

Wordsworth's and Prishvin's Views on Literary Ecology

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Abstract: *Russian ecological literature writers and British "Lake Poets School" writers in the 19th century were determined to build their literary values by appreciating the natural world. Due to diverse circumstances as well as personal experiences, the two countries' writers have their respective views on nature, ecology, attitudes towards life, and writing styles. Based on the issues above, this paper conducts a detailed textual reading of the works of Wordsworth and Prishvin. From the perspective of natural ecology, it compares and interprets the similarities, mutual influences, and cultural characteristics of Russian ecological writers represented by Prishvin and British romanticist poet Wordsworth as well as their respective cultural characteristics.*

Keywords: *Wordsworth; Prishvin; Ecological Literature; Nature*

1. Introduction

Although the Russian ecological literature and the English "Lake Poets" in the early 19th century romanticism belong to the two literary trends of literature in different regions and cultural backgrounds of different times, the attachment and love of Russian and British writers to their native land and life make them unwittingly choose to build their literary world by relying on the natural world. Due to the difference of social environment, natural environment and personal experience, the natural view, ecological view, attitude to life and style of works of Russian ecological writers and British romantic writers "Lake Poets school" poets in the early 19th century all present different characteristics. Russian ecological literature has been emerging since the late 19th century, but academic attention to it has only begun in recent decades. English literature is the first western literature to pay attention to ecology, which can be traced back to the "Lake Poets school" in the romantic stage of the early 19th century. The British "Lake Poets", represented by writer Wordsworth, eulogized nature with its sensitive and clear vision at the beginning of the natural ecological crisis, demonstrated the natural color and aesthetic spiritual realm, and called for the harmonious coexistence and integration of human and nature.

2. Wordsworth: A Pioneer of Ecological Thought

Wordsworth was an early representative writer of Romantic literature in the 19th century England, with a forward-looking ecological perspective.[1] When we carefully read Wordsworth's works, we can feel his attachment to nature as expressed in his works, hoping to be close to nature and harmonious coexistence with humanity.

2.1 Types of Poetry Influenced by the Post-Industrial Revolution and Pre-Romanticism

In the 19th century, human consciousness of conquest gradually emerged and the Industrial Revolution allowed humans to hold a condescending attitude towards nature attempting to conquer and dominate it. At the same time, Rousseau's slogan of "returning to nature" caused a change in consciousness in the social and cultural field. As a result, the British Romantic poet Wordsworth initiated a turn in ecological literature. Wordsworth was the earliest writer to possess ecological consciousness. In the preface to his "Lyric Ballads Collection," he pointed out that he often chooses rural life as the theme and pays attention to the plot and events that occur in daily life. There is a more direct connection between these pastoral lives and various basic emotions of humans, as the author believes. One is that people's emotions are in a purer style in these rural lives, so they can be more

accurately and naturally expressed through thinking; The second is that various customs in a leisurely rural life are inspired by these emotions; Finally, it is because in this pastoral life, human passion is combined with the wonderful eternal patterns contained in nature.[2]

Wordsworth describes the natural scenery of the Northern Lake District in England, mainly in colloquial terms, filled with sincere emotions and imagination, all of which reveal the author's love for nature. In "Tintern Abbey", the poet describes flowing springs, towering mountains, quiet fields, lush maple trees, the afterglow of the sunset, the mountain breeze in the mist... all these free and self-reliant images are endowed with infinite vitality by the author. "How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer thro' the woods". [3] After escaping from urban civilization, the poet, as the subject of understanding, seeks the power of inner peace from the natural landscape. The scene before him is a fetter deep in memory, a hobby, a desire, and represents a spiritual guidance and gift. The simple and simple scenery in front of us embodies the poet's ideal state of forgetting the boundaries between things and myself, and being interdependent with nature.

