

"National Poet" and "Citizen of the World"—On the Overseas Dissemination and Acceptance of Jidi Majia's Poems

Yanan Fang

School of Chinese Ethnic Minority Languages and Literatures, Minzu University of China, Beijing, 100081, China

Keywords: Jidi Majia, Overseas Communication, Literary Acceptance, Identity

Abstract: With Jidi Majia entering the international poetry circle in the late 1980s, the overseas dissemination and acceptance of Jidi Majia's poetry has been opened up for more than 30 years. By combing through the preface of the English version of Jidi Majia's poems, this study finds that the cultural identity of the poet, the poetic discourse of "man and nature" and the aesthetic concept of "human consciousness" are the focus of attention and recognition by overseas critics and poets. The connection of national consciousness, human consciousness and world consciousness is an important reason why Jidi Majia's poems are recognized by overseas readers. It is the sense of responsibility of "world citizen", the implication of ecological thought and the spirit of humanitarianism that the poet shows based on his national identity that move overseas readers. It can be seen that the writing of world literature based on "ethnic group" and "humanity" is the principle that Chinese minority literature should adhere to.

1. Introduction

In the world multi-cultural pattern, Chinese contemporary minority literature not only presents local literary experience, but also actively participates in the construction of a community of shared future for mankind ^[1]. In recent years, Chinese minority poets have appeared on foreign stages, especially Jidi Majia, who has attracted much attention on the world literary stage. So far, Jidi Majia's poetry has been translated into 39 languages, involving a total of 31 translators from 30 different countries, most of whom are well-known poets active in Chinese and foreign poetry circles. His poetry in foreign translation published about 93 versions, of which the English version is the largest, a total of 14 versions (including the Chinese-English version, of which "flame and words" re-edition), if you add China published English version, a total of 16 versions.

The 16 versions are specifically: *The Yi* (2007); *Poems by Jidimajia* (2010); *Rhapsody in Black* (2014); *Shade of Our Mountain Range* (2014); *Words of Fire* (2014); *I, Snow Leopard* (2016); *Identity* (2016); *For Vladimir Mayakovsky* (2016); *Poetry and Artwork Collection of Jidi Majia* (2017); *From the Snow Leopard to Mayakovsky* (2017); *Poems by Jidimajia* (2018); *Words from the Fire* (2018); *Mother's hands: selected poems* (2020); *Birth and Death of an Edgle* (2020); *Split-Open Planet* (2021); *Mother Tongue* (2022). Overseas literary journals have also published

Jidi Majia's poems, including *Chinese Literature Today* and *Pathlight*. Jidi Majia's poetry taps the soul of the ancient Yi people with modern consciousness and "undertakes the mission of communicating his nation and national spirit with the external real world".

The core of literary "acceptance" is actually a kind of value "identity" [2]. "Identity" is an important concept closely related to literary criticism. Its basic meaning is the identification of individuals with specific social cultures. Through the translation and dissemination of overseas poetry critics spare no effort, Jidi Majia's poetry began to attract the attention of western academic circles in the late 1980s. By combing through the preface of the English version of Jidi Majia's poems, this study finds that the cultural identity of the poet, the poetic discourse of "man and nature" and the aesthetic concept of "human consciousness" are the focus of attention and recognition by overseas critics and poets.

2. Identity: "World Citizen" and "Action Poet"

Since the mid-1980s, Chinese minority poets have been writing in a new wave of self-expression. Many of Jidi Majia's poems focus on highlighting their Yi identity, such as "Self-Portrait" "Heh, World, please listen to my answer / I am a one-Yi man", is rooted in the Yi culture, folk tales and ancient Yi books, is the expression of self-orientation and national identity on the basis of expressing the experience of the original world and examining and thinking about the development and change of human society with lyrical subject. As an opinion leader, the overseas acceptor first feels and pays attention to the poet's cultural identity.

