

The Application Research of "Six Observations Theory" in "The Literary Mind That Can Carve Dragons" in the Teaching of "College Chinese"

Taking West Yunnan University as an Example*

Hui Hu

School of Literature
West Yunnan University
Lincang, China 677000

Abstract—The "six observations theory" is a very specific method proposed by Liu Wei in "The Literary Mind that Can Carve Dragons · Zhiyin" on the appreciation of literary criticism. It can also provide some guidance for the teaching of "College Chinese". This article takes the teaching of "College Chinese" course of West Yunnan University as an example. In the teaching, the teachers consciously take the "six observations theory" as the standard, and carefully review the specific articles of "College Chinese". It is found that the "six observations theory" not only examines the words and sentences of the works, but also take an overall view of the theme, structure and style of the whole work. It compares the similarities and differences between the work and many other works, being microscopic and macroscopic. It can see both trees and forests. It can also more fully stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, deepen students' interpretation and understanding of the works, and provide some experience and reference in the teaching of "College Chinese".

Keywords—"six observations theory"; college Chinese; teaching; application

I. INTRODUCTION

"Six observations theory" is Liu Xie's six elements of literary criticism in the "The Literary Mind That Can Carve Dragons · Zhiyin", an important method of literary criticism, and a comprehensive evaluation of a system of literary works. It comprehensively summarizes all aspects of evaluating the pros and cons of the work. In the actual measurement of the work, it takes care and thoughtfulness, and provides a more objective basis for the critics, which can be used by any

critics to evaluate the works.¹ Therefore, taking the "College Chinese" course of the West Yunnan University as an example, in the teaching, the "six observations theory" is applied as the standard to finely review the specific articles of "College Chinese", and guide the reading and appreciation methods, which has made beneficial explorations for the teaching of "College Chinese" in colleges and universities.

II. A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF "SIX OBSERVATIONS THEORY" IN "THE LITERARY MIND THAT CAN CARVE DRAGONS"

The "six observations theory" is a very specific method of literary criticism put forward by Liu Wei in "The Literary Mind That Can Carve Dragons Zhiyin", which has the connotation of transcending time and space. [1]^{P161} He said: "When reading a work, six observations must be made first: the first is to observe the genre of the work; the second is to observe the meaning and features; the third is to observe that whether there are inheritances and innovations in the technique of expression; the forth is to observe the singularity and orthodox; the fifth is to observe the choice of subject matter and the elements in the work and the sixth is to observe the musicality of language. Once these six observations have been done, whether the article is good or bad can be seen." [2]^{P715} This means to examine whether the article's ideological contents and the six aspects can serve the contents properly, which the six aspects are the arrangement of genre, the use of utterances, inheritance and innovation, the diversity and unification of expression, the use of allusions, and the processing of syllables.

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¹ Mr. Li Jianzhong used the "six observations theory" to analyze Lu Xun's "Commemorating Liu Hezhen Jun". For details, please refer to Li Jianzhong's "Lectures on Wen Xin Diao Long" (Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), pp. 163-168. Mr. Huang Weiliang thoroughly studied Liu Xie's theory of literary criticism, and connected the literary theory of the new critical school to analyze the "six observations" theory, applied it to the actual evaluation of contemporary literary works, and wrote many vivid and critical articles.

