

Sign, Literature and Culture:
A Study of Roland Barthes's Semiological Thought

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罗兰·巴尔特符号学思想研究

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前 言

在二十世纪，现代符号学从学科设置、理论构建到跨学科的符号学实践研究，都得到了长足发展。在推动现代符号学发展的关键性人物中，法国符号学家、文学符号学研究的先驱者和文化符号学研究的开创者罗兰·巴尔特做出了卓越贡献。巴尔特的学术视野开阔、思想内涵丰富，发展出了符号学理论构建和符号学视角下的文学、文化研究实践并举的符号学思想。从研究对象上看，巴尔特的符号学思想呈现出符号学、文学和文化等研究相互融合、齐头并进的“多元化”局面；从哲学立场上看，巴尔特的符号学思想历经从结构主义到解构主义的巨大转变，具有“多变性”的特征。巴尔特符号学思想的“多元化”和“多变性”，在巴尔特的学术生涯中具体表现为前后迥异的哲学立场、多变的研究兴趣点、片段式的文本表述方式和浓厚的符号学色彩等特点。上述特点使得国内外学术界在巴尔特的学术身份定位、思想分期、理论体系构建等问题上难以达成共识，巴尔特及其思想研究仍然是学术界的一座迷宫。

本文立足于巴尔特的作品本身，忠实于其理论原貌，以符号学为线索，在符号学理论构建研究和符号学视角下的批评实践研究两个维度上，对巴尔特的思想展开全面研究，并力图实现该研究的结构系统性、逻辑周延性和体系完整性。这是一项在符号学视角下展开的巴尔特及其思想的整体研究。这一研究旨在从符号学的角度构建巴尔特的思想体系，揭示巴尔特符号学思想的生发背景、独特个性、思想内涵和学术价值，以形成系统的巴尔特符



号学思想研究体系。本文将补充和发展学术界现有的巴尔特及其思想研究,并见微知著,为二十世纪的西方符号学研究、文学研究、文化研究以及思想史研究提供新启发。

基于对巴尔特思想的特点和本文研究目的的考虑,本文共分为绪论、正文和结语三个主要部分,正文又分为六个章节。绪论主要包括巴尔特符号学思想研究的研究背景分析、研究对象的界定、国内外研究现状述评和本文的研究思路介绍等内容。

正文的六个章节针对巴爾特的符号学思想展开系统研究。第一章是巴尔特符号学思想的溯源研究。它通过简要介绍巴爾特的生平和学术历程,剖析符号学在巴爾特思想中得以生发的内在原因;挖掘巴爾特的符号学思想与以欧洲大陆为主的现代语言学研究,尤其是与索绪尔和叶尔姆斯列夫等人的思想之间的传承关系;并梳理巴爾特与同时代的学者,特别是与他周围的学术团体成员之间的相互影响。在现实生活和理论背景的双重层面上,重构巴爾特符号学思想生成的学术背景,从学理传承上为本文的巴爾特符号学思想研究做铺垫。

第二章是关于巴爾特符号学理论构建的研究。这一部分分别从符号内部的构成要素理论、符号内部的多维层次理论、符号集合的两层面理论和符号集合的两向度理论这四个方面展开。这四条理论共同构成了巴爾特符号学思想的理论部分,并为现代符号学的发展奠定了理论基础。从中可见,巴爾特的符号学理论经历了从语言学思想到符号学理论的发展过程。这个过程还体现在巴爾特的文学研究中,早期巴爾特主要是在语言符号学理论的影响下对文学形式要素进行思考,而后期则是在符号学理论的指导下对文学意义展开研究,并由此衍生出对文学系统中的其他要素的再思考和重新定位。这两个阶段的文学研究一脉相承,共同构成了巴爾特符号学思想中的文学研究部分。

第三章是巴爾特语言符号学视角下的“写作”观研究,主要包括巴爾特的“写作”观和巴爾特的“写作”观与语言符号学理论两个部分。巴爾特的“写作”观研究又分为“写作”的定义、



“写作”的类型、法国文学“写作”史的构建、“零度写作”和“不及物写作”等内容。巴尔特的“写作”观与语言符号学理论这一部分则着重分析了他的“写作”观与现代语言学的“语言结构—言语”、语言符号观以及其他的语言学思想之间的关系。由分析可见，巴尔特的“写作”观深受现代语言学思想的影响，但此时巴尔特仍处于对现代语言学思想的接受阶段，尚未形成独立的符号学理论。随着思想的发展和研究的深入，巴尔特逐渐开始关注文学意义问题，并借助于他的符号学理论发展出一种文学符号学的研究范式。随后，巴尔特便在符号学视角下对文学系统的诸要素进行了阐释和研究，这些研究共同构成了巴尔特符号学视角下的文学思想。