However, because the expression of the poet's emotion is based on the original world and human society, their concern for the poet's cultural identity does not stop at his identity as a Yi poet, but also adds the praise and recognition of "world citizen" based on the national identity. Mei Danli said in the preface to the English edition of his poetry collection *The Poems of Jidi Majia*: "In terms of cultural identity, Jidi Majia is both a Yi, a Chinese and a citizen of the world, and these three are mutually exclusive." "He was a world poet whose themes of globalization reverberate in his most traditional and passionate poetry." "Jidi Majia is not only a son of his people, he is also a citizen of the world"^[3]. "They believe that this is because Jidi Majia has not been a poet among different peoples, Instead of looking for differences in different countries and cultures, we try to find what brings people closer together. As a matter of fact, Jidi Majia himself put such an ideal into his poems. In his dialogue with the Hungarian poet Lats Porter, he said firmly: "At any time, I can never turn my back on my nation and mankind to write poems that have nothing to do with the pain of soul and life." This sense of responsibility and compassion has also earned Jidi Majia the "2014 Mkiwa Humanitarian Award" from South Africa^[4].

Unlike the world poets who are called "Utopians," Jidi Majia turns the "musicality of ideas" into concrete poetic images, and sends out the national poetic voice with his own subjective practice. The famous French poet Jacques Dallas first put forward the evaluation of "the poet of action" - "Jidi Majia, not only as a poet of the Yi ethnic group, representing his nation, but also as a poet of action." Jidi Majia is not a statesman-poet who speaks only words, as has been confirmed by other overseas commentators. Jack Hirschman praised Jidi Majia as "an outstanding cultural activist" and "a cultural worker with internationalist ideas in China"; "Jidi Majia is the successor to the great revolutionary poets of the 19th century, who held important political positions in society, At the same time with a direct, simple, and passionate poetic language to say" They believe that Jidi Majia's achievements in building cultural bridges and creative dialogues between China and the world are truly amazing^[5]. At the same time, as a creative and leader of cultural activities, he initiated the "Qinghai Lake International Poetry Festival," "Xichang Qionghai 'Silk Road' International Poetry Week," "World Mountain Documentary Festival" and other international

activities. These activities provide a platform for dialogue and cultural exchanges between Chinese poetry and international poetry. These poetry feasts with international influence have built gorgeous rainbows on the big stage of the "Belt and Road" and Chinese contemporary poetry going out. Therefore, the poet is also known as the "practical idealist" by foreign poetry critics.

3. Poetic Discourse: "Man and Nature" and Ecological Connotation

Ecology is the key word and theme of Jidi Majia's poems. From beginning to end, Jidi Majia's poems are deeply thinking about the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, the thought of landscape, forest, field, lake and grass as a life community.

The striking theme of "man and nature" in Jidi Majia's poetry has also attracted overseas critics. "Nature is another important theme in Jidi Majia's poetry." "One of the main lines of Jidi Majia's thought is precisely the healthy relationship that man and nature must establish." The reason why critics and poets pay so much attention to this theme is not only because Jidi Majia's emotional description of nature in his poems touched them- "In his poems, nature is shining", but also because he expressed his reverence for nature and his concern about ecological crisis.

Further, overseas poetry critics' recommendation and interpretation of the theme of Jidi Majia's poems are mainly embodied in the inseparable symbiosis of man and nature and the adherence of poetry to national uniqueness. Influenced by the ancient Yi philosophy of "all things have animism and all things are equal" and the traditional Chinese philosophy of "the unity of heaven and man", Jidi Majia's poems are filled with the elements of animal and plant imagery that are not common in popular poetry translations. Fernando Rendong compares the poetry of Jidi Majia to "A plant that talks, is a flower of memory planted in the garden of the ancestors, is to not let any species die", with an affinity and universality of nature. As a statesman and poet, Jidi Majia does not shy away from writing about the clash between civilization and nature. The translators are keenly aware that "Jidi Majia's vision is broad, he is concerned about the changes brought about by civilization, the terrorism, cruelty, human destruction of natural resources, deforestation, water and the pollution of the entire natural environment in the world today." "History has proved that the basic categories of thought valued by mainstream civilizations are divorced from nature, such as the ideas of God, Buddha, Tao, Plato, existence as essence and material forces.... They are sensitive to changes in the natural and ecological environment in which they live." Jidi Majia "constructed an artistic utopia of truth, goodness and beauty" through "reflections on the post-industrial era."