Here, the author first explains the general meaning of Liu Guan in three levels:² the first is to observe the genre, meaning and features. Liu Xie's "位体" ("wei ti" in Chinese pronunciation) refers to the genre arrangements, which can also be understood as experiencing the main points, as well as the style of the genre and the style of writing of the article, that is, to observe the theme, genre, form, structure, and overall style of the work. "事义" ("shi yi" in Chinese pronunciation) has broad and narrow meanings: "The general meaning is the subject matter described in the works, while the narrow meaning is the quote of cases and the classics, and the reference of stories and words." [1]^{P162} The subject matter is the person, things, and objects that the work actually describes. The narrow meaning of "事义" ("shi yi" in Chinese pronunciation) is the objects, which means the references to materials in the text, such as events, allusions, citations. It means to observe the subject matter of the works, the human things written, and so on, including the use of things, the use of codes, etc. The second is to observe the inheritance and innovation, and the musicality. "置辞" ("zhi ci" in Chinese pronunciation, means inheritance and innovation) and "宫商" ("gong shang" in Chinese pronunciation, means musicality) are the formal aspects of literary works. "Liu Wei paid attention to form, talked about words - how to practice words, how to combine sentences, how to build chapters, how to compare metaphors, how to rise, how to hide, how to show, etc." [1]^{P162} "宫商" is the tonality, such as the rhythm of Pingze. It is to observe the musicality of the works, such as tone, rhyme, rhythm, etc. Liu Xie specially used the "Rhyme" chapter to talk about the musicality of the works. The third and the last are to observe singularity and orthodox of the works. "奇正" ("qi zheng" in Chinese pronunciation) refers to the expression of odd or normal, that is to say, the overall style of the article is novel or orthodox, whether it is more inherited or more innovative. This means that by comparing with other works of the same generation, the technique and style of the work can be seen as orthodox or novel. "通变" ("tong bian" in Chinese pronunciation) also refers to the change of inheritance, which refers to the absorption of the works to the predecessors, and what is the revelation of the works of the descendants, that is, to observe the performance of the work and how to inherit and innovate by comparing with the works of the previous generation.

The "six observations" theory is a system for comprehensively analyzing literary works. Its practical value is limited neither to ancient and modern, nor to China and foreign countries. Qian Zhongshu said in the preface of "Record of Talking About Literature and Art": "The East China Sea and the West Sea, share the same psychology; the South School and the North School, are not divided in doctrine and technique." [3]^{P1} Huang Weiliang believes: "In

the current university classroom, when the teachers of the literature department explain the literary works, they use the system equivalent to the "six observations theory" to analyze and comment. We would take this for granted. In the analysis and evaluation of works, we should always consider the various elements of genre, theme, style, structure, rhetoric and musicality. We should also compare works with other works. However, we cannot take Liu Xie's "six observations theory" as 'nothing more than this' and take it for granted. It must be known that it was formed more than a thousand years ago in the tradition of Chinese literary criticism that basically lacks a strict system! This is where the extraordinary of "six observations theory" is." [4]^{P72} In summary, applying the "six observations theory" of "The Literary Mind That Can Carve Dragons" to the teaching of "College Chinese", and "absorbing the meaning of melting the classics", and then "setting the standard according to the ancient, making innovation in current times" is also a breakthrough of the normal teaching method of "College Chinese".

III. A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTBOOKS OF "COLLEGE CHINESE" COURSE IN WEST YUNNAN UNIVERSITY

The textbooks selected for the "College Chinese" course of the West Yunnan University are "College Chinese" (Yunnan University Press 2017 edition) edited by Hu Yan, Liu Lihui, Wang Dezhaohao, Zhao Weihua, He Yong, etc. The book is guided by General Secretary Xi Jinping's series of important speeches on promoting Chinese outstanding traditional culture. He focuses on "providing virtues", "being close to people" and "being the highest good", and emphasizes "Confluence of Channels" on the path of writing, that is, "based on the classics rather than human". This textbook selects the classical literature, which combines aesthetics and humanity, and is divided into seven chapters with accurate and elaborate annotations: observing things, acquiring knowledge, being sincere, being righteous, improving oneself, managing the family, and governing the country. It is a textbook of "College Chinese" which has profound cultural connotation and can achieve the function of educating people. [5]^{P324-325}

Based on the above understanding, "College Chinese" in the writing style requires the embodiment of "interpretation of the classics of Chinese studies", and each article consists of the original text, annotation, analysis, thinking and practice, evaluation, links and so on. The original text is conspicuous, the sentences, paragraphs, and articles are complete and clear, and the annotations, translations, and comments are all close to the original text. Specifically, it is based on the contemporary humanistic vision, carrying out the spirit of integration of argumentation, articles and testimony. Through reading and teaching, students are trained to master the knowledge of Chinese culture from the classics, understand the spirit of Chinese studies, and improve their ability to study, thus helping students to lay a solid foundation of Chinese studies. Therefore, "College Chinese" is by no means a general textbook, but a classic that pursues a profound academic foundation, which is simple and easy to read.

