

Spirit Returning to Hometown for an “Old Cicada”--Interpretation of Can Xue's Old Cicada

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ABSTRACT. *Can Xue's Old Cicada has a strong allegorical meaning, which personified the animal and insinuated the reality of human society with the life experience and thinking of an old cicada. After eight years of underground life, the old cicada climbs up the branches, and spotless white, but it still has the responsibility and dignity of the leader. It has deeply practical concerns, and after the death of the old toad and a female cicada, it has an insight into the spirit of life, resolutely committed to die together with the old spider, and finally realized its own value. Although the body is extinct but the spirit is eternal, the sacrifice of the old cicada finally let the younger generation wake up. In the old memories, the old cicada has completed its spiritual return to his hometown. And allegory people who are satisfied with the status quo but do not think much about the progress of the fallen in the world,also the violent authority cannot defeat the strong original spiritual will.*

KEYWORDS: *Old cicada, Can xue, Spirit returning to hometown*

1. Introduction

Among the contemporary avant-garde literary writers, Can Xue, as the only female writer, has always maintained her own transcendent and clear writing style. Even in the transition period of many avant-garde writers, she still insisted on penetrating into the depths of the soul and using rational methods to write irrational novels. Old Cicada is a short story published by Can Xue in Flower City in 2010. It inherits her style of expressing self-contradiction and conflict of soul, and highlights her spiritual implication of self-reflection and self-criticism.

On the surface, the article is relatively easy to understand, through the anthropomorphic description of “a world of animals”, and alluding to the real life of human beings, but “the infinite allegory provides the infinite predictability for the novel”. []For example, similar words like “old memories” appear repeatedly in the text, the resurrection of “old toad” and “old cicada”, the combination of “old spider” and “old cicada”, the suicidal will of “old cicada”...Can Xue has buried many

spiritual codes in this seemingly superficial text, and we must start from a detail to reach the castle of soul which was she carefully built.

2. Reflection and Transcendence in “Cicada Chirping”

There are many excellent works extolling cicadas in ancient and modern times. The writers express rich implication styles through the depiction of their living habits or body sounds and holding things together. In this paper, we can also see Can Xue's deformation and ingenious fusion of these connotations.

At the beginning of the novel, the social environment and the natural environment are respectively explained, and the negative and tragic social environment is used to highlight the leisure of animals in the natural environment. The residents' faces are gloomy, “Cicadas are always singing regardless. It's exciting, it's heroic, it's challenging, it's full of high-pitched heat.” Different from the symbolic meaning of the silence of the mountain environment set off by the sound of “cicada chirping” in the ancient poems chanting cicada, what distinguishes the modern city from the mountain environment is the increasingly anxious mood and floating mind of human beings, “their hearts are full of poisonous resentment towards these singers”.

And the author did not give the chance of human vocal, there are altogether eight references to human beings in the novel, six of which are depictions of a half-grown urchin who always aims at an old cicada on a high branch with a strong and delicate slingshot Can Xue takes a young boy as the epitome of all human beings, and tries his best to show his cruelty and indifference incisively and vividly through his scattered movements and expressions in every corner of the text. The boy and the slingshot on his hand are the potential threat in the life of the old cicada and other animals. Finally, the old toad died in the hands of the boy. The boy gave out the sound of cheering and celebrating the trophy he had captured, which was the only human voice in the full text. However, the old cicada suddenly realized “true happiness”, “its song added some brightness, some lightness. “The old cicada's lead song makes the chorus after the rain irresistible, which is the most powerful counterattack to those threats--What can't be killed will make me stronger. As the article says, “Cicadas can't be destroyed until you cut down all the big trees.”

The ancient literati had a feeling of leisure in the sound of cicadas. Wang Wei's Idle living on Rims of Rims River presents Pei Xiu CAI Di depicts the harmonious and quiet landscape pastoral scene, in which “leaning on the wandfirewood door, listening to the twilight cicadas in the wind”, depicts the life situation of his idling in Rims river, which is full of comfortable and natural interest, “the scene of the moment, true rate of ancient light”.[]This paper puts the human being in the position of “aphasia”, on one hand, it sets off the passion and affection of “cicadas”, on the other hand, it criticizes the wanton cruelty of human beings and the restlessness of social environment. We want to destroy all vitality, but do not realize that it is not the hot climate that makes us uneasy, but their own impetuous heart. Lacking the capacity for quiet contemplation, we only resort to violence in an

attempt to assert our sovereign power. While the old cicada is constantly growing in thinking, "its thinking has reached a level that is difficult for its group to reach." and it also reaches the level where humans are in a state of "aphasia." Even though old cicada becomes the leader and occupies a considerable position in its group, he still keeps worrying and thinking about the future all the time. He is still independent, silent and closed, but never self-respecting.

