

The Centurial Achievements and Problems in Ancient Chinese Literary Theory and Its Re-sinicization*

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The centurial study in ancient Chinese literary theory has gained certain achievements, which is embodied in the reorganization of materials, the construction of subject, and the establishment of system. However, some problems, including literary aphasia, objectified objectivism and de-contextualization, have revealed during our rethinking of Westernization, scientism and systematism, showing that we have been trapped by Western-centralism, scientism and post-colonialism. Faced with the demand from modern knowledge pattern of de-sinicization, de-contextualization and de-subjectification, we propose reconstruction strategies of re-sinicization and re-pragmatism in order to provide theoretical conception of rebuilding modern system for ancient literary theory study.

Keywords: Westernization, objectified, de-contextualization, re-sinicization and re-pragmatism

During centurial development of Chinese modernization, the scientific system of Chinese literature, mostly based on the history of Chinese literature and ancient literary theory, is eventually established thanks to the great efforts of several generations. The object of Chinese literary theory study is the discourses of ancient people, as well as their understanding and re-expression of literary discourses. Since 1980s, with the progress of literary systematization and categorization, some scholars has begun to summarize and reflect on this subjects, showing that the builders of modern literary theory system have not only inherited great academic traditions from precursors, but also have raised the consciousness of challenge and innovation, which also represents their critical thinking ability.¹ Thus, this essay, based on the results from former scholars, demonstrates the achievements and the problems in centurial study process, and also explores the possibility of reconstructing ancient literary theory system.

Part 1 Centurial Gains in the Study of Ancient Chinese Literary Theory

Great Achievements in Literature Reorganization

According to the Western mode of subject construction, ancient literary theory established on the basis of

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¹ The first book which challenged the contemporary system of ancient literary theory is Gudai Wenlun de Xiandai Sikao (古代文論的現代思考, Beiyue Wenyi Chunbanshe, 1988) by Lu Hiaming (陸海明). After that, hundreds of books and essays, which reflect on ancient literary study, have been published, like Gudai Wenxue Lilun Yanjiu Gaishu (古代文學理論研究概述, Tianjin Guji Publishing House, 1991) by Luo Zongqiang (羅宗強), etc.

reorganizing historical documents. During the past century, researchers have been working on ancient literature and ancient literary theory constantly unearthed art and literary discourses from ancient people, and efficiently reorganized them, thus laying a solid academic foundation for building a disciplinary system. In “Guanyu Gudai Wenxue Lilun Yanjiu Zhong de Jige Wenti” (關於古代文學理論研究中的幾個問題)², Guo Shaoyu (郭紹虞) demonstrated, “During the May fourth Period, when we started to study on literary theory, the researches were confronted with the difficulty of information collection. But there was an even more serious issue: Chinese ancient literary theories mostly scattered in some prefaces and postscripts to letters, rather than in monographs. Therefore, we had to gather information from seas of ancient books, which had taken us nearly ten years. And actually, not until the 1930s did there eventually emerge a few scholars who were truly doing research on these materials.” Obviously, just as what Guo had said, the initial study on Chinese ancient literary theory is no other than collecting and reorganizing relevant information, which, objectively, provided a literary database and also a substantial theoretical basis for further studying. In other words, these materials together laid a solid foundation for modern study on ancient literary theory. Hence, summarizing the achievements of this process becomes important. So this part of paper puts forward several aspects as following to introduce the main achievements in literature reorganization in the last ten decades.

Firstly, there appears certain of monographs that elaborate outstanding commenters’ views and explanations of ancient literary theory. The compilation, *Zhongguo Gudian Wenxue Lilun Piping Zhuanzhu Xuanji* (中國古代文學理論批評專著選輯)³ contains forty high-valued monographs on ancient literary theory, including *Wenxin Diaolong Zhu* (文心雕龍注) by Fan Wenlan (范文瀾), and *Wenfu Jishi* (文賦集釋) by Zhang Shaokang (張少康). And the series, *Zhongguo Gudian Xiqu Lunzhu Jicheng* (中國古代戲曲論著集成)⁴ embodies 48 classical opera works formed between Tang Dynasty and Qing Dynasty. Among all these great monographs on ancient literary theory, *Wenxin Diaolong* (文心雕龍) has been the most popular one among modern scholars. Actually, apart from Fan Wenlan’s celebrated notes to this book, there are other extraordinary annotations on it, such as *Wenxin Diaolong Jiaoshi* (文心雕龍校釋)⁵. Furthermore, Zhong Rong’s (鍾嶸) *Shipin* (詩品), popular for hundreds of years, also has plenty of annotated works being published, like *Shipin Zhu* (詩品注)⁶, etc. In brief, the publication of monographs, which focus on reorganizing ancient literary theory materials, not only greatly ensures the credibility and authenticity of these documents, but also lays a solid foundation for future study.

Secondly, there are also several carefully-chosen anthologies of ancient literary theory. For example, Li Huaqin (李華卿) collected 75 master pieces of Chinese literary theories ranging from pre-Qin period to the modern period in his work, *Zhongguo Lidai Wenxue Lilun* (中國歷代文學理論)⁷, which turned out to be the earliest anthology of ancient Chinese literary theory; and Wang Huanbiao (王煥鑣) also assembled 55 pieces,

² Guo Shaoyu (郭紹虞), *Guanyu Gudai Wenxue Lilun Yanjiu Zhong de Jige Wenti* (關於古代文學理論研究中的幾個問題), *學術月刊* (Xueshu Yuekan), 1979.

³ Guo Shaoyu (郭紹虞), Luo Genze (羅根澤), *Zhongguo Gudian Wenxue Lilun Piping Zhuanzhu Xuanji* (中國古代文學理論批評專著選輯), Beijing: Renmin Publishing House.

⁴ *Zhongguo Xiqu Yanjiu Yuan* (中國戲曲研究院), *Zhongguo Gudian Xiqu Lunzhu Jicheng* (中國古代戲曲論著集成), Beijing: Beijing Zhongguo Xiqu Publishing House, 1959.

⁵ Liu Yongji (劉永濟), *Wenxin Diaolong Jiaoshi* (文心雕龍校釋), Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962.

⁶ Chen Yanjie (陳延傑), *Shipin Zhu* (詩品注), Shanghai: Kaiming Shudian.

⁷ Li Huaqin (李華卿), *Zhongguo Lidai Wenxue Lilun* (中國歷代文學理論), Shanghai: Shenzhou Guoguang She (神州國光社), 1934.

including “Shi Xu” (詩序) and “Jiaxun Size” (家訓四則), in his *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Lunwen Ji* (中國文學批評論文集). And lately, in 1999, People’s Literature Publishing House published *Zhongguo Lidai Wenlun Xuan* (中國歷代文論選) which included crucial literary theories in each time dynasties, and providing ample evidence for studying Chinese literature history comprehensively. Moreover, some anthologies, such as *Zhongguo Meixueshi Ziliao Xuanbian* (中國美學史資料選編), started the history of differentiating historical documents by literary categories in China. Especially, Xu zhongyu’s (徐中玉) *Zhongguo Gudai Wenyi Lilun Zhuanti Ziliao Congkan* (中國古代文藝理論專題資料叢刊) widely collected materials on ancient Chinese poetry, Wen (文), Ci (詞), Qu (曲), novels, dramas, paintings, music and calligraphy, and classified them by Chinese traditional artistic principles, thus turning into a monumental masterpiece in literary theory selection field.