第四章主要研究巴尔特符号学视角下的文学思想。它主要包括巴尔特在符号学视角下所形成的“叙事”观、“文本”观和“作者”观。在分别厘清巴尔特的上述三种文学观的基础上，本章还深入挖掘了它们各自与巴尔特的符号学理论之间的内在关系，在符号学视角下打通它们之间的关联，从而形成系统化的巴尔特文学符号学思想研究。巴尔特在符号学视角下进行文学研究的同时，也密切关注各种文化现象背后的意义活动，并形成了独特的文化符号学思想。

第五章集中分析了巴尔特的文化符号学思想，主要探索了巴尔特在符号学视角下展开的大众文化、流行文化和日本文化研究。这一章逐一厘清了巴尔特的上述三种文化研究的主要内容，剖析了它们与巴尔特的符号学理论之间的密切关系，构建起巴尔特的文化符号学思想体系。

第二、三、四、五章的研究，包括了对巴尔特的符号学理论构建的研究和对他的符号学视角下的批评实践（含语言符号学视角下的“写作”观研究、符号学视角下的文学思想研究和符号学视角下的文化思想研究）的研究。这两个方面共同构成了巴尔特符号学思想研究的本体部分。在此基础上，第六章则展开巴尔特符号学思想的影响和局限性研究。这一章从符号学、文学批评和



文化研究等领域分别展开对该思想的影响研究，旨在从学界的接受和反映中提炼巴尔特符号学思想的学术价值和深远影响，并客观地指出这一思想的局限性，分析其成因，并尝试提出补救措施。

结语部分简要回顾了本文所进行的巴尔特符号学思想研究，得出本文的研究结论，探讨本研究的研究意义和可能产生的学术影响，并指出本研究存在的不足之处和未来的发展方向。

本书拟在现有的国内外巴尔特研究的基础上提出如下看法。

第一，符号学作为一种理论、一种方法、一种思维方式、一种目光，贯穿于巴尔特的整个学术生涯。从这个角度看，巴尔特的思想整体上都是符号学的，因此巴尔特及其思想研究也是符号学研究的某种呈现方式和存在范式。本文以符号学为线索，在理论构建研究和批评实践研究两个维度上，在文学研究和文化批评两个领域中，展开巴尔特思想体系的构建研究。本文的巴尔特符号学思想研究，实质上是在符号学视角下展开的巴尔特思想的整体性研究。

第二，本文提出“巴尔特符号学思想”这一概念具有广义和狭义之分。广义上，巴尔特的符号学思想包括符号学理论构建、符号学视角下的文学思想和符号学视角下的文化思想。本书所使用的是广义上的巴尔特符号学思想。狭义上，巴尔特的符号学思想仅指在现代语言学思想的启发下，巴尔特所进行的符号学基本原理研究。学界有观点认为巴尔特的符号学研究仅限于从1957年到1968年的所谓“符号学阶段”，这是在狭义上使用“巴尔特符号学思想”这一概念，它大致等同于本文的巴尔特符号学理论构建部分。

第三，巴尔特符号学视角下的文学、文化研究交替共生。因为在巴尔特看来，文学和文化不过是不同形态的意义活动，文学研究和文化批评则是不同形式的符号学研究。本文对于巴尔特符号学视角下的文学、文化思想的研究，在分别理清了它们各自的研究内容和思想内涵的基础上，打通了巴尔特的符号学、文学和



文化研究之间的藩篱，在符号学视角下构建起较为完整的巴尔特思想体系。鉴于巴尔特学说和思想在符号学研究、文学批评和创作以及文化研究等领域所产生的深远影响，本文的巴尔特符号学思想研究必然也能为上述诸领域的相关研究提供借鉴。

第四，根据本文的研究可以得出，巴尔特从符号外部研究到符号内部研究的转移和他的符号内部构成要素及层次理论的发展，才是巴尔特从结构主义到解构主义转变的内在动因和突破路径。这也表明从符号的微观视角来透视二十世纪西方思想史的宏大变迁，并分析这一发展的内在动因和突破路径，是完全可行的。可见，巴尔特符号学思想研究以个案的形式，为全面理解学界二十世纪从结构主义向解构主义的发展演变提供了新的观测点。

