

An Analysis of Lee Kuei-shien's Traveling Poems

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the travel poems by Lee Kuei-shien through the theory of travel literature. First, the researcher of this study believes that “Taiwan” signifies the “coordinates of home” to Lee, as he constructs “an ideal self” between leaving and returning. This ideal self is not only Lee himself but also Taiwan. In the travel literature, a mirror image is often found reflecting the self and the foreign landscape. Lee prefers using the images of “fire” and “mountain.” The dynamism of fire and the steadfastness of mountains are the ideal images for the self as conceived by Lee. Moreover, the sympathetic responses generated in a traveler when facing a foreign landscape is replaced by the familiarity found in a foreign landscape in Lee’s travel poems, thereby presenting an emotional connection to Taiwan, his home. Finally, a traveler’s inner dissatisfaction or satisfaction is usually reflected by “the difference between the self and the others” discovered when traveling. For the dissatisfaction, Lee presents his expectation of the independence of Taiwan through his admiration of the independence of other nation states after the former U.S.S.R collapsed. For the satisfaction, in the series of “Observing China” Li presents the political situation in China that lacks the protection of human right and the respect of individual freedom. He also presents his sympathy towards humanitarianism in many third-world-countries.

Keywords: Lee Kuei-shien, traveling poems, traveling literature