

## *Original Paper*

# Research on World Consciousness in Guo Moruo's Poetry

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### ***Abstract***

*This article starts from the world trend of thought absorbed by Guo Moruo, sorts out Guo Moruo's world consciousness and the dynamic process of his acceptance of world trends, and explores the reasons why these advanced trends of thought were applied by Guo Moruo in combination with Guo Moruo's life experience and spiritual life. Finally, the authors return to Guo Moruo's poetry works and analyze how these ideological currents have brought about some important changes in his poetry creation, leading to some of his poetry works presenting new characteristics and becoming a revolutionary milestone in the history of literature.*

### ***Keywords***

*Guo Moruo, The causes of world consciousness, Pantheism, modern poetry*

## **1. Introduction**

In the long history of Chinese literature, Guo Moruo is an important figure with avant-garde significance. As a widely recognized literary and historical generalist, he truly achieved the goal of observing and understanding the world from a global perspective, thinking about issues related to humanity and the universe. His literary creation draws on advanced ideas from different countries and regions, including Western classical humanitarianism, Bergson and Freud's modern philosophy of life, pantheism represented by Spinoza, Marx's communism, and so on.

Guo Moruo has the most poetry anthologies in his works, and his new poetry holds an epoch-making position in the history of Chinese literature. Therefore, this article takes Guo Moruo's poetry as the main research object, excavates his world consciousness, points out Guo Moruo's open attitude of actively embracing world trends, and analyzes the impact of various world trends on Guo Moruo's poetry creation.

## 2. Concept Definition

### 2.1 World Consciousness

The world consciousness mentioned in this article mainly has two meanings. From the perspective of the causes of Guo Moruo's world consciousness, the "world consciousness" here refers to Guo Moruo's consciousness and ability to consciously or unconsciously understand and absorb advanced ideological trends from around the world and apply them to his literary and artistic creations. Simply put, it is Guo Moruo's attitude of embracing world trends. On the other hand, in analyzing the dimensions of the world consciousness and its impact and inspiration on Guo Moruo's poetry, "world consciousness" tends to have a specific ideological level, which refers to the world trend itself.

### 2.2 Guo Moruo's New Poetry

Around the 1920s, Guo Moruo was mainly rooted in the creation of free verse poetry. The May Fourth New Culture Movement produced a large number of vernacular works and new poetry. Guo Moruo's poetry collection "Goddess" not only serves as the starting point for the free and unrestrained form of new poetry, but also marks the birth of a new era spirit.

### 2.3 Pantheism

The broad term "pantheism" refers to a philosophical viewpoint that considers God and the entire universe or nature as one, emphasizing the supreme status of nature, and denying God's dominance and creationism. Narrowly defined "pantheism" mainly refers to philosophical ideas that were popular in the 16th and 18th centuries, represented by Dutch philosophers such as Spinoza and Bruno. The concept of "pantheism" mentioned in this article refers to a narrow sense. Modern Chinese intellectuals were influenced by many Western ideologies, and Guo Moruo, as one of them, had an inseparable connection between his poetry creation and "pantheism".

## 3. The Background and Causes of Guo Moruo's World Consciousness

### 3.1 The Influence of the Upbringing Environment and Family during Adolescence

A person's worldview is directly influenced by his upbringing environment. Firstly, Guo Moruo was born in Shawan Leshan known as the "land of bandits". His grandfather was a person of chivalry and loyalty, and this upbringing environment is inseparable from the chivalrous culture in Guo Moruo's works. At the same time, Leshan is a beautiful and picturesque treasure land, and Guo Moruo's understanding of Laozi and Zhuangzi's thoughts deepened as he wandered between the mountains and waters. Influenced by the natural landscape, the "pan divine" thought also began to plant seeds in his heart.

Secondly, Guo Moruo's family environment prompted him to embrace many traditional Chinese ideas, among which the Confucian principles, ethics, and views on official career had a huge impact on his early life experiences and creations. Guo Moruo was born into a merchant family, his father was skilled in business, and his mother was the daughter of a local official, which can be considered as the class of

intellectuals. Due to the fact that the society at that time was still in a semi feudal stage, his father was very eager for Guo Moruo to seek fame to break away from his “business” background and improve his social status. The evidence about this can be found from his nickname “Wen Bao”, which means the leader in the text. Under the influence of his family, Guo Moruo developed a sense of identification with the Confucian concepts of “actively entering the world” and “official career”.

