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(论文集)

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I. 意象及意象效应

1 IDEOLOGICAL IMAGE: AS A MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION OF THE CHINESE LANGUAGE

_____意象：汉语表情达意的媒介_____

I

One of the most prominent features of the Chinese language is its extensive use of image for expression. It is used in such great abundance in both colloquial communication and literature that it seems to have functioned as an indispensable medium of expression for the Chinese people. The root of this phenomenon can be traced back to the creation of the Eight Trigrams and the Chinese scripts, both of which are fruits of the ancient Chinese culture, and share the same method for creation.

Of the origin of the Eight Trigrams, Xu Shen (许慎____c. 100) recorded in his book *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (《说文解字》):

“In ancient times, when Bao Xi ruled over the world, he lifted his head and contemplated the signs in heaven; he bent down and contemplated the orders on earth, he contemplated the patterns on the birds and beasts and the suitability of the earth. He drew (ideas) from his own person, and from the objects afar. Thereupon he first invented

the Eight Trigrams.

“古者庖牺氏之王天下也，仰则观象于天，俯则观法于地，观鸟兽之文，与地之宜，近取诸身，远取诸物，于是始作八卦。”

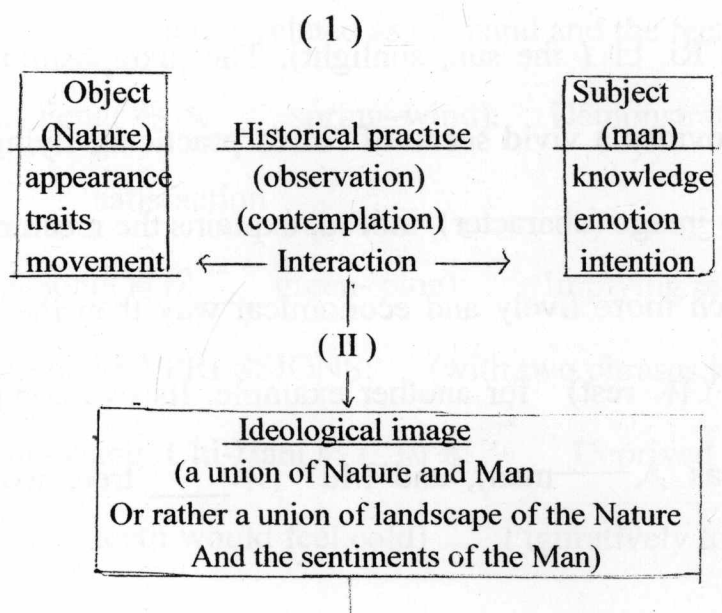
So far as the creation of Chinese scripts is concerned, we can from the above passage reasonably work out the following conclusions:

- 1) Both the Eight Trigrams and the Chinese scripts are creations of man____ man's symbolized records of his observation and contemplation of natural objects, not only of course the work of the ancient sage King, Bao Xi, but also the collective practice of the whole nation for a very long time.
- 2) These symbolized images though have their origin from the natural objects yet they are not just imitation of the natural objects like pictures. So far as the Chinese scripts are concerned, they are composites of graph, meaning and sound (In the earlier stages of the making of Characters, however, sound was not conventional and was not presented with graph signs).
- 3) Being based on man's observation and contemplation, nor are these symbolized images merely presentations of the natural objects themselves, their exterior appearance, internal traits and movements, but also expressions of their close relationship with man____ man's knowledge, emotion and intention concerning them.

- 4) So the symbolized images thus created are products of the interaction of the object (Nature) and the subject (Man), a blending of the two, or a new generation of the union. They are independent unities by themselves, but they enjoy great freedom in association with other characters.

