

Looking into the Distance and Returning: The Poems in “China”

Xiaomeng Xu

Shanghai Normal University, 200233

Abstract: The poems published in “China” explore the poems of the “revenant” Poets within the trend and explore the variations of lyric poetry of revolutionary writers, explore the trend of the transition from “post-obscure poetry” to “New generation” from the outside of the trend and present the reflection aspect of “China” on the outlet of poetry in the 1980s. In a way, it looks outward to the Western cultural resources that were introduced into China in the 1980s, and returns to illuminate inward at the enlightenment tradition represented by the May Fourth New Literature and the war cultural tradition after the Anti-Japanese War. The poems published in “China” focus on reviewing the tradition since the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and pay attention to the exploration and creation of modernist poetry skills. In exploring the path of poetry creation, “China” has indeed made a multi-faceted contribution.

Keywords: Revolutionary Political Lyric Poetry; Post-obscure Poetry; New Generation Poetry; The “Revenant” Poetry

The 1980s is an important period in the history of Chinese contemporary literature. In this period, the literary trends were diverse and varied. The new Enlightenment trend, the modernism trend, the avant-garde literary trend and the humanism trend existed a relation of “as one falls, another rises” and constituted the mixed and plump literary appearance in the 1980s. “China” Magazine was founded in 1985, the transition period of Chinese literature. It was born in the 1980s under the new Enlightenment literature trend. It looked back to the 1977-1984 literary creation dominated by scars, reflection and other themes, and led the modernism literature with a focus on seeking roots, avant-garde and other genres. “China” formed a complex relationship with the literature, politics and society of the 1980s.

With the method of “return to the 1980s”, this paper examines the poetry published in China, an independent periodical field edited by Ling Ding, compares the poetry schools formed in the periodical with the literary trend of the 1980s, and probes into the trend of “reverse” and “harmony”, “rise” and “fall” of it and the main trend. This approach is helpful to restore the historical appearance of “China”, a pure literary periodical, in the literary transition period, and to bridge the fractured landscape of contemporary literature. The poetry schools published in “China” can be divided into the new generation and the old generation. The creation of the old generation poets is represented by the “revenant” poetry, while the creation of the new generation poets includes four schools: post-obscure poetry, new generation poetry, ancient poetry and urban poetry. It shows that “China” in the exploration of poetry on the road, has indeed made a multi-directional rich and effective exploration.

Table 1 The proportion of different schools of poetry in “China”

Poetry Schools	1985	1986	Proportion
The “revenant” poetry	25	6	6.60%
Revolutionary political lyrical poetry	8	3	10.78%
Neo-traditionalist poetry	6	23	18.10%
Post-obscure poetry	0	8	2.38%
Urban poetry	0	20	5.93%
Campus Poet Group	2	59	18.1%
Western Frontier Poetry	25	0	7.41%

Note: The above poetry reference versions are the first edition published by Culture and Art Publishing House in 1985 and the first edition published by Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House in 1986, with a total of 373 poems included.

1. Exploration of Main Melody: Taking Political Lyric Poetry as An Example

In 1985, China was a publication of "old writers" and published a large number of poems of revolutionary writers. Most of these works are written by a group of revolutionaries with a high artistic level and ideological connotation. Most of these revolutionaries were born in the 1920-1940s and experienced the baptism of revolutionary wars such as the War of Resistance against Japan and the War of Liberation. During their youth, they either served as founding members of the Anti-Enemy Association of Yan'an Literary and Art Circles, or as editors in publications such as People's Literature and Literary Newspapers. These people grew up in the revolution, and also gained training and experience in the revolution. The unintentional poetic quality or flavor and the creative pattern of revolutionary popular literature in their poetry have left extremely precious historical materials for future generations.

The publication of lyric poems on revolutionary politics and revolutionary variations in "China" aims to call on the broad masses of the people to continue to stand at the forefront of the reform trend, combine the revolutionary spirit with the spirit of The Times, consciously obey and serve the general goals and tasks of the Party and the state, and serve and obey the socialist modernization. Even poets who have returned in their old age are still full of expectations, let alone a new generation of young poets, which is a concrete manifestation of the variation of "revolutionary poetry". "China" calls on readers to devote themselves to the construction of four modernizations and to the trend of The Times of reform as actively as revolutionary writers devote themselves to the revolutionary struggle.

