



A Comparative Study of Literary Images between Chinese and English from the Cognitive Perspective

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Abstract

The theory of the literary image and the theory of the cognitive image are one of the most important theories in the literature/cognitive linguistic domain. On the one hand, they demonstrate striking difference thinking of the definitions, the content of the theories, the concerned domains and the practical usage; on the other, they meanwhile show inter-disciplinary connections between the literary text and the cognitive principles, with the literary image supplying the direct materials for the cognitive image, and the cognitive image the theoretical enlightens from the linguistic point of view.

Keywords: Relation, Literary Image, Cognitive Image, Domain

1. Introduction

The theory of literary images is one of the most significant principles in the field of literature. Compared with linguistic images, literary images were advocated much earlier. Therefore, the connection and the differentiation between literary images and linguistic images are essential to help us have the bird-eye view on the development of the theories of the images. And then, this paper mainly focuses on briefly analyzing the nature and identical manifestation of literary images and exploring the relationship between literary images and linguistic images.

2. Diachronically studying definitions of literary images

2.1 Classical definitions in Chinese literary field

Image, as one deeply-rooted conception of Chinese classical literary theories, needs us to make all-round study in historic point of view. According to the written materials, it can be traced back to Zhouyi and Zhuangzi to find out the earliest records of "yi" and "xiang" which are the discrete Chinese characters combining together equally to "image". Recorded in the book named *Zhouyi-Xichishang*, the relationship among languages, concrete image and meaning are discussed as follow: "Confucius said 'the sage attempts to have the laws of the nature fully expressed by weaving images in divinatory symbols'." (Xueqin Li, 1999, p.291) In other words, in the course of the ancient ritual process of divinatory symbols, the eyes were fixed on the appearing pictures--images whose meaning need to be analyzed the meaning through language. And this is true of the discussion in *Zhuangzi*, it is said that language is used in order to convey meaning; and the meaning can be caught at without taking notice of its linguistic form.

As time marches ahead, various schools of discussions about the relationship among the above elements go on. And the scholar, named Wangbi living in the period of Wei-Jin Dynasty, made comparatively clear analysis of the dialectical relationship among "language", "image" and "meaning", which developed the theories upheld by Zhuangzi, whose opinion is "The use of the image aims to have the meaning fully manifested, and the use of language aims to have the image explicitly pictured. It is the most effective way to convey the meaning though displaying the image, so does weave up the image through linguistic forms. This is because: 'meaning' fully comes out with the help of 'image', and

'image' vividly occurs with the help of 'language'. Therefore, the purpose of using 'language' is to profile 'image' which, in turn, is prominently highlighted at the expense of weakening 'language'; and then, in the same way 'image' is focally to convey 'meaning' still at the expense of bleaching 'image'." (DingZhen-yan, 2000, p.204) It is very clear that WangBi paid attention to "image" serving to convey "meaning" through demonstrating "language". It was the time of South Dynasty when Chinese compounding characters counterpart to "image" in English was firstly adapted as the literary token in Liuxie's Criticism on Literary Arts interpreted by Zhou Zhenfu as "For the writing stimulus can grow out of the thin air without any limitation, the writer must willingly try to develop such inspires queerly. Although language certainly acts as the actual choice to note all these strange thoughts, it is hard to be used to re-picture them ingeniously. Thus, there must be such transferring processes: thought—image—language; that is, the well-conceived image will perfect the effective language to convey the thoughts; in contrast, the ill-conceived image must mislead the words stray far away from the originalities." (ZhouZhen, 1980, p.132) And also LiuXie expounded elaborately the functions of using images in literary works in this way that the author stirred up by the routine inspires re-occurs such thoughts with conceiving images in mind.

From then on, the connotation of "image" as one important literary theory has been continuously developed and improved. In the period of Ming and Qing Dynasties, some then well-known scholars had made deeply study about "images" on the base of the former achievements and proposed their innovative ideas, among which WangFu-zhi spoken of "meanings lie outside in forms of and lies on in nature images", and WangGuo-wei made generally discussion of such specific literary categories as "the mood of a literary work or a work of art" and "the state/realm of a literary work" etc. And some scholars got research in the methods by which images were created from the perspective of the rhetoric, among which ZhangXue-cheng, the accomplished historian and writer in Qing Dynasty, expressed out his opinions that the efficient way to form images mostly resents to metaphor, as in "the methods to construct images discussed in Yin is similar to the figures of speech in Poetry". From this point, figure of speech in the poem and simile and metaphor in the literary works are brought into the category of the image has greatly influence on the later Western imagery theories.

As time goes into the contemporary period, and as the result of the western philosophies pouring inside, most scholars attempt to clarify the intonation and the connotation of the image by defining from different angles. All the following definitions concluded by LiuYan in his articles, which will help us to trace the developing process of the image, are taken out here:

"AiQing believes that the image is the generalizational sense, thus it is purely sense-related.

ZhuGuang-qian regards the image as the profile shadowed in mind out of the concrete objects by intuition.

ZhuQi defines the image from the poet's point as some objective physical image which transfer the poet's subjective emotions.

LiYuan-le pays attention to the powerful manifestation of the words; thus he defines that the image come into being as the result of the interaction of the objective every-day scenes and the poet's subjective thoughts and emotions, and then appears as the artful pictures or the virtual realm created by using the proper words with permeating the creator's aesthetic prejudice.