Thirdly, the trend of classifying literary theory materials according to literature genres has become increasingly popular. During the reorganization of Poetry Notes (詩話), there emerge some epitomized works, including Wu Jingxu’s (吳景旭) *Lidai Shihua* (歷代詩話), He Wenhuan’s (何文煥) *Lidai Shihua* (歷代詩話), etc. And in the Ci Notes (詞話) organization field, there are also some representative works, such as Cihua Congbian (詞話叢編) by Tang Guizhang (唐圭璋). And when it comes to Prose Notes (文話), Wang Shuizhao’s (王水照) *Lidai Wenhua* (歷代文話) outstood. In the respect of synthesizing Fu Notes (賦話), Li Diaoyuan’s (李調元) *Fuhua* (賦話) and He Peixiong’s (何沛雄) *Fuhua Liuzhong* (賦話六種) both had high academic values. And finally in the field of novels and dramas, there are also some special works, like Cai Yi’s (蔡毅) *Zhongguo Gudian Xiqu XuBa Huibian* (中國古典戲曲序跋彙編), etc.

Fourthly, plenty of great essays have been selected and compiled. For instance, *Wenxuan* (文選), *Yingkuai Lvsui* (羣奎律髓), and some commentaries on them have been synthesized, organized and compiled.

Besides all of these, there is another mighty achievement. As we all know, ancient Chinese literary theories scattered in prefaces, postscripts, Poetry Notes, Ci Notes, Fu Notes, Qu Notes and other commentaries and annotations, such a great number of them were still waiting to be found. And during the last century, many scholars exerted themselves in digging for these scattered literary theories and organizing them by system of punctuations, editions, explanation sections, selections, assemblies, etc. As a result, this kind of work does help to set a solid foundation for constructing subject, as well as to provide convenience for further research.

The Overall Construction of the Modern System of Ancient Chinese Literary Theory

The booming of ancient Chinese literary theory study in contemporary society is closely interwoven with the modernization, scientization, institutionalization and professionalization of modern education. On January 12, 1913, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China promulgated the “Regulations of the University”, which specified that the School of Chinese literature should at least set the following courses: (1) Methods of Literary Study; (2) Explanation of Chinese Character and Music; (3) *ErYa* (爾雅); (4) Rhetoric; (5) History of Chinese Literature; (6) Chinese History; (7) History of Greek and Roman literature; (8) History of Modern European Literature; (9) Introduction to Linguistics; (10) Introduction to Philosophy; (11) Introduction to Aesthetics; (12) Introduction to Ethnics; and (13) World History. Because some high-educated people have realized that there were some weakness in Chinese literature teaching, that the literary courses that appears in juxtaposition with “History of Chinese Literature” are merely “Methods of Literary Study” and “Rhetoric”, while “Introduction to Literature” has always been a permanent subject in the School of English Literature, French Literature, German Literature.⁸ Obviously, the School of Chinese Literature lacked some “must-have”

⁸ Jiangsu Jiaoyu Xingzheng Yuebao (江苏教育行政月报), 1993, pp. 1-17.

courses like “Introduction to Literature” and “Literature Criticism”. Therefore, with the construction of modern subject of Chinese literature, teaching traditional Chinese literary theory has become an important aspect in modern subject system. And many professors with great reputation made an effort on this: in 1914, Yao Yongpu (姚永樸) taught Literary Theory of Tongcheng School (桐城派) in Peking University, and his handouts were finally compiled as *Wenxue Yanjiu Fa* (文學研究法), etc.

In order to adapt to university teaching practice, researchers working on ancient literary theory in 1920s and 1930s began to construct modern system of ancient literary theory under the guide of Western scientific spirit and Western ideology, in which way, Chinese literary theory eventually embark on the path of systematization and scientization. Guo Shaoyu wrote down how he started the research on literary theory in his memoir: “When I taught ‘History of Chinese literature’ in university, I began to pay attention to the issue of literary criticism, but pitifully, I did not do deeper researches in this field, regardless of my concern about some specific problems related. But later, after I read Mr Chen Zhongfan’s (陳鍾凡) *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi* (中國文學批評史) published by Zhonghua Book Company and even started a course according to this book, things changed. Mr. Chen, who was a teacher of Dongnan University at that time, won my great admiration for a long time; hence, it was he that initially inspired my interest in Chinese literature criticism history. And he was really a man of unusual knowledge, so, after his creative study on criticism history, he had also developed certain new fields of literature; but for the same reason, he paid less attention to the issue of criticism. But as for me, I never forget the enlightenment from Mr. Chen, so I have done my best to studying deeper on criticism.”⁹ Through the introduction from Guo Shaoyu, we now know that the foundational work of modern Chinese literary criticism is Mr. Chen’s *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, which was actually wrote for teaching at first. While Guo Shaoyu was giving lectures in accordance with Chen’s book, he was also tried to accomplish his own *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi* under the inspiration by Chen. And by coincidence, Mr. Zhu Dongrun (朱東潤) was doing the same thing at that time, as he specified this history in the Preface of his book: “In 1931, I gave lessons of ‘History Chinese literature criticism’ in Guoli Wuhan University; and in the next summer, I completely finished the writing of the first version of *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi Jiangyi* (中國文學批評史講義).”¹⁰

In 1927, after the publication of Chen’s *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, a variety of works, with modern academic meaning, on history of Chinese literary criticism have been published in succession. For example, in 1934, Guo Shaoyu’s *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi* was published by Commercial Press (商務印書館), etc.

After the founding of new China, Liu Dajie (劉大傑), Wang Yunxi (王運熙), and Gu Yisheng (顧易生), working at Fudan University, together edited *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi* (中國文學批評史), in order to meet the demand for teaching Chinese literary criticism in university. This book actually had three volumes, and Vol. 1 was published in 1964, Vol. 2 in 1983, Vol. 3 in 1985. And the whole book was divided into seven parts according to time: (1) pre-Qin to Han Dynasties (先秦兩漢); (2) Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties (魏晉南北朝); (3) Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties (隋唐五代); (4) Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties (宋金元); (5) Ming Dynasty (明); (6) Early and Middle Qing Dynasty (清代前中期); (7) Modern times (近代). And in 1987, Cai Zhongxiang (蔡鍾翔), Huang Baozhen (黃保真), and Chen Fuwan (成複旺) in Renmin University of China compiled *Zhongguo Wenxue Lilun Shi* (中國文學理論史), emphasizing the idea that “the

⁹ Guo Shaoyu, *Wo Zenyang Yanjiu Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi de* (我怎樣研究中國文學批評史的) (Shulin, 1980).

¹⁰ Zhu Dongrun, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi Dagang Zixu* (中國文學批評史大綱·自序), Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Publishing House, 2001, p. 1.

basic principles of Chinese literary theory can fully reflect the fundamental contradiction and universal relations of literature itself”, emphasizing its own characteristics of “the concept and category of Chinese ancient literary theory”. In 1955, Zhang Shaokang (張少康), Liu Sanfu’s (劉三富) *Zhongguo Wenxue Lilun Piping Fazhan Shi* (中國文學理論批評發展史) divided the literary theory criticism history into five periods: (1) pre-Qin Dynasty, the embryonic period; (2) Han, Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, the developing period; (3) Tang, Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties, the further-expanding period; (4) Ming and Qing Dynasties, the prospering period; and (5) Modern times, the Sino-Western integrating period. But according to the final version of this book, for now, it only contains the first four periods, leaving the modern part unwritten. In 1996, *Zhongguo Gudai Wenxue Piping Tongshi* (中國古代批評通史), compiled by Wang Yunxi, GuYisheng, had seven volumes, making itself a real masterpiece which not only has completely analyzed characteristics of Chinese literary criticism in each historical periods, but also has unearthed new materials. In conclusion, this mighty work has epitomized the systematic study of Chinese literary theory and comprehensively reflected the variety and diversity of Chinese literature criticism materials.

