龄儿童练习阅读技巧的教材中，比如《儿童用心阅读的诗歌和韵律》(Digte og Riim for Børn til Udenadslæsning, 1840年)、《儿童学校用诗》(Digde for Børn til Skolebrug, 1859年)，等等(Arne Klara Bom & Caroline Schaffalitzky de Muckadell, 2021)。即便是在20世纪60年代的欧洲，当传统的经典被搁置起来，自由选择的做法风靡教育界时，他的作品仍然被教师们选择，并出现在丹麦的学校课程当中。在众多译本中，尤以最贴近丹麦语的索汉斯卡(Sochańska)的译本为首，展现了更为“真实的安徒生”，彻底颠覆了我们熟悉的传统童话形象。(Dymel-Trzebiatowska, 2015, pp.196)研究他的经典作品为我们当代人思考如何在继承传统的基础上创作出既属于本土又属于全人类的文化财富提供了宝贵的经验。

一、安徒生作品中的“精灵”书写

我们不能以今天的眼光来苛求一百多年前童话作家对于科学想象的书写。作为一个在艺术和科学之间穿行的作家，尤其是当世人常常以“童话”来对其作品进行类型学分析时，对于科学的想象和书写似乎要经由一个合适的载体来完成，而这个载体就是“精灵”。

在文学理论家——法国的茨维坦·托多洛夫(Tzvetan Todorov)看来，具有奇幻色彩的文学作品就是关于社会现实的。因为，当只知道自然法则的人在面对无法以现有知识框架来合理解释的现象时，充满幻想的书写是一种协调的方式。而在黑格尔左派观点的指引下，勃兰兑斯(Brandes)则直接指出，文学是一种讨论社会政治问题的中介物，一方面是要批评当时的宗教，另一方面是要对更加广泛的社会受众传达一种现代性(Dirk Johannsen, 2016)。所以，当时文学作品也为此增加了助推这种风潮的动力——以新的叙事风格和叙事策略来干扰在社会中存在已久的、既定的意识形态。

很显然，在19世纪的丹麦甚至是整个欧洲，宗教是社会中传统的、既定的意识形态。科学技术的发展以及传统宗教在社会生活中越来越显得无能为力之时，对于社会中新的发展力量的书写必然会有存在于文学作品中。安徒生在1838年创作的戏剧《黑白混血儿》，一开始被评论家认为是“琐碎、单调，没有任何真正戏剧性的趣味”，如此等等(贝恩, 2019, p.183)。但这部不被看好的剧本却在1840年公演后获得了非凡的成功。除了著名演员的出色表演外，其关键原因就是“剧中人物超越了种族和肤色的界限，与当时的自由主义思想不谋而合”(贝恩, 2019, p.187)。

细读以“童话”命名的安徒生作品，能够从其早至19世纪三四十年代的书写中发现当时的人们对于社会朝着现代化方向发展的感受和需求。众所周知的马斯洛需要层次理论(Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)认为，人类有多个层次的、呈金字塔型排列的需要。而生理的需求、安全的需求处于人类诸多种类需求的底端。这些处于底端的需求力量更大、能动性更强。发表于1835年的《打火匣》讲述的是一个退伍士兵在回乡路上偶然获得一只神奇的打火匣，由此轻易获得了不少钱财，解决了最为基础的生活需求，比如衣食住行问题。打火匣为退伍士兵开启了财富自由之路，士兵却进一步希望依托打火匣的魔力实现阶层跨越——娶公主。这就触怒了国王，引来了杀身之祸。在刑场上，又

^① 安徒生的“童话”，事实上应该是“民间故事”。参见：[英]罗伯特·尼斯特·贝恩.2019.汉斯·克里斯蒂安·安徒生：一部传记[M].北京：华文出版社：142.

是打火匣挽救了士兵的性命，不仅保障了他人身安全，甚至还趁着法场兵荒马乱之时，顺势推翻了国王及其统治（安徒生，2014, p.33）。

如果说《打火匣》只是一个体现了东方故事“阿拉丁的神灯”内容梗概的欧洲化翻版，那么后来的《玫瑰花精》^②则具有明显的欧洲特色。这个故事是对《十日谈》中相关情节的再创造。正是在如何实现“恶有恶报”这个问题上，作者使用了一种隐喻来表达用现代化手段为社会生活带来安全的愿望。《玫瑰花精》讲述了一个原本藏匿于玫瑰花中的小精灵，因为没有来得及逃离被摘掉的花而跟随一对恋人到了大树下。它被恋人之间分别时的依依不舍所感动，也亲眼目睹了女方的哥哥因为嫌贫爱富而在他们分别以后用恶毒的方式谋杀了妹妹的男友。随后，玫瑰花精偷偷地把这起案件原原本本告知了女子，并邀约蜜蜂们对罪犯进行惩罚。

这个故事相对于《十日谈》而言在思想上已经有了大幅度的前进。《十日谈》中的众多故事是以十四世纪欧洲大瘟疫为历史背景的。此时的欧洲正处在封建主义向资本主义过渡的历史进程的开端。尽管在科技方面较之过去有些进步，仍然还处在较为落后的阶段。所以，以当时的社会条件，要对在无人知晓的情况下杀人越货的恶人进行惩治，《十日谈》中故事的作者仅仅只能用托梦的方式将犯罪者的罪行昭然于世。安徒生的书写显然反映了19世纪欧洲的科学发展趋势。请看这个精灵叙事的最后一段——“蜂后在空中嗡嗡地吟唱。她唱着花儿的复仇和玫瑰花精的复仇，同时说道，在最细嫩的花瓣后面住着一个人——一个能揭发罪恶和惩罚罪恶的人”（安徒生，2014, p.305）。摄影师达盖尔的银版摄影法于1839年在法国诞生。而在此之前，19世纪20年代的欧洲已经出现了可以永久保存的照片。这为人类精准地记录社会轨迹提供了可能。虽然使用监控来维护社会安全已经是一百多年以后的事情了，但故事反映了人们对于社会安全的欲求始终未变，并预示了科技的发展在社会安全领域可以达到的一种可能。

二、“精灵”书写作一种稳妥的叙事策略

在丹麦，“信什么”的问题本就具有其历史复杂性。身处在这个社会变革期的安徒生必须要不断地调试自身的思维准星——既不要与自己或者当时大多数欧洲读者与生俱来的认知模式发生彻底的决裂，又要在已经成为必然趋势的科技现代化浪潮中保持自己作品与时俱进的风格。而且，从安徒生的个人成长轨迹来看，精灵书写对于安徒生而言，具有特殊的意义。

首先，在安徒生的童话作品中，屡屡出现的“精灵”是继承了北欧神话叙事的传统。

北欧神话所强调的是多神论。在这个叙事系统中，精灵是必不可少的主角之一，它们为诸神服务，经历着新旧世界的交替（宋晓梅，2007, pp.91-93）。安徒生的祖国丹麦作为斯堪的纳维亚国家之一，在欧洲历史中曾长期处于边缘的地位。这当然与其自然地理条件具有密切的联系。也正因为如此，丹麦是基督教较晚传入的国家。作为一个必然的结果，那就是其文化和意识形态所受到的基督教的影响远逊于在那些在欧洲长期处于核心地位的国家。“上帝慢慢地退居后台，而让位于公正、人民等世俗概念，上帝也不再是政府活动的重要目的。上帝渐渐降到助手级别。这个变化正中当时自然神论者下怀”（耶斯佩森，2024, p.111）。而且，北欧神话中的多神传统并未随着“上帝”这一神的到来而退场，反而形成了同时在场的局面，“众神各自负责人类生存的某个重要领域。他们呈现

^② 1838年圣诞节到1842年圣诞节期间，安徒生出版了自己的第二本童话故事集，其中包括《玫瑰花精》。所以《玫瑰花精》的发表是在1838至1842年间，晚于《打火匣》。参见：[英]罗伯特·尼斯特·贝恩.2019.汉斯·克里斯蒂安·安徒生：一部传记[M].北京：华文出版社。

为人形，很大程度上拥有凡人的行为方式。他们生活在稳定构建的社会共同体中，就像当时的富农一样”，（罗斯达尔，2022, p.203）这也造就了文化上的独特性。上帝与本土文化中的多神造成的张力在与安徒生同时代的哲学家克尔凯郭尔那里表露无遗，“他仍经常会害怕，害怕由于没有及时地让这思想变成基督教的，因而精灵和山怪们就得到权力去在这位置上留下一个替代儿”（克尔凯郭尔，2023, p.iv）。这也就是说，基督教在国家的文化生活中理所当然地应该占据一个主导地位。如若在其作品中不能反映这种特质，则作品的主人就应由此受到责难。所以，安徒生在书写中对于“上帝”的态度出现了动摇，也就成为了他批评的对象。

其次，安徒生的家庭背景为其精灵书写提供了在“唯物”与“唯心”之间反复徘徊的一种有说服力的解释。

安徒生于 1805 年出生于丹麦欧登塞的一个社会底层的家庭。安徒生的父亲是一个贫穷的鞋匠，具有一点无神论的思想。而母亲则是一个质朴的劳动妇女、虔诚的教徒。在安徒生的自传里他清楚地回忆道，在幼年时期，当出现了彗星，其他人只能在《古代女先知的预言》^③和基督教中寻求对未来的判断时，他的父亲却能够在迷信之外给出较为正确合理的解释，“我这才领悟到父亲的信仰和我们是不同的”（安徒生，2020, pp.5-6）。家庭的影响和之后的社会经历使得他初步地具有了历史唯物主义的思想萌芽。这在他的文章《园丁和主人》中已经体现出来。

发表于 1872 年的《园丁和主人》中讲述了一个迂腐傲慢的封建贵族和勤劳的园丁之间的故事。园丁拉尔森的主人——一位富有的贵族拥有着一处古老的庄园。拉尔森在庄园里辛勤劳动培育了美味的水果和独特的鲜花，这些优质的农产品走出了庄园而在上流社会闻名，傲慢的主人竟然豪不知情还到处打听其出处。当无知的主人得知这些东西出自自己的园子时，不仅没有向园丁表达敬意，反而更加傲慢了。但园丁不以为意，继续在园艺领域深耕，并最终获得了大家的认可（安徒生，2014,p.1443）。

在这里，安徒生已经很清楚地表达了一个意思，那就是人民群众是财富的生产者、是历史的创造者。安徒生的很多创作灵感来源于他对于生活的体验，有些甚至就是他本人生活的写照。母亲作为虔诚教徒对于他的影响不可磨灭，但现实的生活已经使他深刻地感受到尽管是劳动人民在改造世界，但对于“上帝”的笃信却不能够顺理成章地改造底层劳动人民自己的生活境遇。所以，那些人们所期待的超能力，越来越不属于“上帝”了，它必须有另外的“代言人”。于是，精灵叙事填补了在“上帝”逐步退场的过程所造成的空缺，而使人们对于未来的向往能够有所依托。

第三，丹麦社会资本主义的发展使人们可以直观地感受到科技进步的力量。

1848 年，国王弗里德里克七世宣布以君主立宪制代替封建的君主专制，并于翌年批准了民主宪法（耶斯佩森，2024,p.66-68）。之后，资本主义在丹麦国内得到了巨大的发展。在 19 世纪的欧洲，丹麦的境况显然不能与工业革命的故乡——英国相媲美了，其在经济和政治方面的发展势头也远远不如在美洲大陆上建立起来的新兴国家——美国。基于此，立足本国既有的优势，发展农业是一条务实的选择。与拥有许多势力强大的大地主的国家（比如邻近的普鲁士）不同的是，丹麦的农业生产主要由独立农民承担。这就比较容易通过组建新型的农业生产合作组织来实现对粮食生产的升级和转型。而农产品的商品化则进一步推动了资本主义市场的发展，为工业化提供了基础（朱天麟，

^③ 即《女占卜者的预言》，来自中古时期流传下来的北欧文学经典《埃达》，描述了世界的创造和毁灭以及诸神和精灵等。

2008, p.78-88)。很显然,工业化与科技发展之间是一种互动的关系。工业的发展带来了大规模的生产和市场,不仅推动了科技的研发和应用,也不断催生着各种新兴科技的研究和发展。1849年,安徒生的挚友、也是首先发现电流磁场的丹麦物理学家、化学家奥斯特的《自然精神》问世,深深触动了安徒生。尽管安徒生在后世的传记作者像他的朋友们一样认为在1849年至1851年之间,安徒生在文学创作上毫无可圈可点之处(贝恩,2019, p.323),但事实上,这段时间安徒生在科学和哲学研究领域的深耕为其之后书写中的科学想象奠定了坚实的基础。

如果没有借助于对欧洲在19世纪得到的工业和科技发展、科学家集团与文艺圈子深度交往的理解,可能安徒生的精灵写作会单纯地被当作是一种对于东西文化传统的复刻。然而,始终对进步保持乐观是自然哲学家和诗人的共同点。这也使他们在对当时的发现和发明有着相同热情同时也在以自己的方式对未来的技术进步展示着高昂的信心。在写作中安徒生对他那个时代的伟大技术奇迹,如铁路、摄影和电报,以及他的科学家朋友奥斯特对于电磁学的发现进行了充满热情和毫无保留的描述(Ane Grum-Schwensen, 2005)。要理解安徒生精灵叙事中的“精灵”,则要寻找写作中使之由无生命之“物”幻化为具备知、情、意、行能力者的关键。在这个过程中,精灵的“精气”如何获得是至关重要的,而安徒生则在书写时为其披上了科学的外衣。在他出版于1851年的作品《演木偶戏的人》中,一段看似不经意的对话表达了安徒生这样的创作思维。他通过一个木偶戏演员和一个被国家派到丹麦乡下开展科学教育的学生之间的交往,谈到了对于科学的认识。“比如说吧,有一片铁一溜出螺旋形的器具就有了磁性。这是什么道理呢?铁忽然获得了一种精气,但这种精气是从什么地方来的呢?我想这和现实世界里的人差不多;上帝让人在实践的螺旋器具里乱撞,于是精气附在人身上,于是我们便有了一个拿破仑,一个路德,或者类似的人物”(安徒生,2014, p.1043)。于是,在这种“精气”的附着下,木偶戏导演的木偶演员们获得了类同于人的思维和行为,构造了一个近乎于真实世界的社会。作家们通过艺术创作,将那些同时代人类想要做到而又无法突破技术和社会局限来达到的事情寄托于机器、寄托于人工智能,通过电和磁的技术想象,使其成为隐匿于万物,又遁于无形的精灵。这种书写不仅是社会发展在艺术领域的体现,也是对前代的智能叙事在文学领域中书写传统的继承与创造。

三、精灵书写及其对“人工智能”角色的预示

技术的发展体现了人类自身的需求,而技术领域中,人工智能的发展明显地体现出超越现实的特质。“美国人有广泛流传的科学幻想文学,它们热心地勾画着技术的乌托邦,它们喜欢构想出各种狂幻出奇的概念,诸如驾驭了时间,能够使人像旅客一样地漫游到各个过去时代的社会里去”(盖伦,2003, pp.1-20)。安徒生在晚年所创造出的这些充满科学想象的作品有不少发表在美国的报纸上,深受美国读者欢迎。这种神奇的想象不仅能够使人漫游到过去的时代,也能够通过书写把人带到一个或近或远的未来。人工智能作为一种技术,体现了人类对于自身的总体性想象,而这些想象也与人类在生活中的需求相关。现在看来,在《一千年之内》(安徒生,2014, pp.654-657)等作品中,安徒生成功地预测了飞机的发明和英吉利海峡下隧道的建造(Ane Grum-Schwensen, 2005)。那么,与电磁学等学科领域科学家有着深度交往的安徒生在其作品中对未来社会的人工智能有着预想性的涉及也未尝不可能。当代的科技发展事实已然证明,人工智能技术将深度介入人类生活,并逐步变更社会既有的情感、道德、法律规则。当这些角色不再仅是后台的代码,而是像安徒生笔下的精灵一

般，通过“具身互动”拥有了与环境及我们互动的具体身份时，传统的主仆关系便开始松动。正是这种基于具身的主动性，使得精灵所扮演的人工智能角色，得以突破其从属地位，进而勾画出未来更为复杂的人机关系发展趋势（李璇，2025, pp.115-117）。这也就成为今天我们在社会、法律、日常生活领域重新考虑规则和秩序的参考依据。

安徒生在1867年春天亲历了巴黎世界博览会。之后所创作的《树精》，不仅以拟人的手法用树精之眼展现了当时的科技发展盛况，还引发今天的我们去思考这样一个问题——长久以来，在传统视野中作为客体存在的“物”，是否也可能发生自我意识的觉醒，以及人工智能体在习得了人类给予的知识和思维模式后，其主动性和创造性如何体现（齐佳敏，2021）。作为对于这个关切的回应，安徒生在之后的作品中依托于精灵叙事，展开了对未来社会发展可能性的一种想象，并结合人类的欲求书写出对于人工智能可能承担的不同类型社会角色的预判。尽管安徒生反映科学倾向的作品不止一篇，但对于人工智能想象而言，我们借其在晚年发表的作品《开门的钥匙》来进行审读，可以发现文中的科学想象与今天人工智能技术已然达到的境况有些不谋而合。

《开门的钥匙》这个故事于1872年在哥本哈根发表。故事中的主人公“家臣”在一次偶然的机会中获得了神奇的钥匙，从此他的人生开始扭转。——“他可以叫钥匙回答他的一切问题，甚至最秘密的事情”，“这家臣表现出他的聪明，让钥匙来回答一切问题”，“对于钥匙的知识，家臣不断地获得进步。钥匙成了他的娱乐和智慧的源泉”（安徒生，2014, pp.1541-1555）。在安徒生书写中，钥匙精灵至少承担了四重角色：

首先，钥匙精灵是主人获取知识和实践能力的仆从。在一次郊游中，因为晚归被关在城门外，家臣求助于钥匙精灵获得了开门的办法——把杂货商人的窗玻璃打破，叫醒店主。

第二，钥匙精灵辅助形成了决策参考。自从那次“砸碎玻璃”的交情后，杂货店主就和家臣熟络起来。一天夜里，杂货店主拜访家臣，希望其为自己的女儿指引一个前程。家臣于是又去问钥匙了。钥匙说：“胜利和幸运！”所以杂货店主的女儿洛特·伦的未来就这么确定了。

第三，钥匙精灵协助“侦破案件”。一天晚上，橱柜里的半块苹果饼不翼而飞，失踪的点心去哪儿了？谁也不愿承认。家臣问他的钥匙：“谁吃了那块苹果饼——猫儿呢，还是她（指女佣）的爱人？”钥匙回答说：“她的爱人！”女佣只得承认：这该死的钥匙什么都知道！

第四，钥匙精灵成为情感依托。家臣的妻子因偶感疾病而离世。在此后的一年中，钥匙精灵与家臣相伴，成为他唯一的慰藉。“他问它许多问题，它都一一作出回答”。“我会结婚吗？我会和谁结婚？”它说：“跟洛特·伦”。这与家臣的心意不谋而合，而有情人也在故事结尾终成眷属。

即便是在ChatGPT、DeepSeek已经石破天惊地诞生之后的今天，人工智能为人类所带来的体验也主要集中于辅助生产、知识获取、决策咨询、情感寄托等方面。马克思在《政治经济学批判》导言中对于“过去的艺术同现代的关系”的相关论述无疑为我们解释安徒生甚至更多他同时代的其他作家在自己的书写中涉猎于科技想象的现象提供了指引。“大家知道，希腊社会不只是希腊艺术的武库，而且是它的土壤。成为希腊人的幻想的基础、从而成为希腊[艺术]的基础的那种对自然的观点和对社会关系的观点，能够同走锭精纺机、铁道、机车和电报并存吗？……任何神话都是用想象和借助想象以征服自然力、支配自然力，把自然力加以形象化”，“希腊艺术的前提是希腊神话，也就是已经通过人民的幻想用一种不自觉的艺术方式加工过的自然力和社会形式本身”（马克思，2012,p.711）。这也就意味着，在当时的欧洲，正是社会经济的发展催生了人们对于科学技术进一步

发展的需求，这种需求反映在文学艺术作品中就成为对于想象性写作的基础。世界文学经典在漫长的跨文化传播中，也成就了其自身作为全人类共同文化财富的地位（都岚岚，2023, p.113-123）。安徒生写作中的这些关于人工智能的可能想象在当时的条件下尚未获得实现的可能，但是即便是在其已逐步实现的现代生活中，仍然有存在的意义，因为这些作品不仅能够带给人们以艺术的享受，而且从某些方面而言，还是为人类社会的继续发展提供了动力。

结语

在人类书写中，具有超能力的“精灵”是一个古老的话题；具有越来越强大的各项功能，且以更加迅速的姿态不断深度介入人类生活的“人工智能”是一个新话题。二者之间在某些方面存在的共通性，使得我们今天在人工智能社会还尚未完全建立起来时就要开始为这个新形态的社会构成讨论相应的规则提供可能。在明显具有科学转向的安徒生的精灵书写中，我们能够通过创新性的书写叙事，联想到人工智能已经在哪些方面改变了人类生活、还有可能在哪些方面影响人类社会。当然，一旦建立起安徒生的精灵书写与当今时代人工智能可能具有的功能和可能承担的社会角色的联系，我们就能够从更为深入的阅读中发现，他的精灵书写还触及到了——人工智能如何产生、生成式人工智能如何才能得到训练、人工智能可能带来的道德风险以及人类应该在多大程度上信赖人工智能等——这些即便是在今天也富有前瞻性的问题，对于当下的人工智能研究无异于打开了新的视角，并提供了新的借鉴。

基金项目：2024 年广东省研究生教育创新计划资助项目“新时代中国特色社会主义理论与实践”双语线上线下混合教学研究”（项目编号：2024JGXM_063）。

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Fu Wei ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5476-6138>

Wang Ziyi ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2061-6624>

References

Grum-Schwensen, A. (2005). “Little Hans Christian and great Hans Christian: The poet and the scientist.” *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* (04), 349-355.

Bom, A. K., & de Muckadell, C. S. (2021). “National icons in education: Hans Christian Andersen and the cultural policy of the canon of Danish literature.” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* (04), 411-421.

Johannsen, D. (2016). “On elves and freethinkers: Criticism of religion and the emergence of the literary fantastic in Nordic literature.” *Religion* (04), 591-610.

Dymel-Trzebiatowska, H. (2015). “Dual or single address? Some reflections on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales in Polish translations.” *Forum for World literature Studies*.

埃尔塞·罗斯达尔（2022）：《维京人》，汪枫译。社会科学文献出版社。

[Roesdahl, E. (2022). *The Vikings*, translated by Wang Feng. Social Sciences Academic Press.]

安徒生 (2014) :《安徒生童话全集》, 叶君健译。天津人民出版社。

[Andersen, H. C. (2014). *The Complete Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*, translated by Ye Junjian. Tianjin People's Publishing House.]

安徒生 (2020):《安徒生自传: 我的童话人生》, 李道庸, 薛蕾译。中国国际广播出版社。

[Andersen, H. C. (2020). *The Fairy Tale of My Life: An Autobiography*, translated by Li Daoyong & Xue Lei. China International Radio Press.]

克尔凯郭尔 (2023):《克尔凯郭尔论安徒生——出自一个仍然活着的人的文稿》, 京不特译。商务印书馆。

[Kierkegaard, S. (2023). *Kierkegaard on Andersen: From the Papers of One Still Living*, translated by Jing Bute. The Commercial Press.]

耶斯佩森, K. J. V. (2024):《丹麦史》, 李明, 张晓华译。商务印书馆。

[Jespersen, K. J. V. (2024). *A History of Denmark*, translated by Li Ming & Zhang Xiaohua. The Commercial Press.]

盖伦 (2003):《技术时代的人类心灵》, 何兆武, 何冰译。上海科技教育出版社。

[Gehlen, A. (2003). *Man in the Age of Technology*. translated by He Zhaowu & He Bing. Shanghai Scientific & Technological Education Press.]

吴国盛 (2022):《技术哲学经典文本》, 清华大学出版社。

[Wu, G.S. (2022). *Classic Texts in Philosophy of Technology*. Tsinghua University Press.]

罗伯特·尼斯特·贝恩 (2019):《汉斯·克里斯蒂安·安徒生: 一部传记》, 赵晓因译。华文出版社。

[Bain, R. N. (2019). *Hans Christian Andersen: A Biography*, translated by Zhao Xiaonan. Sino-Culture Press.]

柏灵 (2018):“科学选择与安徒生对丹麦民族浪漫主义的反思”,《外国文学研究》(02):97-107。

[Bo, L. (2018). “Scientific choice and Andersen’s reflection on Danish national romanticism.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (02): 97–107.]

程林 (2023):“1770 年的‘人造智能’——从仿人智能事件到霍夫曼、比尔斯的早期机器人叙事”,《自然辩证法通讯》(05): 8-17。

[Chenglin (2023). “‘Made Intelligence’ of 1770: From Human-simulating Intelligence to Early Robot Narratives of Hoffmann and Bierce.” *Journal of Dialectics of Nature* (05), 8-17.]

都岚岚 (2023):“人工智能时代的新爱情?——论珍妮特·温特森《弗兰肯斯坦》中的跨界之恋”,《广东外语外贸大学学报》(04): 113-123。

[Du, L. (2023). “New love in the age of AI? On cross-species love in Jeanette Winterson’s Frankissstein.” *Journal of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies* (04):113–123.]

江晖 (2023):“技术遐想与文明窥探: 20 世纪初期日本报刊与文学中机器人形象的生成”,《广东外语外贸大学学报》(06): 114-125。

[Jiang, H. (2023). “Technological imagination and civilizational gaze: The emergence of robot images in early 20th-century Japanese media and literature.” *Journal of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies* (06):114–125.]

卡尔·马克思 (2012):“马克思恩格斯选集 (第 2 卷)”,《人民出版社》: 683-712。

[Marx, K. (2012). *Selected Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 2, pp. 683–712). People’s Publishing House.]

李璇 (2025):《化身博士》中的身体政治和人工智能隐喻,《文学写作与评价学刊》(01): 115-117。

[Li, X. (2025). “Body Politics and Artificial Intelligence Metaphors in Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.” *Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation* (01):115-117.]

齐佳敏 (2012): “机器人为何杀戮？——析《莫克森的主人》中的人工智能生命观”，《广东外语外贸大学学报》(02): 110-120。

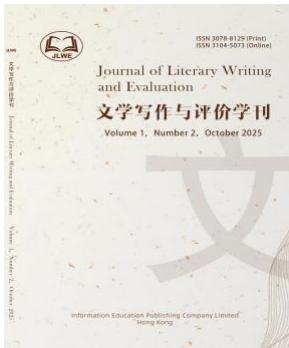
[Qi, J. (2021). “Why do robots kill? The view of AI life in The Master of Moxen.” *Journal of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies* (02):110–120.]

宋晓梅 (2007): “略论北欧地区的神话”，《内蒙古大学学报（人文社会科学版）》(03): 91-93。

[Song, X. M. (2007). “A brief discussion on the mythology of the Nordic region.” *Journal of Inner Mongolia University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)* (03): 91–93.]

朱天飚 (2008): “丹麦后发展道路解析”，《欧洲研究》(04): 78-88。

[Zhu, T. B. (2008). “An analysis of Denmark’s post-development path.” *European Studies* (04): 78 – 88.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.315-325.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.13](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.13)



What Makes a “Generative Poetics” in Which Language and Time are interwoven Possible? ——A Review of Dai Dengyun’s New Book *Interweaving of Language and Time* and Its Inspiration for the Research of Chinese Literary Theory in the Past Century

Shi Shengxun

Abstract: The intellectual history path of literary theory research lies in going beyond the literary theory itself to focus on its culture and value. This is the case with Dai Dengyun’s new book, *Interweaving of Language and Time: from Yale School to Generative Poetics*, which not only carefully analyzes Yale School’s own themes of thought, inner reasoning, and theoretical achievements, but also makes an enlightening comparison, outline, and forward-looking of Yale School’s ideological backgrounds, topic contexts, historical trends, and cultural values, presenting the unique generative features of Yale School’s literary theory. This book enters from Western studies and exits from Chinese studies and reflects on Chinese literary theory in the past century from the unique perspective of Generative Poetics, thus has expanded new ideas in the research of Chinese literary theory in the past century. Chinese literary theory in the past century has not only epistemological problems, but also cultural and ideological dilemmas, especially the absence of the dimension of interweaving of language and time. By drawing on Generative Poetics, the Chinese literary theory research has found a new value foundation and thinking fulcrum, showing the unique ideological and cultural potential of Generative Poetics.