Finally, his closest family members have a competitive temperament. His mother is capable of making excellent needlework, and he also has an elder brother who became a scholar at the age of thirteen, proficient in everything from piano, chess, calligraphy, and painting. His father not only excels in business, but also learns a lot of medical skills. Therefore, Guo Moruo has had great ambitions since childhood and he tries his best to do whatever he can. His competitive spirit has always supported him to absorb excellent ideas and refine his writing. Mr. Guo Moruo has truly achieved the goal of never being too old to learn.

### *3.2 Impact of Study Abroad Experience*

The impact of his overseas study experience and the “foreign scenery” on his worldview made Guo Moruo break away from his original traditional thinking, free himself from the “Chinese perspective”, form and develop a broader “world consciousness”.

While studying in Japan, Guo Moruo experienced a modern way of life, riding a tram, and experiencing the breathtaking scenery of the Inland Sea of Seto. The unique scenery in a foreign land has enriched his perspective on observing the world, including visual, auditory, tactile... Therefore, his poetry creation also appeared dynamic visuals, passionate rhythms, and bold innovations.

In addition, Japan in the early 20th century had just undergone the Meiji Restoration. In this emerging capitalist society, Western culture flooded in, and Guo Moruo was exposed to various Western philosophical ideas as a result.

### *3.3 Changes in the Current Situation and the Impact of Political Revolutionary Movements*

The development of political and ideological movements and revolutions also created prerequisites for Guo Moruo to absorb various advanced ideas. The changes in the world situation after World War I and the success of the October Revolution in Russia promoted the vigorous development of the Japanese workers’ and peasants’ movement, and Marxism and communism were widely spread. It was precisely because of these changes in the current situation that Guo Moruo was able to come into contact with Marxism during his early years of studying abroad. Under the dual stimulation of the May Fourth Movement and his poor hearing, he gave up medicine and joined the literary group “Creation Society”, embarking on the path of saving the country with words. This was an important turning point in his life. At the same time, the turbulence of the current situation prompted his thoughts to no longer remain at the personal level of expressing romantic feelings, but to start paying attention to social reality. As he himself put it, “But when the national race is in danger, who can leisurely focus solely on the safety of their own family? To survive in a dead place, to survive in a dead place. The path I am taking now, I

believe, is the only way to survive.” Especially after his translating the book “Social Organizations and Social Revolution” by Japanese economist Asahi Kawaguchi, Guo Moruo developed great confidence in advanced Marxism.

### *3.4 Literary Works and the Influence of Literary Masters*

The influence of literary works and other writers is also a key factor in the formation of Guo Moruo’s world consciousness. During adolescence, literary works play a significant role in shaping a person’s values. Guo Moruo has shown exceptional learning talent since childhood. At the age of five, he entered a private school to study and began researching the “Suishan Mountain Pavilion”, studying the “Book of Songs” and “The Analects”. The influence of traditional literature unconsciously made him absorb Chinese spirits such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. In addition to the Four Books and Five Classics, Guo Moruo also enjoys reading Tang and Song poetry, and Wang Wei, Meng Haoran, Li Bai, and others are his favorite poets. Wang Wei and Meng Haoran were pastoral poets, and the ideas of Laozi and Zhuangzi were their inspiration for writing poetry. Li Bai, the “poetic immortal”, was known for his persistence in the immortal path and his deep friendship with Yuan Danqiu. These Tang Dynasty poets have their own unique understanding of the Taoist ideology of “nature without action”, and their works laid the foundation for Guo Moruo’s emphasis on the “pan divine” ideology of “nature” and the Taoist philosophy of individual liberation.

During his high school years, Guo Moruo read a lot of Lin Qinnan’s translated works, which undoubtedly opened a window for him to understand the world literature. After studying abroad in Japan, he further came into contact with the poetry of Whitman, Tagore, Shakespeare, Goethe, and others, which broadened his literary perspective.