Therefore, we will continue to ask why the poetry with the theme of "man and nature" is the most easily selected by overseas critics for dissemination and recognition. The reason is that the theme of Jidi Majia's poetry expresses the idea of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. The west has all along upheld the idea that humans are the masters of all things, which has led to humans over-demanding of nature, and this neglect of and harm to nature has brought about very serious environmental problems. Therefore, they tend to choose Jidi Majia's poems, such as *I, Snow Leopard*, which reflect the reverence for nature and the fear of ecological crisis. In the preface to *Snow Panther*, American nature writer Barry Lopez wrote: "It is obvious that Jidi Majia is telling us his allegory from a special geographical position, but it is not a restricted one. It's not a borderland. It's not hard to imagine ourselves there, and we can feel the extraordinary intelligence that the snow leopard is trying to tell us, and its appeal to the world"; "*I, Snow Leopard* to the country readers, are applauded. Its publication comes at a time when humanity is aware that, as brothers and sisters of the snow leopard, the fate of humanity is in danger. "This relationship requires be restored, because it has been severely damaged by centuries of one-sided development. Overseas critics are keenly aware that "the harmonious coexistence of human beings and nature" is what is urgently needed to be promoted in the western society which is in crisis of faith today. Their call for reason and

equality finds a hopeful echo in Jidi Majia, a poet from China's Yi ethnic group^[6].

4. Aesthetic Idea: "Human Consciousness" and Humanitarian Spirit

As a poet with international influence, Jidi Majia's poetry is not limited to writing about his own nation, so the global vision and human consciousness reflected in his poems are important aspects that arouse the resonance and attention of poets and scholars from all over the world. The "humanitarian spirit" demonstrated in his poems is widely praised by the international literary world^[7].

Overseas critics pay special attention to the aesthetic concept of poetry. They think that his poetry has sublimated the national character to the world and humanity, and is committed to the high unity of the national character and the world and humanity. They paid attention not only to the artistic value of Jidi Majia's poems, but also to the universal value of his poems. "What impressed me most was his feelings and reflections on the major themes of our time in the world: his passion for violence and armed aggression; His resistance to discrimination, exclusion, injustice, exploitation of man; His strong desire for peace; A belief in human equality"; "Jidi Majia always looks at problems, examines society and the world from the perspective of human beings and human cultures." "Concern for ethnic groups in the most marginalized parts of the world, "rejection of violence, injustice and discrimination abound in his compassionate and imaginative poetry", which embodies the world's multiculturalism and the universal spirit of humanity^[8].

The reverence for life and humanitarianism in Jidi Majia's poems are connected by blood, and thus give rise to a broader appeal to the world's cultural diversity. "He takes a firm stand in poetry, lamenting and criticizing violence, materialism and ecological destruction in every part of the planet." "The horizon of his vision is not confined to the borders of his homeland, but transcends them^[9]. He felt the ties of consanguinity between his own culture and that of the American Indians and of the great literature of Europe and America, He rejoices to be near them, to be in touch with them^[10]. Humanity and universality are not abstract, and concern for the fate of man, even if it is deeply understood by a small tribe, will be human. Jidi Majia's much-admired poem "Grandmother Rose", written for the last member of the Karlskar Indian tribe in Bagdania, and his spiritual symbols of the tribe, "The Vulture" and "The Rock", connect his poetry to the hearts of the world's minorities^[11].

The poet Lama Yizuo thinks: "It is in the position of 'man' that Jidi Majia sends out the prayers and praises of poetry for the world", and the voice he sends out in this position is always full of compassion and love for the world. The reason why his eulogy can be issued is both remembrance and dialogue, especially the dialogue across races, regions, civilizations and time and space based on the principles of difference and respect, tolerance and love, expressing "a transcendent consciousness and a human feeling"^[12]. The transmission of Jidi Majia's poetic voice is not to shout loudly in the air, but to reach the height of human love from personal perception, showing the emotional logic of "individual, Yi people, world and human". Starting from the understanding of the culture and living conditions of his own nation, the poet moves towards the concern of other nations in the world, and achieves the understanding of history and human destiny from the perspective of personal destiny^[13].