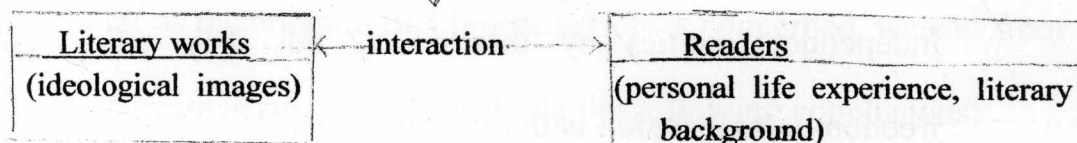
The process of the creation might be briefly described in this way:
First the natural objects make an impression on the sense organs of the observer with its appearance, traits and movement. After repeated occurrences, the observer gradually forms a concept of the object by the working of his own mind, with his knowledge, emotion and intention concerning the object and the world as a whole. Then with the concept in mind (a concept more close to the essence of the object), he begins now to select the typical traits and representative lines and dots to reconstruct the mental image of the object.

The following diagram will roughly show the process.



(III)

The play of image
(image beyond images;
landscape beyond landscapes)



II

Now let's have a general survey of the problem: how the Chinese forefathers manipulate the symbolized images in their creation of Chinese characters.

After the first batch of pictograms (象形字) were created, they began to coin new characters to express abstract ideas. The way they did was to put two pictograms juxtaposedly together to make a new image, and let the new coinage to do the expression job. Take the compound ideogram (会意字) Xi (习 ___ habit, practice) for an example. The character consists two elements: Yu 羽 (feather), standing for "bird or birds' flying", and Ri 日 (the sun, sunlight). The juxtaposition of the two pictograms provides a vivid scene of "birds practicing flying in the sunlight". The new image (character), indeed, explains the meaning of Xi (practice) in a much more lively and economical way than the way by words. Take Xiu (休 rest) for another example. Its two components Ren (人 stylized as 人—man), and Mu (木 ___ tree, wood) are

juxtaposed to create a new image (休), with the meaning of “a peasant enjoying a break between work by a tree”. The new image apparently has brought the meaning of 休 (rest) to full light. As the number of the pictograms are limited, the pictophonetic characters (形声字) are created with two elements: one indicating the meaning and the other sound, e.g. 江 (jiang----river) is created with one element (the radical) indicating the essence of a river (water), and the other element of the sound of the flowing water “jiang” in the river.

To exploit the evolution, the same method is employed to form phrases, idioms and other set expressions. As the list is inexhaustible, we must content ourselves with just a few examples.

PH RASES:

Mao-Dun(矛盾____spear—shield): Indicating sharp contradiction like “attack and defense”

Shou-Zu(手足____hand and foot): Indicating fraternal feeling as intimately related as the hand and the feet of a body

Chun-Feng(春风____spring-wind): Demonstrating success and satisfaction

Qing-Song(青松____green- pine): Implying rectitude or purity

IDIOMS and EXPRESSIONS: (with two phrases juxtaposed)

Chun-Wang Chi-Han(唇亡齿寒____Deprived of the lips, the teeth would feel cold) Figuratively to mean two things

are so closely connected that without the one , the other
would be at a loss.

Wang-Yang Bu-Lao(亡羊补牢____Mend the sheep pen even if
the sheep is lost) Amounting almost to the same
meaning as “It is never too late to mend”

Cang-Hai Sang-Tian(沧海桑田____The blue seas may change
into mulberry fields and vice versa in due course of time.
____ implying “Time brings great change to the world
and vicissitudes to human life.”

Bi_Men Cao-Che(闭门造车____ Make a cart behind closed
doors) Meaning to act blindly by divorcing oneself
from existing conditions

In poetry and art, the juxtaposition method (并置法) has been even
used in a very big way, The most typical and interesting example is the
little song “秋” (*Autumn*) to the tune of “Tian Jing Sha” (天净沙小令)
by Ma Zhi-yuan (马致远), a poet of the Yuan Dynasty(元朝).

“Dried vines, the old tree, evening crows;

A small bridge, flowing water, men’s homes;

An ancient road, west winds, a lean horse;

Sun slants west;

The heart-torn man at sky’s end.”