The Scientization of Subject System and Study Methods of Ancient Chinese Literary Theory

Ancient Chinese literary theory and Chinese literary criticism history are both cultural production resulting from the dissemination of Western culture. And in this trend of learning from west, basing on “Science” and “Democracy”, scientific spirit, scientific value, scientific culture and scientific method, all laying on Western-centrism, together formed the main body of Oriental culture, including modern oriental spirit, oriental value, Oriental culture and Oriental method, and finally became the most rational and authentic belief of Chinese people. And this kind of cultural principles and Orientation which worships scientific rationality and even regards it as god, is known as scientism in the post-modern Western intellectual circles. By scientism we mean applying the principles in natural science field to all of the social culture fields, believing that only through unswervingly implementing scientific methods that can we eventually construct a systematic, scientific and legitimate structure of knowledge. Just as Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培) once said: “After the prosperity of science, all ethic problems and knowledge need a scientific proof.”¹¹

The subject system of modern education was established basically on scientism. Hence, the subject division in Chinese literature field, regardless of a few changes, which simply copied Western standard; and due to that, naturally, “Ancient Chinese Literary Theory” and “Chinese Literary Criticism History” became permanent subjects in modern Chinese academic system. In other words, since the very beginning of ancient Chinese literary theory subject, scientism has already infiltrated in every aspects of it. Because of that, the academic orientation and subject characteristics are both destined to represent scientific spirits, just as the English scholar C. T. Winchester wrote in *Some Principles of Literary Criticism*: “Now it is when we approach a work of literature from this side, with a view to determine its essential qualities and value apart from all its particular external relations, that we find the field of Literary Criticism in the narrower, more precise sense in which it is here to be studied. We may say, then, that it is the function of Literary Criticism to determine the essential or intrinsic virtues of literature, and to discuss these virtues as they appear in various kinds of literature. As thus defined it includes all attempts to discover what are the qualities that constitute literature, whether qualities of matter—as imagination, emotion, or qualities of manner, —as melody and all virtues of form. It covers all discussion of the relation of these qualities to each other, their relative importance, and the

¹¹ Cai Yuanpei, *Zhi Xinqingnian Jizhehan*, Xin Qingnian, 1917.

ways in which they combine to produce literary effect. Criticism, thus conceived, is a science (though doubtless a very imperfect one), rather than an art; that is, it seeks to discover and state general principles rather than to give rules for their application in special cases.”¹²

In 1927, when Chen Zhongfan set out to construct the subject of *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi* (History of Chinese Literary Criticism), he also emphasized scientism: “Analyze Chinese literature with Western methods”¹³. From this sentence, we know that Chen advocated to apply “Western methods” to “Chinese literature”; and we may also find that Chen did do that during his subject building process. Simultaneously, he gave an overview of the characteristics and spirit of “West literary criticism”: “There are five different meanings of ‘criticism’ in Western culture: (1) correction; (2) praise; (3) judge; (4) comparison and classification; and (5) appreciation. It is the responsibility for literary criticism to focus on the nature and form of literature. Therefore, by criticism we mean comparison, classification, judge and appreciation at first, then praise its strengths and correct its weakness.”¹⁴ Furthermore, he pointed out that the essence of “Western literary criticism” is precisely studying on the “nature and form of literature”. However, because of his belief in scientism, Western paradigm is directly transplanted to ancient Chinese literary theory subject without any academic self-examination in Chen Zhongfan’s system. We may find that, from Chen’s comprehension on the nature of literary theory, the cultural value and scientific spirit of Western learning has functioned as a pervasive ideology of legitimacy and rationality at that time. And he also explained: “Literature criticism has already become an independent subject now, since Aristotle. Though Chinese ancients never regarded themselves as specialists of literature criticism, they did comment on literature when they were studied them... From then, critical discourses, like poetry, comments and notes, never succeeded in forming a systematic structure. Thus, I collect various literary theories and make some comparison of them and verify their validity, then write them down in this systematic form.”¹⁵ By this he pointed out that the responsibility and purpose of reorganizing ancient literary theories are to apply the independent Western academic system, or Western scientific spirit and structure of literary criticism, to judge Chinese literary theories which are disordered in ancient times; after that, to make some comparison of them and purify them into a principal line, and to form them in a systematic structure; more importantly, to find out the measurable standard of literary theory, or precisely, the absolute truth and scientific principles in Chinese literary theory criticism.

In 1928, Yang Honglie (楊洪烈) thoroughly explained the absoluteness and reliability of “Western methods” in *Zhongguo Shixue Dgang* (中國詩學大綱). In Preface he wrote: “This book includes all the essays commenting on poetry, and employs scientific methods to sum them up and to rearrange them, and applies Western principles on poetry to handle the problems in Chinese poetry.”¹⁶ Also, he said: “At this time, we need to regard the general principles of poetry which are set by Western poets as the step-tone of analyzing or reorganizing our materials on criticizing poetry...”¹⁷ Yang believed that Western general principles on poetry are the foundational stone of establishing Chinese poetic structure, as well as the perfect pattern of constructing academic subject; naturally, “Western principles of poetry” become the foundation of Chinese poetry. Hence, it seems that meeting the criterion of Western poetical principles has already been a prerequisite when ancient

¹² C. T. Winchester, *Some Principles of Literary Criticism*, Shanghai: ShangwuYingshu Guan, 1923, pp. 8-9.

¹³ Chen Zhongfan, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe, 2008, p. 4.

¹⁴ Chen Zhongfan, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe, 2008, p. 5.

¹⁵ Chen Zhongfan, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe, 2008, p. 6.

¹⁶ Yang Honglie, *Zhongguo Shixue Dagang*, Shanghai: Shangwu Yingshuguan, 1928, p. 1.

¹⁷ Yang Honglie, *Zhongguo Shixue Dagang*, Shanghai: Shangwu Yingshuguan, 1928, p. 31.

Chinese were discussing poetry; however, as we all know, ancients did not use this series of Western principles at all. From this perspective, this so-called “compact scientific methods” during its appliance in analyzing ancient Chinese literary theory, are actually a series of pseudo-propositions intrinsically, which are unable to stand through rigorous tests.

In 1934, Luo Genze said: “The reason why we study the literary criticism history are, in term of criticism itself, to understand critical opinions from critics, and, more importantly, to probe into theories of criticism; and in term of literature, to introspect into past literature, to deeply comprehend the principles of criticism and literature, and to give correct guidance to future literature.”¹⁸ His opinion reveals the characteristics of the scientific knowledge system of centurial Chinese ancient literary theory. We can say that no matter it is “the theories of criticism” or it is “the principles of criticism and literature”, they are always first principles for all academic fields, which developed from natural law and guiding by scientism. The pursuit of literary criticism paradigm and principles, finally, turns into an academic standard of constructing literary theory subject and developing scientific research.

Guo Shaoyu puts forward two standards of studying and constructing literary criticism: “I always believe that the study on literary criticism history should lies on two standards. One is to do deeper research on these given materials, fixing problems rather than simply organizing them and giving an account. Why? Literary terms were not clearly defined in the past, so different people used them in different ways, causing the ambiguity of the meanings of these terms; or more strangely, the same term had more than one implication in the same book, increasing the difficulty to understand it. Therefore, we should analyze documents narrowly, not superficially. And the other standard is to grasp the Marxism-Leninism literary theory tightly, discovering the nature of problems and then using new perspective to draw new conclusions, which are capable of making proper comments on different theories, rather than simply making dogmatic conclusion. Only through combining these two standards together can we meet a higher and more perfect standard.”¹⁹ Guo’s propositions on academic construction, together with these “two standards”, become cardinal principles of constructing ancient Chinese literary theory system. By the standard on “literary terms on literary theory or criticism”, we mean to standardize and categorize those terms. And by “grasping the Marxism-Leninism literary theory tightly, discovering the nature of problems”, we mean to use some rational theories, like scientism and essentialism, to study, analyze and rebuild the system of Chinese ancient literary theory.

From the initial stage of subject construction, Chinese ancient literary theory, just as other Chinese subjects, mechanically copied and imitated modern Western subject system. And between 1980s and 1990s, scholars were encouraged to do internal study in ancient literary theory; while after 1990s, scholars were recommended to do external study. However, no matter what kind of studies they were, they were all simple transplantation from Western theories, like Wellekism, formalism and structuralism. Today, there is extremely clear boundary between ancient Chinese literary theory and other Chinese academic subjects, resulting in subject egoism. Therefore, it is urgent to find out the truth and essence of scientism in the process of constructing this subject. And if we can break completely with subject inertia and hegemony, we can finally re-value the paradigm of ancient literary theory.

