

# Study on the Imagery of Characters in Xiaoliangshan's Poetry

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**Abstract**—The unique imagery selection is an important indication of the nationality and regionality of the poetry in Xiaoliangshan poetry group. The construction of the imagery of the characters is not negligible except for landscapes such as mountains and rivers. They are mainly mothers, fathers and women.

**Keywords**—Xiaoliangshan poetry group; imagery; characters

## I. INTRODUCTION

The role of imagery in literature and art, especially in poetry, has long been unquestionable. Zhu Guangqian said: "Poetry is the reflection of the world of life"[1], and "I always live in the fun, but rarely can turn the taste into poetry, because the taste is the metaphor that cannot directly depict the real feeling, if there is no attachment to the specific imagery, there is no visible image at all.[1] "In the art of literature, emotions must only be imaged and literary, can they be expressed".[2] Therefore, imagery is the bridge and medium of human transformation from emotion to poetry. It conveys the complex emotions that are difficult to express and understand directly, and the esoteric philosophicalization to concrete and sensible things. If "LuguLake" and "Xiaoliangshan" constitute the main background color of Xiaoliangshan's poetry image (the relevant research shows in the author published the papers "LuguLake"and"Xiaoliangshan" —Exploration of the Two Imageries in Xiaoliangshan's Poetry "[3]), then the people living on the land of the hometown have added endless freshness and temperature to this background. Among them, the most traced and most vivid is not the myths and legends, historical and heroic figures common in many minority poems, but from the mother, father and young women in the daily life.

## II. MOTHER

Mother has always been the most indispensable image in poetry. It is no exception in the Xiaoliangshan poets. Their mothers are symbols of kindness, beauty, kindness, hard work and forbearance, and they are always full of maternal brilliance.

The leader of the Xiaoliangshan poetry group Luruodiji's poem, "The Winnowing Mother"<sup>1</sup>, is impressive. The whole poem is divided into three sections. In the first section, the "mother" waved the arm to winnow, but the whole autumn was raised, making the autumn being "lively". In the second section, the "mother" seems to have some kind of divine power. With the help of the "whistle" and "calling" the wind, to completed winnowing. In the third section, the "mother" "looked at the grain of the hills" and smiled, and the smile of the "mother" at that moment will "freeze" the "autumn". The original "autumn" is not about "vibrant" or "frozen", but because of the "mother" labor arm and the smile of joy after harvest, "autumn" enriches its posture and becomes a symbol of the mother. Through the twirling imagery, the poetry fluidizes the static "autumn" and sculpts the dynamic "mother". Behind the image transformation of flow and condensation, it reflects the poet's intellectual thinking about life experience.

Lamu Gatusa's "Ama" ("阿妈" in Chinese, a nickname for mother in minorities) wrote from the details of the mother carrying water, and listed the images commonly used by mothers in their daily life such as "wooden barrel", "stone mill", "wooden", "grass rope" and "spinning wheel". She exchanged for the stability of a family's life by hard work and perseverance. In the face of the hardships of life and the tiredness of life, the mother did not have any complaints, but "like an infatuated lovebird / in love with the native land, in love with her children / in love with the landlike simple Abba." The mother of Xiaoliangshan's poet has almost the same qualities: hard work, kindness and tenacity.

Moonlight dissolves the night / even the stars are trapped when tired / Ama with a pair of tireless hands / quietly sewing the family's life / that little oil lamp / reflected the sweet smile of Ama / Ama's headscarf / shaking off a solid night / her busy figure / hard to disappear from my memory (He Wenping "Ama's Headscarf")

<sup>1</sup> All quoted poems in the text are selected from the following poems, and the following are no longer marked one by one. Ma Shaohi ed. Xiaoliangshan Poetry Selection [M] Kunming: The Nationalities Publishing House of Yunnan, 2006. Ma Shaohi ed. Xiaoliangshan Poetry Selection (volume 3) [M] Wuhan: Changjiang Arts Publishing House, 2014. Ruruodiji, I Used to Belong to the Original Vast [M] Beijing, The Ethnic Publishing House, 2000. Ruruodiji, There Is No Water Cleaner than Tears [M] Beijing: Chinawriter Publishing House, Dec, 2009.