2.2 Simple and Pure Language Reflected by the View of Nature

Wordsworth's highest demand for poetry is nature, especially for language that is natural and pure. He selects language from the spoken language of rural people and uses "pleasant" as the standard, eliminating vulgar elements and using prose to write poetry, replacing those magnificent and elegant rhymes. In his poem "Daffodils", Wordsworth implemented poetic and picturesque language to lead readers into a world of golden daffodils, lush greenery, and a refreshing breeze. He compared himself to a solitary wandering white cloud and suddenly discovers a large expanse of golden daffodils stretching his waist while wandering in the valley. The author felt that they are as agile and cute as small elves, delighting and inspiring people for a long time. Hence, clusters of yellow daffodils twinkled like stars. The daffodils were not only delicate flowers, but also symbol of the beauty of nature representing a passionate life. They swayed and danced in the wind, embodying happiness and beauty. Wordsworth recorded the scenery with his eyes, comparing himself to floating clouds, expressing his desire for freedom. The swaying daffodils in the wind made the author instantly understand how beautiful life was, and the beauty of nature could purify the soul. This poem embodied the author's admiration for all things in nature, attachment to everything in nature, and desire to integrate with the nature.

In his work 'We Are Seven', Wordsworth praised the innocence and kindness of children through a dialogue between children and adults, and also brought readers into his poetic palace that shines with the beauty of human nature. Overall, Wordsworth's language is fresh, concise, and natural, full of love and attachment to nature.

2.3 Theme of Harmony between Man and Nature

The theme and language are inseparable, and only rural life is a worthy theme for poetry. The emotions of rural life are more simple and sincere. In "Daffodils", Wordsworth not only emphasized the harmony between all things in nature, but also the inherent mysterious connection between humans and all things in nature, reflecting a clear holistic view of ecological harmony. The poet compared himself to a floating cloud floating alone, and the leisure and freedom of the white clouds were reflected on the poet, endowing him with a natural human nature. When describing all things in nature, the poet also used anthropomorphic techniques, such as comparing daffodils swaying in the wind to dancing in the wind like a human. All things in nature were integrated with humans, and the divinity and humanity of nature are integrated, presenting an internal similarity and harmonious whole. In other words, the natural beauty here harmoniously integrates with the spiritual and artistic conception of humans, reaching the realm of harmony between heaven and man. Humans also break free from the loneliness and solitude of the mortal world and return to their spiritual home in harmony with all things in nature.

He further wrote in "Ode to Duty" that the endless desires of humanity have become a burden, and only responsibility can manage our hearts. When the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution first emerged, Wordsworth undoubtedly held a perception that transcended time and space. Therefore, the ecological holistic view provides us with a highly valuable path for building a sustainable society, and also provides us with new ideas for re understanding the practical significance of ecological literature.

The relationship between human and nature is intimate in Wordsworth's works, and humans cannot endlessly demand or even recklessly destroy nature. Wordsworth's criticism of the destruction of civilization by the Industrial Revolution is already based on a higher perspective of human civilization

development. He expressed his ecological view and the development direction of human civilization at this time. In addition, Wordsworth not only has a desire and admiration for nature, but also holds the concept of protecting and even saving the environment and human society. These concepts have even pioneered modern ecological and environmental protection, playing a profound pioneering role in human ecological and environmental protection. The unique poetry created by Wordsworth had a huge impact on the Romantic poetry revolution in England, and even had an irreplaceable role in world poetry and literature.

3. Prishvin's Ecological Works and Their Thoughts

Prishvin is known as one of the most outstanding masters of philosophical prose in Russian and world literature. He referred to the genre of his works as "poetic Neo-Confucianism", and he himself is considered the first Soviet "natural essay" and "Thoreau of Russia". He once said, "We have a blood relationship with all things in nature, and we should now restore this relationship with care that seems like family members." His works combine nature with daily life and human emotions, treating the "earth itself" as the "protagonist of the story." Influenced by personal aestheticism, his works are filled with a typical warm and delicate style, which is a literature that "readers aged 9 to 99" love to read. The article "The Golden Grass" in Prishvin showcases childhood, childlike charm and love for nature.