The literary group “Creation Society” was established in Tokyo, Japan in 1921. Its core idea was to create literature that was “loyal to the heart”. Here, Guo Moruo met like-minded writers, such as Cheng Fangwu, Tian Han, Yu Dafu, etc. They often exchanged letters and ideas. In the early stage, they focused on self-expression, while in the later stage, they advocated Marxism.

## **4. Guo Moruo’s Poetry and Guo Moruo’s World Consciousness**

### *4.1 Pantheism and Guo Moruo’s Poetry Creation*

Pantheism is a philosophical view that equates nature with God, emphasizing the supremacy of nature. Pantheism believes that God exists in all things in nature and has no other supernatural domination or spiritual power. Although pantheism originated from the Dutch philosopher Spinoza, Guo Moruo’s “pantheism” draws on the strengths of various schools such as Wang Yangming’s “mind theory”, Lao Zhuang’s thought, and ancient Indian philosophy. In short, Guo’s “pantheism” has the following three aspects: firstly, it emphasizes that “I am God”, highlights the central position of the self in the universe, and highlights self-expression and self-expansion. In Guo Moruo’s important poetry collection “Goddess”, the poem “Heavenly Dog” embodies the central idea of “I am God”. Guo said, “I am a

Heavenly Dog! I have swallowed the moon, I have swallowed the sun, I have swallowed all the planets, I have swallowed the whole universe. I am me!” The passion with which he expresses himself can be seen between the lines.

Secondly, Guo Moruo’s “pantheism” holds that nature is also a god, and all things are “gods”, without the so-called existence of gods beyond nature. In the poem “Earth, My Mother”, Guo Moruo endows all things on Earth with divinity.

Finally, Guo Moruo believes that humans and nature should be unified in God. Let’s take a look at this song “Standing on the Edge of the Earth and Sending Signals”:

Countless white clouds are raging in the air,  
Ah ah! What a magnificent scene of the Arctic Ocean!  
The infinite Pacific lifted his whole body’s strength to push down the Earth.  
Ah ah! The rolling waves in front of me!  
Ah ah! Continuously destroying, constantly creating, and constantly striving!  
Ah ah! Oh, my strength! Oh, my strength!

The painting of force, the dance of force, the music of force, the poetry of force, and the rhythm of force!

At this moment, the surging waves and the author’s flying thoughts blend seamlessly and become a natural entity, endowing both humans and nature with divine power and divinity.

There are many examples of “pantheism” in Guo Moruo’s modern poetry, which will not be listed one by one here due to space limitation.

#### *4.2 Marxist Philosophy and Guo Moruo’s Poetry Creation*

After experiencing the October Revolution in Russia and the May Fourth New Culture Movement in China, Guo Moruo’s understanding of Marxism deepened day by day, opening a new stage of thought and creation.

Guo Moruo’s early literary creation aimed at constructing an aesthetic and self-contained personal emotional world. After accepting the infiltration of Marxism, he became concerned about social problems. As he himself said, “Marx and Lenin, who used to be on the edge of consciousness, did not know when they had squeezed out Spinoza and Goethe and occupied the center of consciousness”; The stereotyping of thoughts has brought about drastic changes in my life, and I have since paid more attention to social activities

Undoubtedly, Guo Moruo’s attention to social politics is also reflected in his modern poetry creation. In 1928, he wrote a poem called “Forward”, in which the poem read:

Forward, forward, forward  
My fellow countrymen are in the city of sorrow  
The demons are outside the city of worry  
The surging cow ghosts and snake gods

Attacking Chou City on all sides  
Forward, forward, forward  
Drive away those demons  
Save people from hardship.

The repeated ‘forward’ shows Guo Moruo’s desire to liberate all humanity. He believes that the historical materialism of Marxist philosophy is the best way to solve the problems of today’s world, and scientific epistemology and methodology are the pillars of it. Guo Moruo’s poetry is no longer simply expressing personal emotions or filled with a strong romantic atmosphere, but praising scientific ideas, reflecting social problems, and advocating social revolution.

