

# 深入 内在世界

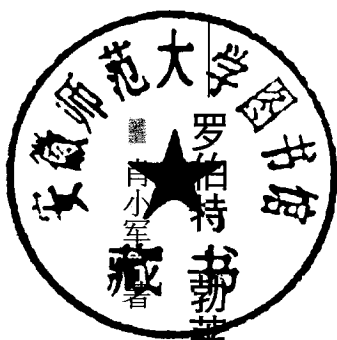
Into the Inward:

A Study of Robert Bly's Deep Image Poetics

—— 罗伯特·勃莱『深层意象』诗歌研究

■ 肖小军 著

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罗勃特·勃莱《深层意象》诗歌研究

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## Abstract

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“Deep image” emerged in the 1950s and has developed into a strong force in American literature. The chief members of this school include poets Robert Bly, James Wright, William Stafford, Louis Simpson, Robert Kelly, Jerome Rothenberg, Wallace Stevens in his late years, W. S. Mervin, Galway Kinnell, Mark Strand, Charles Simic, and James Tate. This research concentrates its exploration on Robert Bly as a case study.

As a widely acknowledged leader of “deep image”, Robert Bly has been deeply influenced by Freud and Jung’s depth psychology, in particular by the theory of the unconscious. He defines that poetry is something that penetrates for an instant into the unconscious. And the image is what makes the way into the unconscious. Jerome Rothenberg says that poetry is what the poet’s unconscious converses with the reader’s unconscious. In order to distinguish his poetics on image from Imagism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Robert Bly criticizes that Pound’s Imagism is in essence picturism or objectivism while his personal theory of the image is that the image cannot be drawn from and inserted back into the real world. It is obtained from the psychic or visionary consciousness, or from the surreal world. Except for the theory of the unconscious, Bly has also been influenced by transcendentalism, Taoism, Bohemism, the theory of the Duende, etc. , all of which concentrate on man’s psychic world,

especially the deep hidden unconscious part.

Bly's deep image poetics is very critical. He objects to the modernist tenets of poetry, which are based upon western philosophy of materialism or objectivism. According to him, American modernist poetry has inherited the tradition of American business culture and Puritanism, which Bly thinks is to do harm to the growth of the national psyche. American poetry since the very beginning has turned a wrong direction—outward. That is, poetry has lost its own center and way, and has to linger upon the objects and materialistic things. However, poetry is the outflow of man's feelings, coming from one's deep spiritual world. Therefore, he suggests that poetry should turn inward, recording the instantaneous movement of the unconscious. He supposes that American poetry learn from Latin America and ancient China. Robert Bly considers that Chinese traditional culture is more idealism and spiritualism than materialism. The anthology of poetry *Jumping Out of Bed* comes out of the inspiration of Chinese philosophy Taoism, the core of which is the private ways of life like solitude, meditation and doing nothing.

Robert Bly is concerned about the psychic life. His poetry mostly involves such themes as “solitude, darkness, the shadow, the meditation, silence and death”, which the poet considers as the deepest part in one's consciousness, and where one is able to gain the most creative power and discloses the nature of humanity.

As a surrealist, Bly is not what some critics call “escapist”. Instead, he insists that a poet not be separated from the reality. His masterpiece, the winner of the National Book Prize of poetry, *The Light Around the Body*, is a typical as well as convincing example to prove that the poet should resume the responsibility of the social construction. *The Light Around the Body* is mainly war poetry in theme. Through the narration from the speaker's deep unconsciousness, it conveys the idea

that the war is destructive not merely physically but psychologically. And the latter is more damaging. In this sense, Robert Bly can be called a realist surrealist.