"Don't break out in silence, or perish in silence." It is not only the old cicada that shows the charm of the leader through "cicada chirping", but also the "short and clear moan" of a young female cicada before she is caught contains some kind of extreme excitement. This deepened the old cicada's doubts and thoughts. He imagined the earth-shattering cry of the old toad, "How can there be such a powerful toad in the world?" "It faintly heard in the southeast wind the chorus of the old toad and its fellow cicadas." At the beginning, such a song brings old cicada great excitement and joy. Here, it brings him a kind of "secret emotion", and triggers old cicada's thinking on the value of life and self-realization. Finally, it will become the most unforgettable grand chorus in the memory of old poplar trees. Can Xue often used the special form of "illusion", which proved the mystery and unintelligibility of the world and existence, guaranteed the "distance" between life and literature, and also brought about the transcendence of "life" in the literary world.[]

3. The Intercommunication and Reflection of "Cicada Nature" and Human Nature

The author spent a lot of ink about old cicada's appearance and personality, it "although long and strong wings, but seldom use their wings, it stay below the bottom of the canopy, natural disposition is withdrawn, once in the underground through eight years of the dark times. That time shaped his character in every way." Cicada, it is the common insects between summer, they suck the SAP of trees, and the males are good at singing. The larvae usually spend several years or even more than ten years in the soil, such as three years, five years, there will be 17 years, these numbers have one thing in common, are prime numbers. This is because the factor of prime number is very few, when drilling out of the soil, it can prevent other cicadas from drilling out together, competing for territory and food.[]However, the old cicada has lived underground for eight years before breaking through the ground. It can be seen that although the old cicada is an old male cicada, but it is strong and courageous, so it can become the leader of the group, "everyone thinks it is unique."

In the face of crisis, the old cicada still remembers his responsibility as the leader all the time, "There are so many of its kind, they all listen to it and follow it, how can it slack off?" The old cicada is a complex and profound symbolic image. It is the king of cicadas, the soul of cicadas. It is also the symbol image of the forerunner, the leader and the thinker in human beings. Different from the speechless human and its followers, the old cicada is deeply worried about the future of its peers," it feels that they trust and are satisfied with the life in this world, which is its deepest worry." This is a metaphor for human society. Anxiety is not a bad thing. It means you are motivated and looking for a way out." The more stable the society, the more

prosperous the zombie culture.” That is to say, modern people are more and more satisfied with the status quo, “unenterprising” life can be seen at a glance, from the novel can be seen everywhere its allusion to reality and the author’s faint worry.

Sadly, the old cicada is unable to convey his hidden worries to his fellow cicadas. Although all his fellow cicadas respect the old cicada, none of them dare to approach it. Can Xue writes realistic contradiction incisively and vividly, foreknowledge lonely helpless, sinking people drift with the tide. An old cicada is like the head of a clan. He has both political integrity and talent. He is older and more qualified, was respected and had the responsibility to be instructed. However, in the collapse of the outside invasion and the inside, the patriarchal clan culture had only irreparable decline, and the patriarchal clan authority only had left helpless and pathos.[]Cicadas, on the other hand, can only chirp in summer. In autumn, everything is bleak. They either freeze to death or have to retreat underground, and even the old cicadas cannot survive. With her keen insight and grasp of art, Can Xue reveals the survival truth of animals and even human beings. This kind of absurd language style represents the author’s double negation in the spiritual direction, on the one hand, it is the negation of the world, on the other hand, it is the negation of people.

At last, the old cicada realized the value of its life in the death of the old toad and the female cicada, and came to life after death. It was disassembled into four pieces and even lost its head. At the same time, its rival “old spider” also disappeared. Can Xue once again used the “maze” of mysterious means, echoing the old cicada “through the rain curtain to see the old spider, as if from the old spider look to see their own. “And the old cicada, who returned by will, recalled the old spider’s feeble cry: “Who is the spider? Is it not I?” The combination of the old cicada and the old spider tells us that competition has always been relative, but the spirit is similar. hey are the elders , leaders of the same kind, and in the competition for survival to die, it seems that they all understand the true meaning of life, unwilling to mediocrity. Even “every day in the last days before the autumn chill, it felt a heterogeneous happiness.” The elder has fulfilled his mission and assumed his responsibilities, and has bravely resisted the fate and external threats, so the meaning of his life has been sublimated. Therefore, the author combines the old cicada and the old spider in the form of “fantasy”, and proves that the spirit is eternal and great with the rebirth of will.

The old cicada, the old spider and the old toad, with the word “old”, describe their limited life force, but in fact make full use of their eternal and tenacious spirit. Just like what our compatriots said when they fantasized about the rebirth of the old cicada: “If it has an idea, it can always succeed.” Old Cicada awakens the younger generation with “the will to commit suicide”, echoing the “ancient memories” repeatedly mentioned in the novel. The story of Old Cicada is the story of a generation, and it will also be the spiritual journey of each generation to return home. “People only cling to reality. The past can complement the present, but the present has no future.”[]Memories are not only soothing and warm, but also a kind of eternal reminder, behind which is a thorough understanding of life.

4. Conclusion

This novel of more than 5,000 words describes “cicadas” in a variety of situations--Many young cicadas have experienced loneliness and loneliness in the soil; Breaking through the ground and emerging from the independent branches of the lofty refined; Not for the same kind of understanding of the helpless isolation; The solemn and stirring of returning to dust after autumn comes...This is a portrayal of the life of a cicada, but also a candle to real life. The result of the old cicada coming back from the dead is the author's realization of the transcendence of life in the ancient memories, the strong call for “self” and primitive life, and the song for the spirit returning home.

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