3.1 Russian Approach to Nature - Hunting Culture

Prishvin depicted nature through travel and hunting, not only exploring the relationship between humans and nature, but also contemplating how humans and nature should coexist harmoniously. In "The Calendar of Nature", Prishvin arranged the content structure based on four seasons, meticulously depicting animals and plants, and combining these materials accumulated during his travels to form the hunting story of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Gorky once commented on Prishvin: "I have never seen a Russian writer who can blend knowledge and love for land so harmoniously." Other writers of that era, although they were also singers of nature, only regarded nature as a background and an emotional rendering. Prishvin, on the other hand, attempted to gain a deeper understanding of the daily surroundings, with nature being the main theme of Prishvin's creations. Prishvin's hunting complex was mainly influenced by family [4]. His father was an excellent hunter and horticulturist, leaving a lifelong companion in the fruit grove for Prishvin and teaching him to use hunting to understand and get close to nature. His father said that the expression of love for nature is hunting in Russian folklore, which is a way for people to understand and integrate into nature. In his childhood, what impressed Prishvin the most was when his father and hunters gathered together to chat about nature. The dense forests and various novel animals and plants not only enriched the language of Prishvin, but also filled his heart with brave imagination, becoming his inexhaustible driving force for exploration in the future.

In order to complete the ecological research of "forest hierarchy", he even went to the forest to investigate specific locations, experience and understand nature. Prishvin prefers forests with rich vegetation and prefers hunting in them, which is the best way to integrate into nature. His works "Grey Owl", "Ginseng", and autobiographical novel "The Chain of the Evil Old Man" all contain a reverence for nature and those creatures. The Eyes of the Earth "is also full of fable like ecological ideas and even environmental concepts, which is nearly a decade earlier than the works of Carson, the founder of world ecological literature. Prishvin occupies an important position in the history of world ecological literature.

Human beings are a part of the natural biological chain and a part of the ecosystem, which is Russia's understanding of ecology. In addition, the ecological ideas of Prishvin in the 20th century were also influenced by the Romantic ideas of 19th century Britain, especially Wordsworth's view of nature. Wordsworth believed that humans and all things in nature are one. Wordsworth pursued tranquility and pure nature, rather than destroying it due to the needs of industrial civilization.

3.2 Natural Views under the Influence of Eastern Orthodox Culture

Russia has had a profound religious culture since ancient times, and their belief in Eastern Orthodoxy is the development of Christianity in Eastern Europe. Not only the Orthodox Church influences Russian literature, but also the ancient polytheism, folk religious worship and other influences on Russian literature. Religion is a very important part of Russian literature. The focus on

religion has also been consistently embedded in the creation of Prishvin's language. Prishvin is not only a folklorist, geographer, and biologist, but also known as a "cosmologist", which is inseparable from his understanding of natural religion and even philosophical ideas. Prishvin's religious ideas are related to his upbringing environment. His mother was a devout religious disciple, and his teacher, Rozanov, further stimulated his interest in and reverence for the discipline of religious philosophy. In Eastern Orthodox thought, God gave humanity a specific mission, evolving from a love for God to a love for flowers, birds, and animals, and a love for all life. People and nature coexist harmoniously and rely on each other, and this harmony is full of beauty. Today, what I feel is the entirety of life in nature. I feel that these flying, swimming, and running creatures are all blood relatives. Now we find things that belong to us through blood, and even in all living things in nature, we discover our own things. "Prishvin referred to animals as his friends, and he could always find human shadows in some species and feel the powerful wisdom of various animals, suggesting that all things in nature are a mirror of humanity.

Under religious ideology, Prishvin's works contain the concept of spiritual ecology, and it can be said that Prishvin pays more attention to spiritual ecology. He once said, "In order to write simple words, a writer's heart needs to understand the entire universe". [5] The concept of allowing the universe to exist within a person's heart is called "spiritual ecology", which means that a person should have a heart to maintain their natural nature, not be influenced by various selfish behaviors in human society, and always maintain a pure heart. In his view, nature is not only an environment for human dependence, but also a source of human happiness.

Everything in nature is actually similar to humans, and exposure to nature can help humans understand themselves. Prishvin's feelings towards nature are not about taking, but rather a sense of giving and a closely related love that carries a sense of mission. Therefore, he can empathize with nature and listen to its 'voices'. Prishvin said, "Nature has arranged for us to live a life where we may not live long enough to see everything in the world, so we feel like we need to cherish everything in this world.