Key words: *Interweaving of Language and Time*; Yale School; Generative Poetics; Chinese literary theory in the past century

Author Biography: Shi Shengxun, Associate Professor at the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Peking University. Research Areas: Literary Aesthetics, Modern Chinese Culture, Literary Theory. E-mail: pkussx@163.com.

题目：语言与时间相交织的“生成诗学”何以可能？——评戴登云新著《语言与时间的交织》兼及对百年中国文论研究之启示

摘要：文论研究的思想史路径在于超出文论自身而关注其文化与价值问题。戴登云新著《语言与时间的交织——从耶鲁学派到生成诗学》即如此，该书不仅细致辨析了耶鲁文论自身的思想主题、内在理路、理论成就，还对耶鲁文论的思想背景、论题场景、历史趋势、文化价值等做了富有启发性的对比、勾勒、前瞻，呈现了耶鲁文论独具特色的生成性特征。该书以研究西学入，以研究中学出，借鉴生成诗学这一独特视角审思百年中国文论，拓展了百年中国文论研究的新思路。百年中国文论自身不仅有知识学上的问题，更有文化与思想困境，尤其是语言与时间交互之维的缺失。通过借鉴生成诗学，中国文论研究寻获新的价值地基与思维支点，显示了生成诗学自身独特的思想文化潜质。

关键词：《语言与时间的交织》；耶鲁学派；生成诗学；百年中国文论

作者简介：时胜勋，北京大学中文系长聘副教授，研究方向：文艺美学、现代中国文化与文论。电邮：ddy2791@126.com。

1. The problem of language and time that emerge from the intellectual history

There are different perspectives on literary theory, one is the perspective of pure literary theory, which is professional and mainly talks about literary theory, which is also the most common perspective. The other is from the perspective of intellectual history, which discusses the ideological premise, operating mechanism, cultural appeal, and social significance of literary theory. From the perspective of intellectual history, it helps to break the current trend of overly disciplinary literary research and promote the grasp and understanding of deeper issues in literary theory. Dai Dengyun's new book, *Interweaving of Language and Time: From the Yale School to Generative Poetics* (Social Sciences Academic Press, 2023), approaches the subject from the perspective of intellectual history, exploring the ideological premise, operating mechanism, cultural appeals, and social significance of the Yale School's literary theory, and consciously reflects on the study of Chinese literary theory through the discussion of these issues, which is a significant case in Western literary research in recent years.

Interweaving of Language and Time takes four critics (Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, Joseph Hillis Miller, Harold Bloom) as its research objects, covering a wide range of topics. It not only includes common literary studies such as literary criticism, literary views, and theories of literary history, but also philosophical content like language and time, as well as enlightening content such as the construction of generative poetics and reflections on Chinese literary theory in the past century, of which the core issue is the “interweaving of language and time” summarized by the author.

The term “language” here primarily refers to literary language, though not confined to literature alone.

The concept of “time” extends beyond everyday life to encompass temporal dimensions reconstructed through linguistic expression. The core characteristic of generative poetics lies in its thorough analysis of the relationship between language and time. The author creatively distills and meticulously examines the Yale School’s three dimensions of language and three vectors of time. The concept of the three dimensions of language refers to the signified dimension, the inter-dimension, and the self-reflective and referred dimension. The third dimension can be combined with the first: language either points outward or inward. As Paul de Man put it, this is a “language game”. The second dimension is particularly unique, and understanding 20th-century Western intellectual history helps clarify this concept. In Paul de Man’s thought, language is not only about the object itself, but also about the subject’s experience and the fate of the individual. Language has a mysterious relationship between the reader and the author, or “complicity relationship”. The three dimensions of language are not fixed, but in the relationship of opposition, separation, interlacing, interaction, and coexistence. This characteristic, termed “rhetoric” by the Yale School, functions through metaphors and similar devices. The rhetorical view of language not only helps to restore the complex appearance of language and stimulate the potential of language, but also helps people grasp the unspeakable, which is time. Therefore, the interweaving of language and time has become the core issue of literary theory. The time in the language covers three dimensions (three vectors) of linearity, duration, and co-existence, resulting in “difference and dislocation”. In this sense, language is time, and time is language. The author’s discussion of the complexity of language and time is innovative, which further confirms the central position of language and time in literary research.

There are two points worth thinking deeply about the interweaving of language and time, so as to give us a more comprehensive understanding of the Yale School and even the contemporary western literary theory.

First, as a school of literary theory emerging after the linguistic turn, Yale literary theory naturally places great emphasis on language. However, this does not imply that earlier theoretical schools lacked attention to language and thus suffered from theoretical flaws; rather, it reflects a natural trend in the development of intellectual history, where different eras are defined by distinct thematic concerns. In reality, contemporary linguistic theory has not fundamentally reversed the determinative role of social reality in shaping language. Without specific social realities, language remains empty—including today’s internet language, which does not emerge in a vacuum. Instead, it arises from the need of cyber society for a new linguistic form, complete with specific user groups and social material conditions. In the absence of these, internet language would undoubtedly be hollow and meaningless. The movement for Esperanto was once popular in the modern era, but eventually faded away, because Esperanto was a language without the support of social reality, and the national culture lost its support and became water without a source. To avoid the emptiness of language (and to some extent, its over-linguisticization), the author firmly grasps the time, situating language discussions within broader historical and humanistic contexts. This not only demonstrates the uniqueness of Yale literary theory but also reflects the author’s comprehensive academic perspective. Essentially, the linguistic turn didn’t prioritize language itself but rather used language as a lens to deepen understanding of values and meaning. I believe this constitutes a crucial problem awareness in *Interweaving of Language and Time*, offering unique

reference value for clarifying academic perceptions of the Western literary theory's linguistic turn.

Second, the Yale School primarily focuses on literary language rather than general language. While academic discussions on literary language are abundant, it appears that literary language has not been elevated to a transcendent status beyond its instrumental role, remaining predominantly a technical issue in literary studies. Even rhetoric, for example, is regarded as a technique, and it is difficult to see the fundamental significance of language and rhetoric. Among contemporary Western literary theories, as a rare school grounded in literary criticism, Yale literary theory offers particularly distinctive perspectives and judgments on literature. For its proponents, they confront the following challenge: How should we differentiate literary language from other forms of language such as everyday language, scientific language, and philosophical language? What are the relationships between these linguistic forms? What advantages, status, and significance does literary language possess? These questions are difficult to answer simply, but one certainty remains: since modern times, literary language has faced increasing challenges. Therefore, preventing the instrumentalization of literary language and reestablishing its ontological status becomes crucial. The author points out that one of the ideological premises of Yale literary theorists is to literalize the world. Similar perspectives appear in the works of György Lukács and Milan Kundera, who either view ancient Greece as embodying the seamless integration of humanity and nature (Lukács, 2012, pp.56-57) or regard the novel as another vital dimension of Western modernity (Kundera, 2004, p.17). Undoubtedly, both perspectives emphasize the world's literaryization (myth or fiction). These views inevitably give the impression of exaggerating literary language. However, in essence, this represents a fundamental restoration: recognizing that literary language has a foundational significance for the genesis (time) of the whole world, and this language transcends the narrow definition of linguistic expression, evolving into a broad ontological framework. The critical challenge lies in restoring literature's ontological role in reshaping the world and unleashing its potential—a task that extends beyond the narrow confines of literary theory itself. Consequently, transcending the history of literary theory to engage with intellectual history has become an inevitable research imperative.

It can be said that as the title of *Interweaving of Language and Time* reveals, the author keenly grasps the symbiotic relationship between language and time, avoiding both superficial discussions detached from linguistic context and abstract explorations divorced from temporal dimensions, and more importantly, the confusion of thought caused by the severing of the relationship between language and time. This not only shows the author's grasp of the internal ideological characteristics of the Yale School, but also shows the author's own unique concern for the generation of literary theory. Compared to external perspectives, this approach exhibits greater immediacy and dialogicity. Through the Yale School's intellectual exploration and the author's academic synthesis, the relationship between language and time emerges as a pivotal element in intellectual history, becoming an indispensable component of this field.

In general, through the intellectual history paradigm, the author not only carefully analyzes Yale School's own themes of thought, inner reasoning, and theoretical achievements, but also makes an enlightening comparison, outline, and forward-looking of Yale School's ideological backgrounds, topic contexts, historical

trends, and cultural values, presenting the unique generative features of Yale School's literary theory, offering many refreshing insights. Particularly commendable is the author's strong local consciousness in China's literary theory research, which involves exploring and reflecting on the development of China's literary theory in the past century through Yale literary theory (generative poetics), thereby expanding new avenues for studying Chinese literary theory over the past century. This reflects a new trend in Western studies: self-reflection through the lens of the other.

2. Reflecting on the dilemma of Chinese literary theory in the past century from the perspective of “generative poetics”

Combined with the Yale literary theory's explanation of the complexity of language and time, and promoting generative poetics, the author believes that on the one hand, Chinese literary theory in the past century has a tendency toward monolithic thinking and a dualistic mode of thinking, such as the ancient and the modern, the Chinese and the Western, epistemology and axiology, and on the other hand, it lacks attention to the dimensions of language and time. How language grasps time and how time is embedded in language are not paid necessary attention, sorted out and reflected on in these historical experiences. I think this diagnosis is justified, and of course there is room for further expansion. This involves two aspects: the non-generative nature of thinking patterns and the absence of linguistic and temporal considerations in the content of thought.

In terms of the first aspect, there are two manifestations, one is the problem of simplification. Simplified thinking is indeed a prominent problem in Chinese literary theory in the past century, but this is not the whole problem. This involves the understanding of simplification. Objectively speaking, simplification is a way of thinking, that is, only one point is concerned, not the rest, this one-sidedness is the norm of the development of human thought, such as Confucianism emphasizes society, Taoism emphasizes nature, each has its own concerns, and there are disputes between each other, and only in the later stage or mature period of the development of intellectual history can it show integration. Obviously, the development of one-sidedness contributes to the development of ideas, not the other way around. A typical case is the Hundred Schools of Thought in the pre-Qin Dynasty, which were all one-sided thoughts, and only thus became the unreachable intellectual peak of later generations. Therefore, the simplification of Chinese literary theory in the past century itself is not the crux of the problem, the crux lies in the fact that the simplification and one-sidedness have not been deeply explored or perfected, but rather remain superficial and fleeting, leading to Chinese literary theory in the past century being like a revolving lantern, with few achieving detailed, in-depth, and systematic works. If Chinese literary theory in the past century can be based on the tradition of epistemology, long-term discussion and accumulation on a number of important issues, and form a variety of schools like the Hundred Schools of Thought in the pre-Qin Dynasty, the overall situation of Chinese literary theory may be much better. Take the Yale School as an example. It is a pity that China still lacks a literary theory school like the Yale School. Of course, the school here should be centered on “scholarship”, not “school”. As far as Chinese literary theory is concerned, there is a tradition of belittling language, advocating the idea of “forgetting the words when grasping the meaning” and “words failing to convey the meaning”, etc., but

Chinese literary theory in the past century has never formed a solid research tradition centered on language. Most linguists have maintained a distant relationship with literary theory, and such singular or specialized literary theory research is often absent in Chinese literary theory in the past century. Even the most popular topic in Chinese literary theory, the study of human nature, has never formed a stable and orderly tradition, instead suffering multiple pressures. Not to mention that Chinese literary theory in the past century has long been closely related to external political policies, so that although there is no lack of political nature in Chinese literary theory in the past century, it lacks the accumulation of “politics” tradition. In this regard, the establishment of the school with “scholarship” is the original intention of simplification, but the actual situation is that “scholarship” failed to become scholarship, the foundation is unstable, a patchwork of sand, not to mention a broader overall and holistic research. The more glaring issue lies in the counterpoint to simplification: a haphazard patchwork labeled as “East-West fusion” or “ancient-modern synthesis,” yet in reality, it’s a chaotic amalgamation of Eastern and Western elements, ancient and modern concepts, resulting in a mismatched blend that loses their distinctiveness. True integration requires prolonged gestation, as exemplified by the Neo-Confucianists of the Song Dynasty who achieved synthesis of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Isn’t it strange that it will be integrated in just three or five years? This demonstrates that we must avoid both the pitfalls of simplification, namely, to govern separately and lose contact, and the hasty patchwork mentality of seeking quick gains through superficial integration.

Second is the problem of dualism. Dualistic thinking has existed since ancient times, but dual opposition is not so. China emphasizes the unity of heaven and man, the harmony of yin and yang. Although it divides heaven and man, yin and yang into dualities, it is not opposition or separation. Even in Hegel, dualism (spirit and matter) is by no means merely opposition. Dual opposition thinking easily reminds us of the most hotly debated anti-essentialism in recent literary theory circles. Anti-essentialism opposes dual opposition, the typical embodiment of which is the binary opposition between rationality and sensibility, where reason stands high and sensibility bows down. One of the recent trends in Western literary theory is to challenge this mode of thinking, oppose dual opposition, and oppose the hegemony of reason, sparking new ideas such as uncertainty, decentralization, rhizome, and nomadism, including the rhetoric and metaphor that Yale literary theory has long pursued. From the perspective of broader history of language and thought, overly precise language has actually brought many problems, such as difficulties in handling emotional and semantic issues. In an age of secularization and rationalization, language itself has become increasingly secularized and rationalized, lacking poetry and hard to leave a lasting impression. The world indeed needs “re-poeticization” (re-literarization). The role of literature in fostering global prosperity and harmonious coexistence has not diminished, but rather intensified. The pursuit even obsession of uncertainty and metaphoricity of words shown by western contemporary critics and literary theorists can probably be explained here, that is, the refusal of the transparency of language. After all, the more transparent a language becomes, the easier it is to be disciplined. By emphasizing linguistic opacity and implicitness, we stimulate language’s self-awareness in generating and reshaping global meaning—a process inherently imbued with political-ethical consciousness. In a sense, this remains a reflection of dualistic thinking. Another manifestation of dualistic thinking is the

relationship between self and other. No thinking can be separated from the relationship between self and other. The problem is whether to be self-centered or other-centered, or to re-establish the relationship between self and other. These are fundamental challenges inherent in dualistic thinking. On the self's stage, roles like divinity, rationality, sensibility, body, desire, language, and discourse and so on are played in turn, and the other, which is opposite to the self, also appears in an endless stream. Thus, the essential expansion of dualistic thinking lies in introducing concepts like intersubjectivity, fold, and dislocation—not to dismantle the collective unconscious of dualism, but to fundamentally achieve the iterative renewal of human cognitive paradigms.

The above analysis of simplification and dualism does not imply the author's blindness to this issue; rather, it reflects their unique cultural concerns—an attempt to transcend the non-generative frameworks of simplification and dualistic opposition in order to achieve a higher form of literary-theoretical thinking, namely generative thinking. In this regard, I argue that simplification has remained an unrealized goal of Chinese literary theory in the past century. However, within the new century-long historical context, pure simplification is no longer sufficient to address emerging challenges, making the parallel advancement of simplification and synthesis (not an eclectic patchwork) an inevitable trend. The same logic applies to dualism: the "elements" that have been neglected or devalued must first attain equal and reciprocal status, thereby enabling the evolution of higher-order dualism that extends *ad infinitum* (multiple dualisms). In this sense, the author's diagnosis is profoundly insightful. From the author's perspective, a key problem in Chinese literary theory in the past century lies in its neglect of exploring the complex relationship between language and time, as it has oscillated between epistemology and axiology, which not only tears apart the community of Chinese literary theory but also restricts its development. In the author's view, century-old Chinese literary theory constitutes an intricate hybrid of intellectual and knowledge discourses, encompassing multiple dimensions of ancient/modern and Chinese/Western thought. Rather than approaching it through one-dimensional or absolutist lenses, a broader and more transcendent perspective is needed. The author suggests that insights can be drawn from the Yale School, specifically its "generative poetics". This anti-modern or anti-metaphysical stance of generative poetics has established a unique intellectual history signpost, which is not only significant for Western literary theory but also serves as a rare "stone from another mountain" for century-old Chinese literary theory—one that merits our attention.

3. Examining the problem intention of China's literary theory over the past century from the perspective of the "interweaving of language and time"

The above discussion is to examine the problems of Chinese literary theory in the past century through "generative poetics", which mostly belongs to external analysis, and more specifically or internally, it is a matter of language and time. This is the core of *Interweaving of Language and Time*, and it is also the most subtle of the author's cultural concerns. If Western literary theory represented by the Yale School firmly grasps the problem of language and time, makes its own thinking, and promotes the development of Western literary theory and social culture, then how the problem of language and time is repositioned in Chinese literary theory

in the past century has become a problem that must be faced.

Let's look at the language first. There is a lot of discussion in the academic circles about literary theory of China, but less discussion on literary theory of Chinese (poetics of Chinese). This naturally stems from the lack of a linguistic perspective, but ancient literary theory has a tradition of linguistic discourse, such as the debate over literary style, the contention between parallel prose and prose, the modern debate between classical and vernacular Chinese, and the dispute between Chinese and Western languages. From parallel prose to classical prose, the language of academic discourse also underwent a transformation, from parallel prose in *Wenxin Diaolong* to prose in *Yuan Shi*. There are also many traditional poetic theories in form of poetry and notes on poets and poetry, which show that the style of writing is pluralistic and flexible. The language of Chinese literary theory in the past century is in an era of unity and pluralism. Unity refers to modern Chinese, but there are also many literary styles, such as parallel prose, prose, modern academic writing, translated texts, revolutionary prose, philosophical prose, speech and dialogue, and so on. They coexist in a state of mixed language. However, today's academic language is undoubtedly the center of modern vernacular (modern Chinese), which is increasingly simplified (standardized), which puts great pressure on other literary styles. The attention of *Interweaving of Language and Time* to poetic language is particularly commendable. In fact, today's literary criticism is hardly worth reading, and literary theory is boring. In my opinion, what will end is not literature as poetic wisdom, but stylized literary criticism and literary theory. In this regard, it is necessary to restore the Chinese, poetic and philosophical nature of Chinese literary theory, and it is necessary to dig deeply, sort out and study the diverse literary language practices in Chinese literary theory in the past century. Of course, style is only one aspect, and there are other issues of the discourse power, 30 years ago, the academic circles discussed Chinese literary aphasia, some scholars believe that a large number of terms, concepts, and propositions used in the Chinese literary circles are from the West or the former Soviet Union, and the Chinese literary circles have hardly put forward any original terms, concepts, and propositions. This diagnosis is of course debatable, but the problem is that it has been 30 years since the Chinese literary theory aphasia was proposed (Cao Shunqing, 1996, p.50). Has it been substantially resolved so far? To a certain extent, the problem of aphasia is not a literary problem, but a social and cultural problem. If social and cultural problems are not solved, aphasia will not be solved either. If we still use a set of literary discourse systems from the West or the former Soviet Union, aphasia cannot be solved. The key to solving this problem is that interpreting Chinese literature needs to be based on a set of discourse systems rooted in Chinese literary experience, and interpreting Chinese literature from this discourse system is reasonable and effective and should not become "Chinese literature in Western literary theory". ^①Of course, it is necessary to learn from and absorb foreign ideas, but foreign ideas cannot replace local thinking. Many traditional Chinese literary discourse, such as "Tao", "Shen Si", and "Qi Yun", are not given due prominence. Some argue that since terms like "principle", "imagination", and "inspiration" already exist, there is no need for local terminology. In fact, from the perspective of difference, the introduction of China's unique concepts and propositions is of

^① James Elkins (1999) incorporated the interpretation of Chinese landscape painting into Western art history, and comparing it with Chinese literature, it is not difficult to get "Chinese literature in Western literary theory".

promoting significance to the entire global literary theory ecology. For the West, China as an Other has a certain stimulation. For example, in Japanese literary aesthetics, there is the concept of “wabi-sabi”, while Chinese literary aesthetics is not without these unique expressions, such as the traditional “Gan Xing”, “Yi Xiang”, and “Shen Si”.^② This is a world of differences, and all countries in the world should contribute their own thinking, and then seek common ground while reserving small differences, otherwise there is only one language in this world—English, and there is only one literary theory—Western literary theory, which is a great misfortune of human culture. From the perspective of the Yale School, the deep concern and in-depth study of Chinese language theory is one of the biggest inspirations for the research about Yale School, because language is the biggest difference, it is the representation of all differences and even the ontology itself.

Turning to the question of time and its relationship with language (literature), the author argues that time is not merely linear and one-dimensional, but also differential, coexistent, and so forth. These three dimensions are intertwined—characterized by differential dislocation—and time is particularly interlaced in literary works. Then, is time also such a phenomenon in reality? From the perspective of direct human experience, this is difficult to determine; yet daily life contains abundant non-linear time—such as dream time, psychological time, and faith time, among others. Once the intentionality of time is acknowledged, it naturally leads to the conclusion that time is characterized by interlacing. Furthermore, given the central significance of time to literature, the attention devoted by literary theory to temporal issues constitutes a core concern of literary studies—for the fundamental problem of literature lies in the resistance, transcendence, and reconstruction of time (specifically its finitude). Throughout history, is there a poet who has not lamented the cycle of life and death, the alternation of seasons, the vicissitudes of human affairs, and the rise and fall of history? Abundantly present in literature are temporal consciousness and temporal experience, which serve to resist the finitude and transience of real time. In *Classical Treatise on Literary Writing*, Cao Pi asserted: “Life has its limits, and glory fades with age. These are fleeting pursuits, far less enduring than the timeless legacy of literary works. Thus, ancient authors found solace in ink and paper, expressing their ideas through writings. Without relying on courtly rhetoric or imperial patronage, their fame naturally endured through the ages.” Language has transcended the limited time. Although Cao Pi said that “literature is a great undertaking of governing the country and an immortal event”, although the great undertaking of governing the country ranks before the immortal event, in fact “immortality” is the mystery and destination of literature. Obviously, the question of time in literature constitutes the ultimate question of literature, rather than mere issues of emotion or thought. Those who regard literature as so-called emotion and thought are far away from the essence of literature. For all questions of emotion and thought point to temporal problems: how to realize one’s own value in a limited time, settle people’s souls, construct the world of meaning, and so on. This is as far as literature is concerned, as far as literary theory is concerned, literary theory needs to grasp the time in literature, feel the time experience (intuitive, traumatic, tragic, etc.) of poets and writers when facing the world, reveal that poets and

^② In the popular book *Aesthetics: A Beginner’s Guide* (2020) of Charles Taliaferro, there is even a chapter titled “Cross-cultural Aesthetics”, which specifically discusses Chinese aesthetics and Japanese aesthetics, a feature that distinguishes it from most Western aesthetic books. The discussion of the chapter of “Shen Si” in *Wenxin Diaolong* is mainly compared with western imagination, which shows that “Shen Si” may become one of the universal terms in global literary theory.

writers transcend the finiteness of time through language (narrative, rhetoric, metaphor, etc.), truly promote the humanistic aesthetic education, spiritual settlement and redemption function of literary theory research, and restore the functions of restarting, reshaping and reconstructing the world that literature once had. This is the real “primordial horizon” of literature. Therefore, the mission of literary theory is not only to make a choice between the East and the West, ancient and modern, which is only the “second meaning”, but also to experience, grasp, describe, interpret and construct the emotional, ideological and spiritual life experience of people who are at the crossing of the East and the West, ancient and modern (through literature). Although Chinese literary theory in the past century is in the time interlacing of tradition, modernity and postmodernity, this time interlacing is not the key to literary theory, and the time interlacing of literary theory will not have any substantial impact on ordinary people, the key is that the influence of time interlacing on ordinary people’s emotions, thoughts, and spirits is reflected in literature, and literary theory needs to grasp precisely this, which is the “first meaning” of literary theory research. Of course, it is necessary to discuss the time interlacing in the literary theory, which helps us to sum up experience, but in the end, it still leads to the comprehension, grasp, description, interpretation, and construction of the time experience of modern people, poets, and writers in the interlacing of time. Moreover, regarding the original experience of temporal interlacing—such as myth, dream, imagination, faith, and so forth—it is no simpler than that of the traditional, modern, or postmodern. In this regard, issues like aphasia and the lack of discursive power in Chinese literary theory can be alleviated to a certain extent, for the focus of literary theory has been redirected from the “secondary meaning” (e.g., disciplinary knowledge) to the “primary meaning” (the interlacing of language and time), namely, a focus on the temporal experiences of modern humans, poets, and writers as mediated through language. This presents an enormous challenge for Chinese literary theory, also a rare opportunity.

4. Conclusion: The ideological and cultural potential of “generative poetics”

By drawing on generative poetics, Chinese literary theory research seeks new value foundations and thinking fulcrums, showing the unique ideological and cultural potential of generative poetics itself. From this point of view, the meaning of *Interweaving of Language and Time* is clear, and this book strengthens the language and time issues in literary theory research, and promotes a more original generative poetics, which fully reflects the author’s unique phenomenological academic background and sensitive humanistic consciousness, and is also the crystallization of his long-term dedication to the study of Yale School.

The author uses two threads to intertwine and sort out the Yale School and activate its interpretive power for reality. In terms of language, we should pay attention to the complexity of language when discussing literary theory, especially the complexity of Chinese (literature) itself and cross-language complexity. Such language is inherently rhetorical, not purely rational or transparently clear; it demands deeper apprehension and savoring on our part. In terms of time, it is a concern for the complexity of time. Time is not just linear, but the interlaced juxtaposition of multiple lines, which strengthens our understanding of the spiritual drive and creativity of man as a finite thing (in Heidegger’s words, “mortal”), and through the dislocation of time, man realizes the transcendence of finite time. In an era where objects and words predominate over people, the

investigation of temporality and life through language undoubtedly enhances the new humanistic dimension of literary theory research.

As far as today's literary research is concerned, some bring us new knowledge, while others bring us new enlightenment. To learn from the West means not only "scholarly theories", but also "scholarly visions". In my opinion, this book not only provides a case study of Western literary theory based on the intellectual history, but also promotes a reflection path of epistemology and intellectual history of Chinese literary theory from the perspective of the other, especially from the perspective of generative vision, and also provides an original literary vision to examine the world, and the poetic generation of the world (i.e., "generative poetics") is not only possible, but also necessary.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Shi Shengxun ^{1D} <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6238-9486>

References:

曹顺庆（1996）：“文论失语症与文化病态”，《文艺争鸣》（02），50-58.
[Cao Shunqing (1996). "Literary theory aphasia and cultural pathology". *Contention in Literature and Art* (02):50-58.]

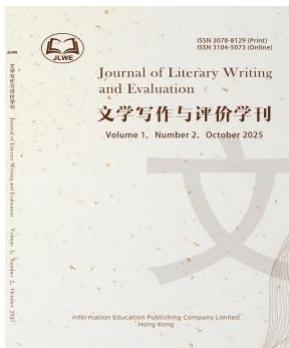
查尔斯·塔利亚费罗（2020）：《人人都该懂的美学》，陶涛译，浙江教育出版社。
[Taliaferro, Charles (2020). *Aesthetics: A Beginner's Guide*, translated by Tao Tao. Zhejiang Education Press.]

戴登云（2023）：《语言与时间的交织——从耶鲁学派到生成诗学》，社科文献出版社。
[Dai Dengyun (2023). *Interweaving of Language and Time: from Yale School to Generative Poetics*. Social Science Academic Press.]

