

中国维度下的天使岛诗歌史诗性和文学性再认识

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1910至1940年间美国政府曾在位于旧金山湾的天使岛设立移民站,据统计,大约有17.5万名申请进入美国的华人移民曾先后被留置关押在此等候移民官审问、甄别其入境资格。拘囚在此的华人移民在拘留所木屋留下了大量的旧体诗文题壁之作。1980年,天使岛移民后裔麦礼谦、林小琴、杨碧芳(Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, Judy Yung)等三人将这些文字整理、校订、编译成中英双语文本《埃伦诗集》(*Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*)出版,在美国主流社会读者群广为流传,并成为迄今“天使岛诗歌”研究的最重要的文本。

综观中美学术界现有研究,均主要视“天使岛诗歌”为华裔美国文学/历史/政治的奠基文本(Founding texts),突出“天使岛诗歌”所创造出的独特的“华裔感性”对于构建美国华裔新身份的重要性,无意中忽略“天使岛诗歌”作为早期中国“新移民”创作,同时也是北美华文文学的拓荒性文本。本文以文本细读法充分贴近“天使岛诗歌”本体,并重新置入中国视角,以“历史整体性”追溯这一特殊的海外华文文学文本所置身的历史文化语境。其史诗性在于这一“尽皆怨语及愁言”诗歌文本及其中突出呈现的使事用典特色凸显出近现代以民族国家观念和主权意识为基调的文化民族主义思潮的兴起与流行。在受斥的异文化场域中,天使岛诗人以“家国同构”的文化模式为基础,以选择性的中国传统文人文化为中介,在“寰球遍地”的行旅中,构筑起一方精神家园。

天使岛诗歌的文学性在于作为一个民间集体文本,其中的精品之作如入选美国《希斯文选》(*Heath Anthology of American Literature*)的诗歌多以富于民族趣味的“比兴”及使事用典等传统手法呈现移民们丰富、鲜活的感性,散发出引人“兴发感动”的优美诗情。但无可否认,以传统文学范式来看,天使岛诗歌在语言、格律等艺术表现方面,于直白、朴素而外,不乏粗糙甚至粗陋之处,回避天使岛诗歌中这部分作品的“非诗性”或以其中内容形式均可观者来拔高天使岛诗歌的文学性均是权宜之策。而在现有天使岛诗歌的诗性或文学性探讨中,有一个为人所忽略的从文学史即从晚清以来诗坛自身发展维度来考察的盲点:从文学史的发生顺序看,“天使岛诗歌”属于受黄遵宪、梁启超所倡导的“诗界革命”余波所及的中国旧体诗词的创作范畴,其非诗性也应置于旧体诗词自身转型此一历史语境中观察。

Recognition of the Epic Quality and Literariness of the Poetry on Angel Island from the Chinese Dimension

Between 1910 and 1940, as many as 175,000 Chinese immigrants passed through the Angel Island Immigration station located in the San Francisco Bay. As a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, these sojourners were detained and interrogated at the barracks in a prison-like atmosphere for weeks, months or sometimes even years. To pass the time, many immigrants wrote or carved hundreds of Chinese traditional poems into the wood of the barrack walls. In 1980, Genny Lim, Him Mark Lai, and Judy Yang compiled and translated a selection of the poems and included them in their book *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*.

The poetry on Angel Island has been considered the groundbreaking text of Chinese American literature, history and politic by both the Chinese and American scholars, given prominence to the significant influence of its unique “Chinese American sensibility” on the construction of Chinese American new identity. Nevertheless, the current research involuntarily slipped the fact that as the creation of Chinese early “new immigrants”, the poetry on Angel Island was also the path-finding text of the Chinese literature in North American. Focusing on the poetry text, this paper re-embedded the Chinese perspective and traced the historical and cultural context of this unique Chinese literary text through “historical integrity”. This paper held the view that its epic quality consisted in the grief and melancholy discourse as well as the harboring of the ideological trend of cultural nationalism. In the excluded heterogeneous context, the poets of Angel Island had found a spiritual home during the trip of “all over the world”, with the foundation of cultural pattern of “integrated home and country” and the medium of selective traditional Chinese literary culture. Meanwhile, the literariness lay on the fact that as a collective folk text, the exquisite poems (for example, the poems are included in *Health Anthology of American Literature*) demonstrated immigrants’ abundant and vivid sensibilities through the usage of the “bi xing”, allusion and other Chinese characteristic literary techniques. In addition, the unneglectable “non-poetic quality” should be apprehended from the poetic history of the self-transformation of traditional poetry after the “Poetic Revolution” which was initiated by Huang Zunxian and Liang Qichao in modern age.