

## The Cosmopolitanism and Theoretical Foresight of Jia Pingwa's Novels: Take *Cherish the Memory of the Wolf* as an Example

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**Abstract:** If we want to discuss the worldwide influence of Chinese modern and contemporary novels, we must stand on the perspective of world literature. It is fundamentally imperfect to talk about the emergence of Chinese contemporary novels, ignoring the influence and inspiration of world literature, or the great efforts of the authors of modern Chinese novels. Jia Pingwa is one of the most local and national writers in Chinese contemporary literature history. His works have strong regional style and dialect character of northwestern China. Therefore, Jia Pingwa's works in world literature are considered "untranslatable". However, this does not affect the wide spread of his works around the world. In particular, Jia Pingwa's novels have remarkable characteristics of globalization, and his novels contain certain foresight in literature theory, which provide precious literary materials to modern criticism theory. Therefore, his novels are not only local, but also global.

### 1. Introduction

After the introduction of the concept of world literature into China, Chinese literature has been further developed from close to open, and become a part of the literature of all mankind. In the history of the development of Chinese modern literature, fiction, as a special style, has a large readership. And compared with other styles, novels are relatively easy to translate and can easily become a genre with readers from other countries. Therefore, this paper studies the worldwide influence of Chinese contemporary novels from a wide perspective of world literature. We find that many contemporary Chinese writers not only have a large number of readers in China, but also have a deep influence in the world. Admired by readers, Jia Pingwa is one of them.

### 2. The Cosmopolitanism and Theoretical Foresight of Jia Pingwa's Novels

A key precondition to evaluate whether an author's work has a cosmopolitan character is whether his work is not only confined to a group of readers in one country, but also provides readers in all countries. Because question the work described and discussed needs to be a problem that all mankind is facing and focusing on. When the writer's works are translated into other contexts, they will be criticized and discussed by readers in that context. Therefore, the evaluation of a writer's work is not only theoretical forward-looking, but also proved that the writer himself is an "amphibian" writer. The so-called amphibious writers not only create literary works, but also works on literary theory. Take Italian scholar and writer *Umberto Eco* as an example, he is a well-known international symbolic linguist, philosopher, literary critic and also a professional across many fields. He can be called an encyclopedia scholar. Another example is British influential postmodernist novelist *David Lodge*, who is also a postmodernist literary theorist with profound influence in every country. Obviously, Jia Pingwa, who is a native author from northwest China, though not a theorist, nor made any literary criticism, his creative thought contains certain

theoretical sensitivity and foresight.

Among the Chinese contemporary novel writers, Jia Pingwa's works has rich local sentiment and national characteristics. His works contains a strong local and dialect characteristics of northwest China. Because of this, the translation of his works is more difficult, even with the help of world-famous translators, and before the translation, we also need to seek a lot of advice about dialect researchers. Especially works with national characteristics can not be accepted by all countries without the translation of excellent translators. But though the translation of the novel is difficult, Jia Pingwa has acquired the attention and favor of national readers by virtue of his strong national characteristics and local flavor,. Although his works do not have a great market in other countries as *Yu Hua* and *Mo Yan's* works, his works have been translated into various languages, widely circulated in various countries, and he himself has frequently won awards at home and abroad.

The domestic critics generally think that Jia Pingwa's work is a combination of traditional and modern, realistic and high-minded. His narrative is simple and honest, but his inner meaning is magnificent, which is why his works have strong narrative art power. Jia Pingwa's narrative angle of view is quite unique, his works, with simple language and rich image, contain the value concept of the rural areas during the period of reform and opening up, and the change of the human world in the traditional pattern. Each word in his works contains the writer's attachment to the hometown and the thinking of the rural situation in the social transition period. So his novels not only have a strong reality, but also have a certain aesthetic. Many works, such as *Shangzhou*, *Impetuosity*, *Qin Opera* and *Yamamoto*, have aroused great controversy [1]. Although these works have caused controversy in the academic world, but one of the characteristics may be ignored by readers, that is, when Jia Pingwa describes the characters and events in his hometown, he also pay attention to the common topic of all mankind, and discuss them in his own works. A kind of national and worldwide power is hidden in his works, which give his works the significance of interpretation and criticism. He does not criticize literary theory himself, but his subconscious is more sensitive to theory, and can also find the trend of future changes. His works reflect a certain foresight. For example, when people mention the image of "wolf" in contemporary literature, they all think of *Jiang Rong's Wolf Totem*, a novel published in 2004, and Jia Pingwa published the novel *Cherish the Memory of the Wolf* as early as 2000. From the perspective of contemporary theoretical criticism, *Cherish the Memory of the Wolf* is a forward-looking work with critical theory, to research the image of "wolf" in literary works, or ecological criticism and animal research field of precious works. The forward-looking author always goes before some theory or some criticism begins, and *Cherish the Memory of the Wolf* goes before some theory comes into being. In fact, it also shows the "animal research turn" of current ecological criticism.