#### *4.3 Modern Philosophy of Life and Guo Moruo’s Poetry Creation*

Philosophy of life is the contemplation of the essence, meaning, and value of life. Since Schopenhauer, the modern philosophy of life has been continuously elucidated by Nietzsche, Bergson, and Claggers etc., and has come to the following conclusion, that is, “the focus of modern philosophy of life is not on the external material world, but on the inner spiritual world of people; they not only understand life as a process, but also deeply explore the inner vitality, creativity, unconsciousness, irrationality, intuition, and so on in people’s spiritual world”.

In Guo Moruo’s modern poetry, there are numerous examples that reflect the philosophy of modern life. The poem “I am an idol worshiper” reads:

I am an idol worshiper!  
I worship the sun, the mountains, and the sea;  
I worship water, fire, volcanoes, and great rivers;  
I worship life, death, light, and night;  
I admire Su Yishi, Panama, the Great Wall, and the pyramids,  
I worship the spirit of creation, worship the power, worship the blood, and worship the heart;  
I worship bombs, I worship sorrow, I worship destruction;  
I worship idol destroyers, worship me!  
I am an idol destroyer again!

Here, the author’s inherent spiritual vitality to challenge authority and the creative thought of “breaking the old and innovating” are fully revealed.

In addition, the so-called unconsciousness refers to “consciousness that is not recognized by our consciousness”, which exists in our minds but is not really known and understood. According to Guo Moruo’s recollection, one day at the end of December 1919, while studying in Japan, he went to the library to read books during his vacation. Suddenly, a burst of poetry hit him, and he hurried to the secluded gravel road behind the library, took off his shoes, walked around with bare feet, and then fell down on the road to get intimate with the gravel. The poem “Earth, My Mother” mentioned above was born. Two paragraphs of the poem read as follows:

Earth, my mother!  
From now on, I don't want to live at home often,  
I want to stay in this open air,  
To you, to show my filial piety.  
Earth, my mother!  
I think all the planets in the sky that day  
It's just a phantom of our biological eyeballs;  
I only believe that you are proof of authenticity.

It can be seen that a burst of "sudden poetry" is the emergence of unconscious thoughts deep in the author's heart, while irrational words such as "unwilling to live at home" and "all planets in the sky are just imaginary shadows of the eyes" are intuitive expressions of love for Mother Earth under the influence of creative passion.

From the above content, it is not difficult to see that modern philosophy of life has had a profound impact on Guo Moruo's poetry creation.

#### *4.4 Chivalry Culture and Guo Moruo's Poetry Creation*

The more Chinese, the more global. Not only the western ideological trends have a significant impact on Guo Moruo's poetry creation, but also the Chinese traditional ideology and culture permeates between the lines of Guo's poetry and prose. As mentioned above, there were often bandits in Shawan, Leshan, Guo Moruo's hometown. The story of local bandit, Monk Yang San's rescue of Xu Dahan left a deep impression on his young mind, and he was fond of Monk Yang San: "When we were young, we always felt that Monk Yang San was a good friend, just like the characters in "Records of the Three Kingdoms" or "The Water Margin". "The Water Margin" is the "masterpiece of Chinese martial arts novels", Guo Moruo compared Monk Yang San to a character from The Water Margin, which shows his inner longing for the spirit of chivalry.

"Shangli" is an important connotation of chivalry culture, and the spirit of chivalry culture in Guo Moruo's poetry is mainly manifested in his worship of force. Some scholars keenly pointed out: "In a sense, the Goddess is the ode to The Times of 'force'". During the May Fourth period in China, there were Western powers eyeing it from outside, and various warlords fighting for years inside. Guo Moruo was extremely eager to have a powerful force to change the chaotic and dark social reality. Therefore, in Guo Moruo's poetry during the May Fourth Movement, the consciousness of advocating for strength was often combined with the spirit of complete destruction and bold creation. For example, in the poem "Ode to the Bandits", the author praises the "political revolutionary bandits", "social revolutionary bandits", "religious revolutionary bandits", "theoretical revolutionary bandits", "literary revolutionary bandits", and "educational revolutionary bandits" one by one, affirming the fighting power of these revolutionaries to overthrow the old world and start a new historical process.

