

Analyzing the Temporal Theme and View of Time in Li Jinfa's Poetry

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Abstract. As a pioneer of symbolism in modern Chinese poetry, Li Jinfa's works have received complex evaluations in literary history. In the first half of the twentieth century, Li Jinfa's poetry contrasted sharply with the realism and romanticism of the time, and his obscure style, though criticized, opened up new aesthetic paths in poetry. This paper delves into the theme of time and the view of time in Li Jinfa's poetry, revealing his deep feelings about the passage of time and his reflections on modernity through a close reading of Li Jinfa's poetry. Starting from the theme of time in Li Jinfa's poetry, this paper explains Li's attitude towards the past and the present moment, as well as Li's criticism of the negative effects of modernity. From a cross-section of the single image of "bee", the paper also examines the special position and meaning of "bee" in Li Jinfa's imagery system. In conclusion, this study illustrates Lee Goldfarb's reflection on linear time and the heterotopias and heterotopias he creates in his poetry, demonstrating a rebellion against the rhythms of modern life and an emphasis on momentary experience.

1 Introduction

In the first half of the twentieth century, modern Chinese poetry was characterized by realism and romanticism. Since the introduction of Li Jinfa's *The Slight Rain*, new poetry borrowed symbolism from France, far away. Compared to the poems published during the May Fourth period, Guo Moruo's *The Goddess* (1921), and Xu Zhimo's *Poems of Zhimo* (1925), Li Jinfa's poems are exceptionally original, and are almost singled out by selectors. Zhu Ziqing, for example, categorized the new poems of the time: the free-form poetry school, the metrical poetry school, and the symbolism school, and also argued that "one school is better than the other, ... the new poems are making progress" [1]. If Guo Moruo's *Phoenix Nirvana*, the great master of freedom, is wild and imaginative; Xu Zhimo's poems, the genius poet of the Crescent School, don't forget to follow the rationality of the metrical system and at the same time, they are poetic; Li Jinfa's poems seem to be so obscure and difficult to comprehend that they were evaluated by Hu Shih and Renjun as "a stupid enigma" and "a new poem that goes astray"[2]. Li Jinfa's poems, on the other hand, were so obscure that they were criticized by Hu Shi and Ren Jun as "stupid riddles" and "divergent paths in the development of new poetry. Like Li Jinfa, a writer who pioneered the trend in China, the evaluation of literary history is

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very low, with only a few excerpts of poems and criticism. There are of course many factors for this evaluation, but the reason that cannot be ignored is his obscure poetic style.

His poems have received mixed reviews for this reason, but they are not without merit. If the term "pioneering" is still ambiguous, then there are scholars who make the following statement: Li Jinfa "formed the aesthetic idea of matching natural objects with his own emotions," transcending simple anthropomorphism, and "achieving complete harmony between the natural scenery and the subject's lyricism in terms of emotional tones. The scenery and the subject's lyricism have reached a complete harmony in emotional tone. His use of imagery enabled the new Chinese poetry to shift from a mode of creation centered on sound and meter to a more modern approach - the aesthetics of poetry centered on meaning and experience [3]. His contribution is more than "first".

In this paper, the author will start from the relationship between Li Jinfa's works and the world. Li Jinfa himself explains the relationship between his works and reality in this way: "The only purpose in art is to create beauty. The only work of an artist is to faithfully represent his world" [4]. It can be seen that Li Jinfa has the concept of "pure poetry" in his heart, and has the aestheticist tendency of "beauty for beauty's sake". Then the critical view of "knowing people and discussing the world" is diluted, and close reading should be a better choice, but it does not mean that the external environment of the literary works is irrelevant. Therefore, this paper will enter the text with a close reading method, focusing on how Li Jinfa views time in his works and the use of his imagery in this theme, in the hope of shedding some light on the mystery that Li has left behind.

2 Li poetry sentiment: *I bid the Driver of the Sun, oh! To Holy Mountains slowly go*

Time is a very important theme in Li Jinfa's poems. The various images favored by symbolism, such as death, corpses, night, and nothingness, are all under the umbrella of the theme of time. From the perspective of life, it is the passage of time that gives meaning to human beings: it is the passage of time that gives rise to the change of state from life to death; it is the beauty that disappears with the passage of time that brings the ugliness to the surface; it is the lack of meaning that is due to the uncertainty of the flow of everything.

