

Analysis of Unique Technique of Metaphor and Analogy in Poems of His Heart

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Abstract: Ruan Ji was a famous poet in the Wei and Jin Dynasties (A.D.220—589). His masterpiece, the eighty-two Poems of His Heart, has not only profound ideological contents, but also the unique artistic features of excellence. This paper mainly analyzes Poems of His Heart in a large number of unique metaphors, which is more profound understanding of the art of poetry connotation. Through in-depth analysis of the text, and to the metaphor and analogy of ancient poems traditional study, and compare of Ruan Ji's poetry style and other poets, recognizing that Ruan Ji inherits the predecessor especially on the basis of Qu Yuan's poetry. The technique of metaphor and analogy was developed and innovated, making the poems more subtle and meaningful.

1. Introduction

The famous poet Ruan Ji, one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, was a shining star in the history of literature in Wei and Jin Dynasties. The eighty-two *Poems of His Heart* shows its profound thoughts, making the readers feel that, in the suffocating dark times, an upright and noble heart of the poet was suffering intense pain and loneliness. He continued to chant the suffering and short duration of life, to think hard about the value and significance of life, and to look confused far to the vast universe. Ruan Ji can be said to be the most painful soul in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, and his poetry is the most deep and beautiful poetry of the era.

Poems of His Heart is not only a great carrier of thought, showing Ruan Ji's pains and conflicts in life, but also a great carrier of art, displaying a unique and outstanding artistic feature, making the poetry mighty ambiguity and polysemy and the stirring appeal.

2. Technique of metaphor and analogy

Wang Fuzhi said *Poems of His Heart*, created by the army, was vast unrivalled and could be traced back to *Guofeng* and the Nineteen Ancient Poems, taking on the clutch between the major spirit [*Ancient Poetry Selection*]. *Poems of His Heart* inherits the tradition of coquettish and uses skillfully a rich variety of dizzying techniques of metaphor and analogy.

2.1. The connotation of the metaphor and analogy

The technique of metaphor and analogy is a common expression art in Chinese traditional poetry, and is widely used in ancient poetry creation. There are a lot of discussions from the predecessors about what is metaphor and analogy, among which the explanations from Liu Xie and Zhu Xi have

great influence. According to them, metaphor refers to an art in poetry combined with lyrical expressions and reasoning, using figure of speech, personification, symbolism and fable as the main means to describe the overall image or the main part of a poetry. Analogy is a kind of lyric, touching and flourishing expression in poetry, functioning as the effect of symbol, atmosphere and rhyme. Liu Xie thinks that when the metaphor gets explicit the analogy becomes implicit, which can be often found in poetry creation

2.2. The development of the metaphor and analogy

The technique of metaphor and analogy has a long history, and was widely used in *the Book of Songs*. But the technique of metaphor and analogy in *the Book of Songs* is most relatively simple, and things it refers to are independently existing individuals. Based on the traditional techniques in *the Book of Songs*, Qu Yuan's *Lisao* enriched the content of the performance and enhanced the artistic expression. Qu Yuan put those isolated objects and metaphors together, consciously took it as abstract concepts of symbols and symbolic images for his political thought, personality, aesthetic ideal and consciousness, making these symbols have an independent and specific symbolic meaning. Therefore, Wang Yi once pointed out that Qu's *Lisao* borrowed the technique from *the Book of Songs*. Qu Yuan put a lot of visible images together to constitute a relatively independent and complete system of metaphors and analogies and the image system of it.

The Nineteen Ancient Poems, which appeared at the end of the Han Dynasty, continued to absorb the words and images from *the Book of Songs* and *Li Sao*, and commonly used the technique of metaphor and analogy. The poetry in Jian'an Times (A.D. 196—220) also used the technique, especially the poems by Cao Zhi used as the best lyric way under the difficult political situation.

3. Technique of metaphor and analogy in poems of his heart

Ruan Ji's poems inherited *Xiaoya* and *the Nineteen Ancient Poems*, deeply influenced by Cao Zhi. He used metaphors and analogies in poetry by nature symbols or immortal suggestions to show two meanings in one sentence and turned to the performance of the ideological content via vague statements. Therefore, Zhong Rong highly evaluated this in his works of *Grades of Poetry*.

3.1. In the traditional metaphor and analogy

The use of this technique was clearly influenced by *the Songs of Chu*. Ruan Ji described many female beauties in his poetry. This kind of appreciation and praise does not mean that Ruan Ji loved women, and it has other deep meanings. These female images are shrouded in a layer of sadness and lonely, inherits Qu Yuan's tradition, showing the monarch-subject relationship with men and women's love. For example, Guo Guang thought that the beauty in the eightieth song should be Emperor Wei. In addition, the desire for beautiful women indicates the poet's pursuit of ideal and the sadness when he couldn't achieve that. On the surface, the beauty seems to an unrivalled beauty in the eyes of the poet, but the fact is not just so simple. This poem doesn't mean the sadness caused by not getting the love, neither the beauty mentioned by Qu Yuan, but a beautiful ideal of the author. Mr Shang Xuefeng believes that the life state of the beauty is the ideal state that Ruan Ji diligently strived after. The theme of poetry is the expression of the imagination of this ideal realm. [*life care and lyric mode in Poems of His Heart of Ruan Ji*] Ruan Ji intended to pull apart the lyric protagonist and the celestial distance and showed life experience in his pursuit of spiritual freedom which couldn't be realized beyond the reality. Ruan Ji pulled apart the celestial distance in poetry, and also made the poetry itself apart with readers. He let the readers appreciate poetry and get a huge barrier of beauty through the blurred distance.