¹⁸ Luo Genze, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1984, p. 7.

¹⁹ Guo Shaoyu, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1979, pp. 699-700.

Part 2 Centurial Problems in the Study of Chinese Ancient Literary Theory

Guo Shaoyu analyzed “the generation of literary criticism” in the introduction of *Zhongguo Gudai Wenxue Piping Shi*: “The generation and development of literary criticism are behind the generation and development of literature. After the generation and long-term development of literature, it asked to be organized, or in other word, criticized. And after the organization, it formed certain genres, from which we can not only differentiate literature from other academic fields, but also discover the resemblance between different literary genres and distinguish styles of literature. For this reason, *Shifu Lve* (詩賦略) becomes a significant part in *Yiwen Zhi* (藝文志), in that it is the origin of criticism and, too, selection, which means the second time criticism. Selection is always about choosing good things and abandoning bad things, and because of its man-choosing process, it is tightly related with people’s insight, a critical insight. Precursors of criticism often regarded criticism and literature as the same thing, which turned out to be reasonable to some extent. Hence, Zhi Yu’s (摯虞) *Liubie* (流別), and Li Chong’s (李充) *Han Lin* (翰林), which were regarded as a kind of literature, become the beginning of literary criticism. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that criticism is a part of literature. The next step is to make comment, or precisely, to evaluate, which was popular among Cao Pi (曹丕) and seven leading writers during the Jian An Period (建安七子). However, this kind of criticism is susceptible to be affected by one’s inclination, thus causing bias and blurring the standard of criticism; hence, criticism needs certain theories. And this is precisely the appearance of the criticism of criticism. After that, the criticism theory can not only guide the criticism, but also guide the writer. To this point, the true power of criticism is eventually brought into play, manifesting the connotation and value of literary criticism.”²⁰ What Guo said infers that, in his opinion, reorganization, selection and evaluation of literature are all components of literary criticism, and all the behavior related to criticism need a “criticism theory” to support. In other words, there must be a “criticism theory” hiding behind the behaviors of criticism. From this perspective, the criticism of criticisms destined to epitomize the essence of criticism, summarize a set of systematic principles of literary theory, and form a repertoire of models to criticism. And these are the core and the goal of the constructing of *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi Subject*. As for what can the principles of criticism actually do, Guo said that “it can function as a guidance both for authors and criticism itself”, means that criticism can transform itself into new behaviors of criticism, or even into a writer’s creation. And this is precisely the power of criticism. It is the scientific logic that leads to the self-evidence of the functions and principles of constructing ancient Chinese literary theory system. Hence, all of us should profoundly summarize, or even rethink, the criticism theory and the power of criticism.

Literary Aphasia and the Absence of Subject

Through the centurial construction of ancient Chinese literary theories, there appears a masterpiece, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Tongshi* (中國文學批評通史), which is highly appreciate for it realized Mr. Guo Shaoyu’s dream of establishing a system of criticism theory. Yet we still feel grieve, for there appears a point of view that Chinese criticism theory, which is depending on Western system, is suffering literary aphasia. Pitifully, this aphasia is not only a Chinese characteristic in constructing literary theory system, but also a weak spot for further development. Cao Shunqin (曹順慶) indicated in *Zaishuo Shiyuzheng* (再說失語症): “By literary aphasia I mean the pained deficiency of academic rules in Chinese culture and literary theory.” And

²⁰ Guo Shaoyu, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Publishing House, 1979, p. 1.

when it comes to the meaning of that deficiency, he said: “Lao-tzu once said that Tao that can be described is not a universal and eternal Tao (道可道, 非常道). And this phrase actually indicates the rules of Chinese subject. The methods, creating an image to explain one’s meaning and forgetting the means by which the end is attained (得意忘言), practically, establishes a set of relationship between words and meanings, emphasizing on the implication of words, or the meaning between the lines.”²¹ The problem of literary aphasia, raised by Cao Shunqin, is, actually an academic questioning to the systematism, scientism and theorization of ancient Chinese literary theory, querying the core belief of modern Chinese academic subject, or in other words, the validity issue of Western scientism. The modernization and systematism of ancient literary theory is, technically, a process of learning from West. During this procedure, we acquiesce in the inferiority of Chinese traditional culture, or, even worse, believe that Western culture stands for advance and modernization when facing the legitimacy of Western culture. This bias, on one hand, consolidates a superior position of Western culture, turning scientism into the ultimate goal of modern subject; on the other hand, discourages the development of local culture, leading to self-criticism, self-doubt, self-denial and self-defamation. The subject establishing on that condition, inescapably, would be conquered by post-colonialism.

The discussion of literary aphasia enables us to gradually recognize the essential problem of establishing modern subject of literary theory, and to recognize how Chinese cultural rules gets colonized and debased during the process of learning from West. As for what we really lost caused by literary aphasia, someone may say discourse rights, someone else may say the rule of culture; however, I believe that it is more complicated than the either way. Take Fenggu (風骨, vigor of style) for example. Wang Yunxi stated: “Fenggu is the pervasive demand proposed by plenty of writers and literary genres themselves”.²² Feng (風) means the vigorous spirit of the feelings and emotions of authors, and Gu (骨) means the vigorous style of the expressions using in the literature. To sum up, the combination of Feng and Gu is regarded as an aesthetic demand for writing, whose main character is the vigor of style. Yet Zhang Shaokang (張少康), another scholar, proposes another opinion: “Fenggu and Elegance of language are demands which are suggested by Liu Xie (劉勰), for writing a satisfactory composition, and here, the satisfaction should stands for its inner style as well as its outer form. Feng is closely related to emotions and feelings of works, but is not equal to the spirit of it; Gu is closely related to styles of works, but is not equal to expressions. Feng is a character of work affected by writer’s feelings and emotions, and Gu is a power represented by the content of the work.”²³ Comparing the definitions from these two scholars, we can find that their explanations do have great similarities, regardless of some little conflicts. Specifically, the similarity represents in three aspects: (1) The term of Fenggu should be categorized. Both scholars planned to give Fenggu a standard definition, as well as a clear and unchangeable academic meaning. (2) Fenggu is Westernized. The explanation of Fenggu lies on the juxtaposing binary opposites of content and form, thoughts and emotions. (3) Fenggu is essentialized. Both scholars believe that Fenggu is a demand in high standard and it belongs to the criticism of criticism or a theory of criticism, no matter it is in universality or estheticism. From this perspective, both scholars above suffered from literary aphasia, losing the capability to understand academic rules in Chinese culture.

²¹ Cao Shunqin, *Zaishuo Shiyuzheng*, Zhejiang Daxue Xuebao, 2006.

²² Wang Yunxi, Gu Yisheng, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi Xinbian* (中國文學批評史新編), Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2002, p. 131.

²³ Zhang Shaokang, *Zhongguo Wenxue Lilun Piping Fazhan Shi* (中國文學理論批評發展史), Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1995, pp. 244-245.

In term of the subject of expression, literary aphasia is not merely the formative problem on the surface, or the problem related to the outsider rules, but an inner one. And we believe that it is, practically, a subjective problem of the expression subject. In this way, the problem of Fenggu turns from explaining the phrase to the subject of explaining. Expression is simply the form to express, as academic rules are merely knowledge form of expression. Therefore, what do works is the subject that explaining things and applying cultural rule. In conclusion, the key to address the problem of literary aphasia is to clarify the problem of lacking cultural subject.