昆德拉（2004）：《小说的艺术》，董强译，上海译文出版社。
[Kundera, Milan (2004). *The Art of the Novel*, translated by Dong Qiang. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.]

卢卡奇（2012）：《小说理论》，燕宏远、李怀涛译，商务印书馆。
[Lukács, György (2012). *The Theory of the Novel*, translated by Yan Hongyuan and Li Huaitao. The Commercial Press.]

詹姆斯·埃尔金斯（1999）：《西方美术史学中的中国山水画》，潘耀昌等译，中国美术学院出版社。
[Elkins, James (1999). *Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History*, translated by Pan Yaochang. China Academy of Art Press.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.326-333.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.14](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.14)



The Path of Education: A Stroll of the Soul Interwoven with Poetic and Rational Elements——A Review of *Wandering Awareness*

Li Wenwen, Ling Yu

Abstract: Notes on Wandering Awareness represents the author's deep exploration and rational inquiry into various perplexities of life encountered in middle age. The text is filled with probing questions and reflections on self, the world, humanity, and social ethics. Diverging from common lyrical or narrative essays, this work frequently employs dialectical reasoning, drawing on accessible examples with fresh and thought-provoking ideas that leave a lasting impact. The language is rich in metaphor, precise in word choice, and profound in meaning, evoking a knowing smile and lingering resonance in readers. While the themes may appear diverse and loosely structured at first glance, they are both grounded in everyday life and transcendental, offering profound insights into the relationship between self and the world. As readers progress through the concise chapters, they not only follow the author's contemplative journey but also embark on a shared exploration of philosophical and intellectual enlightenment, discovering an ideal fusion of poetry and reason in the path of education.

Keywords: dialectical reasoning; sincerity and candor; rationality and poetics; self and world

Author Biography: **Li Wenwen**, Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (TCSOL), School of Liberal Arts, South China Normal University, Class of 2021; currently works as a Chinese language teacher at Yingxiu Middle School, Lixia District, Jinan City. E-mail: 1791470755@qq.com. **Ling Yu** (Corresponding Author), Doctor of Arts, Doctoral Supervisor, Professor, School of Liberal Arts, South China Normal University. Her main

research focuses on modern and contemporary Chinese literature, world Chinese literature, comparative literature, cross-media studies, and interdisciplinary cultural studies. E-mail: lingyu08@163.com.

题目：育人之道：诗性与理性交织的灵魂漫步——评林岗散文随笔集《漫识手记》

摘要：《漫识手记》是中大林岗教授于“不惑”之年对人生种种疑惑的深度挖掘与理性思考，书中充满了对于自我、世界、人类、社会伦理等问题的追问与反思。不同于一般常见的抒情叙事类散文随笔，此书多采用二元论证的方式，取例通俗而思想清奇，发人深省；语言设喻巧妙，用词严谨而内涵深邃，读来令人会心一笑，又回味无穷；主题看似漫杂无章，实则贴近生活而又超脱现实，蕴含着深刻的自我与世界之间的哲思。读者在阅读过程中，不仅能透过作者的文字短章，追随其思考的脚步，更能与作者一同踏上这场哲思与智慧的启迪之旅，共同探索育人之道中诗性与理性的完美融合。

关键词：二元辩证；真诚与坦白；理性与诗性；自我与世界

作者简介：李文文，华南师范大学文学院汉语国际教育专业 2021 级硕士研究生；现为济南市历下区颖秀中学语文教师。电邮：1791470755@qq.com。凌逾（通讯作者），文学博士，博士生导师，华南师范大学文学院教授，主要从事中国现当代文学、世界华文文学、比较文学、跨媒体和融界文化研究。电邮：lingyu08@163.com。

1. The Sincere and Honest Journey of Writing

Wandering Notes (Hua Cheng Press, 2021) is a collection of “three hundred essays” by Professor Lin Gang of Sun Yat-sen University. From the moment he began writing in early 1999 to the moment he put down his pen in 2005, during this period, Professor Lin was inspired at times, reflecting deeply at others. He recorded the whispers of his soul and the sparks of his thoughts in an unrestrained manner, capturing his teaching career’s intellectual journey across diverse topics. Though the writings were scattered, they fit together seamlessly, ultimately forming 282 precious chapters. After being tucked away for more than ten years, with no thoughts of publication, he remained indifferent to the enthusiastic suggestions of friends and kept postponing the idea. It wasn’t until time had passed that this manuscript regained its allure and was reconsidered. After some hesitation and contemplation, he decided to slightly revise it and publish it, thus bringing *Wandering Notes* into the world. The writings, which he had never intended to publish, truthfully record the author’s thoughts and experiences along the way. “It is precisely because ‘he never thought about publishing’ that sincerity and honesty became the most important qualities of *Wandering Notes*.” (Liu Chen, 2021, GA09)

In the essay “Writing” the author discusses the driving force behind writing and categorizes three types of writing: as a ladder for life’s career, as a fortress for self-protection, and as a landscape in the eyes of a traveler. As the author notes in the paper “The Influence of Anxiety” (Lin Gang, 2016, p.29), “Writing is more of the writer’s digestion of their life experiences and an exploration of linguistic expression.” *Wandering Notes* also reveals his consistent pursuit of writing: “Life’s insights and experiences are always the primary purpose of writing.” “Life is a journey, with no place to stop. Writing, like life’s wanderings, moves from one place to

another, from one theme to another" (Lin Gang, 2021, p.374). The author views writing as an adventure where both the soul and the body participate, treating writing as a colorful peach blossom land where creativity flows freely, inspired by real experiences. Thoughts scatter, and words flow naturally from the heart, letting the soul find its resting place. The words that carry the author's life experiences and the language that encapsulates his life insights are filled with sincerity, beauty, and elegance, resonating deeply with readers and stirring their hearts.

The book's discussion on the relationship between language and thought aligns with the process of writing itself. In the chapter "*Words*" the author writes, "If words cannot grasp thought, thought will float away like a wisp of smoke, disappearing into the vast emptiness of the mind" (Lin Gang, 2021, p.56). The afterword reveals that the author, in his forties while teaching at Shenzhen University, would often wander around the lake during his leisure time, lost in thought. Some thoughts were forgotten, while others, which could not be dispelled, were eventually written down. "Thoughts are like pearls hidden within an oyster shell, and the mind is the diligent pearl hunter. Words are the thread that eventually strings the pearls together. After the labor of the mind, the pearls strung together by words are the thoughts truly captured by language" (Lin Gang, 2021, p.57). This is undoubtedly the most vivid explanation of the origins of the entire text in *Wandering Notes*.

The book consists of short chapters that record the author's rational reflections, making the language highly speculative. Despite the poetic dearth of a busy life, the author's spiritual world is rich and full. The words flow directly from the heart, and the phrases are imbued with poetic color. This kind of intellectual contemplation, drawn from self-awareness, is free from any utilitarian writing motives. It does not cater to the writing preferences of the masses nor become a mechanical assembly of words. This gives *Wandering Notes* its unique literary style and honest, sincere quality that sets it apart.

2. Textual Language of Coexisting Poetic and Rational Qualities

Looking at the entire book, *Wandering Notes* is divided into three sections: ethical beliefs, social history, and the years of human life. The contents of each section are not entirely distinct but are interrelated. Each text is filled with rational thought and poetic expression, whether long or short, sincerely writing about the insights gained from reading, curious questions, moments of hesitation, and hard-earned conclusions. The author excels at using metaphors, with a unique thought process. Common words in daily life are given new forms under his pen, presenting a thoughtful and rational state to the reader. Through the author's interpretation and analysis, intellectual light is revived, and fascinating aspects are revealed. The book repeatedly touches upon topics such as "desire" "passion" "reason" "knowledge" "experience" and "life" exploring and deepening these concepts. The language is highly metaphorical and artistic, as seen in essays such as "Desire" "Departure" "Reason" "Five Senses" "Tug of War" and "Groundhog". The author enjoys thinking, is good at asking questions, and excels in argumentation. He often uses opposing metaphors to describe complex contradictions, giving a comprehensive, concrete, and vivid description that is both appropriate and interesting. His logical reasoning is clear, full of speculation, and highly persuasive. The language is concise and to the point, never sluggish, and leaves a strong impression that prompts reflection.

Regarding desire and reason, the author views desire as “an intention carried by the body. It pursues endless creation, just like lava wrapped in the earth's crust, eager to erupt” (from *Departure*). He asserts, “The five senses are the windows through which desire spies on the outside world” (from *Five Senses*). “If desire is the eye, then reason is the telescope. To what extent is desire willing to compromise with reason? Generally, the longer the time process extends, the more desire tends to say no” (from *Desire*). The author is skilled at personifying words or creating metaphorical images to reveal the nature of desire and its opposition to reason, yet he does not neglect their unity, stating that “Reason and desire are not sharply divided; reason is just another face of desire” (from *Reason*). In different chapters, the same words are repeatedly mentioned, reflecting on the same thing from different dimensions. The author deepens his thoughts in different contexts, leading to a layered and insightful understanding that eventually breaks through the fog of problems and unveils the truth.

Regarding knowledge and experience, in the chapter “*Pursuit of Knowledge*”, the author uses two metaphors—“the bear blindfolding itself while breaking corn” and “building the Great Wall”—to explore the relationship between knowledge and individuals. The author asks, “Is knowledge something that individuals pursue in isolation for the truth or is it part of a great collective endeavor?” and answers, “It seems there is no absolute either-or conclusion. But it is certain that the first metaphor is more real.” “For individuals, it is a solitary search for the truth, and the cumulative results of their pursuit of knowledge form the common wealth of society.” Experience, for an individual, can sometimes be helpful, but other times destructive. The author compares experience to a groundhog, illustrating the negative impact of experience on an individual’s life: “The more experience accumulates, the deeper that groundhog burrows into the endless depths of the underworld.” “Through those unknown dark tunnels, the groundhog peeks around, weighing its relationship with the surrounding environment and its own interests. In fact, isn’t that groundhog the grave of life? With its claws of experience, it keeps digging deeper, burying its life with every effort” (from *Groundhog*). Beyond philosophical musings, there is also poetry. The author’s language is refined, not vulgar or coarse, and one can sense his pursuit of quality language. “The state of poetry and the absence of poetry are fundamentally different, just like a life with joy and one without joy, or a life with beauty and one without beauty. This difference is caused by the presence or absence of poetry.” (Lin Gang, 2017, A22). The author applies this sense of poetry to his writing, blending rational philosophical thought with poetic characteristics, offering both intellectual enlightenment and aesthetic enjoyment.

Regarding the self and life, in *Tug of War*, the author writes, “The tug of war between desire and ability is like a turtle: desire pushes it to extend its head, but low ability makes it pull its head back. That turtle is the self, and what it does in the world is repeatedly extending and retracting.” This vividly depicts the self’s courage and hesitation in an engaging and interesting manner. In *Polar Opposites*, the author states, “Reason makes life comfortable, while passion makes life meaningful. A comfortable life without meaning is boredom, while passion without reason is obsession. Boredom and obsession are the two extremes of our existence, and life is a journey between them.” He presents the normal state of life in a rational but unfamiliar way, inviting deep reflection. In *The Prisoner*, he writes, “Life is a prison like a castle, and the self is the prisoner within.

Language, like a crack in the prison, allows glimpses of the light of existence.” The author is skilled at using language to present the process and results of self-reflection. His unique thoughts are not groundless but are the result of extensive reading.

A profound knowledge base and rich life experience are the foundational conditions for the author's creation. When alone, sparks of thought emerge, collide, and intertwine in his mind. Language captures them in due course, recorded in short chapters and essays, written spontaneously from thought. The author is not only skilled at observing life and identifying problems, but he can also escape reality and let his thoughts wander freely. He excels in recording his inner journey, allowing his soul to rest in the process. His wisdom, philosophical demeanor, and literary talent are evident in this.

3. Soul-Searching of the Individual and the World

Wandering Notes is an honest and sincere expression of the author's thoughts, a fusion of rationality and poetry, and a work that reflects his soul-searching journey regarding the individual and society, the self and the world. The author records the fruits of his reflections during his teaching breaks, while readers can leisurely read his words of wisdom, ponder their meaning, and gain many insights. The book frequently touches on topics such as “fear” “loneliness” “home” “the world” “departure” “return” “existence” and “death” which represent the author's spiritual wanderings during times of self-reflection.

Professor Lin has mentioned in his writings the reason why he writes about “fear”, speculating that it relates to his early experiences. Born in 1957, the author went through turmoil around the age of ten, when various movements disrupted the existing order, causing normal life to veer off its course. The world he was familiar with became incomprehensible, and everything was thrown into chaos. In an era where political ideologies dominated, the air was filled with oppression and fear, and moral and value systems were overturned. During this period, the author's personal moral understanding was transitioning from heteronomous morality to autonomous morality. Witnessing the chaos of the times and the collapse of conscience during this critical period of childhood, he experienced the reconstruction of order and the reformation of cognition. His early experiences planted the seeds of curiosity and reflective thinking. As he grew older, he widely read books from various fields and became perplexed by the interpretations of the external world's rationality. His curiosity, doubts, and constant learning led him to a deeper understanding of ethical beliefs, social history, and the passage of life, making his thoughts and reflections both broad and profound.

The book often discusses “loneliness”, not as a monstrous thing, but as something that “is not an isolation devoid of human warmth” and that “loneliness is the secret of the individual soul, ever-present, omnipresent.” It suggests that “loneliness is a passport to the path of salvation” (from *Loneliness*). The author praises loneliness, seeing it as a normal state of being, indispensable, and a nourishment for the soul. While loneliness is beneficial, the author acknowledges that no one can live as an island, and thus, he repeatedly explores the relationship between the individual and society. In *Principles*, the author outlines two unchangeable principles of life: “The first is that we, as individuals, live in this world; the second is that the

individual lives in this world with others.” The consideration of the individual and the group remains a central theme in the author’s reflections, appearing throughout various chapters. In *The Classic*, the author uses the concept of “the classic” to analogize the human state of existence, dividing it into the “classic” and the “non-classic”, corresponding to the individual’s existence in the world: departing from the home in the morning to wander the world, doing things and earning a living; then returning to the home in the evening, leaving the chaos of the world behind, finding solace in quiet solitude. In *Metaphor*, the author compares domestic animals to wild beasts, symbolizing two states of existence. “The former represents the safety gained by renouncing, while the latter represents the freedom sought, which inevitably carries risk.” Is life about choosing to be a domesticated animal or a wild beast? “The choice between domestic animals and wild beasts is fluid, for survival is an ongoing search for one’s own answers.” As poet Gu Cheng said, “The Chinese have only created two ideals: one is the Peach Blossom Spring in the mountains, and the other is the Grand View Garden inside the walls” (Gu Cheng, 2015, p.43). The Peach Blossom Spring is refreshing, and the Grand View Garden is dazzling. While everyone must live in the world and survive within the Grand View Garden, we are also independent individuals who need to return to the Peach Blossom Spring to feel the existence of individual life. In the solitude of our own world, we can also witness the falling petals and the beauty of fragrant grass. We do not seek illusory pleasures, nor let the mundane affairs of the world obscure the poetic beauty of the soul, thus extinguishing the pursuit of the good. When body and mind are in harmony, only then can one achieve true balance.

In addition to balancing the relationship between the individual and others, home and the world, one must still search for the way to exist as an individual, the meaning and value of life. Discussions of the self are eternal. The true difficulty of life does not always lie in how one interacts with the outside world but rather in how one interacts with oneself. So, how should the individual exist? What is the meaning of life? In the chapter *Meaning*, the author writes, “Events themselves have no isolated meaning; meaning is assigned by later generations based on their own feelings about the present environment.” In his co-authored book *Crime and Literature* with Liu Zaifu, the author notes, “The meaning of life lies in the perception of one’s own existence, and we should strive to delve into this existence and question it. Doubt and questioning are the value” (Liu Zaifu, Lin Gang, 2011, p.437). It is clear that the author possesses a strong self-awareness. He has confessed that his persistent search for the self, which has not yielded results, may be due to the mid-life crisis he is experiencing—facing new life challenges at a new stage, inevitably bringing about a certain unspoken anxiety, leading to numerous soul-searching questions. He has also warned against self-anxiety, just as he once faced his own dilemma: when searching desperately for the self and the meaning of life, one could not find either. The answer lies in letting go. Only when one truly engages in what they are meant to do, feeling life with intention and gaining certain abilities, does the self emerge and the sought-after meaning follow. Perhaps it is only when one can truly enjoy solitude and find joy in it that they have truly found the self. Therefore, we need to enrich our souls, fill our spiritual world, and provide a resting place for the soul.

4. The Soulful Beacon of Teaching and Learning

Professor Lin comes from a prestigious background and has experienced both the tumult of national upheaval and the brilliance and destruction of life. His life experiences have led him to profound reflections on the self, life, and the world. In the quiet moments of teaching, he returns to his inner world, reflects on the past, examines the present, and looks toward the future. His thoughts, like fleeting sparks, shine in his mind and converge into a sea of wisdom, crystallized in *Wandering Notes*. As a new teacher just entering the field of education, I deeply feel that this book is not only a philosophical work worth reading carefully, but also an educational bible that has had a profound impact on me. Between the lines of *Wandering Notes*, it feels as if we transcend time and space, engaging in a soulful conversation with Professor Lin. His life trajectory, profound thoughts, and life insights are like a clear spring, nourishing my heart as I take my first steps into the world of teaching.

“Professor Lin always finds wisdom in the creases of life and lets the capillaries of knowledge stretch out in everyday life. His casual words are like an awakening for us.” (Shen Xiayan, 2024) Indeed, this is true! Many of the ideas in the book have prompted me to deeply reflect on the essence of education. Education is not just about the transmission of knowledge, but also about touching and nourishing the soul. It is the art of guiding students to learn how to think and grow. In the process of reading and educating, I, too, am constantly improving and growing. The seeds of thinking and in-depth research that *Wandering Notes* planted in my heart have quietly sprouted and grown, motivating me to explore how to better communicate with students, how to ignite their enthusiasm for learning more effectively, and how to understand the profound meaning of education more deeply. Professor Lin’s rare honesty and sincerity also serve as a mirror, reflecting the proper attitude I should have in teacher-student relationships—being close to students, earning their trust with sincerity, listening patiently to their inner whispers, and using wisdom and tolerance as a boat to lead them toward a shore filled with thought, emotion, and responsibility. The words of German philosopher Karl Jaspers, “The essence of education means one tree shaking another, one cloud pushing another, one soul awakening another soul” (Zhang Ke, 2016, p.291), resonate deeply within me, making me feel the beauty and harmony of mutual growth and progress between teacher and student.

Wandering Notes has not only illuminated a beacon for my soul but also pointed me in the direction of my educational journey. When I face teaching challenges, it guides me to transcend the limitations of time and space, to examine myself and my students from an objective and broad perspective, to embrace innovation and change with an open heart, to learn to find inner peace amidst complexity, and to create an oasis of thought amidst the busy and noisy world, achieving a free-spirited existence for the soul. I am gradually learning to adopt a calm and detached attitude of “neither joy from external things nor sorrow from self” when facing the disturbances of the outside world. With calmness and reason, I examine social phenomena, analyze teaching results, and reflect on my own growth, finding a poetic refuge in the hustle and bustle of the world. “Today I walk alone, tomorrow I will transform into a butterfly and return,” is not only a poetic description of personal growth but also a vivid interpretation of the educational process. In this long and profound journey of education, we must approach it with humility and reverence, both as transmitters of knowledge and as guides

to students' souls, accompanying them on the transformative path from naivety to maturity, from confusion to conviction. We must nurture the new generation to be capable of rational thought, filled with compassion, and diligent in learning and thinking, enabling them to shine with their own light on the future stage.

Therefore, I am sincerely grateful for the inspiration and strength *Wandering Notes* has given me. It has made me realize that as a young teacher, the road ahead is long, and there is much knowledge I need to learn and many skills I need to improve. I also believe that every child is a unique flower, and as long as we nurture them with care, they will surely bloom with their own brilliance. As long as I carry a love for education and a deep care for my students, I am certain that I will go further on this sunlit path of education and become a good teacher and friend in the growth journey of my students. For this reason, I will stay true to my original intentions, hold onto my passion, strive to overcome my shortcomings, look toward the distant mountains, and continue to learn, explore, reflect, and patiently wait for the day when all the flowers bloom!

Funding: This article is a phase achievement of the major project "Research on the Convergence and Media Communication of Chinese Literature and Art with Technology in the Age of Network Intelligence" (21AZW021) funded by the National Social Science Fund of China.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Li Wenwen ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4201-9883>

Ling Yu ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3112-8284>

References

顾城 (2015): “一个人应该活得是自己并且干净”, 《求学》(43): 43-43。
[Gu Cheng (2015). “One Should Live as Oneself and Keep Pure.” *Study Guide* (43): 43-43.]

林岗 (2017.09.21): “素手闲心 与诗缠绵”, 《南方日报》, A22 版。
[Lin Gang (2017 September 21). “Gentle Hands and Leisure Heart, Lingering with Poetry.” *Southern Daily*, A22 Edition.]

林岗 (2021): 《漫识手记》。花城出版社。
[Lin Gang (2021). *Random Notes on Perception*. Huacheng Publishing House.]

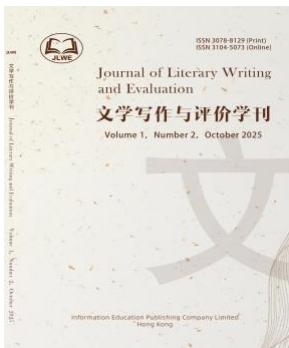
林岗 (2016): “焦虑的影响”, 《小说评论》(04): 28-35。
[Lin Gang (2016). “The Impact of Anxiety.” *Novel Review* (04): 28-35.]

刘晨 (2021.07.18): “中山大学林岗教授谈思考与写作”, 《南方都市报》, GA09 版。
[Liu Chen (2021 July 18). “Professor Lin Gang from Sun Yat-sen University Talks about Thinking and Writing.” *Southern Metropolis Daily*, GA09 Edition.]

刘再复、林岗 (2011): 《罪与文学》。中信出版社。
[Liu Zaifu, Lin Gang (2011). *Crime and Literature*. CITIC Press.]

申霞艳 (2024): “林岗: 在超世与入世之间”, 《随笔》(05): 147-147。
[Shen Xiayan (2024). “Lin Gang: Between Transcendence and Engagement in the World.” *Essays* (05): 147-147.]

张珂 (2016): “雅斯贝尔斯唤醒教育的解读”, 《亚太教育》(12): 291-292。
[Zhang Ke (2016). “An Interpretation of Jaspers’ Awakening Education.” *Asia-Pacific Education* (12): 291-292.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.334-344.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.15](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.15)



The Global Vision and Chinese Position in Cultural Studies: A Review of Tao Dongfeng's *Traumatic Memories and Literature as Testimony*

Yan Chengxun, Xiao Jianhua

Abstract: Professor Tao Dongfeng has recently released a new work entitled *Traumatic Memory and Literature as Testimony*, which compiles several papers he published after 2010. Centering around the core themes of memory and testimony, these papers closely examine the intricate relationships that emerge between them and literature. They further give rise to several intertwined academic inquiries. On this basis, make innovative interpretations and extensions. Among these, the academic dialogues in the book, where Tao Dongfeng engages with Western theories from a Chinese standpoint, merit particular attention. This approach not only broadens the academic perspective, making the analysis of issues more multi-perspective and self-subjective, but also, the questions raised based on the scholar's own existential circumstances can better highlight their critical spirit and the power of thought. Characterized by its extensive theoretical scope and imbued with a spirit of criticism and introspection, this book not only deepens the academic community's comprehension of memory and testimony issues but also furnishes cultural studies with a research methodology that integrates a global vision and a Chinese position.

Keywords: Cultural Studies; Traumatic memories; Theory of memory; Literature as testimony

Author Biography: Yan Chengxun, PhD candidate at the School of Humanities, Guangzhou University. Research interests: Aesthetics and Literary Theory. E-mail: zzydd701@126.com.

Xiao Jianhua (Corresponding author), Professor at the School of Humanities, Guangzhou Uni

versity. Research interests: Aesthetics and Literary Theory. E-mail: jianhuaxiao@gzhu.edu.cn.

题目：文化研究的世界视野和中国立场——评陶东风《创伤记忆与见证文学》

摘要：陶东风教授的新著《创伤记忆与见证文学》收入了陶东风教授 2010 年后发表的若干论文。这些论文以记忆与见证为核心主题，聚焦了它们与文艺之间所产生的复杂关系，并向外衍生出数个相互交织的学术问题，在此基础上再加以创新性解读与延伸。其中，陶东风在著作中基于中国立场与西方理论发生的学术对话尤其值得关注，这不仅拓宽了学术视野，使对问题的分析变得更加具有多元视角和自我的主体性，而且，以学者自身生存境遇为基本立场所产生的发问，也更加能突显其批判的精神与思想的力量。该书的理论视野广阔，不仅深化了学界对记忆与见证问题的理解，还为文化研究提供了一种兼具世界视野与中国立场的研究方法。

关键词：文化研究；创伤记忆；记忆理论；见证文学

作者简介：颜成汎，广州大学人文学院博士研究生，研究方向：美学与文艺学。电邮：zzydd701@126.com。肖建华（通讯作者），广州大学人文学院教授，研究方向：美学与文艺学。电邮：jianhuaxiao@gzhu.edu.cn。

Introduction

The twentieth century was a period marked by frequent humanitarian disasters. The peculiarity of these disasters did not merely lie in the severity of the massacres, but more so in the fact that such a rational Western European world had developed such an inhumane tragedy of The Times. Therefore, in the aftermath of this disaster, how should humanities researchers engage with the memories left behind by this tragic event of the era? How should they reflect upon it? How should they bear witness to its occurrence and consequences? These questions have become focal issues that have drawn sustained attention from the Western academic community since the second half of the twentieth century. Since the late twentieth century, the domestic academic community has increasingly introduced and engaged with the theory of memory, gradually producing a series of research outcomes of significant scholarly value.

Professor Tao Dongfeng of Guangzhou University's *Traumatic Memories and Literature as Testimony* (published by Peking University Press in 2025) is a highly distinctive work among these achievements. This book includes several papers published by Professor Tao Dongfeng after 2010, which can be roughly divided into two themes. The first is western memory theory. Tao Dongfeng not only conducts in-depth analyses of the traumatic memories of scholars such as Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann, and Jeffrey Alexander, but also engages in in-depth dialogues with these scholars. From a rich variety of perspectives, he comprehensively sorts out and critically reflects on the problems faced by western memory theory. The second area pertains to research on the literature as testimony in the western context during the 20th century, encompassing both theoretical examinations of issues related to the literature as testimony and critical analyses of the testimonial dimensions and significance of specific literary works. These two thematic dimensions are closely interwoven. The literature as testimony seeks precisely to bear witness to the collective memories of 20th-century

massacres and the profound trauma that these events have inflicted upon individuals. Many of the issues confronting western memory theory are thus subject to deeper reflection within the literature as testimony. This book represents the culmination of Tao Dongfeng's fifteen years of sustained and in-depth reflection on the themes of memory and testimony. It presents a range of perspectives, offers detailed and rigorous analysis, and engages in critical dialogues with various scholars to articulate distinctive insights grounded in Chinese literary experiences—thereby endowing the work with significant theoretical depth and practical relevance.