The poem is focused on "Ama's headscarf". It is busy, tired and sweet with Ama, and the sight of "I" moves with it. What "I" remember is not only the "headscarf" but also the most intriguing memory of my "Ama" passed behind the headscarf.

Lurudiki's "Mother on the Cliff" uses the "cliff" image to write the mother's concern for her children to the extreme. Because of the entanglement of the children, the mother is always "unsatisfied" and "feared", "as if sitting on the edge of the cliff." The original "cliff" is not directly related to the "mother". However, the poet casts the emotion of the mother's fear from love into the emotion between love and fear. The emotion and imagery match with each other, and finally achieve the realm of "no separation" like Wang Guowei's words: "all the words are in the present". [1] It is important to note that in the Xiaoliangshan poet, the mother often goes beyond the biological mother's category and has the core of the cultural mother.

### III. FATHER

In the Xiaoliangshan poetry group, the imagery of the characters is often represented by symbolic techniques. The mother is like water, and it is like "unbreakable camellia", while the father is "mountain". In his "Father Is a Mountain", Liu Zhongyou wrote: "Father is like a mountain / mountain outside the mountain", facing "suffering", "father is perseverant", facing the self-destruction from this "ordinary world", "father is quiet". When "I" am stagnant, father is like a "whip" driving "me" forward; when "I" am tired, father is the harbor for "me" to stop, and ignites "the hope of me to go on my trip." The whole poem is full of symbolic techniques, making the image of "father" fresh and full.

Although most of the poems of Xiaoliangshan poetry are related to the hard work and the silent and forbearing character, the father's simple and subtle quality is not faded. In Luruodiji's "Light", the father is a "light" illuminating "me":

I seem to sink into a piece of land / being close to a pair of thick feet / when the sickle flashes again / that light illuminates / the dark corner of the distant wooden house / at that moment / I saw / a vicissitude / father's /-face (Luruodiji's "Light")

The poet described the scene of the father harvesting with a sickle in the field, perhaps the harvest was too high, perhaps the father had already been bent back by the hard work of the years. "I" only saw the moment when the "father" picked up the sickle and began to harvest. Then he disappeared into the field. "I" also seemed to "sink" into "land" with "father", but "I" always pursued the "father" work until "the sickle flashed again." Here, not only the "light" of the "sickle" frequently used by "father" "illuminates" the night, but also the diligent, forbearing, "thick" father "illuminates" "me". The poet casts the subjective psychology of "father's" warmth and guidance to "I" on the objective object "light". At this time, the "light" has long been beyond the original meaning of the image because it has been given the poet's feelings.

In the writing of the Yi poet He Jianguo, the image of the father as a "light" appears in another form:

When I was a child / shepherd on the high hills / father often pointed to the eagle in the air / said good man / should go around the country / free flying / / when grow up / I always have an eagle in my heart / carrying the ideals and longing for childhood (He Jianguo "Father")

The Yi people are the people who worship the eagle. They often use the eagle to describe the heroic and brave man. When the "I" was young, the "father" often teaches "I" with the "eagle", inheriting the national blood and tradition, so the "eagle" lived in the heart of "I" and became the carrier and symbol of "my" and "aspiration and ambition", and even became synonymous with "father."

### IV. WOMEN

In addition to the mother, other women are also described by poets, such as Luruodiji's "Girls in the Mountains", Yin Haitao, "The Eyes of the Mountain Girl", and Jianhua "Mosuo Girl", "Morning, the Girl Selling Steamed Bun", Jiasiyangchun, "Girls Carrying Water", "Sister Soma", Jian Rufeng "Sister", "Zhuoma", Mahaiwuda "Little Soma" and so on. These women have become a symbol of beauty, hard work and simplicity. The nourishment of Xiaoliangshan and LuguLake makes them as fragrant and splendid as flowers.