第五，巴尔特符号学思想的突出特点是符号学的理论构建和符号学视角下的批评实践并举，这一特点不但使它代表了法国符号学研究的主要特点，而且成为现代符号学研究的缩影。其中，巴尔特的符号学理论构建，为现代符号学的发展奠定了理论基础，而巴尔特在符号学视角下发展出的文学、文化思想，则为现代符号学研究拓宽了疆域，促使这门学科焕发出跨学科的生命力。因此，巴尔特符号学思想研究对法国符号学研究和现代符号学研究具有一定的启发意义。

关键词：罗兰·巴尔特；符号学理论构建；文学批评；文化研究



Preface

In the 20th century, the modern semiology, in the aspects of discipline-setting, theoretical constructions and application studies, has experienced a rapid development. Among all the key figures promoting the development of modern semiology, the famous French semiologist Roland Barthes, as the pioneer of literary semiological study and the pathfinder of cultural semiological study, has made his great contribution. Barthes's semiological thought, formed jointly by his construction of semiological theories and his semiological application studies in literary criticism and cultural studies, is, profound and influential. Philosophically, Barthes's semiological thought has changed from the Structuralism to the Deconstruction. The diversity and variability of Barthes's semiological thought are shown by his sharply different philosophical positions, variable study interests, his "fragment" writing style and the strong semiological shade of his study. All these make it difficult for the scholars to reach agreement on Barthes's academic orientation, the division of his career and the construction of his theoretical system. All in all, the studies of Barthes and his thought have become an attractive academic maze.

Based on Barthes's writings and thought, this book tries to have a systematic, logical and complete study of his thought. It



consists of his construction of semiological theories and his literary criticism and cultural studies in the perspective of semiology. Therefore, this is a study of Roland Barthes's thought from the semiological point of view. It aims to explore its academic background, its unique characteristics, its rich thought and its profound academic significance, and finally to achieve a complete study of Roland Barthes's semiological thought. This dissertation is an effort to develop the present study of Barthes and his thought, and it will hopefully be enlightening to the Western semiological study, the literary study and the cultural study in the 20th century.

Bearing the characteristics of Roland Barthes's thought and the purposes of this study in mind, I divide this dissertation into three parts. They are the Introduction, the body part and the Conclusion respectively. The Introduction gives a literary review of the previous studies about Roland Barthes and his thought, defines the study object, and introduces the research methods and the major content of this study. The body of this dissertation is composed of six chapters. The first chapter is a historical study of Barthes's semiological thought and its major theoretical resources. It briefly introduces Barthes's life and his academic career to show the development process of his semiological thought. Then, it explores the relationship between Barthes's semiological thought and the modern linguistic study of European continent especially that of Saussure and Hjelmslev, and it studies the interactive influence among Barthes's thought and those of the dominating members of the academic groups around him. This chapter reconstructs the academic background in which Roland Barthes's semiological thought is developed at both the practical and the theoretical levels.



The second chapter studies Barthes's construction of semiological theories in four parts. They are the theory of the componential elements of a sign, that of the multiple levels of a sign, that of the double levels of sign groups and that of the two developing directions of sign groups. These four branches collectively form the theoretical part of Barthes's semiological thought and lay down the theoretical basis of modern semiology. According to this chapter, it can be found that Barthes's semiological theories have experienced the development from modern linguistics to modern semiology. And this development process also can be found in Barthes's literary study. In the earlier time, Barthes is deeply attracted by modern linguistic theories and mainly focuses his attention on the study of literary form. But later, guided by the semiological theories, he develops a study of literary meaning, and gradually has a re-thought and re-orientation of other literary elements. They are the two stages of Barthes's literary study in the view of semiology.

The third chapter studies Barthes's "writing" view formed under the influence of the linguistic sign theories. It is subdivided into the study of Barthes's "writing" view and that of the influence of the linguistic sign theories exerted upon this view. Barthes's "writing" view is composed of the definition of "writing", its types, the construction of "writing" history of French literature, and the terms of "writing degree zero" and "intransitive writing". In the discussion of the influence of the linguistic sign theories exerted upon Barthes's view, it attentively studies that the relationship of the "writing" view to "langue-parole", to the sign theories and to other linguistic thought. Obviously, Barthes's "writing" view is deeply influenced by the



modern linguistic thoughts. However, it can be found easily that Barthes hasn't formed independent semiological views or theories at that time. With the development of his thought, Barthes gradually begins to think about the "meaning" of literature from which he develops a literary semiological study mode. And he also tries to examine and interpret other elements of literary system from the semiological point of view. All these studies collectively form Barthes's literary semiological study.