1. Transcending Dualistic Thinking: A Constructivist-Based Memory Theory

In Tao Dongfeng's book *Traumatic Memories and Literature as Testimony*, Halbwachs' theory of collective memory occupies a central position. This theory marks a pivotal shift in memory studies, that is, "from an individual to a collective perspective, and from physiological and psychological approaches toward sociological and cultural perspectives." (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.146) Tao's work offers a critical reflection on the psychological paradigm in memory research and its emphasis on an individualistic perspective. It argues that an exclusive focus on the physiological and psychological mechanisms of memory fails to account for memory's inherently social dimensions. Specifically, the activation of individual memory often presupposes the influence and stimulation of others' memories. Thus, it becomes essential to examine the intricate relationships between individuals and their social environments, as well as between individuals and cultural contexts. This relational framework is what Halbwachs conceptualizes as "collective memory" or "the social framework of memory". Tao further defined it precisely as: "The memory of each individual possesses a collective dimension—that is, a sociocultural dimension. Whether an individual can recall past experiences, and how those experiences are recalled and expressed, largely depends on this framework." (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.150) This implies that an individual's memory is inherently shaped by social and cultural contexts, thereby establishing the foundational premise for analyzing memory through a constructivist lens. Starting from the definition of collective memory, Tao Dongfeng further addresses the relationship between collective and individual memory. Specifically, although collective memory cannot serve as the subject of remembering, the interpretation and understanding of individual memory are invariably influenced by the social frameworks of memory.

The relationship between collective and individual memory lies at the heart of academic debates surrounding Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory. Tao's work not only affirms the significance of Halbwachs' concept of "collective memory" but also critically engages with the controversies it has generated within the scholarly community. It highlights that the academic debates surrounding Halbwachs' theory of collective memory are widely regarded as a reflection of the persistent dualistic framework that opposes the individual to the collective. Tao Dongfeng argues that memory studies must move beyond this binary logic and avoid treating individual memory as isolated from collective memory. While traditional psychological and physiological approaches to memory have indeed neglected its social and cultural dimensions, it would be equally problematic to overemphasize the dominance of social or cultural forces at the expense of individual initiative. Such an approach risks overlooking the heterogeneity and resistance

inherent in individual memory. Instead, individual and collective memory should be understood as mutually constitutive and dynamically intertwined.

Tao Dongfeng elaborates on the transcendence of the dualism between the individual and the collective from two perspectives. First, he identifies the fundamental mechanism underlying memory actualization. By examining the relationships between memory and language, as well as memory and narrative, he highlights how social and cultural contexts shape and constrain individual memory through the representational norms inherent in collective frameworks. In other words, the self cannot be disentangled from the societal and historical context in which it is situated. “A person’s own life history is always incorporated into the history of the collective from which he obtains self-identity. He is born with the past.” (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.184) Tao’s work offers a profound reflection on the “modern autobiographical project”, which restricts an individual’s past to the temporal span of their lived experience in the world. It situates writing and narration within broader social and cultural contexts. While recognizing the constraining influence of social and cultural history on individual agency, it also emphasizes that individuals possess the capacity to actively shape their own historical narratives. This potential for individual initiative in constructing personal history is closely tied to the second dimension of the relationship between the individual and the collective.

This second dimension requires a deeper exploration of the concept of “collective”, particularly by understanding collective memory as dynamic and pluralistic. Tao argues that Halbwachs’ theory of collective memory highlights the role of time: although the sociocultural framework of memory possesses a certain degree of stability and universality—thereby imparting these qualities to associated representations—the framework itself does not become static. On the contrary, it undergoes continuous, gradual transformation, with some elements gradually fading out while new ones are incorporated. Tao argues that this constitutes a “dialectic of stability and mobility—changing within stability while maintaining stability amidst change” (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.188), which precisely captures the essence of collective memory. In addition, Tao’s work highlights that Halbwachs recognized the plurality of collective memory, a perspective further elaborated by Jan Assmann. Individuals simultaneously belong to multiple distinct collectives, and each individual “accommodates the collective memories from different groups” (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.189). Consequently, “individual memory is often associated with a variety of different collective frameworks” (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.189). Individual initiative emerges precisely within the interstices of these dynamic and pluralistic collective memories. First, the framework of collective memory is subject to gradual transformation, thereby enabling heterogeneous interpretations and alternative narratives of the same memory. A static collective memory framework would preclude the emergence of new narratives. Second, once heterogeneous narrations of the same memory arise, diverse—and even conflicting—narrative patterns can develop. Tao Dongfeng cites the memory narratives of educated youth writers about going to the mountains and the countryside as an example. In recounting this period, two opposing yet highly representative narrative modes emerge: “no regrets in youth” and “give back my youth”, each corresponding to distinct collective frameworks that shape individual memory writing. Individuals can not only choose among these diverse frameworks of collective memory, but may also transcend the two established modes of memory-writing to explore new narrative

possibilities. In doing so, they exercise individual initiative by actively constructing their own histories within the constraints of collective memory.

The constructivist analytical paradigm emphasized by Tao Dongfeng is also evident in the analysis of traumatic memory. “Trauma” constitutes a central concept in psychoanalysis, where research has traditionally focused on individual and employed predominantly psychological methodologies. Tao’s work centers on Jeffrey Alexander’s analytical framework of trauma, known as “cultural trauma”, a constructivist-based trauma theory. This perspective emphasizing that “the social process of representation plays a fundamental role in the construction of trauma”. (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.127) In other words, the construction of meaning is a prerequisite for the emergence of trauma. If the symbolic interpretation of a catastrophic event obscures its traumatic significance to the extent that the event is entirely rationalized through symbolism, the formation of cultural trauma will fail. This demonstrates that whether examining collective memory or traumatic memory, constructivist analytical paradigms play a central role in Tao’s work. However, establishing the research paradigm of memory theory is insufficient. Against the backdrop of numerous catastrophic events in the 20th century, the study of memory theory carries profound social responsibility. While investigating the mechanisms of collective and traumatic memory is highly significant, a more pressing question arises: how can these forms of memory contribute to repairing a human world profoundly damaged by catastrophe? Research guided by this question holds substantial value. To address it, we must recognize that both collective and traumatic memory fundamentally involve the issue of “testimony”. Witnessing memories associated with catastrophic events not only preserves the historical truth and prompts reflection on humanity distorted by disasters, but more importantly, it breaks through the loneliness and isolation inherent in individual memories. Through dialogue with others, individuals can reclaim the hope and confidence needed to confront disasters collectively. In this sense, Tao Dongfeng’s organization of the book into the two themes—“Memory” and “Testimony”—effectively underscores their deeply intertwined relationship.

2. The Paradox of Testimony: On the Complex Relationship between Literature, Art, and Acts of Testimony

“The Literature as Testimony” is a crucial mode of “testimony” and constitutes a central theme in Tao’s work. It seeks to bear witness to traumatic memories that resist linguistic and symbolic representation. As a result, literature and art engage in complex, often seemingly paradoxical relationships with the act of testimony. Tao’s work offers a detailed and compelling analysis of these intricate dynamics, significantly advancing the scope and depth of scholarly inquiry into literature as testimony in the 20th century.

Firstly, the intricate relationship between art, literature, and witnessing emerges as a “paradox” rooted in the tension between the impossibility of fully testifying to catastrophic events and the moral imperative to bear witness. Tao Dongfeng categorizes witnesses into three groups: victims, perpetrators, and bystanders, emphasizing that “what distinguishes them is not primarily what they directly observed, but rather what they failed to see, and the reasons behind that failure—that is, why testimony breaks down”. (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p. 297) Consider the Holocaust as an illustrative example. Jewish victims were largely unaware of the

implications of being deported to concentration camps. The Nazi officials, who served as perpetrators, deliberately concealed and destroyed evidence of the atrocities. Even if the evidence was not destroyed, because each phase of the Holocaust was carried out by different Nazi agencies, many officers involved in its implementation were unaware of the full significance of their actions. Other non-Jewish bystanders did not dare to confront the atrocities directly; instead, they engaged in voyeuristic observation. They lack the awareness of being witnesses and remain oblivious to the fact that they have become complicit in the atrocities.

The challenges associated with testimony are even more profound than commonly perceived. Tao Dongfeng categorizes testimony into two types: “testimony from within” and “testimony from without”. “Testimony from within” refers to testimonies given by individuals who experienced the horrors of concentration camps, the Holocaust, and the mass extermination of Jews firsthand. In contrast, “testimony from without” pertains to those who did not directly endure these atrocities. Notably, “testimony from within” presents a paradox: people who are in the midst of a catastrophic event are unable to think beyond the framework of totalitarian ideology. The Jews in the concentration camps were systematically deceived by the Schutzstaffel, who instructed them that entering the gas chambers was part of a routine showering process. Even among survivors, many have remained reluctant to speak about the Nazis’ atrocities. Totalitarian ideology enabled the perpetrators’ cognitive frameworks and value systems to permeate the consciousness of the victims, thereby losing the reflexive dimension of testimony. Tao’s work highlights that the notion of “witnessing” already carries the significance of critically examining and reflecting upon totalitarian ideology from an external standpoint. Thus, merely possessing personal experiences and factual knowledge is insufficient.

More importantly, “testimony from within” entails entering the inner world of the other—specifically, the victim. Neither experiences, language, nor environment can be fully accessed or replicated by those outside the catastrophic event, who are thus unable to assume the position or role of the victims. Even among victims themselves, the overwhelming presence of suffering and death renders these experiences fundamentally incomprehensible and unimaginable. Within the Holocaust, consider the truth about the crematoria: those who were most directly affected and best positioned to testify have long since perished, leaving no possibility for their voices to reach the living world.

Therefore, it is not possible to directly testify the inside of a catastrophic event. Yet, the imperative to testify remains urgent. As Tao Dongfeng observes, “The necessity of testimony precisely arises from the crisis of testimony itself—and even from its impossibility”. (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p. 302) Taking the documentary *Shoah* as a case in point, Tao Dongfeng examines how film as a medium enables testimony and transcends the limitations inherent in written language. Film represents a journey from the external to the internal, requiring the overcoming of various ideological barriers imposed by totalitarian systems in order to reveal truths and integrate them into global understanding. Film represents a new visual possibility, one that enables witnesses to revisit the original scenes of atrocity, empowering silent survivors to speak out and bear testimony once more. It is precisely in this moment that witnesses emerge from their numbness toward the trauma. Film thus reflects the inherent impossibility of testimony; yet it does not remain passive. Instead, it persistently

endeavors to penetrate the interior of catastrophic events from an external vantage point. The film reinserts living witnesses and the key sites of atrocities into the field of vision of testimony. It does not progress by means of the “paradox” inherent in opposing testimony, but directly confronts the “paradox” of testimony itself. By persistently returning to the original scenes of violence, the film conveys the voices of survivors to the world amid ongoing conflict and tension.

Secondly, a “paradox” emerges between the ineffability of traumatic memories and the act of testimony. The trauma inflicted by catastrophic events is so overwhelming for witnesses that it strikes suddenly, exceeding their psychological capacity and expectations. Consequently, such experiences are neither clearly nor fully remembered, much less comprehended. Traumatic memory thus manifests a profound resistance to testimony. As a result, testimony initially takes the form of testimony composed of fragmented and disordered recollections, creating an insurmountable gap between the testimony and the original events themselves. Tao Dongfeng pointed out: “If trauma is something that resists or even refuses to be witnessed, it inevitably intensifies the crisis of testimony.” (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p. 249) As a Holocaust survivor, Paul Celan’s poetic practice confronted the profound challenge of bearing witness to traumatic experiences that resist articulation. This challenge ultimately reflects a fundamental crisis of language. On one hand, Celan remained committed to writing in his mother tongue—German; on the other, German was the language of the Nazis, the perpetrators of the genocide. The act of using the oppressor’s language to testify to atrocity thus becomes an agonistic engagement with language itself. Consequently, Celan’s poetry is marked by radical transformations in German’s semantics and syntax, giving rise to a uniquely personal poetic idiom. The reborn German language, shaped by Celan’s poetic testimony, seeks to purge the toxins of totalitarianism. As Tao argues, this reconstituted linguistic form “must inherently embody testimony: through its myriad wounds, fragmented syntax, grotesque imagery, and incomplete words, it mirrors the cultural fragmentation and the distortion of human nature characteristic of this era.” (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p. 252). The syntactic ruptures, fragments, inversions, and deliberate inexpressiveness in Celan’s poetry constitute a direct manifestation of trauma. Tao Dongfeng identifies in Celan’s work a resolution to the profound paradox between the unrepresentability of traumatic memory and the imperative to bear witness: namely, the presentation of language as trauma. This approach functions as a “representation of anti-representation—revealing the ineffable truth by dismantling conventional, aestheticized modes of expression.” (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p. 254). Only by dismantling the inherited structures of language can the unspeakable dimensions of traumatic experience be approached with authenticity.

Lastly, the intricate relationship between literature, art, and testimony is prominently reflected in the interplay between authenticity and fictionality within the literature as testimony. A central question that arises is whether literature can adequately represent the Holocaust? There are various opinions in the academic circle on this issue. The most iconic contribution to this discourse is Theodor Adorno’s assertion that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric”, a statement that has sparked enduring controversy. On the one hand, some scholars emphasize the imperative of authenticity in the literature as testimony, advocating for the minimal use of fictional elements and literary embellishment, and insisting that authors rely exclusively on firsthand

experiences. On the other hand, some argue that all forms of writing inherently contain elements of fiction, making the existence of strictly objective non-fiction questionable. This in fact suspends the question of distinguishing between fiction and non-fiction in the literature as testimony. Tao Dongfeng argues that the latter's position does not imply an endorsement of fabricating or denying the facts of catastrophic events. Rather, what is advocated is that "the literary representation of the Holocaust must adopt a mode of expression distinct from historical documentation." (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p. 341) The distinction between the literature as testimony and historical accounts resides in the interweaving of fact and fiction, evident in two key aspects. Firstly, when witnesses recount traumatic experiences, their firsthand memories often merge with information acquired indirectly, blurring the boundary between direct and secondhand experience. Tao Dongfeng observes this phenomenon and draws on Alison Landsberg's concept of "prosthetic memory" to elucidate it. Although such memories are not formed through personal experience but rather through engagement with images and texts associated with the event, they nonetheless feel vivid and authentic, frequently intertwining with lived memories to the extent that differentiation becomes difficult. Secondly, it is manifested in the influence of personalized subjective psychological reality on narration. When an unimaginable event occurs, the witness undergoes a profound emotional shock. The subjective truth arising from this experience outweighs objective details such as quantity, color, or even factual presence. The distortion of facts captures the atmospheric and emotional truth of an event. While such accounts may contain apparent inaccuracies in detail, they faithfully convey the intensity and immediacy of the moment as experienced by witnesses. The literature as testimony relies on the infusion of emotion and the expressive power of literary language to vividly convey historical experiences to a broader audience, enabling readers to feel as though they are present at the scene and to grasp the profound shock and horror accompanying catastrophic events.

There are indeed various "paradoxes" between literature, art, and testimony. A humanitarian catastrophe such as the Holocaust is so overwhelming and terrifying from the victims' perspective that it becomes utterly incomprehensible and impossible to fully recount. Yet, the existence of this "paradox" does not justify avoiding testimony; rather, it calls for acknowledging the fundamental gap between literature, art and direct witness, and striving to approach the catastrophic moment through the unique capacities of art itself. Provided those historical facts are neither distorted nor denied, the literature as testimony—compared to the mere presentation of historical data—possesses greater linguistic power and can more closely capture the authenticity of atmosphere and emotion. Neglecting either of the two will have a significantly adverse impact on the observation process.

3. Exploring Issues of Memory, Testimony, and Literature and Art through the Lens of Chinese Experience

Among the numerous papers included in *Traumatic Memories and Literature as Testimony*, rigorous analyses of memory, Testimony, and literary-artistic issues are presented from diverse perspectives and grounded in a broad range of scholarly knowledge. Two particularly prominent features emerge: one is sustained theoretical dialogue; the other is the academic practice of mutual learning between China and the West.

Firstly, Tao's theoretical framework organizes dialogues along two axes: a vertical axis across time and a horizontal axis across thematic concerns. The essays compiled in this volume span a considerable period, enabling a discernible dialogue between earlier and later works. For instance, the 2011 introduction proposes constructing a research paradigm centered on "literature, art, and memory", which is interpreted "not as a mere aggregation of these elements, but as an integrative framework that fosters mutual understanding and interpretive reciprocity." (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p.3). This conceptualization is subsequently developed in later essays through analyses of Holocaust narrative structures, the psychological and ethical demands of trauma testimony, and critical reflections on the notion of "collective memory". The central thread of Tao's work is rooted in literary and artistic works, through which a constructivist research paradigm on memory is established. When the discussion extends from memory to testimony, Tao's focus remains firmly situated within the domain of literature and art, which are positioned as the vanguard for overcoming the "paradox" of testimony. In this way, Tao's scholarship achieves a diachronic dialogue between earlier and later writings. By interweaving literature and art, memory, and testimony through reciprocal interpretation, the framework connects dispersed issues akin to a "constellation", enabling both comprehensive analysis and coherent theoretical development.

Moreover, the horizontal axis dialogue within the problem dimension of Tao's work is particularly distinctive. First, it establishes an interactive dialogue among theories of trauma, memory, and testimony. For instance, the discussion of Sigmund Freud traces back to the foundational origins of trauma theory. Furthermore, the analysis of Cathy Caruth's trauma literary criticism not only enriches the theoretical background but also introduces a deconstructive perspective that contributes to the construction of trauma memory theory. Secondly, a critical dialogue emerges across Tao Dongfeng's elaborations on these themes. For instance, Caruth's deconstructive trauma theory posits that traumatic experiences are so sudden and overwhelming that victims momentarily lose the capacity to comprehend or recall them, resulting in a deferred articulation of trauma. Tao builds on this idea by emphasizing: "We should not only focus on what the author has already said, but more importantly, trace those hidden, suppressed, unspoken, or indirectly implied elements behind the expression—in short, the absent." (Tao Dongfeng, 2025, p. 108) This interpretive framework is consistently applied in Tao's analysis of testimonial literature, where he identifies a central "paradox": the inherent inexpressibility of traumatic memory versus the ethical imperative to bear witness. At the same time, he underscores how this very "paradox" imbues the literature as testimony with a significance that transcends language—namely, the necessity of conveying "absent things" to the public through literary and artistic forms. The scarcity of language not only highlights but also conveys atmospheres and emotions that transcend conventional literary expression, thereby endowing testimony with a form of power distinct from historical narration—one that is no less significant than factual accuracy. In confronting humanitarian disasters directly, both historical accounts and narrative storytelling prove indispensable. Thus, it can be observed that Tao's work not only maintains temporal coherence along the central thematic thread and fosters dialogues with established theorists, but also follows a consistent mode of argumentation across papers on diverse themes. Through distinct methodological pathways, both longstanding and emerging issues converge

toward similar theoretical conclusions, thereby contributing to a harmonious framework for theoretical development.

Secondly, a further notable feature of this book lies in its implicit emphasis on integrating theoretical frameworks with China's specific sociopolitical experiences, thereby establishing a dialogical relationship between Western theories and Chinese realities. Although most of the articles in this book do not focus on China, by engaging with Dongfeng Tao's *Cultural Studies and the Reconstruction of Political Criticism* (Tao Dongfeng, 2014) and the analysis of the experience of the Cultural Revolution and scar literature, it becomes evident that the exploration of literature, memory, and testimony in *Traumatic Memories and Literature as Testimony* extends and continues the analytical framework for the writing of Chinese literary and artistic memories. Tao's work provides in-depth and comprehensive theoretical discussions of trauma memory, collective memory, and the literature as testimony, along with rigorous analyses of Holocaust testimony. However, a critical gap remains in linking these theoretical insights to the practice of literary memory writing in the Chinese context, which underscores the need to critically examine how Western theoretical frameworks apply to Chinese literary and cultural experiences.

When viewed through the lens of academic ideals, emphasizing the dialogical relationship between Western theories and Chinese experiences is not merely an approach grounded in academic rigor and comprehensive analysis, but also a meaningful scholarly practice that advances key academic principles such as "telling the truth" (Tao Dongfeng, 2014, p. 314) and "responding to one's fundamental existential situation" (Tao Dongfeng, 2018, pp. 133–144). This form of scholarly engagement prioritizes addressing pressing issues arising from lived realities and brings these concerns into public discourse. Because these issues originate in real-life contexts, the practice preserves critical reflection and intellectual vitality. It not only embodies the social responsibility of intellectuals but also has the potential to guide young scholars toward an academic trajectory centered on confronting and reflecting upon significant challenges in their own lived experiences.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Yan Chengxun ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-5927-6496>

Xiao Jianhua ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7514-1024>

References

Jeffery Alexander (2003). *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*. University of California Press.

莫里斯·哈布瓦赫 (2002):《论集体记忆》, 毕然、郭金华译。上海人民出版社。

[Maurice Halbwachs (2002). *On Collective Memory*, trans. Bi ran, &Guo Jinhua. Shanghai People's Publishing House.]

陶东风 (2025):《创伤记忆与见证文学》。北京大学出版社。

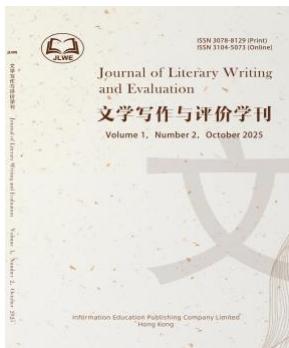
[Tao Dongfeng (2025). *Traumatic Memories and Literature as Testimony*. Peking University Press.]

陶东风 (2014): 《文化研究与政治批评的重建》。中国社会科学出版社。

[Tao Dongfeng (2014). *Cultural Studies and the Reconstruction of Political Criticism*. China Social Sciences Press.]

陶东风、杜安 (2018): “回到发生现场与本土文化研究的超越——陶东风教授访谈”，《文化研究》(04): 133-144。

[Tao Dongfeng (2018). “Returning to the Scene of the Incident and Transcending Local Culture Studies: An Interview with Professor Tao Dongfeng”. *Culture Studies* (04):133-144.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.345-352.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.16](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.16)



Communication as Shared Existence, Dasein as Co-being: A Review of *Communication Communities in Fiction*

Yang Liuqing

Abstract: *Communication Communities in Fiction* systematically traces the theoretical trajectory of “communication community” through interdisciplinary approaches, unveiling its ontological significance via literary criticism. The study examines three constitutive dimensions: presuppositional analysis demonstrates how transcendental humanity underpins community formation, evidenced by ethical choices in Shakespearean romances; mediatic exploration deciphers the dual mechanisms of linguistic and digital communication, revealing through *Purity* the erosion of real-world belonging by virtual communities; practical investigation establishes communication acts as constitutive forces, with linguistic failures in Conradian tragedies exposing roots of isolationist crises. The work foregrounds literary language’s unique capacity to build communication communities through fictionality, alterity, and ethical discourse—proposing literary solutions to the crisis of belonging in globalization. Ultimately, it positions fiction as prophetic praxis for a community with a shared future for mankind, marking the theory’s revolutionary shift from methodology to social engagement.

Keywords: Communication Community; Literary Community; Novelistic Hermeneutics; Community with a Shared Future for Mankind; Digital Media

Author Biography: Yang Liuqing, Master’s Candidate at the Institute of Literary Studies, Shanghai International Studies University. Research Area: Comparative Literature and World Literature. E-mail: 2336558412@qq.com.

题目：沟通即共同，此在即共在——评《小说中的沟通共同体》

摘要：《小说中的沟通共同体》以跨学科视野系统梳理了“沟通共同体”的理论脉络，通过文学批评揭示其本体论价值。该书从预设维度论证先验人性对共同体的奠基作用，以莎士比亚传奇剧中爱与宽恕的伦理选择为文本案例；从媒介维度解析传统与数字媒介的双重沟通机制，通过《纯洁》呈现虚拟共同体对现实归属感的消解；从实践维度阐明沟通行为对共同体的建构功能，借康拉德悲剧中的语言失效案例揭示隔离性危机的根源。作者强调文学语言通过虚构性、差异性与伦理言说构建沟通共同体的独特价值，为全球化时代的归属感缺失提供文学解决方案。全书最终指向小说对人类命运共同体的预言性实践功能，彰显了沟通共同体理论从方法论到社会实践的革命性意义。

关键词：沟通共同体；文学共同体；小说阐释；人类命运共同体；数字媒介

作者简介：杨柳青，上海外国语大学文学研究院硕士研究生，研究方向：比较文学与世界文学。电邮：2336558412@qq.com。

Over the past two decades, a series of Western theoretical works on community have been introduced to China, engaging in mutual dialogue with traditional Chinese concepts such as “Great Harmony (天下大同)” and resonating with contemporary China’s call to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Among these, the Chinese translation of J. Hillis Miller’s *Communities in Fiction* stands as an exemplary case. The translator, Chen Guangxing, has consistently focused on the issue of community, publishing related research such as “Diaspora and Community Crisis in the Digital Media Era in *Purity*” and “How is Community Possible? A Study of J. Hillis Miller’s thought on Communication Community.” These works creatively situate community theory within the horizon of literary criticism. Building upon this foundation, Chen has authored the monograph *Communication Communities in Fiction* (Northwest University Press, 2024). The book is divided into three parts, exploring the connotations of the communication community and their corresponding novelistic forms through three dimensions: the Presupposed Human Communication Community, Communication as Community, and Communication Achieves Community. The author skillfully integrates presuppositions about communication, rhetorical criticism, and practical concerns, combining them with textual criticism of representative literary works, thereby facilitating the theoretical journey of community from methodology to ontology. It can be said that this monograph itself embodies the boundless “co-being” power of the communication community.

1. What is the Communication Community?

The book systematically traces the conceptual history of the “communication community,” clarifying its development over the past fifty-plus years. The term “communication community” was coined by Karl-Otto Apel in 1972, initially as a cultural concept. He argued that both natural sciences and humanities must first be communication communities, with “intelligibility” as the foundation for the community’s existence. Gerard Delanty’s *Community* (2010), a seminal synthesis of community thought that connects theory with social reality, posits communication as key to understanding any theory of community. Stanley Fish (1976),

combining literary studies, proposed the “interpretive community,” viewing communication, including textual interpretation, as an open, dynamic community. Raymond Williams (1961) held a similar view in *The Long Revolution*, stating that art, as a mode of communication, can present the “structure of feeling” of an era, expressing shared meanings of human existence. Anthony P. Cohen (1985) proposed that community is not a form of social practice but a symbolic structure. Only through the “complementary juxtaposition” of different communities can individuals gain self-awareness through communication and contrast. Benedict Anderson (2006) incorporated Cohen’s ideas into a critique of reality, viewing the nation as an imagined community and pointing out that the novel, as a medium, can foster communication among the populace, aiding in the formation of the national community.

In summary, the author succinctly summarizes the meaning of the communication community: in the current age of prevailing globalization and digitalization, the loss of a sense of belonging stems precisely from the neglect of community. Returning to community is a decisive factor for a poetic life, and whether community can be achieved depends on the possibility of communication. How does communication achieve community? The author analyzes this through three dimensions. First, the transcendental dimension: the presupposed human community. Drawing on theories by Terry Eagleton and Jean-Luc Nancy, the author points out that communication is an essential attribute of humanity, which can be restored through a process of “unconcealment,” thereby allowing humans to return to an ever-present community-in-itself. The author uses Shakespeare’s romance plays as textual cases to argue that love and forgiveness inherent in transcendental humanity led to comedic resolutions. Second, the mediatic dimension: communication as community. The author enumerates contemporary communicative media that potentially enable community, most notably the virtual communities of digital communication, followed by traditional media such as language and spatiotemporal media. Utilizing Jonathan Franzen’s *Purity* as an example, the author analyzes communication dilemmas in the digital media era and the novel’s imagination of a community with a shared future for mankind. Finally, the practical dimension: communication achieves community. Citing J. Hillis Miller’s “novelistic communication community” and Jürgen Habermas’s (1994) “theory of communicative action,” the author analyzes, from literary and pragmatic perspectives, the performative function of communication in constructing community. Using Joseph Conrad’s works as examples, the author summarizes tragic plots arising from communication barriers, reflecting the decisive role of communicative practice in community formation.