The Objectified Objectivism

A prerequisite of modern education at colleges and universities is that the knowledge passed on should be scientific, which means knowledge should maintain strict neutrality; or otherwise, the system of knowledge would be invalid and either illegal. American educationist Michael W. Apple has pointed out that the legitimacy of the scientism in modern educational knowledge at college is self-evident: "As we have seen, the usual traditions in both the sociology of education and in the field of curriculum treat school knowledge, those 'principles, ideas, and categories' that are preserved and reside in our educational institutions, as relatively neutral. The focus has been on measures of the acquisition of information, propensities, skills, and dispositions and the effect of such acquisition on later life. The greater the acquisition of such knowledge, the usual 'paradigms' go, the greater the success of the school."²⁴ The demand of maintaining scientific neutrality is to maintain objective, specific and standard, without any bias, interests and subjective emotion, in the process of constructing the knowledge system. In other words, in scientific activities, scientists are artificially recognized as an objective mirror, showing things as the way they are and never changing things. And the principle of the objectified objectivism in scientism is mechanically transplanted to the ancient literary theory construction. Only if every scholar studying literary theory is objective when doing research as well as reporting findings, the literary theory system can be powerful and authoritative. Once researchers offend the rule of objection, the achievements of research would be depreciated. For that, Zhu Dongrun, a researcher on literary theory, represents an academic awkwardness or narrative helplessness sense by saying in the preface of *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi Dagang*: "Someone once said that this book is more like a prose though it is about history, and someone else regarded this book as the criticism of criticism. If I am right, they both hold the opinion that whatever is in this book is not completely historical facts but some subjective deduction. Certainly, I confess that there naturally exists a little subjective judgment, but I want to state that all narrative thing would be affected by author's personal belief, no matter how he tries to avoid it... Here follows the first reason: History, to say the least, is always concerning the perspective of history, in that the historiographers always have their own positions, for which they can only see one side of what happens. It is true that we are encouraged to observe affairs from all perspectives, but an affair is an ensemble of plenty of sides, so there would never be an all-round view. The second reason is that: The record of history, with no doubt, is history; and the history of literary criticism is also history. Yet there are some distinctions between these two kinds of histories. And there comes the third reason: How can we pick up literary criticism from other works? Selection, of course. Selection is another way of judgment, and judgment means subjective. When we describe several critics, it is indispensable to compare one with another, as well as analyze their difference. And this is another judgment.

²⁴ Michael. W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, Taipei: Guiguan Tushu Gongsu, 2002, p. 239.

Therefore, the essence of the history of literary criticism is always the criticism.”²⁵ In scientists’ opinion, history is a subjective form of narration, for it should be scientific, rigorous and accurate; while prose is an objective form of narration, for its fancy and fiction. Some people regard Zhu Dongrun’s *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi Dagang* as a prose, and believe that Zhu disobeys the rule of scientism and objection. Apparently, this satiric comment annoys Zhu, so he lists three reasons to doubt of the absolute fidelity, objective research and narration. However, we can also find that Zhu unconsciously falls into the dead end of regarding objection as the rule of history, with which he defended himself that his work is scientific and conforming to the rules.

The construction of modern system of ancient Chinese literary theory is, taking it by and large, a scientific result of the objectified objection. Now, we take the term “Image (意象)” and “Idea-world (意境)”, whose definitions are always vague and controversial, as an example to explain that. *Zhongguo Gudian Shige de Yijing* (中國古典詩歌的意境) and *Zhongguo Gudian Shige de Yixiang* (中國古典詩歌的意象) by Yuan Xingpei (袁行霈), respectively, give modern explanations of this two term. Yuan said: “Image is an object mixed with subject feelings, or a subjective feeling represented by an object; while Idea-world is an artistic stage which compromises subjective feelings and objective things.”²⁶ Also, he believes that Image stands for individual object or situation, while Idea-world represents a world of feelings and objects. Idea-world is generated from Image, or precisely, without Image, there would not exist Idea-world. Even so, Idea-world is far more complicated than Image. Yuan’s definition of Image mainly focuses on the fusion of objective object and subjective feelings. This explanation system is based on the prerequisite that both the objectified object and subjective feeling are existing in the exact form they have at this moment, after which they would merge together. Apparently this system objectifies Image. And Idea-world, in Yuan’s theory, is, too, an existence, in spite of its more intricate meaning. Tao Wenpeng (陶文鵬), in *Yixiang Yu Yijing Guanxi Zhi Wojian* (意象與意境關係之我見), questions Yuan’s view that Idea-world is more complicated than Image; but he at least approves that it is important for Yuan to recognize that both Image and Idea-world are fusions of subjective feeling and objective object. In other words, Tao agrees with the opinion that Image and Idea-world are both existence that can equate with each other, while he also proposed an opposite opinion on the relationship of Image and Idea-world. From Tao’s perspective, the theory that regards Image as a component of Idea-world actually downsizes the meaning of Image, as well as belittling the function and value of Image. He figures that Idea-world is not always more sophisticated than Image, and sometimes they are equal, or even Image is more complex. To summarize, Tao’s theory on the relationship between Image and Idea-world is still a superficial reorganization of their relative sequence, and not deep enough to touch their subjective meanings. Jiang Yin (蔣寅), yet, expressed his dissatisfaction, in *Yuxiang Wuxiang Yixiang Yijing* (語象, 物象, 意象, 意境) at the theories of Image and Idea-world of Yuan Xingpei and Tao Wenpeng. He attempts to re-define Image and Idea-world from linguistic structuralism by adding the concepts of Verbal Image (語象) and Objective Image (物象) into it. He states: “The nature of Image is an object with poetic reflection, that an object which is described in the poetic context. Something well-known becomes rich in poetic flavor, and seems concrete from the outside, as it is described in the context of poetry”. He treats Image as an “object”, which is full of “poetic reflection” and “being described”, thus the object functions not only as an objective object existing in objective world, but also as an objective object existing, with the meaning of intuitionism and psychologism in mind. He

²⁵ Zhu Dongrun, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping Shi Dagang*, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Publishing House, 2001, pp. 5-6.

²⁶ Yuan Xingpei, *Zhongguo Shige Yishu Yanjiu* (中國詩歌藝術研究), Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1996, pp. 23-62.

says: “Verbal Image is a fundamental image to poetry from existentialism. And as a structural unit of context, it is regarded as a minimum unit which is indivisible. Objective Image, however, is contained in the concept of Verbal Image; and Image is composed of Verbal Image in different narrative sequence.” In other words, Jiang Yin uses the term Objective Image to represent the meaning of Image’s objectified object, as well as uses the term Verbal Image to represent the meaning of Image’s representative subject, regulating the scale of unit of these two concept, and paving the way to introduce of Idea-world. Hence, he explains that Image is a set of symbolic system, which is an emotion that expressed by author, mixed with feelings and natural settings. From this perspective, Jiang Yin’s understanding of Idea-world is no longer limited in the extant relationship between object and subject, but eventually become an objective system with linguistic structural symbols, which is composed of objective objects. And furthermore, the objectified object is composed of objective Verbal Image, which is based on Objective Image that stands for concrete unit. At the end of this book, he summarized: “Verbal image is a literary symbol in the poetry with the ability to evoke subjective feelings; hence, it becomes the bricks of the text. Objective Image is a sub-category of Verbal Image, thus it refers in particular to Verbal Image composed by concrete objects. Image, mixed with the emotion and feeling from author, is a significant structure of Verbal Image, so it is an important part of poetry; while Idea-world is, definitely, a complete and perfect text. The relationship between Image and Idea-world is just like part against entirety, or unit against structure. The association of a series of Verbal Image or Image, through the process of forming a text, is Idea-world.” Judging by appearance, Jiang Yin builds a pyramid system to explaining Objective Image, Verbal image, Idea-world and Image. When studying this system deeper, we would find that his linguistic structural objectivism is more complicated and more complete than Yuan Xingpei’s intuitive objectivism, though all the term in Jiang’s system is regarded as extant existence, which mean that this system is still belong to “objectified objectivism”.

To transcend the dualism between object and subject, schools like phenomenism, existentialism and constructivism have all done plenty of researches. And we can draw a conclusion from their results that only through de-constructing the neutrality and authority of scientism and objectivism that can we finally liberate the terminologies which were once objectified by artificial and imposed rules, and shed light on their natural value both in culture and society.

