

On the Nature and Establishment of Modern Japanese Literature

Xia Wang

Mianyang Normal University, Mianyang, Sichuan, China

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Abstract: Since the 1980s, the study of Japanese literature has undergone tremendous changes under the influence of globalization context and western post-modernism theory. For example, some scholars began to question concepts like “self-evident”. There are also some scholars who have made innovative interpretations on such important theoretical issues as globalization and nationalism, tradition and modernity, and the development trend of Japanese literature in the future. This paper combs the relevant expositions of representative theorists in Japan, explains the background of Japanese modern literature from the angle of collision and integration between western culture and Japanese culture, reveals the characteristics of Japanese modern literature, and studies the nature of Japanese modern literature by combining macro and micro.

1. Introduction

The formation of Chinese image in Japanese literature mainly originates from the feelings and imagination of Japanese writers, and is not a repetition of the actual situation. Common sources include texts describing China, Japanese national imagination of Chinese social collective, and Japanese writers' own experience and residence in China. Among them, the texts describing China are considered to be Japanese texts of Japanese writers, mainly in the form of travel notes, and Chinese texts transmitted from China to Japan.^[1] Japanese modern literature mainly evaluates the starting point of modern literature according to whether the hero's self-image in literary works is established or not and whether there is oral form. However, there is a problem with this criterion, that is, it is too limited to a certain framework and cannot be considered correctly and reasonably. Modern Japan is the only country in Asia that has not become a colony or semi-colony.^[2] After the reform of Meiji Restoration in 1868, it embarked on the road of capitalism. With the development of Japanese capitalism, Japanese modern literature has also grown and developed. Influenced by western culture, it completed the process of European modern literature from Renaissance to the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century in just a few decades (from Meiji Restoration to 1920s). The weakness of the modern Japanese bourgeoisie's political dependence on the feudal emperor system and the rapid development of modern Japanese society have led to two obvious phenomena in modern Japanese literature: first, there are many factions and diverse forms, and literature presents a complex situation; First, progressive and democratic literature cannot form a powerful literary force because of its weak political power and its rapid development and changing social conditions.^[3] However, most of the characteristics of modern Japanese literature were influenced by war, and Japanese literature during the Second World War was greatly influenced by war, and there were many literature works related to war.

2. The Background of Modern Japanese Literature

In 1980, “The Origin of Modern Japanese Literature”, which was published by Tan Tan Society and written by Shogu Pedestrians, came out. Because of its complete subversion of the previous research framework of modern Japanese literature, the trend of Japanese literature history was reconstructed and critical discourse changed, so it was considered as a milestone in the study of modern Japanese literature.^[4] This book studies its origin from the perspective of the ending point of Japanese modern literature, that is to say, although the previous research on Japanese modern literature was based on the modern framework, it did not study reductive critical discourse.

Therefore, there will be great differences in the situation and state of the subsequent research, which represents the end of a research era. After the emergence of *The Origin of Modern Japanese Literature*, a new phenomenon appeared in modern Japanese literature, similar to “severance”. For example, Hideo Odagiri once commented that the severance of literature after Meiji and previous literature was not a development relationship due to severance. Severing can be understood as a creation similar to other forms.^[5] Before the 1970s, Japanese modern literature was considered as starting point after Meiji Restoration. Its theoretical basis is based on the evaluation of Meiji Restoration, that is, Meiji Restoration formed a unified country. There are two reasons for this, namely, the external cause plans to make the country strong and compete with the western countries, and the internal cause abandons the domestic feudal division and promotes the development of capitalism, among which the external cause is dominant.

3. The Establishment of Modern Japanese Literature

With the continuous introduction of western things into Japan, the number of students studying and studying in the West has been increasing, which has expanded the horizons of Japanese people. The Japanese found that literature, art and drama in western countries occupy an important position in society and people's daily life, so they followed the example of the west to establish modern literature belonging to Japan. From this point of view, it is reasonable to judge the Meiji Restoration as the establishment of modern Japanese literature.^[6] However, after 1970s, this judgment method was fundamentally questioned. However, Japanese history textbooks and Chinese scholars still maintain a relatively stable attitude. According to the above, it can be made clear that in the 1970s, the research field of Japanese modern literature began to question the assertion that Meiji Restoration is the starting point of modern times, and proposed that the relationship between “modern times” and “modern times” should be “continuous” rather than “severing”, thus causing the starting point of the establishment of Japanese modern literature to move forward.^[7]

4. The Development of Modern Japanese Literature

The development of modern Japanese literature is based on its inherent feudal values and rooted in many elements of Japanese tradition. In addition, Japan's self-savings during the period of closing the country also played a role in dealing with the development of modern Japanese literature. This leads to some differences in the study of the starting point of modern Japanese literature. Among them, it first questioned the standard of measuring the establishment of modern Japanese literature (that is, the establishment of modern self).^[8] Fang Heche once pointed out: “It is necessary to get out of the middle school textbook-style cheapness that started with Meiji in modern Japan, establish a slightly different longer and broader historical perspective, cleanly abandon the suffocating inherent concept of modern self-establishment, stop daydreaming about the ideal modern existence of Western European countries, and compare and criticize Japan's distorted and variant ways of correcting bombs and reporting, and look at each other with relativism.” Japanese modern literature research circles generally believe that the premise of determining the beginning of modern literature was mostly carried out in its unique way in Tokugawa era, so the starting time of Japanese modern literature needs to move forward. In the early Middle Ages, that is, from the late Muromachi era, with the emergence of Japanese citizen class, the trend of subaltern literature based on spoken language and spoken language thinking began to emerge.

5. Conclusion

In the 1970s, the study of modern Japanese literature presented a prosperous scene. Through the above research, it is found that, despite the viewpoint of examining each other from the perspective of relativism, the problem of measuring Japan itself with reference to Western standards still exists, especially for “modern times”, which is still treated as a self-evident premise. Therefore, we should get rid of the inherent relevance of Japanese history textbooks, establish different and broad

horizons, abandon the rigid modern self-establishment concept, and look at each other from the perspective of relativism.

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