## 摘 要

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“深层意象”于20世纪50年代开始崭露头角并随后发展成当代美国文学的一股重要力量。其主要成员包括罗伯特·勃莱、詹姆斯·赖特、威廉·斯塔福、路易斯·辛普森、罗伯特·凯利、杰罗米·罗森博格、晚年时期的华莱士·斯蒂文斯、W. S. 默文、高尔威·吉内尔、马克·斯特兰德、查尔斯·希米克以及詹姆斯·泰特等。本文主要以罗伯特·勃莱的诗歌诗学作为个例来研究。

作为评论界所公认的“深层意象”领袖，勃莱深受弗洛伊德与荣格的精神分析学尤其是无意识理论的影响。他认为，诗歌是刹那间渗透到无意识中去的東西，而意象是进入无意识的途径与渠道。罗森博格则称，诗歌将使诗人的无意识与读者的无意识进行对话与交流。为了区分于20世纪初“意象主义”的意象观，勃莱将“意象主义”称之为本质上的图像主义或客观主义，而他个人的意象理论则为，意象既不能从现实中获得，也不能返回到现实世界中去。它来源于人的心灵与幻想意识或超现实世界。除无意识理论之外，勃莱还受到超验主义、道教、伯麦主义以及魔幻理论等思想的影响，这些理论都关注潜藏在内心深处的无意识世界。

勃莱的“深层意象”诗学具有强烈的批判性。他反对现代主义建立在物质主义或客观主义西方哲学基础之上的诗歌原则，他认为，美国现代主义诗歌继承了美国商业文化与清教主义传统，而它们将遗祸于民族精神的发展。美国诗歌自最初阶段以来转向了一个错误的方向——向外部世界。也就是说，美国诗歌失去了自己的中

心和途径，将不得不在客观实物上徘徊。然而，诗歌是心灵深处情感的外露。因此，他主张诗歌应转向内心，记录瞬间的无意识活动。美国诗歌应向拉美及古代中国的诗歌学习。他认为，中国传统文化注重心灵与精神而不是物质。诗集《从床上跳起》正是受中国道家哲学思想的影响而创作完成的，其内核就是孤独、沉思与无为的人生哲学。

勃莱关注人的精神生活。他的大部分诗歌主题是关于“孤寂、黑暗、影子以及沉思”的内容，诗人认为，这些内容是人意识内涵中最深层的部分，也最能使人获取最大的创造力并最能揭示人性的本质。

作为超现实主义诗人，勃莱并不是如某些批评家所说的那样是“逃避主义者”。相反，他坚持，诗人不应该脱离现实。其代表作——获国家诗歌图书奖的《遍体灵光》——是一部典型而且很具有说服力的诗集。它证明，诗人应承担起社会建设的责任。该诗集是一部战争题材的作品，通过叙述者深层意识的叙说，作品表达了战争不仅在物质上而且在精神上摧毁着人类世界，而后者更具有杀伤力。某种意义上说，勃莱是位现实主义的超现实主义诗人。

## Chronology of Robert Bly

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- 1926 Robert Elwood Bly born on December 23, the second child of Jacob Thomas Bly and Alice Aws Bly, in Madison, Minnesota, a small farming community.
- 1944 - 46 U. S. Navy, taken into a special radar program, where he meets Marcus Eisenstein and Warren Ramshaw, the first men he had met who had strong interest in literature. Buys his first book of poetry, Carl Sandburg's *Poems of the Midwest*, and later, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.
- 1946 - 47 St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.
- 1947 - 50 Transfers to Harvard. Majors in English; studies with Archibald MacLeish, F. O. Matthiessen, John Kelleher. Under Kelleher's guidance; reads Thoreau and Yeats. Also studies German, Greek, and Latin. Reads Robert Lowell's *Lord Weary's Castle* and Richard Wilbur's *The Beautiful Changes*, "the dominant books" (in Bly's words) of contemporary poetry at that time. Works on staff of The Harvard Advocate; becomes Literary Editor in his junior year. Meets Donald Hall, Richard Wilbur, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Frank O'Hara, Adrienne Rich, George Plimpton, Will Morgan, John Hawks. Graduates, *magna cum laude*, 1950.