At the age of thirteen, it is a watershed. According to the custom of the Mosuo people, a girl who is 13 years old or older is going to hold an adult ceremony and a dress-dressing ceremony, which indicates that she has grown up. Yin Haitao's "Girl in a Dress", He Wenping's "The Age of Wearing a Dress", and the "Mosuo Girl" are all specially extracted as a central imagery, aiming to capture the girl's historical moments shy, excited nervous and sweet. They are like "a bunch of Soma flowers blooming in the mountains", "like flowers", "always dreaming" (He Wenping "The Age of Wearing a Dress").

However, the life of girls is not only sweet fragrance, carrying water, carrying firewood, and shepherding pigs and sheep are the daily life of their lives. In hard work, love often becomes a comfort to their souls. On the contrary, love, missing and lovelorn in love often afflicts their weak heart. Jian Rufeng's "Zhuoma" expresses the sweetheart (A Zhu) fading away from Zhuo Ma's normal boring life with three overlapping sentences. The other "Sister" is even more heartbreaking: "Rain is the heart of the cloud" and "Flower is the heart of the tree", but "The rain is gone" The flower has fallen / who is your heart, my sister / the boat went away, will the lake be painful?" The poet uses the alignment method, puts a group of images and puts them in it, and uses the "boat" as the "Sister's" sweetheart, and "Lake Water" as "Sister". It reveals the inner pain of "Sister" because of the lover's departure without showing anyone's feeling.

For women in love, poets choose beautiful counterparts as symbols to present the passionate feelings of them to their loved ones. Sometimes they are "top grades orchid", sometimes they are "snow from the distant sky", and sometimes they are "sunflower safflowers." For example,

Luruodiki's "Untitled" has an appreciation and sincerity towards the lover:

This is the weekend / woman gets up after the bed / standing in the yard dressing / hair from the waterfall on her head / just woke up from the night / silently flowing over her shoulders / I soaked a cup of tea / waiting for the sun to cross the wall / to shine her bright (Luruodiki "Untitled")

This is a beautiful woman's dressing figure. The hair is likened to a "waterfall" and "flowing" shoulders, and uses anthropomorphic rhetoric to "wake up in the dark" with "woman." At this time, the poet is like a viewer who appreciates the beauty, with a serious attitude, waiting for the best time while enjoying tea.

#### V. OTHER IMAGERIES

In addition to the above categories, the imagery of the characters in Xiaoliangshan's poets relates to various groups of people living there, such as miners, peasants (mountain people, tartary buckwheat planting people), bachelors, beggars, shepherds, lamas, children, friends, teachers, hunters, etc.; and many people living outside Xiaoliangshan, such as Lei Feng, Saddam, window girl, farmers, migrant workers and so on. Like the rich landscape imagery in their poems, the rich imagery of the characters increases the vividness and sensibility of poetic communication and has important inquiry value. For example, in the Xiaoliangshan poetry, the images of the elderly, which are not high in frequency but are very characteristic, are often closer to the original regional culture and the long history of the nation because of their aging age and appearance, and traditional lifestyle, even with some metaphorical metaphors on them:

The fire in the fire pit is gradually extinguished / the old man begins to sink into the night / become part of the stone / his song from the cracks / smashing out / slowly pouring into our heart / finally overflowing from our eyes / ruthless (Luruodiji "Ancient Song")

#### VI. CONCLUSION

In general, the imagery of the characters in Xiaoliangshan's poems often uses symbolic techniques and incorporates many everyday things that are characteristic of local life, highlighting the strong regional cultural characteristics. However, such images are almost all set and selected by poets according to their lyric needs. This kind of emotions always shows the commonality of human beings under different imagery appearances, and they all have broad meanings. Therefore, to certain extent, this may be a manifestation of the globalization of minority poetry explored by many scholars.

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