This sense of uncertainty is notable when confronted with history. For reasons of space, only *Spleens from Eaters and Foul Years* is used to show this confusion more typically.

The color of the discourse of these images lined up in the poem: handicapped road, songstress, helmsman, boat, mountain ducks, poets of the previous generation, avenue of time, and so on, is one of drift and seclusion. For example, "They hate the impotent and the fond / And the crowd calls out in unison for expulsion. / We have only the handicapped road." "We" are ostracized because "we" are impotent but persistent. Also, so "our" path is "handicapped"; and with us, the "impotent and fond", are "songstresses and helmsmen". The common color of the words "songstress" and "helmsman" is amorphous, with the songstress representing a more entertaining, playful side of reality or art, and the helmsman suggesting a drifting, life-driven side. The creators of literature and art left the pre-modern state of literary complicity with politics and religion, and entered the modern age of chasing after the new and the different, and the things that were held up as the norms of the day became the things of tomorrow. "All That Is Solid Melts into Air", as Marx said, and the literary nutrients that nourished the poet and made him a poet were quickly dismissed, either as "defenders" of feudalism or as obsolete and buried under the surface of history. It is because of the "accelerated sense" of time in the process of modernization that the "successes of the past years" are only "traces" but no real fruits.

The term "pot-au-feu" refers to a type of vegetable beef soup in French cuisine. It is often humorously used to suggest that, after many years of studying abroad, one has only learned

to cook this single French dish. "Blackwood," on the other hand, is a precious wood used in African religions for carving idols or religious objects. Carving is what Li Jinfa learned in Dijon, and "Blackwood carving" can be interpreted as the author's heart of reverence, and his affairs are nothing more than the amorphous "boat", the recluse "mountain ducks", and the deceased "poet". The images used are all about escape, either in time or space. By arranging the images, the poet conceals a melancholy sense of the passing of time and a painful rejection of the present. This hidden meaning can only be understood through close reading. It proves once again that Li Jinfa is not an obscure person creating unnecessary mystery.

Li Jinfa's pessimistic side of time can be summarized in his poem: "It's too late now, / and how tired I am, / powerless to call spring and summer back / and the rest of the fall to go quickly, as they are accustomed to do." The search for the truth about time is "too late," impossible; the call for the return of past time is "powerless." The ingenious turn of phrase here demonstrates polysemy: "powerless to call for the return of spring and summer / the remnants of autumn to go quickly" is a layer of poetic meaning that is thick on the ancient and thin on the modern; "the remnants of autumn to go quickly, they are accustomed to it" reflects the paralysis of the present-day people with regard to the passing of time, and fails to recognize the negative aspects that modernity has brought to people. Modernity brings negative aspects to people. The past has already passed, and the present immediately becomes the past, and all meaning is pinned down in the future of the future, so much so that simple meanings cannot be pinned down.

Faced with the rapid decay of time, the "I" in the poem drinks from a golden bottle. The word "golden bottle" quickly mobilizes the traditional cultural context and immediately brings out the mood of Li Bai's "Will Enter the Wine". If Li Bai is "wishing to get drunk and not wanting to wake up" due to the shortness of life, then Li Jinfa's gesture of refusal and numbness of "don't make the intestines stand far away" and "fall back to sleep for a moment" is a rebellion against the passage of time. Rebellion against the passage of time. From this, I the author can see that the present moment in Li Jinfa's view of time is dangerous and meaningless.