“枯藤老树昏鸦,

小桥流水人家。

古道西风瘦马，

夕阳西下，

断肠人在天涯。”

The poem is packed with images like snapshots, arranged in succession without even a connective. Though the images look separate and individual, they are closely connected in a way of metonymic logic to form a unique scene just as montage (蒙太奇) does in modern motion picture. Dried vine, old tree, and evening crows are all indications of the elapse of time; small bridge, flowing water, men's homes remind one of the coziness and intimacy of one's family; the ancient road, west winds and a lean horse imply the lonesome feeling of the traveler, and at the same time the tediousness of the endless journey. The omission of verb in the lines allows all the elements in the poem to co-exist in a reciprocal relationship. The poet doesn't name himself in the poem, but he is well mixed up with the landscape. Here the landscape of the environment and the sentiment of the man are blended into one. It is hard to tell whether it is the poet who uses these images to express his languor and nostalgia, or whether it is these actual landscapes that provoke the poet and bring to his mind the consciousness of his weary, long wandering. The state of "landscape—sentiment" or rather "Heaven__Man" blending harmoniously into one is just what the poet seeks to achieve in his poem.

The juxtaposed images are also arranged in antithesis and parallelism. This scheme is a frequent practice in Chinese everyday life as well as in literature. Offering a certain audio and visual beauty of balance and atmosphere of harmony and jubilation, it often appears in the form of parallel couplet on happy and festival occasions and gatherings. In the old-styled Chinese poetry, parallel couplet plays such a vital role in rhythm that it eventually becomes a part of its formation. To illustrate the play of the scheme, let's quote a parallel couplet from Li Bai (李白) for analysis.

“Floating cloud / wanderer's mood

Setting sun / heart of one left behind”

“浮云/游子意，

落日/故人情。”

These lines are taken from a poem describing two parting friends in a dusky landscape background. The poet compares the sentiment of the leaving friend to the floating cloud, which is aimlessly dispersing in the sky and that of the seeing-off party to the setting sun, which is reluctantly sinking down the horizon. He put the two comparisons (with the ellipsis of comparative words at that) side by side in parallelism: floating cloud and the setting sun, as if the natural elements are participants of the scene and also sharing the pangs of separation of the parting friends. Here again the “Heaven ____ Man” combination is created.

Another line from Du Fu (杜甫), a poet of the Tang Dynasty, will suffice for illustration.

“Red doors / wine meat rot,

Scattered paths / Freeze-die bones.”

“朱门/酒肉臭，

路有/冻死骨 “

Here, “Red door” refers to the court, the rich family, where meat is allowed to rot after daily luxurious feast; “Freeze-die bones” indicates the grass-roots, the paupers, who die of hunger and cold with their remains scattered by the road side. The contrast of these images in the antithesis is so striking and appealing that indignation and resentment are immediately aroused.

III

From the aesthetic view-point, the metaphorical use may be ranked as the most popular and important usage of image. It is a matter of long standing. In the Preface to *Shi Jing* (《诗经》—— the first early collection of poems), it has been recorded that Fu (赋), Bi (比) and Xing(兴) are the three rhetoric devices used in the anthology. Fu is descriptive of narrative pieces; Bi, which means “comparison”, is close to metaphor; Xing, which evokes the idea of “incitation”, is close to metonymy. In *Chu Ci* (《楚辞》—“Song of the State of Chu”, another early collection of poems dated around the fourth century before our era), the poet Qu Yuan (屈原) also

frequently uses metaphorical images when he compares his various virtues to flowers and fragrant herbs, and his poetic inspiration and genius to the horse and dragon on which he rides. As a matter of fact, it has ever been the tradition of the Chinese literature to use metaphorical images to express their poetic ideas. Almost all the poets in history are seeking in every way in their life to create through metaphorical images a poetic state of “image beyond images”, “landscape beyond landscapes”, in other words, the play of images. Numerous masterpieces of successful images have been passed down from generation to generation, and accumulated into a huge precious cultural heritage of the country. Now let’s take Li Shang-yin’s (李商隐) very well-known poetic images for a look of the practice.