2. The Exploration of New Poetry within the Trend: Taking "the Jiu Ye School" and "July School" as Examples

In the early 1980s, the literature and poetry circle "was reborn". Poets who have suffered from the "youth crisis", with the vigorous and deep tone, with the attitude of "revenant" poets, made a group comeback to the poetry circle, and created a batch of poems reflecting on life, sunken hope, and reflecting on the relationship between history and personal. The poems of the "revenant" poets have both the breadth of history and the depth of soul, and are full of the experience and perception of life. Their poetry language is simple and full of philosophy, with sincere emotion and full of enthusiasm, which reflects the distinct personality and characteristics. The thoughts of the "revenant" poets are different from the scar literature, and they often have a tolerant understanding of the real suffering. They make their own life experiences into a unique art history of the "revenant" poets.

The study of the poems of "revenant" poets published in "China" provides a research perspective for us to explore the succession and change of new poetry since the May Fourth Movement in 1919. Whether it is the return of the "July School" or the "Nine Ye School", whether it is the adoption of "situational poetry" or the application of Eliot's poetic views, whether it is the return of the ancient poetic tradition, or the reference of modern poetry art, these explorations have made important contributions to the development of contemporary poetry. In the adjustment of the relationship between poetry and reality, in the feeling and thinking of modern emotions and social contradictions, poets have made profound social exploration with a strong sense of political participation and a spirit of rational speculation.

The "revenant" poems published in "China" have made contemporary poetry leap over the cracks of history and renew the spiritual source and artistic creation of new poetry. It has found a reliable logical starting point for poetry creation and the development of theory in the 1980s and later, and provided a reasonable historical basis, and also inspired and encouraged obscure poets to carry out artistic exploration. In carrying the mission of connecting the past and the future, the "revenant" poets have established their historical position in the modernization process of new poetry.

3. The Effort of Leading the Trend-A Study of the "New Generation" Poetry in China

In 1984, a group of younger writers than obscure Poets began to intervene in the literary world, and created a number of anti-lofty, anti-elegant, anti-image works, with oral poetry. These poets were called the New Generation. In 1986, "China" gave attention and support to this new force in the poetry circle. Han Niu, who was responsible for the task of compiling and publishing poetry, wrote an introduction article "The New Generation of Poetry" for them, and the "New generation" was thus born. In the following years, the "new generation" poetry set off a literary boom. As can be seen from Table 1, the number of "New generation" poems published in "China" is as high as 18.1%. It can be seen that "China" has made great contributions to the growth of "new generation".

The diversified experimental tendency of the "New Generation" new poetry published in China has exceeded the limitation of any historical period, especially the external form of prosification and liberalization, which greatly broke through the formal norms of poetry from 1930 to 1950. "New tradition" poetry strives to expand the imagination space of national consciousness, break through the closed geographical isolation, and break through the shackles of traditional poetry rationality with open and free survival consciousness.

This attempt restores the individualization and sensibility of Chinese poetry, activates the original images deposited in the deep soil of national psychology, and is an exploration experiment of the free and unrestrained prosification and high-density visual stimulation of language image of Chinese poetry. The “New generation” poets represented by the “student poem group” use a large number of symbols, innuendo, metaphor and other techniques to promote the development of poetic language towards a more accurate and clear direction, which provides a path for reference for the diversified creation of contemporary poetry.

Conclusion

In the poetry field of “China” literature field, there exists the phenomenon of the coexistence of old generation and new generation poetry. These two tendencies of poetry creation are based on the reflection of the current situation and future development direction of the “poetry world”. Although the poetic trend of thought in “China” shows the characteristics of diversification, it is not aimless. The revolutionary political lyrical poetry published in “China” magazine and the profound revolutionary “variation” poems created by the “renewed” poets as the basis are all under the expression of the theme of “revolution”, and summon a group of new poets who contribute to the four modernizations in the new era. At the same time, the “returning” Jiu Ye poems published in periodicals tend to continue the modernist poetry of the 1930s, while the returning July poets emphasize the importance of the new era reality, and they are usually enthusiastic and confident in describing the future of reform and opening up. Although they also experienced the vicissitudes of life for a while, those poets transformed eventually this emotion into a sincere blessing that was reinvigorated after cooling.

References:

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Explanatory note:

The concept of “Old Generation” comes from Han Niu’s book “I Am Still Trekking Hard”, which is reflected in chapter 15, “The Complicated and Tortuous Era of Change (1980-1988)”. After Han Niu put forward “the New generation of poetry” in 1986, he also put forward “Old Generation”. In this paper, the author mainly defines “Old Generation” into the creation field of poetry. Han Niu believes that the “old generation” is mostly a group of writers who have experienced setbacks, mostly suffered in various political movements, been attacked, and rediscovered and possessed “self” in their old age.