Li Jinfa's poems are often reminiscent of past moments. This is, of course, two sides of the same coin in his conception of time: reminiscing about the past because of an inability to place oneself in the reality of the present. Take, for example, "Old Acquaintance" from Songs for Happiness. In the first stanza, "The seasons have moved on," one can feel the melancholy of the passage of time. What "I" know are "the valley" and "last night's moon", which are "old acquaintances"; I have already grown old and can only "play the role of the old man". I have grown so old that I can only "perform a hobbling dance". Time has worn away so much that the grass needs to bend, and the moon cares for my wounds; the "expectations" of the second stanza were not needed in the prime of youth, but are now "in my heart". In the second stanza, "expectations" were not necessary when I was in the prime of my youth, but now they are "flourishing" in my heart. Under the contrast of time, "my" aging is emphasized, and the beautiful vitality of the past is missed by "me". In "Song of the Night", "Phew! The song that no longer comes like the sound of the lyre, / Sent to my young ears with the wind" in "Song of the Night" is the helplessness of his youthfulness; "My childhood is called away by the sound of the birds: / Oh, to live in the land of clear streams, / Where the inhabitants sing with their staffs, / And I look at the short trees along the streams with my eyes closed" ("The Autumn of Me"). ("My Autumn"), on the other hand, is directly about the idyllic pastoral songs of his childhood. It can be seen that the past moment in Li Jinfa's view of time is a "lost paradise" for human beings.

His tendency to go to his country and miss his hometown, to be powerless in the reality of his homeland and to call for the past, is quite similar to that of Qu Yuan, so his attitude towards history and reality is described in "Li Sao" by the phrase "I will make Xihe repress the festival and look to Gansu without being forced".

3 Li Jinfa's *Bee*: A genie of beautiful moments

3.1 The positive meaning of *Bee* in the theme of time

Among the many images in Li Jinfa's poems, *Bee* is a very special one. The imagery of "bee" in *The Complete Poems of Li Jinfa*, and they are found in all of his published poetry collections. The image of "bee" is not something favored by symbolism, such as "death," "corpse," "night," etc. The fact that it appears as many as 29 times is not an unintentional act. Li Jinfa's "bee" has its connotation, and his use of the imagery of "bee" also contains his unique view on the theme of time.

In Li Jinfa's masterpiece *The Abandoned Wife*, the first poem in his first collection *Light Rain*, the line "My grief is only deeply imprinted in the brain of a wandering bee" is very difficult to understand, and there are many different opinions. Some scholars believe that the "wandering bee" represents the Christian spirit in the abandoned woman's spiritual world. Others interpret it as "the long-term gaze on these carefree insects seems to have filled them with sorrows and written all over them," suggesting that the abandoned woman hopes her troubles will fly away like the wandering bee. Additionally, some scholars think her troubles will indeed fly away like the wandering bee, and others believe she hopes for this outcome. Some scholars believe that it should be simply understood that the abandoned woman "sent her feelings to the bees, which seemed to be wandering with her own sorrow" [5-7]. The above scholars have centered on the significance of the "bee" in the poem for the "abandoned woman", but since the "bee" does not appear only once in Li Jinfa's poem, but even more than 29 times, we may start from the special position of the "bee" in the poem to understand what the "brain of the wandering bee" is. Perhaps we can start from the special position that "bee" occupies in the imagery of Li Jinfa's poem, and finally go back to the masterpiece "The Abandoned Woman" to understand what is "the brain of a wandering bee".

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"Bee" often appears together with bright and positive images, especially flowers and spring and summer. For example, "The bee has no way out of the cave of spring. The 'silence' seems dead, and the laughter of the past is far away in the depths of the rice fields." ("I in the Hollow of the Rock") "Let me breathe in the clear spring, heh, the jumping of the hearts of the bees and butterflies and grass insects." ("My Autumn") "I wish that your hair would turn into a magnolia flower, that I would sleep peacefully long beside the flower pieces, and that the wandering bees would sing my dreams calmly when they come" ("Wish") [8]. The author can make a bold speculation that the meaning of "bee" in Li's poem is a symbol of warmth and beauty.

3.2 The bee as a symbol of instant memory

This paper argues that the bee is the recorder of beautiful memories in Li Jinfa's poems, representing the splendor of the moment. The third stanza of "Old acquaintance" can well show this point: "I want to ask the nature-loving poet, /Have I ever suffered from this looting: /The flying of a piece of flower, / Complaining about the frenzy of bees and butterflies" The word "looting" refers to the destruction of beautiful things by time [8]. In the wild songs and drinks of youth, the flowers may fall off a little. The "one who looks at the cocoon" represents a person who has lost the good time, and is scarred by the ravages of time. This interpretation

is confirmed by the following text: "The evening sun organizes the colors of the colorful clothes, / and wants to invite the goddess of the foggy car to dance together in the last moment", symbolizing that "the one who looks at the cocoon" burns the last light of his life and enjoys the evening sun of his life; in contrast to this, there is the phrase "but the crows are a bit shy" [8]. In contrast, "But the crows are a little reluctant, / Calling out that the sky is darkening." represents a very different state of mind: self-loathing, leaving the playground of joy in despair, no longer believing in the existence of goodness in the world. The contextualization of the poem reinforces the positive meaning of "bee" and the beautiful moment it represents.