“Spring silkworm spins its silk until it dies,

The candle sheds its tears till wick is ashes.”

“春蚕到死丝方尽，

蜡炬成灰泪始干。”

This parallel couplet is taken from one of his love poems. In the first line, the word “silk” (丝), pronounced as Si, is a homophone for the word “思” (thought, think of). With the link of the pun, the poet suggests that he will miss his sweet-heart to his last breath, just like the silk worm will only ends its silk when death befalls. In the second line, “tears” and “ashes” are figuratively used to a candle to imply the endless pangs of

separation of the lovers. Through these images, put in parallel position and joined internally in allusion, the poet plainly reveals his indestructible passion and life-long loyalty to his beloved.

Let's quote from another celebrated love ballad "*Song of Eternal Sorrow*" (《长恨歌》) by Bai Ju-yi (白居易), another poet of the Tang Dynasty. The story of the poem is based on a popular account of the love between Emperor Ming Huang (唐明皇) and his favourite concubine, Lady Yang (杨贵妃), who was killed in a riot of rebellion in 755 A.D. After the death of his concubine, the Emperor is said to have missed her so much as to send a man to seek for her in a fairy island. Of the manner of the fairy lady in receiving the Emperor's messenger, the poet describes:

"But her jade pale face was sad,

All stained with tears,

Like a branch of blossoming pear with spring

And rain-drops on its petals.

“玉容寂寞泪阑干，

梨花一枝春带雨。”

A branch of blossoming pear with spring and rain-drops on its petals, what a bold and suggestive comparison! With the help of the metaphorical image, the poet presents us a perfect image of a tearful young lady with all the beauty you can imagine of her.

VI

As we have mentioned above that literary image is a product of the interaction of the Object (Nature) and the Subject (Man), a blending of the two. It has a nature much truer and much more superb than the original object. It makes manifest the Truth (真), Goodness (善) and Beauty (美) which the Nature embodies in the object, and at the same time opens up a new vision with deep and great insight and prospect.

As literary image has revealed to some degree the true essence of the Nature, it has tremendous impact on the viewers. Take the above quoted metaphorical images ____ silkworm and candle for an illustration. These things are common sights in our daily life. But it is only when the poet has unveiled their qualities of self-sacrifice and self-dedication in these images that we begin to see the light of the truth in them, and at the same time feel ourselves more spiritually inspired and awakened to a new dignity than ever before. The other kind of image like the blossoming pear tree is of a different significance. It evokes in us an aesthetic satisfaction when it brings us to the presence of the perfect creation of the Nature. A successful literary image always has the function in providing us beyond the words fresh moral insight and great satisfaction of life every time we read it, though the response varies to different people with different life experience and literary background.

Language is not used to describe facts but to create images; and

ideas are not expressed directly in speeches and words but through images. It is a great secret to the great brilliancy of the Chinese literature, and proves to be a great invention and contribution of the ancient Chinese to the world culture.

Sept. 8. 1996

Tempe, Az.

U. S. A.

(译文) 意象：汉语表情达意的媒介

汉语最显著的特点之一是其表情达意中广泛使用意象. 它在口语和文学中用得如此大量, 似乎中国人已把它作为表达不可或缺的媒介. 其根源可上溯到中国古代文化中两个创造方法相同的八卦和汉字。

关于八卦的来源, 许慎在其《说文解字》中记载: “古者庖牺氏之王天下也, 仰则观象于天, 俯则观法于地, 观鸟兽之文, 与地之宜, 近取诸身, 远取诸物, 于是始作八卦。”

如就汉字的创造而言, 我们可从上述引言中合乎情理地作出如下^{推断}结论:

1 八卦和汉字二者都是人的创造, 是人对自然事物观察和思考的形象记录, 当然这不光是先贤庖牺帝的成果, 而是全氏族长期集体实践的成果。