The fourth chapter studies Barthes's literary semiological thought, which consists of his "narrative" view, his "text" view and his "author" view. This chapter defines Barthes's three literary views one by one and then deeply explores their respective relationship to Barthes's semiological theory. This chapter aims to systematically construct Barthes's literary semiological thought. Besides that, Barthes examined closely the meaning activities of various cultural phenomena. And he forms unique cultural semiological thought, which are studied in Chapter Five.

The fifth chapter studies Barthes's cultural semiological thought. It analyzes Barthes's mass culture study, his popular culture study and his Japanese culture study one by one. By analyzing these cultural studies of Barthes, this part sheds light on the tight link between Barthes's cultural studies and his semiological theories, and then tries to construct his cultural semiological thought systematically.

Based on the studies of the above chapters, Chapter Six further analyzes the academic influences and limitations of Barthes's semiological thought. According to the acceptance in and the responses from the academic circle, this chapter tries to show the academic value and deep influence of Barthes's semiological thought, mainly in the fields of modern semiology,



literary criticism and cultural studies. In addition, it still points out the limitations of this thought, analyzes their causes and tries to put forward some improving suggestion.

Finally comes the Conclusion. The Conclusion briefly goes over the whole study of Barthes's semiological thought, draws the conclusions and discusses its research significance and the possible academic influence. After that, it also points out the limitations of this study and the improvement in the future.

After the whole study, this dissertation tries to put forward the following opinions. Firstly, semiology, as a theory, a method, a thinking way and maybe only a kind of perspective, goes through Barthes's whole academic career. Therefore, Barthes's whole thought is semiological by nature, and the study of Barthes and his thought are some kind of semiological study. This study of Barthes's semiological thought is the study of Barthes's thought in the perspective of semiology. It consists of two aspects. One is the study of Barthes's construction of semiological theories; the other is the study of his literary and cultural thought formed from the vantage point of semiology.

Secondly, it can be found that the term of Barthes's semiological thought can be used in both a broad and a narrow sense. Broadly, it consists of his construction of semiological theories, his semiological literary criticism and his semiological cultural studies. We used this term in the broad sense in this dissertation. Usually, it is used in the narrow sense. For example, some people hold the view that his study of semiological theories is confined to the so-called "semiological stage", which lasts roughly from 1957 to 1968. These opinions just use "Barthes's semiological thought" in its narrow sense, which is similar to Barthes's construction of semiological theories



of this study.

Thirdly, the literary criticism and cultural studies co-exist in Barthes's semiological thought. Because, in Barthes's eyes, literature and culture are two kinds of meaning activities, and therefore literary criticism and cultural studies are just different types of semiological studies. The studies of Barthes's literary and cultural semiological thought are helpful to find the inner relationship in their own field and useful to bridge the gap separating the researches among Barthes's semiological, literary and cultural studies. In addition, because of the deep influence that Barthes's researches and thoughts have exerted upon the modern semiological, literary and cultural studies, this dissertation surely will make its contribution to these studies which have been mentioned above.

Fourthly, it is the change of Barthes's semiological study from the inner side to the outer side of a sign and the development of his theories of a sign that jointly promote Barthes's shift from a Structuralist to a Deconstructionist. This study shows that it is likely to study the development of the Western academic field in the 20th century and to analyze its inner motivation and developing process in the view of semiology. Therefore, the study of Barthes's semiological thought, as a typical case, will be a new observing point for us to explore and understand the philosophical shift from the Structuralism to the Deconstruction.

Fifthly, the most outstanding feature of Barthes's semiological thought is the co-existence and combination of his construction of semiological theories and his semiological literary criticism and cultural studies. It makes Barthes's semiological thought gain the major features of French semiological study and be a miniature of modern semiology. Barthes's construction of



semiological theories lay down the theoretical basis of modern semiology. And Barthes's semiologically literary criticism and cultural studies enliven and enrich this new discipline. Therefore, the study of Barthes's semiological thought will be enlightening to the French and modern semiological studies.

Key Words: Roland Barthes, the construction of semiological theories, literary criticism, cultural studies

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