

Study on the Image of China in Travel Literature From the Perspective of Post Colonialism-Through Maugham's 《on the Chinese screen》 and Akutagawa Ryunosuke's 《travel to China》

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ABSTRACT

Maugham, a British writer, loves to travel. He traveled in China from 1919 to 1920 for nearly four months. He wrote "on the Chinese screen" to record what he saw, heard and felt in China, and describe the image of China in the hearts of foreigners. This paper analyzes the image of Chinese people and China in Maugham's works from the perspective of comparative literature, whether out of their own background as Westerners, resulting in ideas and misunderstandings. Akutagawa Ryunosuke, a Japanese writer, once traveled in China and wrote his travels to China. In the novel, he recorded many scenes of China's dilapidation, so as to depict the image of China in the hearts of foreigners and give a great impact to the literary world at home and abroad. With the change of the times, this paper analyzes whether Akutagawa Ryunosuke's travels to China will have a more objective conclusion from the perspective of comparative literature. The travel notes contains these records and subjective thoughts, from the travel notes, you can get a lot of different information. Since they traveled to China and wrote their travel notes within a year of each other, what they saw and what they got was about the hardest time in China. From these points, we can explore the mystery and objectively judge the scene at that time.

Keywords: 《on the Chinese screen》, Maugham, 《travels to China》, Chinese image, Akutagawa Ryunosuke

1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, travel notes have been a very convenient way to understand the country and to establish different images of each country. Therefore, travel has become a way for many people to watch and judge the image of each country. Akutagawa Ryunosuke visited China as a special correspondent of a large news agency in 1921, while Maugham, a British writer, spent nearly four months in China from 1919 to 1920. The two travel notes written by them because they lived in China are popular in the literary world, but their emphasis is somewhat different. On the one hand, they describe the local conditions, customs and regions, while on the other hand, they describe the views of westerners and the images of Chinese coolies, officials and philosophers. The reason for this is the interpretation of China's image, their records and what

they see and think. This paper reveals the image of China in the minds of the two writers, as well as the differences between their ideals, China and real China, and interprets their cultural psychology and comparative literature perspective behind the image of China in their writing.

2. ASPECTS

2.1. THE IMAGE OF CHINA AND CHINESE PEOPLE IN 《ON THE CHINESE SCREEN》

The author's thoughts and environment when he first arrived in China must be the first to strengthen the role in his heart, which was especially important to describe the image of China. William Somerset Maugham had a lot of methods to describe the environment of China in his journey, and he kept recording them. At the

beginning of his journey, he described a picture, "a row of thatched houses, a haystack of mud, an ancient and deserted city wall like the city of Pakistan." [1] the environment description at the beginning could always make a basic conclusion for this work, and the theme that the author had set. In 1919, there were still disputes all over China, so they could see the dilapidated and savage scene. The low protection and shabby accommodation made the author's heart fluctuate a lot, which affected their opinions of seeing the Chinese in the future. William Somerset Maugham, who had received advanced education in the western society, came to China, hoping to see a scene like a landscape painting. Since he had been in contact with the East since he was a child, in addition to some mysterious Dongfang studies, he must have come into contact with many works with literary color. As a result, his heart fluctuated, and it must be normal. When William Somerset Maugham went deep into the China's environment, he also found something different from the description at the beginning. In one of her works, she deeply portrayed the description of landscape, trees, rice fields and Chinese temples, and complimented and imagination evaporated. During the journey in China, he saw the incomplete environment of China, He had also experienced a lot in China and had some objective opinions. Because of the family background and life background of William Somerset Maugham and the UK, he defined the people he came to China. He used a lot of words and passages to describe the image of the western people in China, who were mostly preachers. Those western people seemed to have different understanding of Chinese culture and have different thoughts. What we are going to investigate this time is the image of the Chinese characters described in his book. Most of them are officials of the upper class, and there are also Taoist philosophy. As for those who are visible in the street, William Somerset Maugham will not reduce his ink brush. However, from what William Somerset Maugham has done in the past, we will choose William Somerset Maugham as a objective person to portray the Chinese society. The bottom level people in China portrayed incisively and vividly in his two works. The years of hard work led to their difficult survival, as well as the scars on their bodies. Their howls at work seemed to be desperate cries, the images of trapped and difficult were born, and some ugly faces of China were also seen by William Somerset Maugham's brush and ink [2]. An official's greedy eyes and some flattering hearts portrayed some ugly images of China incisively and vividly. At the end of this article, William Somerset Maugham mentioned this minister who was worried about the country and the people, In fact, he was an evil person who took bribes, which made a deep irony. Most of the people who had read Maugham's articles had an objective description of Maugham. It could be seen from his short stories. However, when we turned to the screen he wrote in China, we might have revealed a

little bit of our own assumptions to him and become sensitive.