De-contextualization

“De-contextualization” refers to splitting literary expressions, which originally belong to social expression behavior, from the social context, especially from the expression practice, and letting them to be re-understood and re-explained out of the context. After we separate the literary expressions out of the social context, we will face something that does not belong to historical truth, but some scattered pseudo-facts. And the reason causing these splits is the subjective understanding activities, it is a kind of artificially forced fragmentation. The things which can be perceived when perceiving “decontextualized” symbol system can only be literal meaning and symbolic form conveyed by the context, so this “scientific” knowledge is naturally confined artificially within the rigid sense.

In the construction of literary theory, the most typical approach of “de-contextualization” is categorization. In English, category refers not only category itself, but also classification. Let’s talk about classification first. Classification is to classify things into many categories. Hence, this classification is an artificial behavior, based on a predetermined human characteristic, classifying things into many categories, thus forming an order of

things. The second is category. What is category? Zhang Dainian (張岱年) said: “Category indicates that there actually exists a unity, a universal norms or a universal connection.”²⁷ And Wang Yonghao (汪勇濤) states that “category reflects the thinking mode of understanding the nature of the object as well as the scope and variety of it. It reveals the regulated contacts in objective world and objective things, so it has logical sense as well as ontological significance.”²⁸ Combining all of the discussions above, we may find that category actually includes several characteristics as follows: Firstly, it has universal, general or ontological meaning. Secondly, it has universal norms of classification. Thirdly, de-contextualization. Origin events, which occur in practice, after categorization, would no longer have social relations between them, but get a more abstract, theoretical relationship between them.

The source of the research on categorization of literary theory can be traced back to Wang Guowei (王國維). In his *Renjian Cihua* (人間詞話), he picks up the concept of “Idea-world” specially, and then differentiates “Idea-world with ego (有我之境)” with “Idea-world with non-ego (無我之境)”, “creating Idea-world (造境)” and “describing Idea-world (寫境)”, “fictional Idea-world (理想)” and “realistic Idea-world (寫實)”, “with Idea-world (有境界)” and “without Idea-world (無境界)”, “objective poet (客觀之詩人)” and “subjective poet (主觀之詩人)”, “divided (隔)” and “undivided (不隔)”, “hidden (隱)” and “show (秀)”, based on which he explains the connotation of “Idea-world”. In recent years, the category theory becomes a popular academic trend, and even becomes a unique event in the study of Literary Theory. There appears plenty of achievements in this aspect, like *Zhongguo Gudai Meixue Fanchou* (中國古代美學範疇) by Zeng Zuyin (曾祖蔭), *Zhongguo Gudai Meixue Fanchou Yu Chuantong Wenhua* (中國古代美學範疇與傳統文化) by Zhang Hao (張皓), and especially the series of books, which have shown great impact on the society, called “*Chinese Classical Aesthetic Category Series* (中國古典美學範疇叢書)”, including *He: Zhongguo Gudian Shenmei Lixiang* (和: 中國古典審美理想) by Yuan Jixi (袁濟喜), *Zhongguo Gudian Meixue Fenggu Lun* (中國古典美學風骨論) by Wang Yonghao, etc. In 2001, the first volume of “*Chinese Aesthetic Category Books* (中國美學範疇叢書)” including *YijingTanwei* (意境探微) by Gu Feng (古風), were published by Jiangxi Baihuazhou Art Publishing House. And in 2005, the second volume of “Chinese Aesthetic Category Books” was published. These series of books are all in large-scale, and they together provide a comprehensive interpretation of the core categories in ancient Chinese Literary theory, such as Comparison and Metaphor (比興), Fenggu, Interests (趣味), Naturality (自然), Elegance and Vulgarity (雅俗), Imagination (神思), Literary Characters (文質), Literary Qi (文氣), reflecting a principle of rethinking scientism.

The stereotype of categorization is also reflected in some organizing works, such as *Zhongguo Gudai Wunlun Leibian* (中國古代文論彙編) published by Haixia Art Publishing House. In the process of organizing and classifying ancient Chinese literary theory, we adopted categories like “Poetry expressing one’s ideals (詩言志)”, “Idea-world”, “Body and Spirit (形神)”, “Fu, comparison and metaphor (賦比興)” and so on; And if classifying literature according to dynastic times consecutively, we would find that it has already been a categorization system itself. *Zhongguo Gudian WenyiXue Congbian* (中國古典文藝學叢編), published by Peking University Press, edited by Hu Jingzhi (胡經之), divides classical literary theory into three parts, respectively creation, works and reception. In the “creation” part, there are fourteen small types including Comparison and Metaphor, Imagination, Xujing (虛靜), Miaowu (妙悟), Literary Qi, etc; In the “works” part,

²⁷ Zhang Dainian, *Zhongguo Gudian Zhexue Gainian Fanchou Yaolun* (中國古典哲學概念範疇要論), Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1987, p. 5.

²⁸ Wang Yonghao, *Fanchou Lun* (範疇論), Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1999, p. 2.

there are fourteen other types including Image, Idea-world, neutralization (中和), Literary Genres (文体), continuity and change (通变), etc. And in “reception” part, there exist ten types including Beauty and Ugly (美丑), Interests, Fenggu, Naturality, etc. Hu believes that “categories are knots in the ideology network. And if we comprehend things from knots, and clarify the links between knots, we would eventually grasp all of the knowledge in this network.” Only through grasping the inherent logic of the basic category and understanding the theoretical value and historical development of the category can we study literature and arts more thoroughly.

During the development of modernization, ancient literary theory becomes one of the typical knowledge fields of Western-centrism, scientism and post-colonialism, as well as falls into a kind of pure scientific knowledge study of “de-contextualization”.

Part 3 Reconstruction of Re-sinicization and Re-pragmatism of Ancient Chinese Literary Theory

We roughly summarized the achievements and problems during the modernization process of ancient Chinese literary theory study above, thus realizing that the scientism of euro-centrism and subject-sectionalism has caused academic defects, and even barrier to rebuilding Chinese ancient literary theory system. Particularly, the problems of Western knowledge-pattern resulted in Occidentalization and neocolonialisation of the study of literary theory. Therefore, only through questioning the literary pattern of scientism, objectified objectivism, de-contextualization and decomposing the literary rules built by Westerners can we finally discover Chinese cultural characteristics and build up our own cultural self-consciousness and realize the true value of Chinese classical culture.

Reconstruction of Re-sinicization

Elites in May Fourth Period introduced the idea of science and democracy, which they have regarded as a panacea for Chinese social crisis, to our country, in order to realize the great revival of Chinese nation. With the deepening development of Westernization, Chinese traditional culture is gradually misinterpreted and even gets self-based. As the time goes by, Chinese value is completely conquered by scientism of Western-centralism, and local traditional culture is tortured, and even twisted. Those terrible changes result in the loss of our own self-identification, leaving modern Chinese, who are tamed by modernization, scientism and Westernization, a serious question, “Who am I?” This question, asked by people who suffer from identical anxiety and cultural loss, is no longer personal; it is national now, in that the whole generation of contemporary Chinese is under frustration and depression while they sense the loss of familiar things, like tradition.

After centurial development of Westernization, scientization and systematization, reconstructing real Chinese literary theory becomes more difficult of solution. To achieve that goal, we need to avoid extreme behaviors: being hostile to Western culture and being stubborn in sinicization. While the former persists in that we should discard everything from West including their essence, the latter believes that all Chinese traditions including dross should be preserved. Aiming to keep away from those two extremes, we should reorganize the concept of sinicization: reconstructing the nationality, humanity and ecologism of modern Chinese in order to go through their crises in spirit, culture and identity successfully.