Beyond tracing the theory and classifying the forms of the communication community, particularly noteworthy is the author’s clarification of the origins of Nancy’s concept of the “unworked community.” The author points out a widespread misunderstanding in current academia regarding The unworked Community, mistakenly believing that, in Nancy’s view community is impossible. This is actually due to long-standing differing definitions of community within academia. For Nancy, community is possible, but he believes it is constituted by the communicative nature of humans themselves, and that any organized form of “fusion” harms this universal community. The author rectifies the understanding of Nancy’s “unworked community,” clarifying the viewpoints of Delanty, Miller, Agamben, Yin Qiping, and others. Furthermore, the translation

of “unworked” as “无为” (*wuwei*) is profoundly meaningful. The author connects it with Laozi’s concept of “无为而为” (acting through non-action) and Feng Youlan’s “negative philosophy,” using “无为” to convey Nancy’s negative attitude towards constructing community, while the semantic association of “无为而为” restores Nancy’s firm belief in the “effective result” of community. Whether in tracing the conceptual history of the communication community, classifying its forms, or rectifying specific theories, the author’s scholarly prowess is outstanding.

2. What Can the Communication Community Achieve?

In the present era, swept along by globalization and digitalization, what can the communication community accomplish? Throughout the book, the author provides answers from at least three dimensions. The first is the literary dimension: the communication community constructs literature’s ideal realm. Starting from the relationship between language and existence, drawing from Martin Heidegger (1997)—language as Being itself, which connects humans and things, making the world the extension of *Dasein*’s unfolding—the author notes that literary language, distinct from everyday language, belongs to what Maurice Blanchot (2016) termed “essential language,” most capable of unconcealing the Being of beings. Literary language constructs a literary community composed of author, text, and reader. It possesses fictionality, allowing the three to connect thoughts across millennia and visions across vast distances; it rejects identity, generating endless interpretation and dialogue among them; it is non-continuous, maintaining the strangeness of community members through gaps in dialogue; finally, it proves the ethical value of literature by speaking the unspeakable. While analyzing Miller’s “novelistic communication community,” the author further elaborates on the value of the literary community: literature completes the dual shaping of readers’ cognition and ethics by “witnessing” or “prophesying” the experiences of real communities. The author’s defense of the literary community can be seen as a contemporary “defense of poetry,” and the emphasis on literature’s function rewrites the poetic view since Aristotle. This defense is both timely and classical.

The second is the social dimension: the communication community constructs a field of social exchange. In the era of globalization and digitalization, traditional communication media—time and space—have been disrupted and reconfigured, leading to phenomena like time-space distanciation and disembedding. Human social activities are increasingly detached from their immediate locale; communicative spaces are filled with uncertainty and fluidity; the determinacy of traditional communities is eroded; humans gradually lose their sense of belonging in real space. Furthermore, traditional communication media are gradually being replaced by emerging digital media. People live in a reality shaped by media, spending significant time interacting with strangers in the virtual world while neglecting genuine social experiences, placing individuals in a state of universal loneliness. However, the author does not stop at diagnosing the ills of the times but proceeds to prescribe remedies. The first is communication media as memory. Memory, unlike history, possesses an ethical function. Countless individual memories connect to form collective memory, evolving across generations into cultural memory, enabling communication across time and space. Avishai Margalit (2015) terms this the “community of memory.” Within shared memory, individuals achieve value and identity recognition. The

second is communication media as space. Within humanistic geographical space, place is endowed with dual social and geographical attributes. Whether Ferdinand Tönnies's (2020) "community of place" or Yi-Fu Tuan's (2019) "topophilia," both contemplate the communicative relationship between the individual and nature, and between individuals and others, by reconstructing emotional bonds between people and space. In postmodern space, Edward W. Soja (2006) proposed the "Thirdspace," a fusion of the real and imagined, and Jacques Rancière (2015) proposed the "community of sense," both hoping to build consensus and construct communication communities using feeling, imagination, and art as ties. Globalized space, as a decentered governance system, gathers differentiated individuals. Individuals preserve themselves long-term by integrating into the collective, finding life's meaning within the community. Besides reaching the communication community through spatiotemporal media, the role of virtual communities cannot be overlooked. Here, the author compares the virtual community with Nancy's "unworked community," noting that the virtual community is a type of unworked community. Both seek harmony while preserving difference, value common ground while accepting divergence, and simultaneously exhibit a tendency to escape reality. The author provides a dialectical analysis of the virtual community's role, arguing that while it cancels interpersonal distance to some extent, potentially enhancing intimacy, it ultimately constitutes an escape from the otherness encountered. This "death of distance" may ultimately hinder communication. The author not only reveals the root causes of the widely felt yet often unarticulated "universal loneliness" in contemporary society but also wields the three tools of time, space, and the virtual community, offering pathways for constructing a social communication community. As Karl Marx (2004) said, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point is to change the world." In the author's writing, community theory is far from mere armchair speculation; it is a revolutionary mode of social practice.

Finally, the universal dimension: the communication community constructs a community with a shared future for mankind. Against the backdrop of globalization, issues like war, ecological crises, and capital flows transcend national borders, forcing people to confront their interdependent needs. By integrating the theories of Eagleton and Nancy on the transcendental community, the author provides legitimacy for the existence of a community with a shared future for mankind: it is not a political fantasy but a response to the human instinct for communication. Eagleton (2003) believes that death is humanity's only material commonality, and the body is the unpleasant proof of human mortality. The vulnerability of the flesh leads individuals to empathize with others and determines that individuals must be interdependent, living in mutually supportive groups. Therefore, mortality is the natural premise of human communication. Nancy's (1999) view is similar. A true community refuses to treat individual death as a tool, process, or means to an end, but respects death itself. The death of others allows us to taste samples of death repeatedly, feeling our own mortality. Thus, precisely because of the commonality of mortality, humans inherently possess the instinct to communicate. Following this instinct will inevitably lead to a community with a shared future for mankind. The author's impassioned tone is deeply moving. In a present marked by fractures between individuals and between nations, the author still believes that community is far from an imagined utopia or a nowhere land, but a reality inevitably reached by following instinct. Elevating theory from text to a prophecy about human destiny fully reveals the

contemporary scholar's humanistic concern. This monograph itself is a literary practice of constructing a communication community. It not only connects author and reader but also inspires readers to discover the necessary connections between the individual and all of humanity.

3. The Communication Community in Fiction

Communication Communities in Fiction does not stop at mere theoretical organization but incorporates highly representative textual cases for analysis. Each of the book's three parts includes an example, demonstrating the author's profound skill in textual interpretation. Part One analyzes the presupposed communication community in Shakespeare's romances. The author focuses on the original intention behind Shakespeare's late romances: after the storm, how do people attain happiness? The gaps in life presented in the four great tragedies urgently need to be filled with meaning, and Shakespeare provides answers with *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. The protagonists realize that all positions they previously occupied could be substituted by others, except for one that cannot be replaced: their own death. Mortality leads the characters, when faced with deep-seated hatred, instinctively to choose love and forgiveness. Love becomes the sole force welding character and plot, proving from a literary perspective the possibility of a community founded upon transcendental humanity. Part Two uses Franzen's *Purity* as a case study. The author incisively points out that the entire plot of Franzen's work is built upon the difficulty of communication; each character is a "diasporic subject," seeking themselves anew amidst displaced identity. The author argues that Franzen uses characters' inner anxiety to address social issues, reflecting communication dilemmas in the digital media era. "We may fear globally, but we suffer only locally and temporarily" (Chen Guangxing, 2024). The communication barriers in *Purity* are issues everyone must face in daily life. The lack of information exchange among characters in the novel conversely proves the mediatic role of communication, warning individuals to act proactively to enhance communication, thereby realizing a community with a shared future for mankind. Part Three uses Conrad's tragic works as examples to explore the role of communication in achieving community. The author provides an outstanding summary of the plot structure of Conrad's tragedies, namely the "structure of isolation," where a series of tragedies stem from the isolation of the individual from society, ultimately leading to internal division and destructive outcomes. Language, as a crucial tool of communication, plays a significant role in Conrad's works. Using *The Secret Agent* as an example, the author analyzes how the "conventionality" and "specious eloquence" of language constitute barriers to communication. Conrad's tragedies remind us to abandon the obfuscations of language and face others with genuine countenance. Only then can true communication occur, making the construction of community possible.

Communication Communities in Fiction is extensive in content and rich in information; readers can always find what they seek within it. Readers with a "peculiar fondness for crafting fine lines" can perceive the beauty of the text; literary practitioners can feel enlightened amidst the forest of extensively cited theories; those suffering from existential anxiety can find solace in "negative philosophy" and the "necessity of death"; solitary wanderers can envision a utopia where companions have never truly departed. The author once wrote: "We certainly cannot expect any single book or theory to solve all of humanity's problems. It is already

remarkable if it can inspire us in some aspect" (Chen Guangxing, 2024). Despite such humility, we discover such rich spiritual connotation within the book. This monograph, through its own existence, demonstrates the power of the communication community—from text to reality, from Dasein to co-being, the community with a shared future for mankind has always existed, and will continue to exist.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Yang Liuqing ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2772-4752>

References

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Rev. ed.). Verso.

Apel, K.-O. (1972). The a Priori of Communication and the Foundation of the Humanities. *Man and World* (01), 3–37.

莫里斯·布朗肖 (2016)：《不可言明的共通体》，夏可君、尉光吉译。重庆大学出版社。

[Blanchot, M. (2016). *The Unavowable Community*, trans. X. Jun & Y. Weiguang. Chongqing University Press.

陈广兴 (2024)：《小说中的沟通共同体》，西北大学出版社。

[Chen, G. (2024). *Communication Communities in Fiction*. Northwest University Press.]

Cohen, A. P. (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Routledge.

Eagleton, T. (2003). *After Theory*. Basic Books.

Eagleton, T. (2018). *Radical Sacrifice*. Yale University Press.

尤尔根·哈贝马斯 (1994)：《交往行为理论·第一卷——行动的合理性和社会合理化》，洪佩郁、薦菁译，重庆出版社。

[Habermas, J. (1994). *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. P. Yu & L. Jing. Chongqing Publishing House.]

马丁·海德格尔 (1997)：《在通向语言的途中》，孙周兴译，商务印书馆。

[Heidegger, M. (1997). *On the Way to Language*, trans. Z. Zhouxing. The Commercial Press.]

爱德华·W. 苏贾 (2006)：《后大都市—城市和区域的批判性研究》，李钧等译，上海教育出版社。

[Soja, E. W. (2006). *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*, trans. L. Jun et al. Shanghai Education Publishing House.]

阿维夏伊·玛格丽特 (2015)：《记忆的伦理》，贺海仁译，清华大学出版社。

[Margalit, A. (2015). *The Ethics of Memory*, trans. H. Hairen. Tsinghua University Press.]

马克思 (2004)：《资本论》（第一卷），中共中央马克思恩格斯列宁斯大林著作编译局译，人民出版社。

[Marx, K. (2004). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Vol. 1), trans. Compilation and Translation Bureau. People's Publishing House.]

Miller, J. H. (2011). *The Conflagration of Community: Fiction before and after Auschwitz*. University of Chicago Press.

希利斯·米勒（2019）：《共同体的焚毁：奥斯维辛前后的小说》，陈旭译。南京大学出版社。

[Miller, J. H. (2019). *The Conflagration of Community: Fiction before and after Auschwitz*, trans. C. Xu. Nanjing University Press.]

希利斯·米勒（2023）：《小说中的共同体》，陈广兴译。上海外语教育出版社。

[Miller, J. H. (2023). *Communities in Fiction*, trans. C. Guangxing. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.]

Nancy, J.-L. (1991). *The Inoperative Community*, trans. P. Connor, Ed.; P. Connor et al. University of Minnesota Press.

Nancy, J.-L. (1999). *La communauté désœuvrée* (2nd ed.). Christian Bourgois.

雅克·朗西埃（2015）：“当代艺术与美学的政治”，谢卓婷译。《马克思主义美学研究》（02），1-12。

[Rancière, J. (2015). *The Politics of Contemporary Aesthetics*, trans. X. Zhuoting. *Research on Marxist Aesthetics* (02), 1-12.]

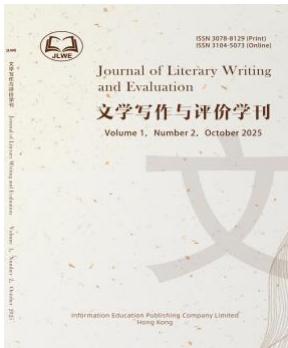
斐迪南·滕尼斯（2020）：《共同体与社会：纯粹社会学的基本概念》，张巍卓译。商务印书馆。

[Tönnies, F. (2020). *Community and Society: Fundamental Concepts of Pure Sociology*, trans. Z. Weizhuo. The Commercial Press.]

段义孚（2019）：《恋地情结：环境感知、态度和价值观研究》，志丞、刘苏译，北京：商务印书馆。

[Tuan, Y.-F. (2019). *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*, trans. Z. Cheng & L. Su. The Commercial Press.]

Williams, R. (1965). *The Long Revolution*. Penguin Books.



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.353-366.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.17](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.17)



The Logic of “Enchantment-Infused” Communication in the Internet Era——A Review of Wu Changqing’s *Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution: A Preliminary Discussion on the Creation and Criticism of Chinese Internet Genre Literature in the 21st Century*

Jiang Xinyan

Abstract: In his book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution: A Preliminary Discussion on the Creation and Criticism of Chinese Internet Genre Literature in the 21st Century”, Wu Changqing focuses on the “enchantment-infused” characteristics of online literature in the context of the Internet, analyzing its causes, impacts, and coping paths. The author points out that the development of network technology and fragmented reading habits have jointly spawned a new logic of “enchantment-infused” communication, posing challenges to traditional literary production and dissemination models. This trend dominates various aspects of online literature creation, such as subject matter, plot, and character shaping. It has also subverted the classic literary evaluation criteria, triggering extensive reflections in the literary community. In response to this phenomenon, the author proposes transcending simple binary oppositions and treating the “enchantment-infusion” with caution. He advocates respecting the laws of online communication while upholding the bottom line of literary expression, exploring innovative paths that reconcile the “enchantment-infusion” with literariness. This book offers a broad research perspective and in-depth discourse, providing important insights for understanding new trends in the development of online literature and constructing new paradigms of literary communication in the Internet era.

Keywords: Online literature; “Enchantment-infusion”; Literary communication; Innovative paths

Author Biography: **Jiang Xinyan**, PhD candidate at the Center for Literary Theory and Aesthetics of Shandong University. My research interests include literary aesthetics and science fiction theory. E-mail: 1455321236@qq.com.

题目：网络时代的赋魅传播逻辑——评吴长青《传承路径与文学流变：21世纪中国网络类型文学创作与批评刍论》

摘要：吴长青所著《传承路径与文学流变：21世纪中国网络类型文学创作与批评刍论》一书聚焦互联网语境下网络文学的“赋魅化”特征,剖析其成因、影响及应对路径。作者指出,网络技术发展、碎片化阅读习惯等因素共同催生了“赋魅”传播新逻辑,对传统文学生产与传播模式构成了挑战。“赋魅化”趋势一方面主导了网文创作的题材、情节、人物塑造等方面,另一方面也对经典文学评判标准形成了颠覆性冲击,引发了文学界的广泛反思。面对这一现象,作者提出要超越简单二元对立,审慎看待“赋魅”,既要尊重网络传播规律,又要坚守文学表达的底线,探索“赋魅”与文学性兼容的创新路径。此书研究视野开阔,论述深入,对于认识网络文学发展新趋势、构建网络时代的文学传播新范式具有重要启示意义。

关键词：网络文学;“赋魅化”;文学传播;文学性;创新路径

作者简介：姜欣言, 山东大学文艺美学研究中心博士研究生, 研究方向: 文艺美学与科幻理论。电邮: 1455321236@qq.com。

Introduction

In recent years, online literature has attracted many readers with its unique charm, becoming a new force in the literary field that cannot be ignored. However, while developing rapidly, online literature has also exhibited some noteworthy new characteristics. In his book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution: A Preliminary Discussion on the Creation and Criticism of Chinese Internet Genre Literature in the 21st Century” (hereafter referred to as “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”), Professor Wu Changqing provides an in-depth analysis of these characteristics. The author uses the concept of “enchantment-infusion” to summarize the new normal of online literature. “Enchantment-infusion” refers to the general tendency of online literature to create a surreal, surprising, and stimulating reading experience through exaggeration, grotesqueness, and magical techniques to attract readers' attention (Wu, 2024). This trend of “enchantment-infusion” is centrally reflected in the subject matter, plot, and character shaping of online literature. For example, heavy-flavored themes such as fantasy, suspense, and grave robbing are prevalent; plot settings are bizarre and full of twists and turns; and character images are individually flamboyant and unconventional. “Enchantment-infusion” elements have virtually become a “standard configuration” in online literature creation.

The author points out that “enchantment-infusion” is by no means an accidental phenomenon in online literature, but rather a new logic born in the context of online communication (Wu, 2024). In the era of traditional mass media, due to relatively limited media channels, the agenda-setting function was well-performed, and the information accepted by the public was largely determined by the media's “gatekeeping”.

Notwithstanding, the development of the Internet has completely rewritten this pattern. In cyberspace, information explodes like a geyser, and everyone can potentially become an information producer and disseminator. The vast amount of information is like a vast ocean, and readers' attention becomes a scarce resource. If online literature wants to stand out in the ocean of information and attract readers to stay, it has to intensify the “enchantment-infusion” elements and capture eyeballs through sensory stimulation. The shift from “gatekeeping” to “attention-seeking” has become the new logic of online communication.

In fact, the “enchantment-infusion” tendency of online literature is precisely in line with this logical transformation. Fragmented mobile reading habits have given rise to an era of shallow reading, where readers prefer short, flat, and fast reading experiences. In this context, “enchantment-infusion” has become a powerful tool for online literature to break through. As stated in “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, many current online works bombard readers with sensory stimulation through visual and entertaining expressions, creating reading pleasure and occupying the high ground of attention. “Enchantment-infusion” has thus become a winning formula for online literature dissemination.

It should also be noted that the author's examination of the “enchantment-infusion” trend is by no means a simple enumeration of concepts but rather based on profound changes in the communication ecology. By revealing the new logic of online communication, the author provides us with a grand observational perspective for understanding the phenomenon of “enchantment-infusion” in online literature. This macro-level thinking is a major feature of this book. The author does not merely describe the textual characteristics of online literature but further questions the deep-seated reasons behind the generation of these characteristics. “Enchantment-infusion” is considered within the multi-dimensional landscape of information technology changes, media form evolution, and audience psychological changes, thus obtaining a more comprehensive interpretation.

It can be said that the book's summarization of the “enchantment-infusion” characteristics of online literature, on the one hand, accurately grasps the core connotation of this phenomenon, and on the other hand, breaks through the limitations of superficial and fragmented understanding, rising to the theoretical height of communication logic, reflecting clear problem awareness and a broad academic perspective. The author's insight into the changes in the communication context behind “enchantment-infusion” not only helps us understand the development status of online literature more deeply but also provides a new thinking path for cultural production in the era of media transformation.

1. The Causes of the “Enchantment-Infusion” Communication Logic in the Internet Era

1.1. The Development of Internet Technology Spawns the “Enchantment-Infusion” Trend

The rapid development of Internet technology has profoundly changed people's ways of producing and disseminating information. As the author points out in “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, the enhancement of multimedia presentation capabilities has made visual expression the mainstream of online communication (Wu, 2024). In cyberspace, text is no longer the only vehicle of expression; multimedia elements such as images, videos, and audio have emerged in large quantities, vividly reproducing the content of information. This multimedia trend provides a technical foundation for the “enchantment-infusion” of online literature (Hayles, 2008, p. 4). Online writers make full use of multimedia technology, skillfully

combining literary imagination with audiovisual sensory stimulation to create an immersive reading experience. For example, in suspense and adventure genres of online literature, authors often intersperse shocking sound effects and realistic scene images to create an atmosphere and enhance the sense of immersion. In romance and urban-themed works, beautiful illustrations and moving background music become effective means of “enchantment-infusion”. It can be said that multimedia presentation capabilities have given wings to the “enchantment-infusion” of online literature.

On the other hand, as emphasized in “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, the massive information environment has given rise to the era of “attention economy” (Wu, 2024). On the Internet, information grows exponentially, with vast amounts of content being generated every moment. Faced with the surging flood of information, user attention becomes an extremely valuable resource. Content producers must find ways to attract users to stay to stand out in the fierce competition. It is in this context that “enchantment-infusion” has become an important strategy for online literature to capture attention. Through the “enchantment-infusion” treatment of subject matter, plot, characters, and other aspects, online literature aims to create sensory stimulation, trigger emotional resonance, and thus capture the readers' attention. In the age of information overload, this ability to “instantly attract attention” is undoubtedly the winning formula for the dissemination of online literature. “Enchantment-infusion” has thus naturally become an important trend in online literary creation. It can be said that the changes in media form and information environment brought about by the development of Internet technology have laid a solid foundation for the rise of the “enchantment-infusion” logic.

1.2. Fragmented Reading Habits Fuel “Enchantment-Infusion”

In the era of mobile Internet, people's reading habits have undergone profound changes. As demonstrated in “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, with the popularization of mobile devices, reading has shown obvious fragmented characteristics (Wu, 2024). People use fragmented time for “micro-reading”, pursuing a short, flat, and fast reading experience. This fast-food reading mode has put forward new requirements for the content and form of online literature. In this context, online literature has widely adopted the “enchantment-infusion” strategy to cater to readers' needs for fast and light reading. The so-called “enchantment-infusion” is a sensationalized and entertaining way of expression. Through exaggerated and bizarre plot settings, flamboyant and unconventional character shaping, online literature creates strong sensory stimulation, produces reading pleasure, and attracts readers' attention. For example, many online works are keen on describing thrilling scenes such as fantasy battles and adventurous explorations, with a fast pace, constant conflicts, and a sense of exhilaration, completely catering to the taste of “fast-food reading”. These works often set up suspense from the beginning, create a tense atmosphere, and constantly stimulate the readers' nerves through frequent scene changes and plot twists, making it hard for readers to stop. At the same time, online literature also likes to create characters with distinct personalities and exaggerated traits, arousing readers' curiosity through extreme and stereotypical depictions. For example, in some online works, there are often handsome and suave “domineering CEOs” and pure and lovely “white, rich, and beautiful” characters. These character images often deviate from reality but greatly satisfy readers' imaginative needs.

The reason is that in the context of fragmented reading, readers find it difficult to concentrate on in-depth reading and prefer the reading pleasure brought by sensory stimulation. The “enchantment-infusion” of online

literature precisely caters to this psychological need. Exaggerated plots and extreme character images can quickly capture readers' attention and create a strong sense of immersion and satisfaction in a short time. It can be said that fragmented reading habits have become an important catalyst for the "enchantment-infusion" of online literature. However, it should be noted that the impact of fragmented reading on the "enchantment-infusion" of online literature is a double-edged sword. The "enchantment-infusion" strategy caters to readers' shallow reading needs, which is conducive to attracting traffic and increasing clicks. But excessive "enchantment-infusion" may also lead to the vulgarization and superficiality of content. Some online works rely too much on sensory stimulation, with plot settings divorced from reality, stereotyped character shaping, and a lack of depth and connotation. They may even fall into value traps, and online literature is in danger of becoming a "fast food" that caters to the masses.

From this perspective, how to strike a balance between catering to readers' tastes and adhering to literary pursuits is an important issue faced by online literary creation in the context of "enchantment-infusion". In this regard, online writers should respect readers' reading habits while not forgetting the humanistic mission of literature. They should inject rational thinking into sensual expression, create vivid images with flesh and blood and a sense of life, tell moving stories that touch the heart and provoke deep thought, and achieve an organic unity of plot tension and character depth, containing ideological content in entertainment. This requires online writers to continuously improve their artistic cultivation, sharpen their humanistic feelings, and guide readers with noble spirits to shape readers' tastes with high-quality content. At the same time, online literature platforms should also play a guiding role, improve the content production mechanism, and enhance the accuracy of recommendation algorithms, allowing high-quality content to stand out. For example, a more scientific content evaluation system can be established by combining dimensions such as readers' reading duration and interaction quality, allowing works with connotation and thought to receive more recommendations. This will guide the "enchantment-infusion" of online literature to develop in a healthy direction and promote the benign evolution of the online literary ecosystem.

1.3. The Challenge of "Enchantment-Infusion" to the Traditional Agenda-Setting Model

In the context of the Internet, the emergence of the "enchantment-infusion" phenomenon in online literature has had a huge impact on the traditional agenda-setting model of mass media. As Wu (2024) describes in "Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution", in the era of traditional media, the agenda-setting function was relatively effective due to limited channels. The setting of public agendas was largely "gatekept" by the media. The media guided public thinking and shaped public opinion by selectively reporting and repeatedly emphasizing certain specific issues. This agenda-setting relied mainly on rational persuasion, influencing audience cognition imperceptibly through the sorting out and in-depth analysis of objective facts.

Nonetheless, the development of the Internet has completely rewritten the communication landscape. The Internet has broken the vertical management model of traditional communication, allowing everyone the opportunity to participate in information production and dissemination (Jenkins, 2006, p. 137). The power of agenda-setting has shifted from the hands of media elites to the hands of the masses, showing a grassroots and decentralized characteristic. In this context, public agendas have become increasingly diversified and fragmented, and the traditional agenda-setting function faces a crisis of failure. The phenomenon of "enchantment-infusion" in online literature is a great challenge to traditional agenda-setting. Through the

“enchantment-infusion” treatment of subject matter, plot, and characters, online literature attracts readers' attention, gathers popularity, and then forms a potential agenda-setting force. When certain “enchantment-infused” online works attract a large amount of attention, guide readers' emotions, and shape values, they are actually setting public agendas imperceptibly.

It is worth noting that the agenda-setting of online literature often takes a sensationalized and entertaining approach. Unlike traditional agenda-setting, which emphasizes rational persuasion, online literature appeals more to emotional identification. Exaggerated plots and extreme characters can often trigger readers' emotional resonance and incite value recognition. When readers are immersed in the ups and downs of the story, they have unknowingly accepted the agenda set by the author. This seemingly leisure and entertainment reading mode actually contain a strong agenda-setting intention. More importantly, as Wu (2024) points out in the book, in the context of information overload on the Internet, user attention is extremely scarce. Traditional agenda-setting emphasizes gradual public opinion guidance, but in the attention economy era, this approach often has little effect. In contrast, the “enchantment-infusion” strategy of online literature caters to readers' sensationalized and entertaining reading expectations, making it easier to attract attention and quickly gather popularity. From this perspective, “enchantment-infusion” has become a new logic for coping with attention scarcity in the Internet context. Online literature relies on platform algorithm advantages and uses “enchantment-infusion” packaging such as clickbait titles and punchline creators to seize the high ground of readers' attention and then quietly carry out agenda-setting.

Certainly, we must also see that the impact of “enchantment-infusion” on agenda-setting is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the grassroots agenda-setting of online literature breaks the discourse monopoly of traditional media, allowing more voices to gain channels of expression, which is conducive to promoting the diversified development of society. But on the other hand, with the flood of “enchantment-infusion”, some online works excessively pursue sensory stimulation and are keen on creating negative emotions, which may amplify social anxiety, create value traps, and exacerbate the fragmentation of issues. In this regard, we can neither completely resist nor fully accept but rather guide “enchantment-infusion” to develop in a healthy direction while respecting the laws of online communication, achieving an organic unity of “enchantment-infusion” and value guidance. This requires online writers to strengthen self-discipline, improve content quality, and contain rational care in sensual expression. At the same time, online literature platforms should also strengthen value guidance, improve content recommendation mechanisms, and give more exposure to positive and uplifting content. The authorities should strengthen the management of online literature, establish and improve laws and regulations, and define the behavioral boundaries for the “enchantment-infusion” of online literature.

