

Traditional Aesthetic Ideas in Japanese Literature

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Abstract: As one of the important components of world literature, Japanese literature has conceived a large number of classic works around human nature, beauty and evil, love, sex, reflection, and absurdity, forming a distinctive and influential literary system. And its unique and distinctive traditional aesthetics has also had a profound impact on the Japanese nation and even Asian literature. This article first summarizes the origin and development of modern Japanese literature, and then expounds the characteristics of Japanese literature. Finally, it analyzes and introduces the reasons for the formation of aesthetic concepts in Japanese literature.

1. Introduction:

Influenced by the changes in Japanese society, Japanese writers are good at expressing their inner feelings under the guidance of traditional aesthetic orientation. This expression is not restricted by external pressure, making their artistic expressions exaggerated and concrete, so there is always a feeling of sadness shrouded in them.

2. The origin and development of modern Japanese literature

Japanese modern literature is usually divided into four periods: Meiji, Taisho, Showa, and Heisei. The first period was mainly drama literature, also called popular literature. Japan at this time, after experiencing the Meiji Restoration, had just entered the capitalist society, and there was no modern literary creation theory yet, so literary creation was still based on popular literature such as comic books and human love books that were popular in the Edo period. At that time, a large number of overseas literature flooded into Japan. The most outstanding translation masterpieces in the history of modern Japanese literature included Turgenev's *Reunion and Encounter*, translated by Futaba Tei, and "Improvement Poet" translated by Mori Ougai.

The second stage is the Meiji 1920s and 1930s. The main literary creation styles include realist literature, pseudo-classical literature, romantic literature, etc. Representatives include Ozaki Momiji, Koda Rohan, and Higuchi Ichiha. In the third stage, Japanese literature gradually developed into aestheticism, naturalism and idealism, forming a unique aesthetic style, also known as aestheticism.

The last stage is that Japanese literature is now more diversified, and there are no genres, mainly democratic literature, post-war literature, and realist literature. It was also at this stage that aesthetic concepts such as "things and sorrows" in Japanese literature were discovered and developed. For example, works such as Osamu Dazai's "Disqualification in the World", which believed that the beauty and truth of human beings were deeply buried due to the dust of the world. Oda Sakunosuke's "The World" depicts the lives of civilians, especially the homeless, and portrays the chaotic world after the war in detail, revealing the sense of disillusionment and sorrow in the real lives of civilians. Some scholars believe that modern Japanese literature has restricted its further development due to negative and pessimistic secular concepts. However, this unique aesthetic style has had a huge impact not only on Japanese literature, but also on literature in Asian countries including China.

3. Features of Japanese Literature

Ai Wu ^[1] is a very important aesthetic orientation of Japanese literature. It was put forward by Nobuhaga Motoi in the Edo period. Its essence means that the development of things stops immediately when they reach their peak, so as to obtain eternal beauty. Just like Chinese Confucianism and Taoism, it is not only deeply immersed in Japanese literature, but also dominates many aspects of Japanese spiritual life. Whether it is a literary worker or not, the idea of sorrow has a great influence on the ideological character and behavior of the Japanese people. Especially in modern Japanese literature, the traditional aesthetics of being sad and knowing things have a deep influence. For example, seeing a cherry blossom fall, and the author feels sad because of seeing it fall or is excited by this magnificent landscape. Then it is knowing things and sad. Things are objective existence, and grief is subjective feeling. The combination of the two conveys a sense of sadness of knowing things and sorrow. This kind of traditional aesthetics makes it easy for Japanese scholars to touch the scene. But because this kind of grief is mostly the expression of personal feelings, there is not much feelings of family and country in Chinese literature, so the negative or positive emotions are expressed to the full.

The second is the beauty of ideological and conscious distance. In contrast, European and American literature more frequently writes about the magnificent historical changes of the nation-state from the macro perspective of social revolution and political struggle, while some themes and content discussed in Japanese literature are very personal, and they are some very secret and private emotions. And compared to European and American literature, Japanese literature is influenced by Chinese classical literature, and its use of language and imagery is more subtle and euphemistic than European and American literature, and it is difficult to read. Coupled with the absorption of stream of consciousness novels by Japanese writers represented by Yasushi Kawabata^[2], this resulted in a gap in literary consciousness. In addition, Japanese literature and aesthetics have a sense of ambiguity and even a sense of distortion in pursuit of the ultimate, and the themes are also very different from traditional Chinese literature, which creates this gap.