3.3 Mother Nature is the Source of Life

In Russian literature, many things in nature are compared to mothers. Land, rivers, mountains, forests, and more are the images of the Virgin Mary, all expressing the true feelings of the Russian nation's attachment to nature. Another prominent doctrine of the Eastern Orthodox Church is the worship of the Virgin Mary. This Nature worship concept is connected with the image of the mother. I seem to feel that the whole nature is in a dream, just like my mother; and I have already woken up. To avoid waking her up, I walk gently. Nature is also sleeping soundly, dreaming like my mother. Although she is asleep, she also has the ability to understand everything in the dream... This is how our Mother Nature is, I am her child. She can feel me in the dream, listen to my words, and everything is under control in her own way. She also sometimes has nightmares, dreaming that I am in danger. At that time, my mother would sit up and there would be lightning, thunder, and pouring rain outside. In Prishvin's thinking, the image of nature and mother is integrated, and nature cares for me like a mother, and I also rely on and cherish my mother. Prishvin viewed nature from a flat perspective, and communication between humans and nature would increase one's happiness index, which can only be felt in a mother like nature.

Therefore, Prishvin's ecological thinking has inherent characteristics under the influence of the Russian nation, with a strong Eastern Orthodox ideology. It uses hunting as a Russian ethnic characteristic to get close to nature and integrate into it. Nature, like a mother, is the source of all human beings. This is the foundation of the Russian nation's love for nature.

4. Summary: Two Writers with Inheritance and Regional Characteristics

Due to differences in social environment, natural environment, and personal experience, the works of Russian ecological writers have different characteristics from those of early 19th century British works. Ecological literature is characterized by responsibility, ecological concepts, civilization criticism, and ecological warning. Both Wordsworth and Prishvin have rich works and are representative figures of ecological literature. From the perspective of ecological criticism, although the two have commonalities, their focus is different. In the 19th century, Wordsworth, due to the fact that people were more revered and attached to nature during that era, and that humans and nature were one, in Wordsworth's poetry, nature seemed to have the beauty of a fairyland. Wordsworth's view of nature laid

the foundation for people's ecological thinking in the 20th century and also had an impact on the later Russian writer Prishvin. These two writers, although belonging to two literary trends in different regions and cultural backgrounds of different eras, have contributed to world literature by relying on the natural world to construct their literary world.[6]

From the two poets' different lodgings on natural landscape, we can explore the different characteristics of different cultures. The goal of Western business culture is to achieve prosperity and strength. Due to internal shortcomings and scarcity, it is often necessary to explore and conquer the outside world to obtain the resources necessary for personal survival. Therefore, cultural personality often contains the characteristics of competition, progress, and combat, often viewing the relationship between humans and nature as a state of opposition between heaven and humanity, and viewing the relationship between oneself and others as a state of opposition between oneself and oneself. The emergence of Russian culture relied on the Volga River basin and the vegetation covered Siberian forests. In such a large environment, it developed a typical self-sufficient farming and hunting culture. This cultural form has a strong ability to resist external disturbances. For generations, it has relied on nature for survival and is integrated with it in the infinite extension of time and space. Therefore, it emphasizes "looking inward". The ego and nature blend seamlessly, and the boundaries between the self and the outside world often dissolve in philosophical contemplation, thus achieving the state of unity between heaven and humanity. In the works of two poets, Wordsworth, as the subject of knowledge, transforms nature, and the pastoral green restores him to tranquility, recalling the joy of the past.[7] Prishvin is more influenced by polytheism and the local Orthodox Eastern Church. Nature is considered to be the source of everything and the symbol of mother. We should integrate into nature, and hunting is the best way to get close to nature. It can be seen that the different ideas of the two writers present different ways of expressing nature.

The cultural differences between East and West Europe have influenced the way poets view the world and their personal experiences, and natural scenery has different symbolic meanings in their works. The nature they write about is also shining with radiance, full of the beauty of nature.

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