By examining the imagery in "I in the Hollow of the Rock", the meaning of the bee imagery becomes clearer. The "alcove of the rock" is a place where I can "sit" with wine, weeds, and new flowers. The phrase "the earth's crust is shrinking" can be interpreted as experiencing a change in the world. In such a context, "the bees have no way out of the grotto of spring" means that the bees, as symbols of spring, cannot leave that beautiful world. If they do, "the branches cry" and "the roses change color," indicating that the beautiful moments can only exist in that ideal world.

Once they leave, "the branches weep," "the roses change color," and the beautiful moments can only be stored in "the spring of the past"-the memories of the past. "I am not waiting for anyone to come!" It is implied that the world full of good memories has left, but "I" do not pray for its return.

3.3 Entering *The Abandoned Woman from the Bee*

From this, the author returns to the text of *The Abandoned Woman* and interprets the meaning of *The Abandoned Woman* from the point of entry of the "bee". The words "the glare of shame, the rush of blood, and the slumber of withered bones" refer to the cold eyes of others, life, and death, respectively. For the "abandoned woman", these things are brought about by her own situation, i.e., being marginalized by others, homeless, and powerless, but now these glares, rapids, and slumbers have been "cut off" and are no longer important to the abandoned woman. --She doesn't care. Like an ostrich with its head buried in the sand, it does not mean that the "sword" has disappeared. The darkness of "night" and the worries of "mosquitoes" still come; and although she has built a "short wall" of "partition," it is not strong enough to hold her. Although her "partition" had built a "short wall", it was not solid, and could still attack her "innocence". Li Jinfa adds some panoramic metaphors. "such as the wild winds of the wilderness: war chestnut countless nomads", you can imagine that there has been nothing in the wilderness, living by the water and grass nomads look at the distant sand and dust when the helplessness and helplessness.

So what else can the abandoned woman rely on? The weakest symbol of life is a blade of grass, and "Empty Valley" alludes to Du Fu's poem, "There is a beautiful woman who lives in an empty valley", which is why it is said that she is "traveling to and fro with the Spirit of God in an empty valley", implying that she has already been spiritually lost in the valley. This is why she is said to be "traveling back and forth with the Spirit of God in the empty valley", meaning that she has spiritually abandoned herself in the "empty valley" and is lonely and helpless, but she has no intention of leaving the empty valley by herself. In this kind of heart like ashes, the lake like no waves in the numbness, the abandoned woman in the heart what else? Only grief. Relief for what? Mourning those days of butterflies and bees are gone, pain as a medium of memory can still remind her of the good from time to time, from time to time to break the calm numbness, because of this "from time to time" sense of surprise, so there is a need to use the word "swim"; because of the emphasis on the good moments of memory, so there is a need to use the word "swim". The word "brain" is needed as a reminder because it emphasizes the beautiful moments in the memory. She instinctively wants to dispel

the beauty in her mind that causes her pain and stops her from being numb - a kind of Q spirit - and so the seasons change - from the spring and summer of "swimming bees" to the spring and summer of "red leaves" to the summer of "red leaves". The seasonal change - from the spring and summer of "swimming bees" to the fall and winter of "red leaves" - makes them "long lagoon" and "all go away". This part of the poem transforms the poem from a simple depiction of abandonment to a profound allegory of modernity - the living conditions of the numb, modern man abandoned by the quick decay of time.