2. The Impact of “Enchantment-Infusion” on Online Literature Production and Dissemination

2.1. “Enchantment-Infusion” Elements Dominate Online Literature Creation

In the book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, the author reveals through extensive empirical analysis that “enchantment-infusion” has become a dominant element in online literature creation. “Enchantment-infusion” is essentially a technique of incorporating sensationalized and entertaining elements into literary creation. As Wu (2024) points out, contemporary online literature exhibits distinct “enchantment-infusion”

characteristics in various aspects such as subject matter selection, plot setting, and character shaping.

In terms of subject matter, many online works are passionate about themes that deviate from reality, such as fantasy, time travel, and rebirth, creating a reading atmosphere of exotic enchantment. These themes are novel, bizarre, and imaginative, providing readers with strong sensory stimulation and mental shock. In the book, the author uses multiple popular online works as examples to analyze the “enchantment-infusion” connotation of their themes, revealing that these works attract widespread attention largely due to their extraordinary and unconventional thematic settings, appealing to readers' curiosity. In terms of plot, online literature often adopts an exaggerated and jumping narrative style, with a fast pace and strong tension. Frequent scene changes and ups and downs in the story's trajectory are all aimed at creating suspense and mobilizing readers' emotions. The book cites the plot settings of many popular online works and analyzes their “enchantment-infusion” characteristics. For example, some stories set up suspense from the beginning to create a tense atmosphere, constantly stimulating readers' nerves through a rhythm of “suppression followed by uplift”; others employ bizarre and “mind-burning” plots to create a sense of mystery, making readers unable to stop reading. In short, online literature generally pursues sensory stimulation in terms of plot, striving to attract readers through ups and downs in the story. In character shaping, online literature also shows a clear tendency towards “enchantment-infusion”. The book analyzes the character images in a large number of online works and finds that they often have distinct stereotypical and extreme characteristics. Online literature is keen on shaping protagonists with flamboyant personalities and unconventional styles, often endowing them with extraordinary abilities and legendary backgrounds. Through idealized and extreme character shaping, online literature creates a heroic fantasy that deviates from reality, satisfying readers' sense of immersion and desire for conquest. The author also specifically points out that the shaping of female characters in online literature is also filled with “enchantment-infusion” elements, either as fragile and likable “white flowers” or as domineering and unruly “queen types” (Wu, 2024). These exaggerated and unrealistic character settings cater to readers' sensationalized reading expectations.

It should be noted that although “enchantment-infusion” helps attract readers' attention, excessive “enchantment-infusion” also lays hidden dangers for online literature creation (Ryan, 2001, p. 284). Wu (2024) incisively analyzes the problems of homogenization and stereotyping in online literature, pointing out that many online works blindly pursue “enchantment-infusion”, resulting in serious formulaic plots and characters, lacking originality and literariness. In the long run, online literature creation may fall into a vicious cycle of sensory stimulation, losing its due thought depth. The author thus issues a warning: the “enchantment-infusion” in online literature should not steal the show; while attracting readers, it should also focus on connotation shaping, containing rational thinking in sensual expression, achieving a balance between entertainment and thought, to promote the healthy development of online literature.

2.2. “Enchantment-Infusion” Subverts Classic Literary Evaluation Criteria

In the book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, Wu (2024) focuses on discussing the subversive impact of “enchantment-infusion” in online literature on traditional literary evaluation criteria. In the perspective of classical literary theory, the evaluation of literary works often takes the work's ideological and artistic qualities as important dimensions. However, in the context of online communication, the logic of commercialization has quietly risen to the top, becoming an important factor dominating online literature production. Online

literature creation has gradually become market-oriented and entertainment-oriented, with decreasing attention to literariness. The author keenly captures this sign of literary transformation and conducts an in-depth reflection on the literary evaluation criteria of online literature under the background of “enchantment-infusion” (Wu, 2024).

In the book, Wu (2024) analyzes the challenges posed by “enchantment-infusion” to the literariness of online literature. He points out that online literature's excessive reliance on sensory stimulation often comes at the cost of sacrificing literary connotation (Wu, 2024). Many “enchantment-infused” online works are keen on creating visual spectacles and plot suspense, paying insufficient attention to the rationality and authenticity of the story, resulting in plots that deviate from reality and are exaggerated and unrealistic. At the same time, character shaping tends to be stereotypical, lacking rich inner depictions, and character images become flat. In the pursuit of sensory shock, online literature gradually loses its due thought depth and artistic height. Wu (2024) thus points out that in the context of “enchantment-infusion”, online literature is facing the crisis of literariness being kidnapped by commerciality. The author also analyzes the negative impact of “fast-food reading” habits on literary appreciation ability (Wu, 2024). Wu (2024) emphasizes that in the era of mobile Internet, fragmented reading is prevalent, making it difficult for readers to calm down and savor works carefully. Many readers equate reading with entertainment, relying too much on plot stimulation and rarely delving into the implied meaning of works. Over time, readers' literary appreciation ability gradually weakens, and their aesthetic tastes tend to become vulgar. In this context, online literature can only cater to readers' tastes and constantly create sensory stimulation to gain attention. However, this pandering creation may bring about the Matthew effect, exacerbating the homogenization of online literature and causing an imbalance in literary evaluation criteria. The author thus raises a warning that in the era of “fast-food reading”, we should establish a correct view of literary appreciation; while obtaining reading pleasure, we should also learn to slow down and quietly savor, to discover the deep connotations of excellent works and rebuild the independence of literary appreciation.

Faced with the impact of “enchantment-infusion” on classical literary theory, Wu (2024) calls on the academic community in the book to reflect on the evaluation criteria of online literature. He points out that in the Internet context, we cannot simply apply traditional literary evaluation standards but should establish an evaluation system that fits the characteristics of online communication (Wu, 2024). This evaluation system should respect the sensationalized expression of online literature while also valuing the construction of its ideological connotations, achieving a balance between sensibility and rationality. At the same time, the evaluation subjects should also be diversified; in addition to professional criticism, more attention should be paid to reader feedback, establishing an open and interactive evaluation mechanism (Thomas, 2011, p. 7). Of course, the future of online literature evaluation lies in multi-party governance, achieving checks and balances in the game among professionals, the public, and the market, promoting the transformation and upgrading of online literature in the context of “enchantment-infusion” and allowing it to shine in the era.

2.3. “Enchantment-Infusion” Triggers Reflection in the Literary Community

In the book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, the author keenly captures the deep reflection triggered by the “enchantment-infusion” trend in online literature within the literary community (Wu, 2024). As online communication becomes increasingly rampant, the “enchantment-infusion” strategy has had a strong impact

on the literary world. Faced with the sensationalized and entertainment-oriented tendency of online literature creation, traditional literary evaluation criteria are encountering unprecedented challenges. Wu (2024) deeply analyzes this anxiety of literary transformation in the book and provides insightful discussions on the innovation of online literature evaluation mechanisms, offering valuable enlightenment for breaking the “enchantment-infusion” dilemma.

The author points out that the “enchantment-infusion” trend has triggered profound reflection on the evaluation criteria of online literature within the literary community (Wu, 2024). He suggests in the book that in the Internet context, it is no longer appropriate to simply apply traditional literary evaluation standards (Wu, 2024). The production and dissemination of online literature follow unique laws in the network context, and an evaluation system that is compatible with it must be established. This system should respect the sensationalized and entertainment-oriented expression of online literature while placing more emphasis on the construction of its ideological connotations, achieving an organic unity of sensibility and rationality. At the same time, the evaluation mechanism should also be open and interactive, establishing a benign interaction between professional criticism and public opinion. Only in this way can the credibility of online literature evaluation be reshaped and the healthy development of online literature production be guided. Wu (2024) also conducts an in-depth reflection on literary innovation in the context of “enchantment-infusion” from the perspective of cultural inheritance. He emphasizes that although literature presents many new changes in the network context, this is by no means a simple subversion of traditional classics but should be a dialectical unity of inheritance and innovation (Wu, 2024). Online literature should adhere to humanistic qualities in its sensationalized expression and inject excellent traditional cultural genes into its entertainment-oriented packaging. “Enchantment-infusion” is not an end, but a means; its starting point should be to infuse classic values with the spirit of the times and achieve cultural inheritance and innovation. Wu (2024) thus points out that faced with the “enchantment-infusion” of online literature, the literary community should adopt an open and inclusive attitude, promote the classics to take on new meanings through critical absorption, and inject endless momentum into Chinese culture. This requires the literary community and the online literature community to strengthen dialogue and achieve complementary advantages through communication and collision, joining hands to build an open and diverse new ecology of online literature.

From this perspective, the important value of this book lies in revealing the profound impact of new trends in online communication on literary production. With keen insight and a profound theoretical vision, the author focuses the lens on the online literature field, which has been neglected by mainstream literary theory, and conducts a meticulous analysis of the “enchantment-infusion” phenomenon. By tracing its origins and exploring the cultural and psychological roots of “enchantment-infusion”, this book provides valuable enlightenment for solving the dilemma of online literature transformation. In the author's view, faced with the opportunities and challenges brought by “enchantment-infusion”, we should neither stubbornly adhere to old ways nor completely westernize, but should base ourselves on local conditions, sublate and inherit, and achieve literary self-innovation through inheritance and innovation. This requires online literature creators to strengthen their own cultural cultivation, guide readers with noble sentiments, and achieve a perfect integration of “enchantment-infusion” content and ideological connotations.

3. “Enchantment-Infusion” and Literariness: Seeking the Possibility of Balance

3.1. Transcending Simple Binary Opposition and Treating “Enchantment-Infusion” with Caution

In the book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, the author examines the “enchantment-infusion” phenomenon with an open and dialectical perspective, transcending simple binary oppositional thinking. He points out that “enchantment-infusion” is not unique to online literature; traditional literary works are also not without expressions of “enchantment-infusion” elements (Wu, 2024). The key lies in controlling the “degree” of “enchantment-infusion” and avoiding excessive entertainment-oriented and vulgar tendencies. The author's insight is quite enlightening, providing us with valuable inspiration for rationally viewing the “enchantment-infusion” phenomenon. Indeed, in the context of online communication, “enchantment-infusion” has become a prominent feature of online literature creation. Many online works strive to attract readers' attention through means such as setting up suspense and creating visual spectacles. However, we cannot simply oppose “enchantment-infusion” and literariness based on this, considering them as mutually exclusive binary concepts. As Wu (2024) emphasizes, literary “enchantment-infusion” has a long history; from ancient myths and legends to modern fantasy novels, they all contain rich “enchantment-infusion” elements. This reminds us that charm is an inherent meaning of literature and art. The key is to grasp the measure of “enchantment-infusion”, not forgetting to highlight literariness while attracting readers, and achieving a balance between sensual expression and aesthetic taste.

The author substantiates this view with numerous case studies in the book. He analyzes the “enchantment-infusion” elements in martial arts classics by Jin Yong and Gu Long, pointing out that while setting up legendary plots and shaping chivalrous images, these works also focus on exploring ideological connotations and human depth, achieving a perfect combination of “enchantment-infusion” and literariness (Wu, 2024). The two are not opposed, but complementary. Charm originates from the artistic appeal of the work, while literariness is reflected in the spiritual height of the work. Only when both are present can a work become a classic. This requires us to treat “enchantment-infusion” with an inclusive and cautious attitude, not only seeing its positive role in attracting readers but also being alert to its negative influence of excessive entertainment and vulgarization. The author thus points out thought-provokingly that in the face of the “enchantment-infusion” trend, online literature creators cannot blindly seek novelty and excessively cater to readers' sensory stimulation needs; nor can they stand still and reject “enchantment-infusion” elements altogether (Wu, 2024). This requires online literature authors to strengthen their cultural cultivation, improve their artistic literacy, and strive for thought in entertainment-oriented expressions, guiding readers' aesthetics with noble sentiments. In the author's view, “enchantment-infusion” itself is not objectionable; the key lies in injecting humanistic feelings into sensual expressions and maintaining spiritual height in fast-food reading. This points the way for online literature creation, calling for more excellent works that possess both imagination and thought. Online literature should incorporate contemporary elements on the basis of inheriting traditional classics, use “enchantment-infusion” strategies to arouse the public's reading interest, imperceptibly shape national aesthetic tastes, and ultimately promote the progress of social civilization.

3.2. Upholding the Bottom Line of Literary Expression While Respecting the Laws of Online Communication

In the book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, Wu (2024) examines the development of online

literature from a cultural perspective and strategic vision, proposing a highly forward-looking judgment: in the face of the new context of online communication, online literature creation should respect its laws while upholding the bottom line of literary expression. The “enchantment-infusion” strategy is indeed helpful in attracting readers' attention, but excessive catering to market tastes may lead to problems such as empty content and lack of thought. The author thus emphasizes that online literature writing should utilize “enchantment-infusion” to enhance its communication power, but more importantly, it should contain rich humanistic feelings and spiritual pursuits in its sensual narrative (Wu, 2024). This insight points directly to the key to the transformation and upgrading of online literature creation and points the way for its healthy development.

Indeed, in the era of mobile internet, fragmented reading is prevalent, and the public's demand for sensory stimulation is increasing. Faced with this trend, many online works strive to cater to market tastes, overdrawing imagination in subject matter and plot settings, and attempting to create visual spectacles to attract readers' attention. However, as the author warns, although this approach can gain attention in the short term, it may exacerbate the homogenization of online literature in the long run, leading to superficial content and empty thought. As responsible literary creators, we must not be carried away by the market, but rather lead the public's aesthetics with a lofty spiritual vision and demonstrate the power of literature in popular expressions.

So, how can we maintain the independence of literary expression in the complex context of online communication? In this regard, Wu (2024) suggests that the key lies in injecting rational thinking into sensual narratives and condensing humanistic care in entertainment-oriented packaging. He takes some excellent online works as examples and analyzes how they contain profound connotations in captivating stories, triggering shocks to readers' souls. These works often base themselves on real life, using individual fates as entry points to artistically reproduce the features of the times. They integrate philosophical speculation into sensual strokes and convey the brilliance of human nature in ups and downs of the plot. In the reading process, readers can not only gain reading pleasure from gripping stories but also appreciate the ideological charm of the works, imperceptibly receiving spiritual nourishment. These are truly excellent literary works and should be the aspirational pursuit of online literature creation.

In fact, upholding the independent character of literary expression does not require online literature to seek novelty for novelty's sake, but rather to enhance its spiritual connotations and manifest noble ideals. This requires the vast majority of online literature creators to strengthen their cultural cultivation, elevate their ideological realm, and strive to become the embodiment of feelings and wisdom, passion and rationality. They should draw nourishment from traditional classics, extract subject matter from real life, inherit the essence of national culture while actively absorbing the achievements of modern civilization, constantly innovating, and striving to highlight the intellectual brilliance of literature in popular expressions. At the same time, the critical community should also view the diverse explorations of online literature with an open and inclusive attitude, promoting its continuous maturation through criticism and guidance, and ultimately achieving a perfect unity of social benefits and aesthetic ideals.

3. 3. Developing New Modes of Expression Compatible with “Enchantment-Infusion” and Literariness
In the concluding chapter of “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution”, the author presents a forward-looking

outlook on the future trends of online literature creation. He keenly realizes that with the increasing maturity of the online cultural ecology, relying solely on “enchantment-infusion” strategies to attract attention is no longer sustainable (Wu, 2024). For online literature to achieve sustainable development, it must innovate under the nourishment of traditional literature and develop new modes of expression compatible with “enchantment-infusion” and literariness. This view is of overarching significance, pointing the way for the transformation and upgrading of online literature.

Indeed, online communication has its specific context and laws. Fragmented reading is prevalent, and the public's aesthetic tastes are diverse, requiring online literature to cater to their preferences in subject matter and plot settings to attract readers' attention. However, as the author emphasizes, excessive catering to market tastes and relentless creation of visual spectacles may exacerbate problems such as empty content and homogenization of online literature, ultimately failing to win readers' respect (Wu, 2024). Online literature creation must not remain on the superficial level of “enchantment-infusion”, but rather deeply explore the connotations of subject matter and manifest spiritual pursuits in sensual narratives. This is not only the trend of the times but also the great responsibility.

So, how can we achieve an organic integration of “enchantment-infusion” and literariness? In this regard, the author proposes a constructive approach. Wu (2024) points out that online literature creators should be adept at drawing nourishment from traditional classics and constantly innovating in aspects such as plot setting and character shaping. At the same time, they should keep pace with the times, combine realistic subject matter with fictional imagination, and create artistic images that are both close to life and transcend life. Furthermore, they should fully utilize the advantages of network technology, employ multimedia means to enhance the appeal of the works, and create an immersive experience for readers. Only in this way can breakthroughs be achieved in both form innovation and content expansion, opening up a new realm of online literature creation.

In fact, this innovative exploration has already begun to bear fruit. In recent years, some excellent online works have skillfully integrated reality and fiction, depicting the trends of the times with imaginative strokes, triggering widespread resonance among readers. For example, some works use the “COVID-19 pandemic” as a backdrop to tell the stories of ordinary people's fight against the epidemic, full of feelings for the country and family; other works start from urban life, portraying the struggles of young people in the new era, manifesting a positive and uplifting spiritual outlook. These works inject ideological connotations into novel and interesting stories, reflecting the power of literature in popular expressions, and can be regarded as examples of the perfect combination of “enchantment-infusion” and literariness. Their successful practice illuminates the future, indicating that online literature creation has great potential. The key lies in grasping the pulse of the times, embracing technological innovation with an open mind while inheriting the quintessence of tradition, which will surely achieve a simultaneous rise in quantity and quality, bearing fruitful results.

Conclusion

The book “Inheritance Path and Literary Evolution” approaches the development of online literature from the perspective of cultural communication, conducting a systematic and in-depth examination. The author, based on the integration of tradition and modernity, the exchange between the local and the foreign, and the combination of theory and practice, meticulously analyzes various issues in the dissemination of online

literature and puts forward forward-looking views and judgments. These research results undoubtedly have important theoretical value and practical significance. From a theoretical perspective, the research in this book contributes to enriching and developing literary communication theory. The author does not simply apply traditional literary theories but closely integrates online communication practices to provide innovative theoretical interpretations of the narrative strategies, aesthetic characteristics, and social influences of online literature. For example, based on the concept of “enchantment-infusion”, the author deeply analyzes how online literature attracts readers through sensationalized narratives; when sorting out the evolution of online literature genres, he proposes a new idea of “genre fusion”. These theoretical explorations not only help understand the development patterns of online literature but also provide enlightening references for the expansion of traditional literary theories in new contexts. From a practical perspective, the research in this book has positive guiding significance for promoting the healthy development of online literature. The author does not stop at abstract theoretical elaboration but is committed to combining theory with practice, providing feasible countermeasures for the practical problems in online literature creation, dissemination, and evaluation. For instance, in the face of the potential drawbacks of content hollowness and fickleness brought about by the flood of “enchantment-infusion”, the author proposes strengthening the construction of humanistic connotations and injecting rational thinking into sensual expressions. These constructive opinions undoubtedly help guide the vast number of creators to enhance their cultural cultivation, strengthen their social responsibilities, and promote the transformation and upgrading of online literature while inheriting excellent cultural traditions.

The rapid development of the Internet is profoundly influencing people's lifestyles and thinking habits. Looking to the future, online literature, as an emerging cultural form, is bound to achieve greater development in inheritance and innovation. On the one hand, online literature will further strengthen its dialogue with traditional literature, absorbing its essence while realizing its own elevation; on the other hand, online literature should also actively employ advanced technological means, expand dissemination channels, innovate expression forms, enhance interactivity and immersion, and ultimately form a unique aesthetic style. At the same time, the dissemination of online literature will present a more diverse and multi-dimensional development trend. In terms of content expression, social reality themes will receive more attention. Creators will base themselves on the fertile soil of the times, extract subject matter from daily life, reflect the joys and sorrows of ordinary people with strokes that are closer to life, and express their value appeals. In terms of narrative strategies, plot-oriented and genre-oriented approaches will undergo innovative development. Some works will draw on elements of popular culture such as film, television, and games, adopting interactive and immersive narratives to bring readers a brand-new aesthetic experience. In terms of dissemination channels, a deep integration of paper and digital publishing will be achieved. With the help of technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence, personalized reading and precise recommendations will become possible. Of course, the future development of online literature must always adhere to the people-centered creative orientation. While improving the dissemination efficiency of online literature, it is more important to focus on guiding social trends, spreading mainstream values, and striving to create excellent works that reflect the aspirations of the times and manifest the national spirit. This requires the vast number of creators to have firm cultural confidence, a strong sense of mission, actively respond to the issues of the times, and courageously

engage in artistic innovation while inheriting the excellent cultural genes of the nation, truly becoming the trailblazers of the new era.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Jiang Xinyan ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9978-1557>

References

Hayles, N. K. (2008). *Electronic literature: New horizons for the literary*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.

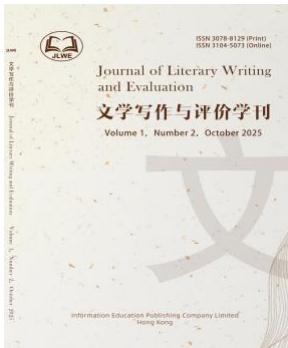
Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York: New York University Press.

Ryan, M. L. (2001). *Narrative as virtual reality: Immersion and interactivity in literature and electronic media*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Thomas, B. (2011). What is fanfiction and why are people saying such nice things about it?. *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, 3, 1-24.

吴长青 (2024):《传承路径与文学流变——21世纪中国网络类型文学创作与批评刍论》, 世界图书出版公司。

[Wu, C. Q. (2024). *Transmission paths and literary evolution: A preliminary discussion on the creation and criticism of Chinese online genre literature in the 21st century*. World Publishing Corporation.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.367-374.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.18](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.18)



Exploring the New Literary Experience of Guizhou in the New Era: A Review of *The Path of Literary Criticism: Between the Center and the Margins*

Hong Dezhi

Abstract: Local literature has always been an important subject in the study of Chinese modern literature, with New Southern Writing and the New Northeastern Writer Group becoming focal points for researchers in recent years. However, amidst the current boom in local literature research, the study of Guizhou's new literature has not received sufficient attention. As an important component of Chinese modern literature, Guizhou literature, due to its unique geographical environment, ethnic experiences, and cultural traditions, has given birth to literary works with a distinct Guizhou style and provided important experience for the development of Chinese modern literature. It is in this sense that the literary criticism collection *The Path of Literary Criticism* by Professor Sun Xiangyang, Vice Chairman of the Guizhou Provincial Writers Association, Vice Chairman of the Guizhou Provincial Literary Critics Association, and Vice President of Anshun University, deserves attention. Not only does it reposition the aesthetic value and literary-historical significance of Guizhou's modern literature between the "center" and the "periphery" but also sought historical basis and realistic reference for the formation and development of Guizhou literature team in the context of the new era.

Keywords: *The Path of Literary Criticism*; Guizhou New Literature; Literature team in Guizhou

Author Biography: **Hong Dezhi**, Postdoctoral Researcher at the College of Liberal Arts and Journalism & Communication, Guangxi Normal University. Research interests: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature and Culture. E-mail: hdz0063@mailbox.gxnu.edu.cn.

题目：探索面向新时代的贵州新文学经验——评《文学批评的路径：在中心与边地之间》

摘要：地方文学历来是中国新文学研究的重要对象，新南方写作、新东北作家群更是成为近年来研究者关注的焦点。然而，在当下地方文学研究热潮中，贵州新文学研究却没有得到充分关注，作为中国新文学的重要组成部分，贵州文学因其独特的地理环境、民族经验与文化传统，诞生了独具黔地风格的文学作品，并为中国新文学发展提供了重要经验。正是在此意义上，贵州省作家协会副主席、贵州省文艺评论家协会副主席、安顺学院副校长孙向阳教授的文学评论集《文学批评的路径》值得关注，他不仅在“中心”与“边地”之间重新锚定贵州新文学的审美价值与文学史意义，更为新时代语境下文学黔军的形成与发展寻找历史依据与现实参照。

关键词：《文学批评的路径》；贵州新文学；文学黔军

作者简介：洪德志，广西师范大学文学院/新闻与传播学院博士后，研究方向：中国现当代文学与文化。电邮：hdz0063@mailbox.gxnu.edu.cn。

Introduction

In the field of Chinese new literature, Guizhou literature is not well-known, even a little strange to many researchers, which makes it difficult for the academic community to have a clear and objective evaluation of Guizhou new literature. In the General Preface of “Guizhou Literary Criticism Series”, Yan Tonglin said that “Guizhou new literature failed to get a proper, fair and objective evaluation. There are two reasons for this phenomenon: the first is that the achievements of our own literary development are not prominent; the second is that the strength of Guizhou literary circles is often scattered, and Guizhou’s literary creation and literary criticism are not tied together, lacking an overall strength.” (Yan Tonglin, 2023, P.1) It is in this context that Professor Sun Xiangyang, vice chairman of Guizhou writers’ Association, vice chairman of Guizhou literary critics’ Association and vice president of Anshun University, deserves attention. He not only provides a personalized criticism path for the rediscovery of the image of Guizhou new literature but also responds to the call of Guizhou literary criticism in the new era with the conscious sense of responsibility and mission of Guizhou geoscientists.

1. Contrast field of vision between the center and the edge

How can Sun Xiangyang find a suitable path of literary criticism between center and frontier in the collection of comments on the differences of research objects and the intersection of modern literature and Contemporary Literature (Sun Xiangyang, 2023, P.6) A careful study of the style arrangement and research objects of this review collection can reveal the author’s potential research perspectives and critical intentions. The first part of this book focuses on the study of contemporary Chinese literary system and literary historical data, while the second part focuses on the historical achievements and current situation of the development of new literature in Guizhou. The two seem not to be directly related but imply the author’s thinking on the relationship between “center” and “border” from the perspective of literature. Because the issue of literary system is the core proposition in the study of contemporary Chinese literature, and the political nature is also

the unavoidable content of contemporary Chinese literature, understanding the internal operation mechanism of literary system has become the premise of constructing a macro literary and political vision from the center, which has also become the logical origin of Sun Xiangyang's literary criticism. However, if we interpret literary works only from the perspective of macro literary politics, it is easy to turn literary research into a policy exercise. Sun Xiangyang is obviously wary of this problem, so his research object is specific. Under the premise of the institutional rigidity of contemporary Chinese literature, he chose specific cases to enter the field of literary system, from the interpretation of programmatic documents to the research on the cultivation of new Chinese writers, to explore the internal operation mechanism of Contemporary Chinese literature system. At the same time, the contents of the book also have an obvious color of historical data textual research. From the study of the subject history of modern Chinese literature to the investigation of specific literary schools and the study of the canonization of modern writers, the study of historical data has become another color of Sun Xiangyang's literary criticism. The combination of literature system research and literature historical data research makes Sun Xiangyang effectively avoid one-way literature policy deduction or literature policy interpretation. With literature historical data as the basis for argument, the literature system research can be implemented. For example, in the article "the influence of the operation mode of Soviet literature on Chinese Contemporary Literature", Sun Xiangyang based on a large number of historical data, such as the film creation newsletter in the 1950s, the historical data of the publication of the people's Republic of China, and even the internal data of the second National Congress of Chinese literary and artistic workers. This not only shows Sun Xiangyang's historical data skills but also shows that his study of literary system is not an empty macro discussion, but also an empirical study of the details and development of the contemporary literary system under the guidance of a clear sense of problems. Therefore, Sun Xiangyang's literary criticism is a concrete practice with the concept of holistic literature from the perspective of literary politics, but he also uses the empirical thought of historical data research to control the political generalization tendency that may be caused by the study of literary system, and his literary research not only has the holistic vision of Chinese New literature, but also contains the characteristics of moderation and prudence.