There is a significant question on Re-sinicization: what is the real propose of that? Just to preserve the traditions? Or to make the past serve the present? Preserving the traditions for its own sake, a typical Western

cognitive pattern is too simple, ideal, and entertainable to fulfill the cultural needs of modern Chinese; while making the past serve the present seems qualified as a modern guidance spirit to reconstruct Chinese ancient literary theory, though we need to differentiate it from the concept of “modernization of ancient literary theory”. In terms of that, Cao Shunqin once said: “By that we do not mean to simply, or stiffly translate ancient concept into modern mode, but to explain ancient poetry in ancient ways. Similarly, reconstructing the discourse of ancient literary theory is neither simply restoring ancient ways nor trying to combine traditional poetics with modern poetics to solve the problem of ‘literary aphasia’, which may occur after Western poetics completely defeating ours.”²⁹ Briefly, the modernization of ancient literary theory emphasizes on “explaining ancient poetry in ancient ways”, applying ancient poetics to modern literary criticism and laying emphasis on the modern effect and practice of ancient literary discourse. However, in other side, it would also confuse people by its resemblance to replicating ancient literary discourse to modern criticism, leading people to mistake the real cultural spirit and essence of ancient literary theory. Therefore, the true re-sinicization is no longer simply activating ancient discourse, but re-activating the great intelligence and spirit of ancients, re-lightening national literary characters, rethinking the legitimacy and rationality of Western value in modern literary theory, and eventually constructing a new method of literary theory to pass on cultural spirits and existential wisdom.

Another question comes out: what is the approach to sinicizing the literary theory? Some scholars consider that we should restore the ancient culture without any change, that we totally replicate traditional culture. However, this approach has two lethal disadvantages: lacking the pertinence of the culture and causing new doubts, like the possibility and the necessity of keeping ancient culture intact. Also, people may mistake restoring culture as cultural retrogress. Hence, the returning of sinicization should be a root-seeking process, the local part of universal root-seeking activity, to find out the root of Chinese and Chinese culture, which may have been lost in the developing process of Westernization. We all know that ancient literary theory is the result of poetic wisdom and rational thoughts of ancients, reflecting the thinking model of Chinese, so it would definitely enhance vigor and vitality to the root-seeking activity.

Finally, what is the destiny of sinicization? Back to the ancients’ culture? Or seek cultural dialogue? Restoring ancients’ culture means advocating ancient models and applying ancient culture to present situation while ignoring the actual literary difference between past and today. This ignorant, as completely duplicating Western knowledge patterns, can lead to radical thoughts of ancient literary theory. So it is necessary for two different era’s cultures to have a dialogue, which is widely accepted as an effective way to realize sinicization of literary theory. Cultural dialogue has the capacity to cause collisions, competitions and even quarrels between traditional culture and modern culture in individual way or group way. Only through those critical and competitive dialogues can we re-find and re-activate feasibility and effectiveness of Chinese traditional culture, and truly understand the difference between tradition and modern, and return actively to Chinese cultural essence, and eventually recognize cultural identity of subject. During these cultural dialogues, subject of culture returns from the Westerner’s to the Easterner’s, which helps cultural subject to turn his cultural crisis and cultural anxiety to cultural recognition. Only in this way can we truly finish the root-seeking process and realize the great revival of Chinese nation.

Most importantly, the goal of sinicization of ancient Chinese literary theory is to return itself to Chinese historical context because the Western method which deliberately divides spiritual and cultural background has

²⁹ Cao Shunqin, Cong Shiyuzheng, Huayuchongjian, Dao Yizhixing (從失語症話語重建到異質性), *Wenyi Yanjiu*, 1999.

been proved to be inappropriate when applying it to Chinese traditional culture, particular its Western-typical faith of de-humanization, de-cultrualization, de-contextualization and de-historicalization. Ancient literary theory is one way proving the existence of ancient Chinese, and it is also closely related to the spiritual world, the society, the living conditions and the cultural characters of ancient Chinese, so it is an inter-disciplinary, diversified, indigenous and typical part of culture. Through returning to Chinese historical context, specially traditional spirit context and historical culture context, we can find the way in which ancient Chinese thought about literary expression can create new culture and came up with self-renewal.

In conclusion, the “de-eurocentrism” and “de-colonization” in Chinese ancient literary theory study is to break up with Western modern knowledge pattern. Because it is the only way to realize our own cultural self-consciousness, to legitimate local knowledge, to foster self-identity and cultural identity to go through Chinese cultural crisis, to combine academic construction with Chinese dreams, to encourage the development of cultural discourse, and to improve national culture-confidence.

Reconstruction of Re-pragmatism

According to Zhang Jiang (張江), contemporary Western literary theory is too far-fetched and too inefficient to be applied to Chinese literary practice. Concerning the problem of reconstructing Chinese literary theory, he said: “The construction of Chinese literary theory should lies on three major ideas. The first is to abandon the excessive emphasis on foreign theory, and return to our own literary practice. The next is to follow the road of nationalization, getting back to the Chinese context and absorbing ideas from Chinese traditional literary theory. And the last is to comprehend and handle the relationship between the external and internal research, which is essential for constructing the research paradigm that achieves dialectical unification.”³⁰ From this perspective, his blueprint for future Chinese literary theory has certain academic value because he has already analyzed the inefficiency and limitations of applying Western knowledge paradigm to Chinese literary practice, and then he points out the direction of reconstructing Chinese literary theory based on that, though he never clearly puts forward the idea of breaking completely with Western mode. In addition, while we are rethinking or even criticizing scientism, we also need to deconstruct the single mode and value of Western culture, and jump out of the dead end of regarding ancient literary theory as a pure cognitive object, and break out from the limitation of academic departmentalism, and combine literary theory with social context, and undergo a sinicized knowledge transformation of academic vision. Briefly, the reconstruction of Chinese literary theory is not only the sinicization of idea, but also the pragmatism of methods.

There are two indivisible aspects that can explain the re-pragmatism in Chinese literary theory’s rebuilding: the criticism practice and the re-practice.

From the criticism perspective, we should make it clear that ancient literary theory cannot provide any fixed patterns or criticism principles to modern literary criticism, literary appreciation or criticism of criticism, because all of the systematic construction of ancient literary theory is a knowledge-based and scientific construction, which means that it is inappropriate to stand for Chinese culture. However, ancient literary theory is also an ancient way to express, or an ancient condition that Chinese lived in, while modern literary theory is a present way to express, or a present condition that Chinese lives in. From this angle, these two perspectives have cultural isomorphism and continuity. Fang Xiaoyue (方孝岳) once said: “Not everyone is a writer, but everyone can be a literary critic; otherwise, literature would be valueless. People criticize sounds, tastes, sights

³⁰ Zhang Jiang, Dangdai Xifang Wenlun Ruogan Wenti Bianxi (當代西方文論若干問題辨析), *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, 2014.

and smells by quality and beauty at every moment. Those criticisms, as an instinct of human, are the central of our daily life. Though some people are very professional while some are amateurs, they all have the ability to criticize. In other words, everyone is a critic.”³¹ Though Fang ignored the limits of criticizing as well as the problem of cultural identity, his belief that everyone can be a critic reminds us to emphasize on the subject spirit and cultural value showing in ancients’ criticism. Modern Chinese people, as existent beings, should think about how to criticize and judge literature in ancient way, and to criticize and rethink problems of literary criticism and cultural value, and even to learn from the spirits created by ancients. On one hand, it can handle problems of literary aphasia in the study of literary theory; on the other hand, it can reconstruct discourse and evaluation with ethnic characteristics. Particularly, the method of ancients to combine individuals with the whole world can avoid the problem of binary opposite relations of subjectivism and objectivism, spirit and substance, essence and appearance, as well as to help people to jump out of the rigid thinking set of scientism and logicism, which would lead to the transformation in patterns and principles of literary theory.

We now concentrate on the second perspective of re-pragmatism, which is closely related to the reconstruction and transformation of ancient literary theory. Foremost, we need to give up scientism and objectified objectivism, and to acknowledge that ancient literary theory is an expressed practice of ancients. Only in this way could we rebuild new sinicized paradigm of literary theory. And only breaking with the blind worship of scientism can we deeply understand the way that ancients expressed themselves in, as well as their expression strategy. Now, we explain the possibility of reconstructing literary theory from the following three aspects.