- 1951 – 53 Goes to New York City, living alone, supporting himself with part-time jobs as clerk, typist, house painter, etc. Readings cover: Rilke, Jacob Boehme's *The Three-Fold Life*; *The Tao Te Ching*; Horace; Virgil's *Georgics and Eclogues*.
- 1955 Marries Carolyn McLean. Moves to a farm in Minnesota.
- 1956 – 57 In Norway on Fulbright Grant to translate Norwegian poetry. In the Oslo library reads for the first time the poetry of Pablo Neruda, Georg Trakl, Juan Ramon Jimenez, Gunnar Eklof, Harry Martinson.
- 1958 With William Duffy as coeditor, publishes first issue of *The Fifties*.
- 1962 *Silence in the Snowy Fields* published.
- 1963 "A Wrong Turning in American Poetry" published in *Choice*.
- 1965 Writes first Vietnam War poem, "At a March Against the Vietnam War". Begins work on long autobiographical poem which would become "Sleepers Joining Hands". Awarded Guggenheim Fellowship.
- 1966 Organizes first anti-Vietnam War poetry readings at Reed College and the University of Washington. Founds with David Ray, the organization American Writers Against the Vietnam War. The anthology *A Poetry Reading Against the Vietnam War* is published.
- 1967 *The Light Around the Body* published.
- 1968 *The Light Around the Body* wins the National Book Award for poetry. In his acceptance speech, attacks American government and publishers for not actively opposing the war, donates prize money to the draft resistance movement.

- 
- 1970 Published "The Teeth Mother Naked at Last".
- 1971 Bly's only brother, James, dies in a car crash.
- 1973 Published *Sleepers Joining Hands*.
- 1975 Organizes, with Peter Martin, the First Annual Conference on the Great Mother. *The Morning Glory* published.
- 1977 Publishes *This Body Is Made of Camphor and Gopherwood*. Participates in symposium, Chinese Poetry and the American Imagination, New York, April.
- 1978 Two documentaries on Bly are made: a film, *A Man Writes to a Part of Himself*, by Minnesota filmmakers; and a PBS program by Bill Moyers.
- 1979 Publishes *This Tree Will Be Here for a Thousand Years*. Divorced.
- 1980 Publishes *News of the Universe* and *Talking All Morning*. Remarries. His best friend, also an important poet, James Wright died.
- 1981 Publishes *The Man in the Black Turns*.
- 1985 Publishes *Loving a Woman in Two Worlds*.
- 1986 Publishes *Selected Poems*.
- 1994 Publishes *Meditations on the Insatiable Soul: Poems*.
- 1997 Publishes *Morning Poems*.
- 1999 Publishes *Eating the Honey of Words*.
- 2004 Publishes *The Insanity of Empire: A Book of Poems Against the Iraq War*.
- 2005 Publishes *The Urge to Travel Long Distances*.
- 2008 Named Minnesota's First Poet Laureate.

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## Introduction

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Richard P. Sugg, an important critic as well as professor in American literature and humanities at Florida International University, in the "Preface" of his monograph *Robert Bly* comments, "Robert Bly is among the best American poets since 1945. Without question, he has been the most influential upon his own and younger generations."<sup>①</sup> Galway Kinnell (1927 - ), a contemporary poet, once counted Bly among the two or three most important of his generation. And William Matthews, also a poet, expressed his sentiment when he declared in 1969 that "Bly has come to dominate American poetry."<sup>②</sup> Meanwhile, his review on Bly's poetics is also powerful, "It is nearly impossible to overemphasize the importance of Bly's criticism .... There has been nothing so interesting or influential since Ezra Pound began sending reviews to *Poetry*."<sup>③</sup> However, in the same year, William Heyen (1940 - ), a poet and professor, gave a quite opposite description, "For several years I disliked what Robert Bly had done in *Silence in the Snowy Fields* (1962). Indeed, I was surprised that the book had even made it

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① See the "Preface" in *Robert Bly: Twayne's United States Authors Series* by Richard P. Sugg, Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1986.

② William Matthews, "Thinking about Robert Bly", *Tennessee Poetry Journal* 2, No. 2 (Winter 1969), p. 49.

③ *Ibid.*