During the War of Resistance Against Japan, China fell into a more dangerous situation. At a critical

juncture of national border occupation and survival, Guo Moruo still issued the cry of “upholding strength”:

We need to stir up the angry tide of national liberation,

We need to play the bugle of punishing traitors,

We need to summon the whole people to the front line of national defense to overthrow the aggressors.

Wake up the whole nation towards the final duel! Towards the final duel!

.....

The “force” here is no longer the force of destruction and renewal, but the fighting force to defend territorial sovereignty. In the above poems, the influence of the spirit of “force” and the tradition of chivalry culture on Guo Moruo’s creation can be clearly seen.

#### *4.5 Confucianism and Taoism Spirit and Guo Moruo’s Poetry Creation*

##### *4.5.1 Confucian Spirit and Guo Moruo’s Poetry*

The main ideological trend of new intellectuals during the New Culture Movement was to “overthrow the Kong family store”, but Guo Moruo went against his path and talked extensively about “respecting Confucius and Confucianism”, as he himself said, “I confess here that we worship Confucius. Let them be the ones who say our times are wrong. We still worship Confucius... The Confucius we see is a great genius like Kant and Goethe, a perfect personality, and a giant with eternal life”. It can be seen that the idea of “respecting Confucius and worshipping Confucianism” has indeed penetrated into Guo Moruo’s bones.

Confucianism advocates for “entering the world”, and in Guo’s poetry and prose after the founding of the People’s Republic of China, his praise of the spirit of entering the world can be seen everywhere. He sometimes praises the new society and the new atmosphere: “Difficulties create triumphs, the five-star red flag is red everywhere. There are many living beings, abundant resources. The workers and peasants are the masters”. Sometimes he praises the leadership of the Communist Party: “You, a living missile! You have given travelers the boldness of heaven. Please guide them forward, forever, forever”, Sometimes he praises the hard work of the working people: “It is labor that has transformed nature and society, and made the rivers and mountains shine with the radiance of life”. Undoubtedly, these poems contain the poet’s positive attitude of longing to devote himself to the construction of socialist new China and his profound outlook for a better future.

##### *4.5.2 Taoist Spirit and Guo Moruo’s Poetry*

Zhuangzi once said; “Heaven and earth have great beauty, but they do not speak”. The Taoist school regards nature as the source of truth, goodness, and beauty. They praise nature and hope to achieve spiritual communication between humans and nature. Guo Moruo can deeply feel the beauty and unique qualities of nature. His poetry is rich in imagery, ranging from the sun, moon, and stars to insects, fish, birds, and beasts, all of which are the objects of his singing and lyric. In “Watching the



Sunrise in a Boat”, the poet sings:

Oh! The Sun!  
A crystal round pendant!  
At the seaside skyline  
Dark Clouds overhead low.  
It was so easy for me to see your face!  
Please sing a triumphal song for me!  
I can be considered to have defeated the ocean today!

While the poem “After the Rain” not only depicts the vast landscape: the sea and the universe, but also depicts the subtle scenery such as fishing boats and lights on the island:

On a flat shore,  
The fishing boats in a row,  
No trace of anyone.  
There are two or three lights,  
Flashing on a distant island—  
A rising star?

These poems implicitly contain the poet’s natural concept of “harmony between heaven and man”.

## 5. Summary

Guo Moruo’s world consciousness has contributed to his modern poetry creation. He is adept at drawing on different ideological trends for writing, and his poetry thus holds epoch-making significance in both form and content. Guo Moruo, who blends Chinese and Western cultures and studies through ancient and modern times, is widely recognized as a literary master. His poetry also provides an important template and paradigm for modern poetry writing in later generations. Guo Moruo joined the Creation Society in his early years and advocated the literary concept of “art for the sake of art”. However, under the call of the mission of the times and the sweeping wave of revolution, Guo Moruo gradually gave up his previous romantic ideals and instead let literature serve social reality. Contemporary writers should also draw inspiration from Mr. Guo Moruo’s world consciousness, avoid “false emptiness” in literary creation, support literary works with real ideas and connotations, care about current politics and the people of the world, add practical significance to literary works of “sunny spring and white snow”, change the ignorant and ignorant public ideology, and criticize the evil and dark social reality.

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