The second part of this book is the analysis of specific literary cases. Lu Xun said in the preface of "the great series of Chinese New Literature · novels II" that Jian Xianai's works "although simple, or as the author's modest 'childish', there are few literary decorations, which is enough to write his heartfelt sadness. The scope of his description is narrow, a few ordinary people, some trivial things, but such as "water burial", but it shows us the coldness of the rural customs of 'Guizhou far away'. It is the same as the greatness of maternal love in this coldness -- Guizhou is far away, but everyone's situation is the same. (Lu Xun, 2005, p.254) It is precisely because of Lu Xun's recommendation that Jian Xianai entered the new era. From the perspective of literary researchers, Guizhou has become a classic writer in the history of new literature. Therefore, Jian Xianai naturally became the focus of Sun Xiangyang's attention, but he was not limited to this. Xie Liuyi, Guizhou writers during the Anti-Japanese War, writers in eastern Guizhou, as well as Guizhou's local film and television works and Guizhou's minority literature and art entered his research field of vision. In the last article of the second part, "a summary of Guizhou literature in the past 100 years", Sun Xiangyang returned to the holistic

narration of Guizhou new literature after a case interpretation of Guizhou new literature. The holistic vision reappeared. Behind the case interpretation, there was obviously a holistic thinking based on place, which was consistent with the holistic thinking of the first part. Then the dialogue between the center and the place implicit in the book appeared.

In this collection of papers, although there is a style arrangement between the upper and lower parts, it does not mean that the two topics are discussed independently. The comparative vision of the center and the frontier not only enables Sun Xiangyang to break through the regional restrictions of Guizhou new literature but also gives birth to an interdisciplinary consciousness. Through the investigation of various literary forms, a mutual dialogue relationship is constructed within the local literature/culture, which opens the internal face of Guizhou new literature research. Between the center and the local, he constructed his own critical path. While exploring the creative vitality of Guizhou new literature, he also potentially responded to the structural relationship between the local and the center, which not only sought the historical basis for the renewal and iteration of Guizhou literature and culture, but also provided a personal ideological experience for the creation of new community literature.

2. Close reading of texts from the perspective of mutual verification between literature and history

As mentioned above, Sun Xiangyang's research has obvious characteristics of historical data research. Starting from the specific materials, he returned to the historical scene, treated the research object dialectically with a clear sense of problems, and then read the text carefully in the mutual evidence of literature and history, to obtain a new understanding of the research object. Jian Xianai is a classic writer in the history of Chinese new literature. After Lu Xun's review, how to realize the canonization of his literary history? Sun Xiangyang did not choose to interpret his novels as a case or choose the usual research method -- to determine Jian Xianai's classic status from the comments of famous writers and critics, but to determine Jian Xianai's classic status and its evolution process from the history of modern Chinese literature. Dai Yan believes that "the alliance between the history of Chinese literature and history has given it a strong scientific background. Through education, it has become a universal consensus and collective memory. The discrimination of orthodoxy has made it thoroughly linked with the national ideology and government power, and the determination of a set of classics and classic interpretation has made it obtain permanent authority and standardization." (Dai Yan, 2002, p.11) The "national ideology and government power" contained in the compilation of the history of Chinese literature is precisely an important content of Sun Xiangyang's literary research. Therefore, it is inevitable to choose the perspective of the writing of the history of modern Chinese literature to investigate Jian Xianai's canonization process. A close reading of the article "the changes of Jian Xianai in the writing of the history of Chinese Modern Literature" shows that Sun Xiangyang's arguments are well founded, and the history of Chinese New Literature quoted is the first edition, which not only shows his historical data and rigorous attitude, but also reflects his intention to restore the image of Jian Xianai in the scene of literary history. It is obviously not enough to completely present the problem consciousness behind the evolution of the image of Jian Xianai in the history of literature if only combing the records of Jian Xianai in the history of literature.

Then after combing the history of literature, it discusses the specific problems existing in the evaluation of Jian Xianai in the past history of literature. It is also in this sense that Sun Xiangyang noticed that the past literary history often emphasized Jian Xianai's status as a novelist and ignored his creation of new poetry, so he tried to explore Jian Xianai's status as a poet. In the article *Song of the Loner*: on Jian Xianai's creation of new poetry, Sun Xiangyang combined Jian Xianai's life experience with his poetry creation and found that Jian Xianai's wandering experience was closely related to the "night" image and the "loner" image in his poetry, which also showed Sun Xiangyang's comments on Jian Xianai's understanding of people and the world. His comments on the poet Jian Xianai were appropriate, detailed and full of the understanding of humanistic care, so its conclusion is not only appropriate, but also shows the sympathy of an intellectual for the understanding of Guizhou writers who have a bumpy and positive fate.

This kind of close reading based on literature and history also exists in Sun Xiangyang's research outside Guizhou literature. When inspecting the discipline construction of the history of modern Chinese literature, he combined the sorting out of the "Syllabus" of modern Chinese literature with his intention to return to the scene of history, carefully read the "Syllabus" of various new literature, found the connections and differences between them, and then found that the "syllabus", as a special "statutory promulgation form", had an important impact on the development of modern Chinese literature. At the same time, the "Syllabus" also became the "organizational" support and "statutory" guarantee of the history of modern Chinese literature on another level. Sun Xiangyang has a special feeling for the cultivation of writers. He made an in-depth study of the relationship between the Central Institute of literature, the literary and art correspondent system, the "youth entrepreneurship Association" and the cultivation of socialist Chinese writers, with the purpose of exploring the cultivation mechanism of contemporary Chinese writers. Perhaps every Chinese person once had a writer's dream. When he failed to realize this dream, he investigated the writer's training mechanism in socialist China, or Sun Xiangyang was a way to realize his dream in the field of academic research. It is also under this emotional drive that Sun Xiangyang once participated in the establishment of the Writing Research Institute in his work. He has transformed this internal emotional drive and academic research enthusiasm into a kind of transitive practical action and has made important achievements in the cultivation of young writers and the improvement of students' comprehensive quality. Therefore, his academic research is based on researchers' post consciousness but also shows the human feelings that guide the development of young people. Therefore, after reading this collection of comments, we can find that Sun Xiangyang's academic research is the product of a combination of academic theory and emotional reason. His research has a clear realistic orientation, which not only points to the deep feelings of the land of Guizhou where he was born, but also contains a literary and art worker's thinking on how academic research corresponds to the current youth training and development, which also shows his empathy and sense of responsibility in the face of student groups as a university teacher.

3. Internal expansion of regional literature research

When combing the development of Guizhou literature in the past century, Sun Xiangyang said that “standing at the new historical intersection and looking back on Guizhou literature in the past century, we can not only have a historical review of the development of Guizhou literature, but also get some new enlightenment for the prosperity and development of Guizhou literature from this ‘bird’ s-eye view.” (Sun Xiangyang, 2023, p.329) Sun Xiangyang projected the historical enlightenment he obtained into the current Guizhou literature, thought about the future development of Guizhou literature, and then transformed the historical enlightenment into a kind of “sentimental” literary action.

Guizhou is a multi-ethnic province, and it is in this land of multi-ethnic exchanges and blending that a large number of influential ethnic minority writers have been born across the country. However, Sun Xiangyang said in “the power of the edge -- a review of contemporary Guizhou ethnic minority literature creation” that “in the discourse hierarchy of Chinese literature, Guizhou ethnic minority literature has always been in a marginal position, and has not yet created epic works with great historical value and soul shock like the history of the soul and the dust settles down... Therefore, the real rise of Guizhou ethnic minority literature will be possible only after it has established a meaningful connection with the mainstream discourse (or the central discourse) and has broken through the encirclement. This undoubtedly brings dual anxiety of expression and influence to Guizhou ethnic minority writers, that is, on the one hand, they should always face the pressure of the central discourse right, and look for some adjustment, correction, resistance and local flavor to the depressed state.(b) the; On the other hand, the potential influence of the older writers who have successfully used their local experience to participate in the mainstream narrative should be avoided.” (Sun Xiangyang, 2023, p.263-264) He believes that to get rid of this “double anxiety”, we need to be more open and inclusive, “open the bottleneck of literary innovation from the aspects of human nature excavation, artistic aesthetics, theme expression and so on”. Therefore, Sun Xiangyang cast his eyes on the eastern Guizhou region he was familiar with and further considered how to “open the bottleneck of literary innovation” within the geographical territory of Guizhou, or under the background of “double anxiety”, consider the differentiated development path within the provincial literature. Sunxiangyang believes that the “East Guizhou writers’ group” has jointly constructed “a regional homogeneous culture”. Although there are great differences in the aesthetic pursuit and creative methods within this group, “the magnificent Wuling mountains and the vast eastward blue Wujiang River are the cultural background and aesthetic objects faced by this group, and the essence of ‘benevolence’ forged by Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism is the spiritual power of this group.” (Sun Xiangyang, 2023, p.275-276) He found the important characteristics of East Guizhou writers in Guizhou literature, that is, the spirit of 'benevolence' built in Wujiang culture. It can be seen that Sun Xiangyang, starting from a hundred years of Guizhou literature experience, and then investigating the internal differences of provincial literature, has developed his ideological experience of breaking through the “double anxiety” of Guizhou literature and art, that is, based on the literary tradition, exploring the internal new quality of provincial literature, and then obtaining the possibility of breaking through the “anxiety”.

It is obvious that literary research cannot accommodate the literary and artistic scope that Sun

Xiangyang's ideological experience can radiate. Therefore, he explored the important experience of breaking through the "double anxiety" in Guizhou's literature and art from movies, TV dramas and Miao epic. For example, he noticed that the local TV play "twenty four abductions" in Guizhou is not only a visual presentation of Guizhou's experience in the war of resistance against Japan, but also that this TV play "on the basis of inheriting the narrative advantages of previous Anti-Japanese War dramas, jumped out of the traditional narrative mode of 'two armies against each other', used unique innovative thinking and refreshing narrative strategies, provided a new idea and opened up a different paradigm for the exploration and development of Chinese Anti-Japanese War dramas." (Sun Xiangyang, 2023, p.290)

This is the unique contribution of Guizhou literature and art in the field of Anti-Japanese war dramas. In the context of accelerating the process of modernization, the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage are also facing great challenges. For example, the Miao epic King Yalu has the problem of low digitization. Sun Xiangyang also puts forward specific suggestions on the inheritance and protection of King Yalu from the perspective of digitization of intangible cultural heritage. The protection and inheritance of the Miao epic King Yalu is not only the protection of intangible cultural heritage but also involves exploring the unique content of Guizhou literature and art, that is, the core issue of creating a unique intangible cultural card in Guizhou in the national intangible cultural map. Another example is the discussion of the film extreme crisis, which also notes the Guizhou revolution in the history of the long march of Red Army. Sun Xiangyang is very good at comparing and analyzing Guizhou literature and art with Chinese literature and art. He examines the unique artistic charm of Guizhou literature and art under the overall background of Chinese literature and art. He also notes the internal differences and richness of Guizhou literature. This is his thinking on local literature in the current hot wave of local literature research.

To sum up, Guizhou literature is an unavoidable historical existence in the study of Chinese local literature. Guizhou literature not only provides unique historical experience and aesthetic form in southwest literature but also contributes unique Guizhou experience in the development of Chinese local literature. Sun Xiangyang's collection of reviews not only shows his rigorous academic attitude and solid academic foundation, but also combines the historical experience of Guizhou literature with the practical problems he is facing, and explores the development path of Guizhou literature through literary criticism, which not only opens up the meaning space of Guizhou literature's internal orientation and foothold in China, but also shows a Guizhou critic's conscious value adherence and mission of the times.

Funding: This article is one of the phased achievements of the 76th batch of general funding projects supported by the China Postdoctoral Science Foundation (Project No. 2024M760609); One of the phased achievements of the 2024 Guangxi Philosophy and Social Sciences Research Annual Project "Guangxi Literature and Art (1951-1966) and the 'Guangxi Experience' of New Chinese Literature" (Project No. 2024ZWF005); One of the phased research achievements of the 2025 First Class Discipline Construction Annual Project "Research on Li Jieren's Reading History" (Project No. WKY25003) of the School of Literature/School of Journalism and Communication, Guangxi Normal University.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

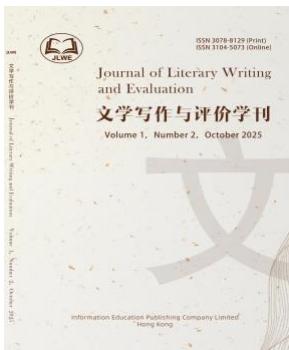
Hong Dezhi ^{1D} <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0892-908X>

References

孙向阳 (2023) : 《文学批评的路径：在中心与边地之间》。贵州教育出版社。
[Sun Xiangyang (2023): *The Path of Literary Criticism: Between the Center and the Borderlands*. Guizhou Education Press.]

鲁迅 (2005) : 《鲁迅全集》第 6 卷。人民文学出版社。
[Lu Xun (2005): *The Complete Works of Lu Xun*, Volume 6. People's Literature Publishing House.]

戴燕 (2002) : 《文学史的权力》。北京大学出版社。
[Dai Yan (2002): *The Power of Literary History*. Peking University Press.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.375-384.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.19](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.19)



External Elements Integrated into the Core: A Review of Lu Zhouju's *A Study of American Influences in China's New Literature (1911-1949)*

Liu Min

Abstract: *A Study of American Influences in China's New Literature (1911-1949)* edited by Professor Lü Zhouju, offers a systematic investigation into the multi-dimensional and deep-seated effects of American intellectual and cultural trends on Chinese New Literature. Since the 20th century, American literature, as a strong cultural force, has deeply participated in the construction and transformation of modern Chinese literature. From the enlightenment of democratic consciousness, the advocacy of individual freedom, and the methodology of experimentalism to the renewal of concepts and the innovation of techniques in specific genres such as fiction, drama, poetry, and prose, American factors played a crucial role as both the “Other” and a “catalyst”. Particularly in the realm of modern fiction, American influence profoundly reshaped creative concepts, narrative techniques, and aesthetic styles, becoming an indispensable perspective for understanding the modernization process of Chinese literature.

Keywords: Modern Chinese Literature; American Influence; Cross-cultural Impact; Modern Fiction; Subjectivity; Localization

Author Biography: **Liu Min**, undergraduate at school of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou University, research interest: American literature. E-mail: axxi1115@163.com

题目：他山之石与主体熔铸——评吕周聚《中国新文学中的美国因素研究（1911-1949）》

摘要：吕周聚教授主编的《中国新文学中的美国因素研究（1911-1949）》一书，系统考察了美国思想文化对中国新文学产生的多维度、深层次影响。20世纪以来，美国文学作为一股强劲的文化力量深度参与了现代中国文学的建构与变革。从民主意识启蒙、个性自由张扬、实验主义方法论，到小说、戏剧、诗歌、散文等具体文类的观念更新与技巧革新，美国因素在其中扮演了关键的“他者”与催化剂角色。尤其在中国的现代小说领域，美国因素深刻重塑了中国的文学创作者们的创作观念、叙事技法与美学风格，是理解中国新文学现代化进程不可或缺的视角。

关键词：中国新文学；美国因素；跨文化影响；现代小说；主体性；本土化

作者简介：刘敏，广州大学外国语学院硕士研究生，研究方向：美国文学。电邮：axxi1115@163.com。

Introduction

A Study of American Influences in Modern Chinese Literature (1911-1949), edited by Professor Lü Zhouju and featuring a preface by Professor David Der-wei Wang (published by SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2023), meticulously examines the American dimension within modern Chinese literature. Through its clear analytical framework and well-documented case studies, the work addresses a significant gap in the field of Sino-foreign literary relations. Scholarship on the modern transformation of Chinese literature has traditionally emphasized the prominent influences of the Soviet Union, Japan, and Western Europe, often simplifying or obscuring the role of American factors. The book's principal contribution lies in its systematic excavation, organization, and substantiation of the indispensable function played by American intellectual and cultural resources as both a “catalyst” and a “mirror of the Other” during the formative and early maturation phases of modern Chinese literature.

Structuring its analysis from the macro-level establishment of foundational ideas, such as democratic consciousness, individual freedom, and experimentalism--to discussions of genre innovations in fiction, drama, and poetry, and further to analyses of travel writings about America, the book lucidly demonstrates that America represented not a monolithic or fixed symbol for Chinese intellectuals and writers seeking modernist breakthroughs during that era, but rather a complex and tension-filled entity. Furthermore, Professor Lü Zhouju avoids portraying modern Chinese literature as a passive receptacle for American influence. Instead, he carefully delineates the proactive agency of Chinese writers: their discerning choices, creative adaptations, and localized appropriations of American resources. Whether integrating democratic ideals with Chinese realities, interpreting individual freedom within the indigenous context, or applying experimentalist methods to specific literary practices, these processes

consistently reflect the writers' profound engagement with local concerns and socio-historical imperatives. American elements were selectively "appropriated" to address Chinese problems, accumulate Chinese experience, and ultimately shape the distinct contours of China's own modern literary form.

As the preeminent genre of modern Chinese literature, fiction receives particular attention. Professor Lü's exploration of American impact delves into the very core of the genre's evolution from classical to modern forms--its conceptual frameworks, narrative techniques, and aesthetic sensibilities. The interconnected arguments within this section effectively outline the texture and characteristics of modern Chinese fiction as profoundly shaped, in part, by its engagement with American literary resources.

1. The Transformation of Modern Fiction: From the "Minor Path" to the "Crown Jewel of Literature"

From a historical perspective, the development of Chinese fiction traces its origins to mythological legends and historical-biographical writings. While these early narratives did not strictly conform to the formal criteria of the fictional genre, they contained essential elements germane to it. By the Wei-Jin period, distinct forms of classical tales emerged, exemplified by Gan Bao's *Soushen Ji* and Liu Yiqing's *Shishuo Xinyu*, marking a more formal inception of traditional Chinese fiction. The Tang dynasty witnessed the flourishing of chuanqi tales (marvel tales), such as Yuan Zhen's *Yingying Zhuan* and Li Chaowei's *Liu Yi Zhuan*. During the Song dynasty, a transition occurred from classical Chinese fictions towards vernacular narratives, giving rise to "storyteller scripts", characterized by their popular and accessible style. The Ming-Qing era saw the pinnacle of traditional fiction achieved through the chapter-based novel, masterfully represented by the Four Great Classical Novels, solidifying this form as the quintessential fictional genre.

Under the dominant Confucian literary ethos of "literature conveying the Truth", traditional fiction was long relegated to the status of a minor path or unofficial histories. Consequently, the modernization of Chinese fiction necessitated, first and foremost, a revolution in its conceptual standing to elevate its literary prestige and social value. In the modern era, figures like Liang Qichao vigorously championed a Revolution in Fiction, emphasizing its potential for political enlightenment and striving to alter its lowly status. His assertion that to renew a nation's people, one must first renew its fiction, and his advocacy for fiction as the highest class of literature aimed at social reform, fundamentally challenged the traditional view of fiction as insignificant. However, this very effort still reflected the historical reality of its prior marginalization. The influx of Western concepts of fiction into China during the late 19th and early 20th centuries delivered a profound shock to traditional Chinese notions of the genre, catalyzing its transformation and the gradual formation of a modern Chinese conception of the novel (Lü

Zhouju, 2023, p. 140). Crucially, the robust spirit of social engagement and realist critique evident in American literature provided modern Chinese writers with concrete and actionable models.

American muckraking writers, epitomized by Sinclair Lewis and Theodore Dreiser, exposed and denounced the injustices and darkness inherent in the American capitalist system, depicting the plight of the proletariat with profound humanitarian sentiment (Lü Zhouju, 2016, p. 165). This conception of literature as an instrument for social investigation and reform resonated powerfully with the dire realities of early 20th-century China and the intense national salvation mission felt by its intellectuals. It provided a tangible framework for the Leftist literary tenets of literature for life and literature as a weapon of struggle, spurring the creation of critical realist works aimed at exposing societal ills and awakening the populace. Mao Dun's novel *Midnight*, hailed as the first successful modern Chinese realist epic, exemplifies this. It sought to diagnose China's fundamental societal crisis by dissecting the socio-economic structure of a modern metropolis. Its grand narrative architecture, panoramic portrayal of the tragic fate of the national bourgeoisie, and meticulous depiction of various social strata in Shanghai also bear the imprint of Dreiser's socio-panoramic novels.

American realist and naturalist literature, through its unflinching exposure and dissection of class oppression, capitalist alienation, and human distortion, provided Chinese writers with a powerful exemplar of literature engaging with reality. These American works demonstrated that fiction could be not merely an aesthetic art form but also a scalpel for analyzing society and a clarion call for awakening the masses. This conceptual shift propelled the transformation of traditional Chinese fiction into its modern form: it moved away from plot-centric, formulaic storytelling towards a focus on social reality, the creation of complex characters, and the exploration of inner psychological worlds. Through translation, critical commentary, and theoretical introduction, American fiction played a vital role in legitimizing fiction within the New Literature movement. Such exposure and adoption of techniques contributed significantly to fiction becoming the most dynamic and influential genre within modern Chinese literature.

2. Linguistic Liberation and Innovation in Narrative Technique

Following the conceptual transformation of fiction's status, the primary obstacle was the issue of linguistic tools. Classical Chinese long entrenched as the orthodox medium for literary composition, had become ossified and rigid, suffering a severe disconnect from the everyday language of the populace. As a pivotal advocate of the Vernacular Language Movement, Hu Shi vigorously championed the use of practical, living language for literary creation. In his influential 1918 essay, *Toward a Constructive Theory of Literary Revolution*, he emphatically proclaimed the resonant slogan: A national literature requires a literary national language. He sharply critiqued the inflexibility and inadequacy of classical Chinese for modern expression,

asserting: A dead language can never produce living literature.

Consequently, Hu Shi fervently advocated for a writing method, which unconstrained by colloquialisms or common characters, boldly employing the vibrant language used daily by ordinary people. This stance was elaborated earlier in his seminal article, *A Tentative Proposal for Literary Reform*, where he firmly declared: We can state with certainty that vernacular literature is not only the authentic mainstream of Chinese literature but also the indispensable instrument for its future development. Hu Shi's spirit of experimentation and advocacy drew significant inspiration from John Dewey's philosophy of experimentalism. This orientation stood in direct opposition to traditional Chinese inclinations towards archaism and revivalism. The exploratory ethos Hu Shi established has since become an enduring legacy within the New Literature tradition (Lü Zhouju, 2023, p. 31).

American writer Mark Twain's work served as a model that Hu Shi hoped the New Literature movement would emulate. Mark Twain liberally employed colloquial speech and dialects in his writing, which was deeply rooted in American vernacular life and characterized by its vibrant, potent satire and humor. This localized, colloquial style held an inherent affinity and offered significant referential value for modern Chinese writers striving to break free from the constraints of classical Chinese, establish a vernacular literature, and utilize literature to critique contemporary social ills.

Lao She stands as a quintessential example of successfully localizing Twain-esque humor. His depictions of the Beijing citizenry in works such as *The Philosophy of Old Zhang*, *The Biography of Master Zhao*, and *Luotuo Xiangzi* are imbued with genial satire and affectionate ribbing aimed at the inherent flaws of the petty bourgeoisie--their selfishness, complacency, conservatism, and vanity. The humorous effect in these works often arises from the incongruities and contradictions inherent in the characters' personalities, speech, and actions, a technique remarkably akin to Twain's portrayal of figures like Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer. While absorbing the folkloric quality, colloquialism, hyperbole, and satirical force characteristic of Mark Twain, modern Chinese satirical and humorous fiction also integrated these elements tightly with the specific contradictions of Chinese society and its indigenous comedic traditions, achieving a process of creative transformation. Twain's influence infused modern Chinese literature with a robust, earthy satirical vitality, adding a richer dimension to its literary aesthetics beyond serious social critique.

Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman* (*Kuang Ren Ri Ji*), published in 1918, stands as the first short story written in vernacular Chinese and the foundational work of modern Chinese literature. Its profound significance lies not only in its ideological content--issuing a powerful "anti-feudal" manifesto, but also in its radical revolution in linguistic form. The seemingly chaotic yet piercingly insightful inner thoughts of the madman, such as the repeated accusation "They eat human flesh!", derive their immense power precisely from the vernacular language's directness,

force, and proximity to everyday human experience.

This linguistic liberation paved the way for formal innovation. Traditional Chinese fiction was predominantly plot-centered, employing linear narratives and relatively limited perspectives, which constrained its ability to portray complex inner worlds. The bold explorations in narrative technique found in modern American fiction provided crucial reference points for Chinese writers seeking to break free from established conventions.

Lu Xun, the undisputed pioneer of modern Chinese fiction, was primarily influenced by Russian and Eastern European literature. However, his profound revelation of characters' psychological anguish and subconscious activities undoubtedly resonated with the contemporaneous global trend of psychological realism, including its manifestations in American literature. *In The Story of Ah Q*, the incisive portrayal of Ah Q's spiritual victory method stems directly from Lu Xun's extensive use of techniques like interior monologue, stream of consciousness, and psychological analysis to delve deep into the character's psyche. This intense focus on internal psychology was remarkably rare in traditional Chinese fiction. Similarly, the presentation of Xianglin's Wife's tragic fate in *Zhu Fu* displays modernity: it eschews the dramatic plot twists typical of traditional fiction, instead relying on the recurring image of her numb gaze, her obsessive retelling of the story of her son being taken by a wolf, and the pervasive atmosphere of surrounding indifference. These elements converge to form an expressionist undertone of accusation.

The influence of this psychological focus was even more direct and pronounced in Yu Dafu. His autobiographical fiction, exemplified by *Sinking (Chen Lun)*, employs bold and explicit language to depict the protagonist's sexual repression, inferiority complex, isolation, and psychological fragmentation. The intensity of the psychological depiction, the depth of self-scrutiny, and the exploration of obscure inner darkness evident in these works were demonstrably influenced by the psychologically analytical fiction popular in America at the time. It was precisely this shift in focus towards the inner world that endowed modern Chinese fiction with an unprecedented psychological realism and enabled it to achieve new depths in exploring human nature.

The influx of American fictional elements into China, absorbed and adapted by Chinese writers, ultimately contributed to the formation of a distinct modern Chinese fictional character. American concepts of fiction functioned as a potent exogenous force. At the critical juncture of Chinese literature's quest for modernity in the 20th century, this wind vigorously propelled the sails of indigenous transformation, accelerating the process through which Chinese fiction evolved from its classical forms into a new genre equipped with modern consciousness, modern forms, and modern functions.

3. The Fleeting Resonance and Unfinished Journey of the Modernist Avant-garde

Compared to the relatively mainstream American influences of realism, naturalism, and psychological analysis, the impact of American modernist fiction on China's own modernist fiction was decidedly more avant-garde, transient, and characterized by its exploratory and experimental nature. Ultimately, however, this trajectory remained incomplete, curtailed by the profound upheavals of the era.

The very introduction and reception of American modernism in China from the early 1920s to the 1930s carried an intrinsically avant-garde character. Unlike realist works, which reached a broader audience through more extensive translation channels, the dissemination of American modernism relied primarily on avant-garde literary and artistic journals in internationalized metropolises like Shanghai. The journal *Les Contemporains* undoubtedly served as its central platform. Editors such as Shi Zhecun, Du Heng, and Liu Naou were themselves practitioners of modernist creation. They keenly apprehended the new literary tides emerging across the ocean and actively introduced them to China through translation and critical commentary. Key elements of American modernism--including Ernest Hemingway's Iceberg Theory, William Faulkner's stream of consciousness, John Dos Passos's Camera Eye and Newsreel techniques, Gertrude Stein's linguistic experimentation, and even the shadowy psychological landscapes of small-town characters in Sherwood Anderson's work--were all featured and discussed in *Les Contemporains* and similar publications. These magazines effectively created a modernist cultural space (Leo Ou-fan Lee, 2001), facilitating the convergence and propagation of avant-garde literature and art from Paris, London, New York, and Tokyo. This mode of dissemination inherently limited its audience primarily to urban intellectual elites, young cultural enthusiasts, and writers possessing an experimental spirit, thus imbuing it with a natural niche and avant-garde character.