In addition, there are two important aesthetic consciousnesses in Japanese aesthetics, Wabi ^[3] and Youxuan ^[4]. They are all related to the influence of Zen, and they all have the meaning of sparse and quiet. The term "youxuan" comes from Chinese classics^[5], which means deep interest and obscure beauty, while loneliness means independence, detachment and tranquility. These two aesthetics are also pursued by Japanese haiku. It stems from the author's detailed description of the surrounding environment, people and things, which makes the development of plots and events quite gentle, and time seems to be stagnant at a certain moment and a certain second. The Japanese decoration style prefers simplicity and nature, and the elegant colors should be influenced by this aesthetic. As it was written in Matsuo Basho's "Ancient Pond": Ancient Pond, a frog jumps in, and there is a sound of water in an instant. The pond was deep and quiet, and the frog was alive. The moment the water jumped into the water, the water waved away. Quiet and full of vitality, it stopped abruptly and the lingering sound lingered. Like a Zen bell in Wan Lai Ju Ji, it vividly and profoundly depicts the artistic conception of silence and seclusion, reflecting the aesthetic level of Japanese classical aesthetic consciousness.

4. Reasons for the formation of aesthetic ideas in Japanese literature

The first is self-estrangement at the ideological level. One characteristic of Japanese literature is to alienate oneself, thereby creating the purity of the ideal world. In the traditional Chinese thinking, "I" is closely related to the world. When you see the magnificent scenery, you have to worry about the people if you live high in the temple, and worry about the monarch if you are far away from the rivers and lakes. Even if you are as open-minded as Su Shi, there are also "sorrows for my life, envy the infinity of the Yangtze River." Everything has meaning, to a large extent it comes from the thinking of "I" and the emotion of "I", which is expressed in literary works, this "The traces of "me" are very heavy. The Japanese are different. They think things have meaning in themselves,

especially in the changing world. In the works, real life is only a mirror to the ideal world, and everyone is a passing visitor. As Shikibu wrote in "The Tale of Genji": "The stars behind the snowflakes are dancing." This is a diverse expression, like the scenery in the morning mist, impressionist paintings. The author's identity is just an observer, not a witness. One is the mysteriousness of this kind of text, and the other is that the author often puts his true expression in the "mirror", which readers cannot touch directly, which creates the "distance" of Japanese literature.

Secondly, the similarity between geographical location and culture is that we can better understand the emotions expressed in Japanese literature. Japanese is also derived from Chinese, and its culture is similar, and its recognition of beauty is also similar. The geographical proximity leads to the proximity of the natural landscape, and the scene described by the writer can resonate well. The scenes described by European and American writers inevitably cannot resonate because they have never seen it before. Beauty is a very subjective feeling. As Asians, we may be able to perceive the sensory beauty created by the Japanese to the greatest extent. The three-dimensional preservation of Tang culture, coupled with the Japanese's emphasis on traditional thinking, made us feel more cordial about Japanese literature. For example, the plays of Homer and Shakespeare are milestone masterpieces in the alphabetic language, but the Chinese people's understanding of classical beauty is probably mostly derived from Tang poems, Ci Song, Ci Chu and Han Fu. In this way, Japanese haiku is more suitable for Chinese people. Aesthetic.

On the other hand, the unique aesthetics and values of the Japanese are also affected by the changes of the social era. First of all, Japan is a sad nation. There are no large plains and rivers on the Japanese territory. There are only mist and moss. With the influence of Zen, they have a view of emptiness and impermanence, thinking that everything will pass, so they don't like to write historical and political reality. Kawabata Yasunari has a similar expression, that is, the actual concept of the world will always change with the development of history, so Japanese literature likes to depict those eternal winds and flowers, and pursue pure beauty. In addition, because of the respect and worship of death by the Japanese nation during the war, Japanese literature did not like a happy ending. They believed that death is eternal. So they prefer tragedy, and there is always a touch of sadness in the work.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, Japanese writers are influenced by the changes in Japanese society and guided by the traditional aesthetic orientation. They are good at expressing their inner feelings. This expression is not restricted by external pressure, making their artistic expressions exaggerated and concrete, so they always have a sad feeling. Shrouded. In addition, Japanese literature is good at looking at the subtleties, discussing interpersonal relationships, family education, family ethics, human nature, and the hidden subconscious levels, which makes its overall style present a bleak, paradoxical, and gloomy color, thus forming a unique aesthetic style.

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