The poem shifts persona from here, from first person to third person. The former is to better express the inner world of the abandoned woman, while the poet uses the latter to complete the sculpture of the "abandoned woman". The phrase "the outcast's hidden worries pile up in her movements" is almost like the language of appreciation for a sculpture. "The fire of the setting sun can't turn the boredom of time / into ashes that fly away from the smoke bulge", the past can't pass away, and the boredom brought by those moments is always hidden in the heart of the abandoned woman. Then the author pulls the camera away to show the environment of the sculpture to everyone: from the ashes to the wandering crows; from the crows to the tsunami rock; from listening on the rock to the drifting boat. The poet pushes this sadness further and further into the more boundless sky, and the imagery used takes on a sense of reclusion: the boat, the wandering crows. Although the poet has made an effort to push out, the focus is still on "the fire of the setting sun cannot turn the boredom of time into ashes", and all these efforts are futile. Because under the time of modernity, those moments are as beautiful as dreams, but they can never be revisited, just like Jia Baoyu who misses the Grand View Garden.

Based on the "bee" imagery, we can conclude that Li Jinfa has the idea that the beauty of the moment can be stored in memory, so that it is not subject to the influence of time and does not perish quickly. By extension, the author looks at Li's concept of time from the perspective of the "moment".

4 Momentary feelings against linear time

Some scholars, in their attempts to analyze the concept of time in modern Chinese poetry, have classified Li Jinfa as having a "linear sense of time," believing that he remembers the past [9]. It seems that at first glance, Li Jinfa does give people such an impression. However, Li Jinfa's nostalgia is only one aspect of his temporal theme, and it may be necessary to consider whether it is possible to make such a simple generalization. Li Jinfa's poems emphasize experience and feeling, and in addition to his sense of helplessness in history, his momentary elation - such as the imagery of the "bee" - should also be included in his conception of time. In addition to his sense of helplessness in history, Li Jinfa's poems emphasize experience and feeling.

His masterpiece, *Completeness*, reveals to people quite clearly another kind of Lee Goldfarb. One can summarize the poem in his final line, "Hooray for silence! Only then can one be given a complete." He savors the sweet taste of "completeness" in silence. What about others in modern society? "One moment's departure is for the next moment's coming, and their journeys are not stopped by desert volcanoes."

In the blackness of the night when everything is dark, he can explore the self - "I grope for my four bodies, this square, that round?" The loneliness that comes with this moment of darkness is not a pre-modern agony, but an extremely modern sense of self. The experience of this moment becomes a kind of "heterotopia"[10].

Apparently, in *Totally*, the "night" and the "tiles and square walls" together construct a combination of heterotopia and heterotopia. In this space and time, the strange behavior of feeling one's own "this square and that circle" to the outside world is permitted; the reality is that "one moment goes to the next moment comes", and there is no ego, but in this

combination of heterotopia and heterotopia, time is stuck, and the ego is "complete". In this combination of heterotopia and heterotopia, time is stuck, and the self is "complete". At this moment, Li Jinfa discovers the heterotopia of modern man. The time of this stagnant time-space conjunction is not linear in its development. On the contrary, the notion of linear time, "the going of one moment is the coming of the next," is exactly what Li Jinfa rejects.

5 Conclusion

Li Jinfa's poetry occupies an important position in the development of modern Chinese poetry. Although his obscure style has been criticized by some, his works are groundbreaking in the use of symbolism imagery and poetic aesthetics, and he has formed the aesthetic idea of matching natural objects with self-emotion.

First, time is a central theme in Li Jinfa's poetry. Through symbolist imagery such as death, corpses, night and nothingness, he shows the meaning and changes in life brought about by the passage of time. His view of time reflects nostalgia for the good old days and deep reflection on the powerlessness of the present.

Secondly, the imagery of "bee" is particularly important in Li Jinfa's poems. The bee is not only a symbol of a beautiful moment, but also reflects the poet's unique observation and understanding of the theme of time. In works such as *The Abandoned Woman*, the use of bee imagery reveals nostalgia for fond memories and melancholy feelings about the passage of time.

Finally, Li Jinfa's poems show a reflection on linear time. Through experience and feeling, he creates a kind of "heterotopia" in which time is no longer linear, but realizes the "completeness" of the self in the momentary experience.

Overall, Li's poems have had a significant impact on the development of modern Chinese poetry. His profound exploration of the theme of time and his innovative use of symbolism opened up a new direction for the development of new Chinese poetry. Despite the obscurity of his style, the profound insights into time, memory, and momentary experience contained therein provide a unique perspective for understanding the living conditions of modern people.

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