² Mr. Li Jianzhong used the "six observations theory" to analyze Lu Xun's "Commemorating Liu Hezhen Jun". For details, please refer to Li Jianzhong's "Lectures on Wen Xin Diao Long" (Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008), pp. 163-168. Mr. Huang Weiliang thoroughly studied Liu Xie's theory of literary criticism, and connected the literary theory of the new critical school to analyze the "six observations" theory, applied it to the actual evaluation of contemporary literary works, and wrote many vivid and critical articles.

IV. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF APPLYING "SIX OBSERVATIONS THEORY" IN THE TEACHING OF "COLLEGE CHINESE"

Chai Dongxue believes that there are the following problems in the teaching of high school poetry reading:

- Focusing on the translation of words rather than the tempering of words;
- Focusing on single piece, makes it difficult to become a system;
- Focusing on reciting, rather than chanting;
- Focusing on knowledge instilled rather than interest guidance;
- Focusing on teacher conclusion rather than student personality perception. [6]^{P4-11}

The reasons can be conclude as the following:

- Ignoring the ancient poetry's feature of "one word can stand the bone";
- The psychological misunderstanding of the test-over-learning;
- The traditional teaching concept of the exam-oriented;
- Ignoring the systematic principle of the ancient poetry and knowledge.[6]^{P12-16}

The textbook "College Chinese" selected by the "College Chinese" course of West Yunnan University is composed of ancient poetry. During the teaching process, Ms. Chai Dongxue proposed some problems in the ancient poetry reading teaching of high school. It also exists in the teaching of "College Chinese", and the reasons for this can all be include in the points summarized above by Ms. Chai.

The "six observations theory" put forward in the article "The Literary Mind that Can Carve Dragons · Zhiyin" provides methodological guidance for the reading of later works, and also sets standards for reading and evaluation. Some of the contents provide the necessary method guidance for the reading teaching of "College Chinese", which have certain enlightenment. For example: "to observe the meaning and features: it is to experience the magic of refining the word and vividly grasp the works; to observe the musicality of language: it is to read and chant the work to understand the emotion; to observe that whether there are inheritances and innovations in the technique of expression: it is to compare more than one work to experience the new and differences to form a system." [6]^{P17-27} "To observe the genre of the work" can cultivate students' sense of "literacy". "To observe the choice of subject matter and the elements in the work" can enable students to examine how classics are used, and the use of classics is related to the depth of the writer's literacy education. Appropriate use of the classics can improve the expression of the work. And it can enable students: "to experience the work with emotions, inspire interest and compare the work in multiple ways rather than being shallow, appreciating repeatedly and analyzing till find the beauty of the work". [6]^{P28-34}

V. CONCLUSION

The "College Chinese" course of the West Yunnan University regards the reading of ancient poetry and articles as the focus of teaching, and it is also a difficult point. In the teaching, the use of "six observations theory" put forward in the article "The Literary Mind that Can Carve Dragons · Zhiyin" can "examine the words and sentences of the works, as well as the theme, structure and style of the whole work, and compare the works with many other works to know the similarities and differences. (Liu Wei emphasized 'a person can only know the music after he had played a thousand of songs, a person can only know the tools after he had seen a thousand of swords'.) This is really a microscopic and macroscopic system, seeing trees and seeing forests, and a system of criticism combined with microscopes and telescopes." [7] Of course, using "six observations" theory to guide the teaching of ancient poetry reading in the "College Chinese" course, although it has a certain help to the specific teaching, it is limited to the limitations of the author's thinking and the constraints of the studies' vision, so that it cannot express the mindset of the writer. Therefore, in teaching and writing, there will inevitably be tens of, hundreds of, thousands of and even hundreds and thousands of leaks. People who have paid attention on this are always welcomed to criticize and correct.

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