2.2.THE IMAGE OF CHINA AND CHINESE PEOPLE IN 《TRAVEL TO CHINA》

Akudagawa lived in the upper class of Japan. He had studied Chinese culture, and also liked Chinese classical literature and ancient poems. Therefore, he really hoped to come to China and have a discussion with the middle-class literary and elegant scholars in China, so as to understand the wonderful Chinese culture and Chinese environment in the classical poems. In 1921, his classmate invited him to go to China with hope, but he saw a scene that disappointed him. The description of the environment played an important role again. Akudagawa's trip to China firstly depicted the moment he stepped on the continent and got off the cabin. The real scene completely shattered Akudagawa's dream of China and his country. The scene described people. The coachman, with dirty clothes, flocked to the Japanese woman who just came ashore, And he hugged and roared, which gave Akudagawa the first reaction to the bottom of China. His ugly and dirty face made him look forward to the noble Chinese culture and the ancient Chinese culture in a sharp contrast. When he went deep into the city, he found something greedier was happening in succession, which made his impression of China and the image of China change greatly for the first time, and also destroyed the image of China in her heart [3]. However, the environment seemed to be different from what he got from ancient poems. There were more streets and smelly blocks that had not been cleaned, which made Akudagawa, who was looking forward to a great river and mountains, feel a lot of chill in his heart. However, maybe it was because of Akudagawa's first trip, he chose to get off the ship in Shanghai. In 1921, Shanghai was filled with the color of western culture, which made Akudagawa, who was looking forward to the eastern culture, feel a little strange and disappointed at the Chinese culture for the first time. This could explain why he went to Beijing and the Yangzhou did not belittle this place. This was Akudagawa's view on the change of China's image, as well as the change from admiration to such an objective but somewhat belittling view. As for the image of Chinese characters described in Akudagawa's words, most of them were about the thoughts and attitudes of middle-class scholars and gentlemen in China. He saw about Zhang Bin Lin, Zheng Xiaoxu and other elites of the intellectual class in China, and because of this meeting, Akudagawa had a deeper understanding of the current situation of the country [4]. Because he knew most of the things about Chinese classical culture before, He had never cared about the Chinese characteristics of the ancient poetry and literature. He had been communicated with the elite of the Chinese intellectual class, so he was more concerned about the political

problems of his country. And when he talked about his communication with these people in the travel notes, he showed his view of the modern China and the people in China. Most of them thought that even if he was deprived by knowledge, economy, art and politics. We can see from Akudagawa's article that he mainly described the image of the people in China and the image of the people in China, and also found out the difference between the images of the people. Most of them are greedy, greedy, and most of them are dirty. On the other hand, the image of the Chinese intellectual is very deep perception, and they actively work for the political career of China. Therefore, his writing was objective and rigorous to the image of China. From the previous articles of Akudagawa, we can see that his words are extremely sharp and hit the nail on the head. When some people are commenting on his writing of China's travel notes with the meaning of being belittled and his words are too mean, on the other hand, you can also get his comment on China, which is not too exaggerated. Therefore, he could feel her regret for the dilapidated China in her heart, but hoped that she would not be discouraged and give her hope[5].

3. RESEARCH

As for this topic, he used case study to study the relationship between the two and investigate its development and change. Through the investigation, Maugham was born in the upper class of Europe. Most of his learning and culture were about Europe, because he had absorbed most of the European thoughts in 1915. Although his objective analysis was at the peak of a second-class novel, it needed to be judged by the objective degree of his heart. In the case study, through the study of Akudagawa's work and background, one could know that he liked Chinese culture and ancient poems since childhood. He had a deep study of this kind of history. As for China in 1921, due to the arduous struggle, its external performance had left an impact on Akudagawa, and his concept had changed. The second research method, I use the literature research method, according to the situation of China around 1921, pick out the topic, understand the historical situation at that time, and study it, so as to obtain the current situation of China at that time and the general reasons.

4. CONCLUSION

These two pieces of work were both very controversial in both Chinese and English circles, and in Chinese and Japanese literature circles. Some people agreed with it, and some people belittled it. For example, Ba Jin had written an article about mocking Rhys in a group of Sanskrit words, mostly because of Chinese travel, and William Somerset Maugham had also been attacked by foreign and Chinese people because of this work, which was very western. When we go deeper into

the exploration of the current situation of China, the situation of the society from 1919 to 1921, and combined with the image of China described by the two writer, the former image of China in their hearts, and their background experience, we can come to a conclusion that the two of them are generally objective, although we used to expect too much about China. Therefore, the contrast laid a very slow foundation at the beginning of the writing. While some people gave another explanation to the image of China in Maugham's works, thinking that since the description of the Chinese background, it was an important way to show oneself and find spiritual sustenance in the west to realize their own value. Maugham thought it described China on the surface, but in fact, it was about the mental state of the west, which further explained the state of the West. The British writer, William Somerset Maugham, lived in the upper class of the UK, and most of the things he came into contact with were based on western theories. At the beginning, he had more or less belittled China because of the mystery of China's East and the language gaps between the two sides of the river. Then, because of his objective view of things, he had recorded the mysterious colors of Chinese people, who were always like some musicians, as well as the hard scene of the labors of the farmer, it also described the coldness and ugliness of the Western creatures. She had the same output of the stinky street at the beginning and the great mountains and rivers later, indicating that her works were quite considerable. As for Akudagawa, because of his understanding of the Chinese culture in the past, his understanding of the ancient Chinese poetry was very poetic and had a very fantastic imagination with the eastern China. The contrast between ideal and reality made him lose the classical order of China, and also re-examine the politics of this country, and combined with the image of the common people and the image of the intellectual, he objectively described the current situation of China, as well as the wish to revive and progress in China. Therefore, in view of these two works, we should use an objective and critical attitude to evaluate their works, as well as the actual situation of the society, and combine their works with the history of our country and their travel notes. Maybe we can objectively let us understand the real situation of China from 1919 to 1921. From then on, we should combine the style and reflect ourselves in time, and also strengthen our judgment and acquisition. The real meaning of it is to remove the dross and take its essence, so that it can better serve our future research.

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