5. Conclusion

The development of minority literature can not be separated from the dialogue with Chinese literature and world literature. The overseas dissemination of Yi poetry reflects the "Multi-national, Multi-lingual Chinese literature has also become the most distinctive literary ecology and the most important aesthetic feature of contemporary Chinese literature, and is gradually being recognized

and respected by the world literary world." On the basis of the value of the national culture, examining the common problems and predicaments of human beings, connecting the consciousness of life, the consciousness of nation, the consciousness of human beings and the consciousness of the world, is the important reason why the poets of the minority nationalities represented by Jidi Majia are recognized overseas. It is the poet's sense of responsibility as a "global citizen" based on his national identity, his theme of ecological progress, and his concept of humanitarianism that moved overseas readers. It can be seen that the world literature writing of "ethnic group" and "humanity" is the principle that Chinese minority literature should adhere to, and it is also the starting point of its dialogue with other minority literature in the world.

Facing the future of poetry, Jidi Majia, when talking about the direction of minority writers' creation and efforts, it puts forward that "while presenting the national character of literature, it is also necessary to present the humanity of literature brilliantly", which is not only the foothold of the poet's writing, but also the cultural key to a higher realm. By paying close attention to the small and weak nations and the small and weak lives in the world, we will organically combine the feelings of individuals and the destiny of our own nation with the destiny of the people of all ethnic groups in the world. By integrating the national culture into the world culture, the poet has gained full respect in the cultural exchanges with the nations of the world, and successfully realized the dialogue with the world literature. To sum up, the reception of Jidi Majia's poems abroad focuses on the spirit of his poems, and endows him with the title of "citizen of the world" and "poet of action", showing the world of Jidi Majia's poems and highlighting the "consciousness of human destiny community" in his poems. The overseas dissemination of Chinese ethnic poetry represented by Jidi Majia is of great significance to reconstruct local knowledge and global vision, and to participate in the construction of a community of shared future for mankind.

References

- [1] Bender Mark. *Rhapsody in Black*[J]. *Chinese Literature, Essays, Articles*, 2014.
- [2] Mair Denis. *Son of the Nuosu Muse: The Poet Jidi Majia* [J]. *Chinese Literature Today*. 2012.
- [3] Hao Lin. *Study on Overseas Communication of Chinese Contemporary Poetry* [M]. Nanchang: Jiangxi education press, 2020.
- [4] Jidi Majia, Wang Xueying. *Individual Call, National Voice and Human Meaning-On Jidi Majia Dialogue in Poetry Creation* [J]. *Southern Literary Circles*, 2017, (03): 44-48+54.
- [5] Lama Yizuo, Yue Xing. *Position and Sound: Reading Ji Di Majia's Twenty Poems* [J]. *Southwest Academic*, 2023:271-280.
- [6] Li Mengmeng. *Research on Reception of Ji Di Majia's Poetry* [J]. *Research on Ethnic Literature*, 2022, 40(02):83-91.
- [7] Li Xiaofeng. *Personality, ethnic group, ethnic group and World-Reflectionson Jidi Majia's Poetry Creation and Research* [J]. *Contemporary Writers Review*, 2020(04): 105-111.
- [8] Liu Bo. *National Spirit, Poetic Justice and the Community of Human Destiny: Jidi Majia's Writing and Humanism the Construction of Yi Poetry* [J]. *Huaxia Culture Forum*, 2023(02):52-58.
- [9] Liu Jiangkai. *Identity and "Extension": Overseas Acceptance of Chinese Contemporary Literature* [M]. Beijing University Press, 2012.
- [10] Pan Zhen. *On the Translation and Introduction Model of "Going Out", in Chinese Literature: A Case Study of JiDi Majia* [J]. *Novel Review*, 2015(06): 48-52.
- [11] Shao Lei. *The Foreign Communication of Chinese Contemporary Poetry from the 5W Model: A Case Study of the Multilanguage Overseas Promotion of Jidi Majia's Poetry* [J]. *Published Reference*, 2018(02):23-25.
- [12] Xie Danling. *The English Translation of Poetry by Sherdanling Jidimajia and Akuwu and the Overseas Dissemination of Ethnic Literature* [J]. *Studies in Ethnic Literature*. 2023, 41(04):101-108.
- [13] Yang Bin, Ai Le. *Self, Nation and World: On the Spiritual Dimension of the Image Group in Ji Di Majia's Poetry* [J]. *Deuteronomy*, 2024(01): 170-175.