Wolf is one of the animals coexists with human, and thus it is also a important item in biological chain. Instinct of one specie may cause disappearance of a series of other species. Human cuts his route of retreat in the process of innovation. Thus, what the author "cherish the memory of" is not only the specific specie of wolf, but also the balance of the world and the biological ideal claims for the harmony coexist of human and nature. Mr. Jia has raised the introspect of Shangzhou culture to the level of worries and warnings for the fate of all humans. The environmental ethics consciousness and ecological ideal of harmonious coexistence of man and nature contained in the context gives the the novel a very high ideological value.

### 3. Jia Pingwa's Theoretical Consciousness and Unconsciousness

Read *Cherish the Memory of the Wolf* carefully, there are many of the wolf's feelings which contain a detailed description of their human nature. For example, the wolf will actually gather to suicide; the injured wolf will seek medical treatment from the old Taoist priest in the mountains; after being cured, the wolf actually took a piece of good precious jade as their repayment; in desperate situation of life and death the wolf turned into an adult. The descriptions of these fragments all present Jia Pingwa's unique humanistic concern for animals and respect [2]. In the world, human is not the only race and subject of value. The existence of wolves has its own meaning. The days without wolves are as terrible as those with wolves. People have to keep on

fitness in days with wolves. Because of the fear of wolves, children dare not cry. In the days without wolves, human may degrade, and civilization may decadent. The meaning behind such difference is obvious. In fact, it exists objectively. Wolf's own characteristics show their cognition and perception on the nature, which proves wolves also have their own consciousness and the right of existence. This is a kind of world ecological feelings, Jia Pingwa's cognition of wolf status directly shows the principle of harmony between human beings and animals, and also presents the concern of humanism.

Human beings are no longer the only species on earth that is considered to have life, and enjoy nature as well as all species. But in this situation of mutual coexistence, people can not change the fate of any animal, and human beings are sometimes threatened by other species in the world [3]. The disaster presented in Jia Pingwa's works is a warning to mankind. However, in recent years, the strengthening of human's concept of environment-protecting shows that the problems in his works have attained attention by mankind. The novel proves its fable value by successfully predicting the future.

It must be recognized that although Jia Pingwa is not a theorist, his theoretical cultivation and understanding of theory have reached a degree which currently many authors can not achieve [4]. In the "post-theory era" environment, the function of the theory will suffer some limitations, but the theory itself has not been eliminated. Jia Pingwa's novels about wolves involve a lot of theoretical thoughts. Readers can view and expound this novel from the perspective of "later humanism", "ecological criticism" and "animal research" in order to dig out the critical role and theoretical intention behind its unique discourse. In addition, the work is a practice of Chinese literature criticism casts doubt on the theory from the West, thus opening a wide space for communication between critics and authors.

#### **4. Discrimination between the Nationalism and the Cosmopolitanism**

For a long time, Jia Pingwa's works are difficult to translate in people's eyes, especially the contents of folk dialects. But his works still spread all over the world through translation. The process of translating his work is actually a process of re-creating, which is one of the remarkable characteristics of the circulation of Chinese literary works among countries around the world. Chinese literature spreads to world literature always accompany with a attitude of "embrace and take". Many foreign published works have Chinese translations in a short period of time. Therefore, we have the same expectation for foreign translation and publishing circles, hoping to introduce more high-quality Chinese works to foreign countries. But the facts are not satisfactory. Jia Pingwa is extremely lucky compared to other writers, whose works have been translated into various words and have a large number of readers in various countries. If *Cherish the Memory of the Wolf* is not translated, and not put into the vision of world literature, then it is not the world's work, only a country's. To say it is national, it is from the regional perspective of wolf life: the wolf described in the novel comes from Shangzhou, and the characters in the novel generally have a great relationship with Shangzhou, which represents the regional characteristics of northern China. The work is said to be cosmopolitan because, although there are local differences between the wolves in the work, Jiang Rong's Inner Mongolia prairie wolves, and Jack London's Alaska wolves, they all belong to the wolf family, and the value this creature conveyed has universal significance.

People are always nostalgic. The development of the times and the progress of society improve the standard of living of human beings. The life of hunting for a living before has gone with the times into history [5]. But human with an improved life still cherish the memory of the past simplicity and harmony relationship with the natural environment, which is not only the hope of Shangzhou people, but also the hope of all. Jia Pingwa's ecological care and animal care are extremely significant, his ecological care has exceeded the boundaries of his own country, and reaches a worldwide significance, and has risen to the dimension of ecological cosmopolitanism. That is why his novel can go out of northwest China to the world of global literature. We must see that, all creatures, be they humans, dogs, or cats, as soon as they are one member of the world, they must be respected and treated fairly by each other species in the world. And, humans must know

that, cosmopolitanism cannot be put in a opposite relationship with patriotism or nationalism.

## 5. Conclusion

Mr. Jia Pingwa is not only an author with remarkable humanistic care, and also has wider natural care and animal care. Unlike other writers, Mr. Jia Pingwa's works express cosmopolitan and theoretical foresight in plain language. His works claim the protection of animals, which has never been taken seriously before, and has been paid more and more attention to now. From here we see the farsightedness of Mr. Jia's work. His work is a precious treasure of contemporary literature, which worth all of us, domestic and foreign, to read and appreciate.

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