Firstly, ancient literary theory is a cultural expression of the understanding of theorists’ own worlds. In phenomenology, theorists, just like ordinary people, are present existents in the world. We need to realize that it is wrong to regard theorists as simple existents, because this phrase denies the presence of theorists. Similarly, people believing in intuitionism, empiricism and structuralism also lay stress on simple existent rather than present existent, veiling the world of presence. On the other hand, we need to avoid cultural imagination of mysticism and primitivism, as well as the spiritual materialization of subjectivism and psychologism, and the selfishness of existentialism. Great thinkers like Confucius (孔子), Laozi (老子), Zhuangzi (莊子) and Mencius (孟子) are all theorists with inner worlds, and their cultural expressions of social world, spiritual world, future world and theory value are actually manifestations of their understanding of their inner world. They not only repeat other’s cultural discourses, but also express their own existence and social circumstance. Hence, researches of literary theories of ancients would not only give us the cognition of their lives, but also make us understand the spiritual world and social world of ancients, realizing their existential wisdom and how they determine themselves by cultural expression. In this way, we no longer simply study characters and languages; instead, we are studying the meaning and the status of their existence. Yet we should also remind ourselves that we couldn’t stick to the inner world of ancients, because it may lead us to fall into the quagmire of subjectivism. And to avoid the flaw of subjectivism, we need to study on how inner worlds of ancients formed and what their structures are.

Secondly, ancient literary theory is bonded with social structure of ancients. If the first possibility which is explained in detail above shows the existence of human, this part, the second possibility, would represent that human is something that belong to society, which means that social co-existence is the first state of beings of

³¹ Fang Xiaoyue, *Zhongguo Wenxue Piping* (中國文學批評), Shanghai: Shijie Shuju, 1936, p. 1.

human and that the social structure or existence are all included in human's own world. When we trace the world of theorist's to the existence of human beings, we can avoid the criticism of absolute subjectivism. Society, without any doubts, is a structural and hierarchical system, so no matter we are modern people or ancients, no matter we are sages or ordinary people, we all exist in the social system full of rules, and no one can jump out of it. In other words, everyone is equal when faced with social rules. Someone may ask: what about Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi (荀子), Mozi (墨子) and Hanfeizi (韓非子) who are fond of participating in politics? What about Laozi, Zhuangzi and these immortal in Wei and Jin Dynasties with utopianism? And what about the hermit Tao Yuanming (陶淵明)? Did they live in the social system? Absolutely. No one in the world can be an exception. Therefore, the sociality of human is entrenched, and the two worlds, both inside and outside of people's heart, are bonded together with coherence. And in term of that, someone may equate these worlds, believing that this conclusion is not true, in that it is trapped into the theory of objectivism, materialism and Marxism. To explain this, we should realize that what we discuss now is the coherence of these worlds, not confusing one with another.

Thirdly, ancient literary theory is the result of symbolic construction in expression practice. We create a world of theorist between social world and symbolic world. Though it seems a little complicated, it at least avoids direct links between social world and symbolic world, as well as avoids equating them or completely differentiating them. Actually, symbolic world is an expression world, so what world is related to it most closely? Without doubt, it is more closed to theorist's own world; however, we cannot equate them, in that the expression of theorist is a social activity, with the limits of culture, literature and even politics. When faced with the same expressed object, the world of their own would be changed with the change of the outside world, and this is what we called: the theorists' adaption to the changing circumstances. Thus we now understand that symbol represents the world, which is generated from theorists' world but is not equal to that world. In the meantime, we shall know that the theorists' own world is generated from social world, but is also not equal to that world. Grasping the knowledge of where the literary symbolic world is born and how it forms, we should also clarify the meaning of constructivism, tropism and tactic of symbolic expression when we are studying the symbolic world.

Take some important theories for example, such as "poetry can contain author's annoyance (詩可以怨)" (Confucius), "expressing one's self for being angry (發憤抒情)" (Qu Yuan, 屈原), "writing for being angry (發憤著書)" (Si Ma Qian, 司馬遷), "Expressing for being angry (不平則鳴)" (Han Yu, 韓愈), "creating beautiful poetry for being in trouble (詩窮後工)" (Ouyang Xiu, 歐陽修). They can all be explained as the following sentence: only people in troubles can finally create desirable poetry. Qian Zhongshu (錢鍾書) said: "Pains, rather than happiness, can encourage the creation of poetry. Good poetries are all about venting one's depression and annoyance. This is not only the normal theme in literary theory, but also the cliché for writing."³² We may question that if they are really the twice-tell stories or clichés. As a matter of fact, the clichés, which are more susceptible to be ignored, may deserve more studies. Qian's explanation is actually a superficial understanding, and in detail, there are some problems: first, he ignored the existent world of introducer's; second, he ignored the social expression activities; third, he ignored the historical objectivism of symbolic world. If we enrich the author's world, social world and symbolic world, and then integrate them together, we would find that the real meaning concerning society, relationship and the whole world of themes,

³² Qian Zhongshu, Shi Keyi Yuan (詩可以怨), *Wenyi Pinglun*, 1981.

such as “poetry can containing author’s annoyance”, “writing for being angry”, would be eventually revealed. And through that, we can break with the simple explanation limited in knowledge, because the words are activated, and it also re-attain the practical meaning that has once been abandoned, forgotten and ignored in the process of pragmatism.

The idea of re-pragmatism, compared with research paradigm of Western scientism, is more humanistic, more practical and more socialized, though it may be more difficult to operate or may face more problems resulting from the complicated relationship between symbolic world and theorists’ own world, literary expression and social relationship. However, only through sinicizing and practicing the literary theory that looks like common sense can we construct new literary knowledge of nationality and locality, and understand the meaning of ancient expressions in the literary theory, and realize the true transformation of literary theory research.

Conclusion

Great achievement has been won in the field of ancient literature theories. Firstly, it is showed in the collection and reorganization of ancient literary theory. It helps us to sort out important literary theory monographs, and provides us the possibility to select literary theories and classify them. Briefly, theories on Poetry Notes, Ci Notes, Fu Notes, Wen Notes (文話) and drama theory have all reaped fruits. What’s more, the achievement is also embodied in the construction of modern literary theory system, which is tightly related to the subject construction in colleges. Finally, it is reflected in the scientization of research methods. The subject construction of ancient literary theory carries through the academic discourse and value of Western modernization, showing the west-hegemony of Western scientism and modernization.

Flaws still exist in the process of constructing ancient literary theory system. Firstly, there is a phenomenon of literary aphasia, for the excessive emphasis on academicism and systematism. And it is also caused by the lack of cultural subject and confidence. Secondly, in order to meet the scientific and neutralized standards, there comes the objectified objectivism, falling into the absolute binary opposition of object and subject, which makes some literary discourses be objectified consciously or unconsciously. Thirdly, literary discourses are undergoing the de-contextualization. Literary discourses are artificially divided, typically in categorization of literary theory, constructing theoretical relationship of literary theory from category study.

Faced with the problems of literary theory, we realize that there exists a cultural barrier to truly develop literary theory because of the Western-centralism and scientism. Therefore, we put forward the idea of forming self-confidence to our culture, and make local explanation of ancient literary theory. First, ancient literary theory must re-sinicize. It does not mean discarding Western culture completely or legitimating Chinese ancient culture completely, but to reconstruct locality and ecology of Chinese modernization to solve the crises of culture and identity. Second, the ancient literary theory should re-practice, which is not equal to duplicating discourse and value of ancient literary theory in order to encourage modern literary criticism. It is to understand the existential wisdom and discourse creation of ancients in constructing literary theory, particularly to underscore the practice of discourse of ancients and to comprehend the relationship between discourse creation and social context.

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