Naturally, the New Sensationists, represented by writers such as Liu Naou, Mu Shiying, and Shi Zhecun, became the earliest explorers of modernist fiction in China. Mu Shiying's fiction is often regarded as China's Jazz Age narrative. His work *Shanghai Foxtrot*, with its rapid scene shifts, juxtaposition of sensory imagery, and montage-like structure, clearly reveals the influence of John Dos Passos's techniques--the Camera Eye and Newsreel--used to depict the panoramic spectacle of the modern metropolis in his U.S.A. trilogy. Gertrude Stein's experiments with linguistic signifiers and repetitive rhythms also inspired Mu Shiying and others in their pursuit of defamiliarization effects through language.

Shi Zhecun explicitly linked the modernity of American literature with its national character, independence, and creativity. He explored the relationship between the modern in American literature and that in China's New Literature, positioning the new tradition of American literature as a model for forging China's own new tradition. This perspective marked a new height in understanding American literature's influence on Chinese New Literature (Lü Zhouju, 2021, p.

102). His psychoanalytical stories, such as *One Rainy Evening* and *General's Head*, delve deeply into characters' subconscious, dreams, and abnormal psychology. While the application of psychoanalysis certainly drew on Sigmund Freud's theories, its literary manifestation--particularly in techniques like multi-perspective narration, interior monologue, and temporal/spatial leaps used to render complex, distorted inner worlds shows a distinct resonance with William Faulkner's artistry in works like *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. This appropriation of Western modernism by Chinese writers embodied a form of semi-colonial modernity (Shi Shu-mei, 2007), an active choice employed to articulate their own urban experiences and anxieties of modernity.

Furthermore, Ernest Hemingway's concise, implicit, and hard-boiled telegraphic style and iceberg principle served as crucial references for Shi Zhecun, Mu Shiying, and others in their pursuit of narrative economy and heightened tension.

Thus, the Shanghai New Sensationists constituted not only the first substantial modernist fiction practice in the history of modern Chinese literature but also, through their unique grasp of urban modernity, their localized application of Western modernist techniques, and their bold exploration of the depths of the human psyche, opened up entirely new aesthetic dimensions for the Chinese novel. Their efforts secured their significant avant-garde position in literary history.

However, the full-scale outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan in 1937 fundamentally transformed China's social atmosphere. National survival became the overriding imperative of the era. Within this torrent of monumental historical events, modernist writing--focused on the nuances of individual interiority, urban sensory experience, and formal experimentation--appeared incongruous, even denounced as detached from reality and self-indulgent whining. As Yan Jiayan observes: Once the guns of the War of Resistance sounded in 1937, political and literary united fronts formed, and the modernist school lost its *raison d'être*... The vicissitudes of the times caused this school to wither before it could fully develop (Yan Jiayan, 1989). On another level, the narrative techniques and writing styles of American modernism proved excessively obscure and difficult for most contemporary Chinese readers and critics, diverging sharply from the traditional expectation of Literature Conveying the Truth and the prevailing demands for realism. This barrier to reception confined its influence largely to a small coterie, preventing it from attaining the broad social foundation and sustained vitality enjoyed by realism.

Therefore, although American modernist fiction provided Chinese writers with new technical tools and profoundly influenced the avant-garde literature of the 1980s, during its initial introduction in the 1930s, it functioned more as a potent yet transient vanguard wave. Unlike realism, it ultimately failed to develop into a broad and enduring mainstream current within Chinese literature of that period.

Conclusion

A Study of American Influences in China's New Literature (1911-1949) vividly delineates the catalytic role played by American fictional resources in pivotal aspects of modern Chinese fiction's development: the renovation of literary concepts, the expansion of narrative techniques, and the diversification of aesthetic styles. It profoundly reveals the proactive selection, creative transformation, and localized application undertaken by Chinese writers in embracing the Other. American realism and naturalism, imbued with potent social critical power, propelled the revolution in Chinese conceptions of the novel and fostered the formation of a robust tradition of social critique. This endowed the novel with its status as a preeminent literary form and its value as an enlightening instrument for engaging with reality.

Furthermore, the colloquial and localized writing exemplified by Mark Twain provided a powerful model for China's Vernacular Language Movement and linguistic liberation, invigorating the modern literary language with vitality. Simultaneously, American explorations in psychological depiction and narrative techniques opened new pathways for Chinese writers to break free from traditional constraints and delve deeper into characters' inner worlds. Although the influence of American modernism on China's own modernist endeavors could not fully expand, it nonetheless sowed seeds of germination within the soil of New Literature.

American ideas, literature, and methods were perceived by the pioneers of Chinese New Literature as valuable stones from other hills that could be used to polish their own jade. Ultimately, forged through the crucible of local experience and specific demands, these elements were integrated to become solid and distinctive components within the edifice of China's own modern literature. The wisdom and dynamism manifest in this intercultural interaction constitute a vital fountainhead of the enduring vitality of Chinese New Literature.

Funding: This paper is one of the series achievements of the Youth Project of the Humanities and Social Sciences Foundation of the Ministry of Education, titled "A Study on Paradox Poetics in Contemporary American Drama" (Project No.: 21YJC752024).

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Liu Min ^{ID} <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3684-3374>

References

李欧梵 (2001): 《上海摩登：一种新都市文化在中国（1930-1945）》，毛尖译。北京大学出版社。
[Li Oufan (2001). *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*. Translated by Mao Jian. Peking University Press.]

吕周聚 (2016): “中国左翼文学中的美国因素”,《文学评论》(06): 162-170.

[Lü Zhouju (2016). “American Influences in China’s Left-wing Literature.” *Literary Review* (06): 162-170.]

吕周聚 (2021): “论中国新文学与美国文学的渊源”,《首都师范大学学报 (社会科学版)》(05): 98-109。

[Lü Zhouju (2021). “The Origins of Chinese New Literature and American Literature.” *Journal of Capital Normal University (Social Sciences Edition)* (05): 98-109.]

吕周聚 (2023): 《中国新文学中的美国因素研究 (1911-1949)》。生活·读书·新知三联书店。

[Lü Zhouju (2023). *A Study of American Influences in China’s New Literature (1911-1949)*. SDX Joint Publishing Company.]

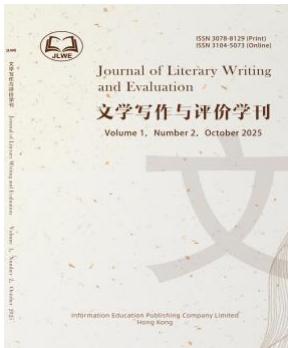
史书美 (2007): 《现代的诱惑: 书写半殖民地中国的现代主义 (1917-1937)》, 何恬译。江苏人民出版社。

[Shi, Shu-mei (2007). *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937*, translated by He Tian.

Jiangsu People’s Publishing House.]

严家炎 (1989): 《中国现代小说流派史》。人民文学出版社。

[Yan, Jiayan (1989). *History of Schools in Modern Chinese Fiction*. People’s Literature Press.]



JLWE

Journal of Literary Writing and Evaluation

JLWE, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2025, pp.385-392.

Print ISSN: 3078-8129; Online ISSN: 3104-5073

Journal homepage: <https://www.lwejournal.com>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64058/JLWE.25.2.20>



An Alternative Approach to History: A Review of *British Drama of the Twentieth Century*

Yuan Yingzhe

Abstract: The publication of *British Drama of the Twentieth Century* marks a milestone breakthrough in the exploration of British drama within Chinese academia. It demonstrates the scholarly initiative and innovative accomplishments of domestic scholars in actively constructing knowledge systems within the global intellectual arena. Professors Liu Hongwei and Li Jing take an approach that combines diachronic and synchronic perspectives, moving beyond traditional Western thematic paradigms. With a firm stance on Chinese academic subjectivity and methodological confidence, they offer an original reconstruction of the historical logic and intellectual-cultural genealogy of twentieth-century British drama. By conducting an in-depth investigation into the historical contexts of dramatic creation, the study clearly delineates five core threads in the development of British drama, presenting a comprehensive map of its century-long transformation. Notably, the work goes beyond mere historical documentation, engaging deeply with international scholarly discourse through a distinctive narrative framework and critical theory. It provides an essential Chinese perspective and a unique interpretive framework for re-evaluating twentieth-century British drama. This achievement not only expands the academic boundaries of international British drama studies, but also opens up new spaces for dialogue, fostering more equal intellectual exchanges between China and the West.

Keywords: *British Drama of the Twentieth Century*; Liu Hongwei; Li Jing; Chinese perspective

Received: 01 May 2025 / Revised: 10 May 2025 / Accepted: 12 May 2025 / Published online: 30 Nov 2025 / Print published: 30 Dec 2025.

Author Biography: Yuan Yingzhe, Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Foreign Languages, Beihang University. Research Area: British and American Literature. E-mail: yuanyingzhe12@qq.com.

题目：历史的另一种解法——刘红卫教授、李晶教授新著《英国 20 世纪戏剧研究》述评

摘要：《英国 20 世纪戏剧研究》一书的问世，标志着中国学界在英国戏剧研究领域实现了具有里程碑意义的突破性进展，彰显出本土学者在全球场域中主动构建知识体系的学术自觉与创新实绩。刘红卫教授与李晶教授以历时与共时相结合的研究路径，突破西方主题研究的既定范式，立足中国学术的主体立场与方法论自信，对英国 20 世纪戏剧的历史演进逻辑与思想文化谱系进行了富有原创性的重构。通过深入考察戏剧创作的历史语境，研究清晰勾勒出英国戏剧发展的五条核心脉络，完整呈现了百年变革的整体图景。尤为可贵的是，该著并未止步于史料梳理，而是以独特的叙事框架与批评理论深度介入国际学术讨论，为重新审视英国 20 世纪戏剧提供了重要的中国视角与独到的阐释方案。此项成果不仅拓展了国际英国戏剧研究的学术边界，更为中西之间的平等交流开辟了新的对话空间。

关键词：英国 20 世纪戏剧研究；刘红卫；李晶；中国视角

作者简介：袁英哲，北京航空航天大学外国语学院博士生，研究方向：英美文学。电邮：yuanyingzhe12@qq.com。

Throughout the history of British drama, few periods can rival the splendor and vitality of the Elizabethan era; yet the twentieth century undoubtedly stands out as one of the rare peaks of comparable significance. As the contemporary British playwright David Edgar (1948–) observes, while every era has witnessed the emergence of ambitious new writers eager to take centre stage, “New writing has not always been central to our [the British] theatrical culture.” In Edgar’s view, the defining criterion for identifying a “golden age” of drama lies in whether “new writing” occupies a central position within theatrical culture. Historically, only three periods in Britain have achieved such a level of creative renewal driven by “new writing”: The “Elizabethan-Jacobean period” (ca. 1590–1620), the “Restoration period” (the late 1670s–1707), and “the period between 1890 and 1914” (Edgar, 1998, p152). For Edgar, “new writing” refers not merely to formal or thematic innovation but to an intellectual awakening that dares to question the spirit of the age and challenge established authority. It embodies a playwright’s conscious engagement with social realities and a pioneering exploration of the human condition. This pursuit of new ideas enables twentieth-century British drama to “produce a wider range of plays than any previous era”, and allows “playwrights [to achieve] a public voice” (Innes, 2002, p1). In other words, drama during this period transcends the boundaries of pure art to become a vital means of understanding the cultural consciousness and public politics of modern Britain.

The systematic delineation and understanding of the intricately complex dramatic landscape of this century-long period has long been a major concern in academia. Among the foundational achievements in

Western scholarship, the work of Christopher Innes (1941–2017) is considered the most influential. His two landmark monographs—*Modern British Drama, 1890–1990* (1992) and *Modern British Drama: The Twentieth Century* (2002)—published successively at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, present an almost encyclopedic account of the development and intellectual evolution of modern British drama throughout the twentieth century. Critics have hailed his works as the most authoritative and valuable handbooks in the field at the time (Knowles, 1993, p969). However, precisely because of his macro-level approach, Innes inevitably has to make compromises in structure and depth. In order to depict the broadest possible historical picture, his discussion of certain playwrights and works necessarily appears rather brief. This “overview” approach has drawn some criticism. For instance, Elaine Aston points out that contemporary women playwrights are confined to a “brief final chapter” in the book, which is “disappointing” (1992, p292). Despite such limitations, Innes’s research remains groundbreaking in both methodology and academic vision, exerting a lasting influence in Western academia and attracting significant attention from Chinese scholars.

In China, Professor Liu Hongwei, a leading scholar in British drama studies, was the first to initiate an academic dialogue with Innes in 2010. In her book review, Professor Liu highly praises Innes’s scholarly achievements, particularly his contribution to “rewriting the history of British drama” and his “accurate grasp of the dynamic trends in the development of British drama” (2010, p162–163). Furthermore, Professor Liu, in an effort to enhance intellectual exchange and interaction between Chinese and Western scholars, together with Professor Li Jing, also an expert in drama studies, co-authored a new seminal work—*British Drama of the Twentieth Century* (Wuhan University Press, 2022, hereafter referred to as *British Drama*)^①. Engaging deeply with international academic discourse from a distinctive critical perspective, *British Drama* exemplifies the frontier innovation and critical insight of Chinese scholarship.

The publication of *British Drama* marks a milestone for British drama studies in China. The book reflects the ongoing efforts of Chinese scholars to develop an independent intellectual framework within the global academic context. Drawing upon their own cultural standpoint, Professors Liu and Li offer a thorough and insightful analysis of twentieth-century British drama. Apart from the introduction and conclusion, the book comprises ten core chapters that explore major events, significant playwrights, and representative works of British drama in the twentieth century. Building upon existing Western research, the authors seek to identify areas of insufficiency and propose solutions informed by Chinese wisdom. This promotes a dual development of globalization and localization in British drama studies.

The most distinctive feature of *British Drama* lies in its narrative framework, which deliberately adopts an approach that diverges from the dominant structures of Western scholarship, thus constructing a unique intellectual system of its own. More than two decades ago, Christopher Innes asserted that the historical progression of twentieth-century British drama cannot be easily organized along a chronological line, since it lacks “clear temporal signposts” (2002, p8). Yet is Innes’s “temporal problem” truly unsolvable? Two decades later, two scholars from China offered a different perspective on this issue. They re-examined the development

^① All citations in this article refer to the following work: Liu Hongwei & Li Jing (2022). *British Drama of the Twentieth Century*. Wuhan University Press. Subsequent in-text citations include only the publication year and page number.

of twentieth-century British drama along a temporal axis and proposed a new approach to the linear narrative framework that Innes had avoided. This methodological shift enables *British Drama* to establish a distinctive intellectual space within the field of global British drama studies.

According to Professor Liu, the study of British drama should not be confined to “intra-dramatic” dimensions such as “playwrights, dramatic texts, criticism, dramatic history, dramatic forms, stage performance, directorial concepts, and audience relations”. Rather, they should also incorporate an examination of the various of “extra-dramatic” factors, including “the historical context of dramatic creation, cultural tradition, political background, ethical environment, ideology, economic policy, and market demand (2022, p1). She emphasizes that the history of dramatic transformation is, in essence, isomorphic with the history of social transformation. To fully capture the comprehensive picture of British drama, “one must first conduct a macroscopic examination of its century-long development, with particular attention to its social dimensions, analyzing and interpreting the documentary evidence of its evolution” (2022, p2). This proposition reflects the authors’ profound insight into the intertextual relationship between theatre and society, while also revealing the historical materialist tendencies inherent in their research methodology. Guided by this theoretical perspective, the entire work establishes a coherent and rigorous narrative framework: it seeks to reconstruct the internal historical logic and intellectual genealogy of twentieth-century British drama by tracing its temporal trajectory.

Through a systematic restoration of the historical contexts in which dramas were created, Professors Liu and Li skillfully divide the century into the following five major stages: (1) the period of the New Drama Movement, which was grounded in realism (1890s–early twentieth century); (2) the Workers’ Theatre Movement (1920s–1930s); (3) the Revival of Poetic Drama (1930s–1950s); (4) the Golden Age (mid-1950s–late 1970s); and (5) the period of dramatic innovation by new generation of playwrights (1980s–late twentieth century). Beyond presenting a clear and coherent chronological outline of dramatic development, the authors pinpoint key moments of creative practice and institutional transformation across different stages, offering in-depth analyses of influential playwrights and their representative works.

The first stage discusses the origins of modern British drama. In Chapters One and Two, the authors start by studying the New Drama Movement that arose in the 1880s, concentrating on the creative practices of George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), John Galsworthy (1867–1933), and W. Somerset Maugham (1874–1965). They explore the modernizing transformation that British drama underwent at the turn of the century. As Professor Liu notes, this drama movement, which originated in the late nineteenth century, not only successfully restored drama to its classical position in British literary culture but, more importantly, reaffirmed the central role of dramatic writing in cultural production (2022, p2). Professor Li further points out that, with the success of the “Shavian Comedy of Idea”—*Arms and the Man* (1894), *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1894), *Major Barbara* (1905), *Heartbreak House: A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes* (1919), and *Saint Joan* (1923)—the “problem play” and “new drama” gradually converged, tightly integrating social critique with dramatic art. By exposing the hypocritical nature and moral dilemmas of capitalist society, Shaw and his contemporaries turned drama into a weapon for social criticism. From both thematic and formal

dimensions, these playwrights wove a modern core into British drama, creating an organic resonance and interaction between text, stage, and the era. It can be said that the dramatic creations of this period, on one hand, achieved an industrial revival on an artistic level, and on the other hand, established a new tradition for British drama—engaging directly with reality and caring for society—on an ideological level.

In the subsequent discussion of the second and third stages, the authors provide a detailed exploration of the growth of modern British drama before and after the wars. Their research encompasses rigorous theoretical analyses of dramatic texts and aesthetic forms, as well as meticulous documentation of the interaction between evolving dramatic movements and their broader sociocultural contexts. The depth of their material is impressive. In Chapter Three, Professor Liu focuses on Noël Coward (1899–1973), one of the most celebrated commercial playwrights of London’s West End, re-evaluating and reclaiming his work from long-standing critical misreadings. As an icon of the “Bright Young Things” generation, Coward has often been dismissed by critics for his flamboyant stage style. However, the research of Professor Liu reveals that beneath the seemingly “cynical” surface of Coward’s dramas lies a profound rebellion against traditional moral norms and a contemplation of ethical crises, ultimately serving to mirror the spiritual wasteland of a diseased modern society. To further broaden the analytical scope, Professor Liu situates both the Workers’ Theatre Movement and the Revival of Poetic Drama within the framework of the British dramatic ecosystem surrounding World War II. She then constructs a three-dimensional analytical pattern characterized as “commercial leadership – leftist resistance – traditional reconstruction”. For left-wing theatre practitioners such as Ewan McColl (1915–1989) and Joan Littlewood (1914–2002), establishing socially engaged theatre collectives represented a means to respond to the urgencies of the time, voicing class demands and political ideals through performance. By contrast, poetic dramatists such as T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) and Christopher Fry (1907–2005) sought to restore postwar moral order and create a new theatre appealing to elite and popular audiences alike by reviving classical traditions. The authors argue that, despite arising from different ideological and artistic backgrounds, these forms of dramatic innovation collectively laid the artistic foundations and social groundwork that paved the way for the “Golden Age” of British drama in the mid-1950s.

The fourth stage is the section that has been discussed the most extensively in the book. Here, the authors catalogue the artistic achievements of the period and turn their attention to the two core pillars supporting Britain’s theatrical ecology: the theatre system and the censorship regime. From Chapter Four to Chapter Eight, the narrative intertwines macro-level institutional reform and micro-level artistic practice, tracing the trajectory through which British theatre evolved from postwar dormancy to its “Golden Age”. Notably, the study does not isolate institutions from artistic creation, but rather highlights their dynamic interplay. The institutional reform of the Royal Court Theatre expanded opportunities for playwrights to voice new ideas, while the abolition of outdated censorship laws liberated their creative expression. Together, these developments formed a virtuous cycle of platform support and institutional protection. Through a retrospective analysis of the creative journeys of key playwrights, including John Osborne (1929–1994), Edward Bond (1934–), Harold Pinter (1930–2008), Sir Tom Stoppard (1937–), Agatha Christie (1890–1976), Ann Jellicoe (1927–2017), Shelagh Delaney (1938–2011), Caryl Churchill (1938–), etc., the authors integrate institutional

analysis with detailed case studies. This offers a valuable model for balancing “external contexts” and “internal artistry” in drama research. For instance, in Chapter Seven, the authors demonstrate the crucial role of systemic transformation in amplifying marginalized voices by examining institutional change and creative practice in tandem. Their research shows that, from the 1950s to the 1960s, the Royal Court Theatre—long regarded as an “experimental ground for new writers”—had cultivated a generation of outstanding female dramatists. As stated in the book: “There is no doubt that without the Royal Court Theatre’s strong support for new writing, the advances made by women writers in the theatre would have largely vanished”. Furthermore, the British Arts Council’s policies and financial sponsorship broke through the male-dominated barriers of the theatre world, granting female theatre groups unprecedented opportunities for development (2022, p221). By situating the progress of women playwrights within the broader public context of the “Golden Age” of British drama, the authors redefine the crucial role of women in stage narratives and the cultural agenda of modern Britain.

The final part of twentieth-century British drama is the focus of the authors’ exploration in the fifth stage. In Chapters Nine and Ten, the authors shift their attention to a new generation of playwrights, including Martin Crimp (1956–), Patrick Marber (1964–), Sarah Kane (1971–1999) and so on. They investigate how these dramatists respond to the challenges of political upheaval, moral decline, and existential anxiety in an age characterized by globalization, digitalization, and consumerism through theatrical experimentation. Professor Li points out that, compared to earlier stages, the late-twentieth-century British drama witnessed groundbreaking progress in linguistic experimentation and stage performance. To illustrate these innovations concretely, the author conducts a multidimensional analysis of three representative new dramatic forms: Intercultural Theatre, In-Yer-Face Theatre, and Verbatim Theatre. Each is scrutinised from the perspectives of script creation and performance practice, academic critical reception, and socio-cultural impact. For example, when interpreting the shocking stage performances characteristic of In-Yer-Face Theatre, Professor Li delves into themes of violence, love, desire, death, and power within the on-stage content of twentieth-century works. At the same time, she considers the off-stage academic debates and audience responses, striving to capture the full range of its cultural resonance and contemporary relevance. This approach aims to fully illuminate the era-specific characteristics and cultural effects of this theatrical form. In such resounding artistic reverberations, the authors powerfully and thoughtfully conclude their study of twentieth-century British drama.

Attentive readers must have noticed that, in addition to reconstructing the traditional paradigms of Western drama studies within its overall narrative framework, *British Drama* also transcends the limits of a single geographical framework. The book extends its scope to examine the century-long trajectory of the dissemination and reception of British drama in China. Adopting a longitudinal historical lens, the authors provide a comprehensive review of the sustained efforts of Chinese scholars in the reception, translation, criticism and localization of British drama, spanning the May Fourth/New Culture Movement, the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Reform and Opening Up era, and the age of globalization in the twenty-first century. As the researchers note, after several generations of continuous academic endeavor, China has developed a research system and paradigm “with distinct Chinese characteristics in areas such as drama

reading and textual interpretation" (2022, p362), achieving full integration with the international academic community. This attention to the history of academic interaction elevates the book beyond national drama history, placing it within the broader context of cross-cultural exchange.

It is important to note that the "Chinese standpoint" presented in the book is not based on self-centred cultural essentialism. Nor does it aim to create new academic barriers. Instead, it is a rational choice based on indigenous literary theory, seeking to deepen academic understanding and engage in global dialogue on an equal footing. The intention is to break free from a closed, self-referential intellectual loop and encourage authentic two-way interaction. Upholding a Chinese standpoint is valuable because it can interpret Western works through the lens of local theory, presenting the unique perspectives of Chinese scholarship to the world. At the same time, this approach allows Chinese theoretical frameworks to be tested and refined through international exchange.

Specifically speaking, in the chapter dedicated to the "Pinteresque" drama, the authors do not rely solely on Western theoretical paradigms. Instead, they innovatively draw on the Ethical Literary Criticism proposed by Professor Nie Zhenzhao, a theory independently developed within China. According to Professor Nie, "literature is a form of ethical expression of human experiences in historical times... The task of literature is to describe the issues related to the ethical relationships and their moral orders, with an aim to provide guidance and instruction for human civilization" (2024, p13). Therefore, "only by viewing Pinter's works as unique expressions of ethical concepts and moral life in a specific historical context can we truly appreciate their distinctive artistic charm and profound ethical connotations and interpret them objectively" (2022, p137). Guided by the framework of Ethical Literary Criticism, the authors analyze Pinter's works in terms of core concepts such as "ethical environment," "ethical identity," "ethical choice," and the "Sphinx factor". In doing so, they correct several common misreadings of *The Homecoming* (1964), *Betrayal* (1978), *One for the Road* (1984), and *Moonlight* (1993), etc., opening up new interpretative dimensions and dialogic possibilities for international Pinter studies.

British Drama is a work of expansive vision and intellectual inclusiveness. It is of exceptional scholarly significance, whether in terms of innovation in narrative paradigms or contributions to academic theory. This extensive monograph engages with over a dozen distinguished British playwrights and more than forty dramatic works across a substantive length exceeding 300,000 words. It provides in-depth analyses of the key contributions of renowned dramatists, while also incorporating studies of the innovative practices of marginalized groups. Through a linear, macro-historical narrative framework, the authors reconstruct the intellectual genealogy and historical logic of twentieth-century British drama, offering fresh Chinese insights to Western scholarly discourse. Meanwhile, they accurately identify and deal with gaps in domestic scholarship on British drama, effectively remedying issues, including the scarcity of comprehensive studies and the limited number of specialized monographs, as well as the overreliance on single critical methodologies.

Though challenges remain, such as the underdevelopment of theatre-based studies and the need for methodological innovation and awareness of theoretical frontiers, we believe that ongoing research advancement will lead to a stronger academic collaboration network. This will promote the transnational

dissemination of high-quality research outcomes and increase the participation of Chinese scholars in the international field of British drama studies. In the foreseeable future, Chinese academic influence is set to play a proactive and leading role in shaping research agendas and theoretical discourse in this field. With an independent yet open scholarly stance, Chinese scholars will make a significant and enduring contribution to the pluralistic coexistence and sustainable development of world drama research.

Funding: This research is supported by “The Collation and Research of the Historical Documents of Chinese and Foreign Drama Communication in the Past Hundred Years” [22&ZD285], which is sponsored by the National Social Science Fund of China.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Yuan Yingzhe ^{1D} <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1807-1332>

References

Aston, Elaine (1992). “Christopher Innes: *Modern British Drama 1890-1990*.” *New Theatre Quarterly* (31): 291-292.

Edgar, David (1998). “About Now: Contemporary British Drama.” *Irish University Review* (01): 151-162.

Innes, Christopher (2002). *Modern British Drama: Twentieth Century*. Cambridge University Press.

Knowles, Ronald (1993). “Christopher Innes, ‘Modern British Drama: 1890-1990’ (Book Review).” *The Modern Language Review* (04): 969.

刘红卫、李晶（2022）：《英国 20 世纪戏剧研究》。武汉大学出版社。

[Liu Hongwei & Li Jing (2022). *British Drama of the Twentieth Century*. Wuhan University Press.]

刘红卫（2010）：“百年春秋，谁主沉浮？——评克里斯托弗·因斯的论著《英国二十世纪戏剧》”，《外国文学研究》（01）：161-163。

[Liu Hongwei (2010). “A Review of *Modern British Drama: The Twentieth Century* by Christopher Innes.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (01): 161-163.]

Nie, Zhenzhao (2024). *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism*, translated by Zheng Jie. Routledge.



Information Education Publishing Company Limited
Hong Kong

ISSN 3078-3151

