

神圣的符号学

——经院哲学写作与中世纪的文学和艺术

Holy Semiotics

耿幼壮 美国俄亥俄大学

Geng Youzhuang

[英文提要]

With the illumination of Charles Haskins, discussion of the twelfth-century Renaissance as stimulus, this paper intends to examine the unity and continuity of the medieval culture through an investigation of the relationship between Scholasticism and the medieval literature and arts.

Unlike Italian Renaissance culture, which claims its unity by sensuous images, medieval culture establishes its unity on a rigorous writing. Here the word "writing" is meant to not only a private activity of composing, but also a social practice of signifying. In either case, Scholastic writing is the highest form of medieval culture. Viewed from the perspective of history, two factors need to be noted: first, book and writing already occupied a critical position in the early history of Christianity; second, it was in the late middle ages that writing became a professional production in the hands of Schoolman, as the city schools were founded and a good number of encyclopedic books appeared. Behind the scholastic mode of writing, there is a way of thinking, i. e., a medieval mentality, which becomes a common ground for the creation of various cultural forms of the middle ages. That is medieval intellectualism derived from writing, reading, interpreting, and receiving of Christian text. Thus, artwork, like theological

text, is created by a rational consciousness rather than a blind force of emotion. It is fundamentally a manifestation of mind, which is trying to imitate the divine creation in the sense of the metaphorical and the technical as well. Metaphorically, the poet and artist, like the theologian, are doing nothing but repeating divine work. That is why Emile Male, in his *Gothic Image*, says that St. Thomas is the greatest architect of the later middle ages that Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an invisible cathedral, and that Gothic cathedrals are plastic *Summas*. Technically, grammar, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, iconography, and symbolism are employed by the poet and artist in the same way as the theologian does; with a passion for the order and a concern for the precision to reveal, to clarify, and to demonstrate divine truth.

It is in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* that the characteristics of Scholastic writing can be seen most authentically. Following Panofsky's ideas, totality, homologous arrangement, and distinctiveness and deductive cogency are regarded as the basic characteristics of Scholastic writing in this study. Although all three of them have been questioned in varying degrees, they are still hardly ignored. More importantly, Panofsky's comparison between Gothic architecture and Scholastic writing indicates that there is a far more complex relationship between word and image, linguistic sign and spatial sign, verbal text and the visual text in the cultural production of the middle ages. Therefore, Dante's poetry and poetic theory, the spatial structure of Gothic cathedral, the "vocabulary" and "syntax" in medieval painting, and, last but not least, the interaction of word and image in medieval manuscript painting or book illustration are touched upon in the present study, in order to reach a better understanding of the unity and continuity of medieval culture.

Recently, as the concept of New Medievalism is seen frequently in medieval studies, analogies in various cultural phenomena between the middle ages and our times are made consequently. Is not this true that history is displaying its continuity?

石刻的无声言语,如同它那样直接地进入任何人的注视和想象一样(因为形象是俗人的文学),迷惑着我的眼睛。

“它们是什么?它们传达了什么象征信息?”[阿德索问道]。

——艾柯:《玫瑰的名字》^①

“历史的连续性拒绝在相续时期之间所做的那样绝对和极端的对比。而现代研究告诉我们,中世纪并不像我们想象的那样黑暗,那样停滞不前,文艺复兴也不像我们所想的那样光明,那样发展迅猛。中世纪展示了活力,色彩和变化,展示了对知识和美的渴求探求,展示了在艺术、文学和教育等方面的富于创造力的成就。意大利文艺复兴以一些相似的,虽然范围较为狭窄的运动紧随其后。”^② 这就是查尔斯·霍墨·哈金斯在1927年提出所谓“12世纪文艺复兴”时的基本理论前提。而今天,人们甚至已经在谈论三个文艺复兴:即9世纪卡罗林杰时期文艺复兴,12世纪文艺复兴和15世纪意大利文艺复兴。这样,古希腊罗马和意大利文艺复兴之间的千年历史便不再被视作一片空白。而12世纪文艺复兴因其承先启后的历史地位也就显得尤为引人注意。

那么,12世纪到底贡献了些什么呢?根据哈金斯的看法,它

^① 安贝托·艾柯:《玫瑰的名字》,第40页,纽约沃纳图书1983年英文版。

^② 查尔斯·哈金斯:《12世纪文艺复兴》,第5页,哈佛大学出版社1927年版。