The technique of metaphor and analogy in Ruan Ji's poetry makes expansion and extension on the

basis of Qu Yuan's *Lisao*. Into natural images are added frost, weeds, wind, moon, and wilderness and so on. The symbolic meaning of many birds is also shown. The author examined nature and had concern about the plight of the individuals. He inspired himself through natural changes and thus the natural objects appearing in his works were no longer pure natural things, but the nature in the poet's heart. Ruan Ji put the natural objects to his own feelings, and expressed the feelings by himself. Using images to express his unspoken thoughts not only brings an aesthetic feeling, but also gets readers to fall into a reverie and strong psychological shock. In the myth of immortals, he not only described a large number of immortal pictures and fairy wonderland, but also treated the fairy world as a beautiful ethereal ideal, a kind of spiritual compensation of real life defects. Through his elegant refined and free celestial description, he looked for a pure land away from the suffering reality and found a kind of spiritual support and comfort.

3.2. Continue to create and develop new methods and contents

Ruan Ji inherited the traditional metaphors and analogies and also continued to create and develop new methods and contents. In *the History of Chinese Literature*, Zhang Peiheng and Luo Yuming indicate that the subject of the poetry is the folk songs and literati poetry which has developed on the basis of the folk songs. Its connotation is usually relatively simple, and the subject is the mostly specific problem. Ruan Ji completely got rid of the imitation of folk songs, combined skillfully with a series of artistic images, and gave a very broad field of poetry vision as well as a profound philosophical perspective. By the means of expression, with symbolic meaning his poetry forms an aloof, twinkle twist, inducing people to appreciate and think repeatedly, which is said in *the Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* as Ruan's intention being profound. In the poems rich in philosophical implication the real life contents rises to a real art and melts in the profound philosophical verses. The harmonious philosophy light of aesthetic images flash between the universe and real life to arouse readers' rational consciousness of suffering and lofty aesthetic taste.

Ruan Ji was adept in his poems in reflecting the reality by the means of hint, contrast and foiling. Life expresses the sentiment of life, so the aesthetic images he displayed in poetry have obvious uncertainty and strong obscurity. The reason for the multi view is that the aesthetic object of uncertainty will inevitably lead to hazy aesthetic images. So, which statement is more accurate? There is no strict boundary. No scholar can prove his theory is authoritative, and everything is only speculation and inference on the basis of the understanding the thoughts of Ruan Ji. These are reasonable existences. It is because of Ruan's profound subject that brings a hazy and subtle feeling, and this is the charm of classical poetry. In *the Original Poem* as Ye Xie said that the wonder of poems lies in the subtle expanse and the deep thought. It is because of the connotative polysemy of euphemism that triggers the imagination and taste of the readers, and has the subtle, unspeakable charm.

3.3. Allusions are used

Allusions are widely used in Ruan Ji's poetry. The use of great many allusions makes the emotions profound and euphemism meaningful, which not only creates a style of simple words with deep meaning. And the use also gets the aesthetic characteristics of poetry away from the tendency of rich literati poetry creation which is on the basis of folk songs since Ji'an Times in the late of Han Dynasty, showing more prominent literati, personalized temperament. At the same time Ruan's lyrics naturally reflect the strong consciousness of historical thought and the great deep sense of history.

Compared with the poetry in Jian'an Times, Ruan Ji's poems use not only the old words and ready-made diction, but also a lot of history language and antiqueness. His allusions can be said to be the results of consciously taking history as the reference to think about social life, also reflect of ideology in his poetry creation when trying to examine the social life higher and deeper. Ruan Ji's use

of allusion has the effect of reality satire.

Some of Ruan Ji's poems do not rigidly adhere to the facts and are not simply limited to the category of drawing lessons from the past. He studies the historical events in the broad historical time and space. The author just wanted to use the form of poetry to explain his views on the history and his thinking of personnel so as to cause a reflection and thinking of social reality and life on the basis of the historical facts. It is because of the polysemy and fuzziness of poetry itself that it largely makes poetry show stronger aesthetic power. As a kind of aesthetic information, in the process of aesthetic appreciation the ambiguity and obscurity of poetry may cause plenty of imagination in the hearts of readers. If poetry expresses feelings directly and bluntly, its images must be substantial and straightforward and lose the due and unique connotation and accumulation of Chinese ancient poetry, which will result in being dull, flat and uninteresting and lose the taste of its endless charm.

Xie Zhen once said that the excellence of a poem lied in its ambiguity. [*Siming Poetry*] The images of poems should express implicitly, aim far and intrigue aftertaste. Distance produces beauty. Hazy beauty of aesthetic imagery of Ruan's poetry is derived from his abstraction and real life fantasy, and sublimate to elegant ethereal, abstruse artistic images. This artistic image, which is from the reality but beyond the reality, will produce subtle distance with readers, to make readers feel the hazy beauty between history and reality in the process of aesthetic appreciation.

These poems reveal the poet's exploring and thinking of social life, are far beyond the reality of the political level, and have significance of history philosophy. Because Ruan Ji's poetry not only measures the reality, but examines the social understanding of life on history philosophy, and to a certain extent the poetry is beyond the individual's experience and has the universal meaning of life. Ruan Ji's poetry owns a deep understanding and reflection towards history and social life. Its lyric is not only about the reality, but also has the aesthetic features, namely, in the thick atmosphere of life; it's mixed up with the poet's deep consciousness of historical reference value.

4. Conclusion

The extensive use of unique metaphors and analogies helps Ruan Ji put his life experience, historical insights and examination of social life into his poems, and makes emotional expressions connotative, thought-provoking and eternally artistically charming.

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