YuZhao-ping takes the image as a psychological state which unconsciously constitutes a reasonable and emotional psychol (biaoxiang) and this image is embodied and fossilized in the form of words, and conveys some concrete meaning in a particular, aesthetic—concerning situations." (LiuYan, 1995, p.125)

Besides those, there are some other scholars in the modern time talking about the image, and some of their opinions are quoted here:

WuXiao gives the definition of the image as "the compounding formula which is shown off in the visible words and functions as the bridge to look insight into the objective materials from the subjective side."(WuXiao, 1990, p.16)

JinKai-cheng holds that the image is the physical image reflecting the author's subjective conscience with the emotional value included, or the physical picture occurring to the mind processed in the course of the imagination which can also be named imaginative image termed in the course of psychology. And the image can be analyzed from two levels; on the higher level, the image is the variant attached the writer's thoughts and senses, that is at the name of Yin in Chinese; and on the basic level, the image, which Chinese counterpart is Xian, is some certain real physical image which may be originated from the objects in the nature, or the imaginative image conceived in the mind resulting from the sense of the surroundings. (JinKai-cheng, 1999, p.49)

From all the definitions enumerated in above part, we try to summarize features of the literary image mentioned in ancient and modern Chinese authentic scholars and thoroughly permeating in Chinese literary works. First, as one of the most popular ways used in Chinese literary works, the theory of the image has underwent a historical, continuous, and developing process. And, this theory was derivative from the literary practice much earlier than regarding as one

effective method to transmit the writer's meaning. So, we will be enlightened to study the image as the continuum entity from the historic point view. Second, the literary image is in nature one entity with two interacting sides—the physical image which comes from the subjectivized physical object, and the personal emotion which is implemented through the physical image. What is more, language acts as the concrete material to connect these two sides, in other words, it is unavoidable to study what is the function of the language has played in the course that the image comes into being in the mind and then conveys the writer's meaning through the image. Third, as one mature-directed theory, the image can be discussed from several aspects. As far as what has been researched in Chinese literary field is concerned, the image can be unfolded in the literary, aesthetic, psychological, or cultural perspectives and so on. And what is the most important we have concerned in this part is from the literary point of view to focus on how the image is created out of language and how it functions through language. Fourth, by comparing with other figures of speech, the author personally hold that the image itself is not attributed into the category of the rhetoric, but rationally is one effective measure to convey meanings which are weaved up in reality with some figures of speech as practical methods. And among these figures of speech, simile, metaphor, and even symbolism act very important roles.

2.2 Classical definitions in Western literary field

Generally speaking, though it is in the early time that the theory of the image has been used as one efficient measure to transmit meanings explicitly in the writing practice, the image proposed and then entrenched as one theoretical term in Western literary field is relatively later than that in Chinese literary field. And the later developing image theory has a lot in connection with that mentioned in Chinese definitions. Therefore, it will be much inspiring if we make a brief look at the definitions given in Western literary scope.

Compared with the term completely put forth in China by LiuXie, it was 18th century, about 1300 years later that Immanuel Kant initially proposed the definition of the image in Critique of Judgment. Till 20th century when the poetry movement of imagism arose in American and English literature, "image" was recognized as one of the basic aesthetic terms. In this poetry movement, it was the British poet and theorist T. E. Hulme who firstly clarified the conception of the image as the essential pursuit of the direct language. (YinGuo-ming,1999, p.140)And then the imagism poets with Ezra Pound as the head have imposed great influences on the western literary field at the beginning of the 20th century, and had the importance of the image theory re-understood. Ezra Pound who was deeply influence by the Chinese classical poetry gave the definition of the image as following "an image is that which represents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time". (Ezra Pound, 1935, pp.3-5) Thus we can tell that the image, in Ezra Pound's understanding, is the straightforwardly identical connection between the physical image and the subjective emotion instead of the humanization of the object.

Under the influence of the poetry movement of the imagism, the western scholars attempted to elaborate the image from different aspects and then put forth their own viewpoints about the conception of the image. Here, we just briefly listed several among these understanding about the image, which LiuYan have mentioned in his writing: "May Sinclair thinks that the image is not the replace, and advocates such views that the image does not substitute for nothing except for itself, and that the image naturally is the way of manifesting instead of reoccurring. Then, you can not distinguish the real object from the image. Peter Jones believes that the image mentioned by the imagist have the changeable meanings, just like the signals 'a, b, and x' in the course of the algebra. The nature of the imagism is that the writer adopts the method of the image just because that he observes or feels the existing of it, not because he thinks the use of the image in order to support some decree or some aesthetic or economic mechanism. Gertrude Patterson gives such definition as the image is a clear, explicit, and precise observation which, if expressed, will occur in the form of the poem, and function as the form of the direct conversation between the poet and the reader without concerning any logical coherence. Suzanne Juhase defines the image from discussing its relationshipwith the symbolism, i.e. the image reoccurs the sensual experiences, and it can act as one symbol once it comes into being."(LiuYan, 1995, pp.125-126)

And the American signal aesthetician Susan Langer exploits the image from the signal angle. She thinks "the image, included in the term of the imagination, acts as the key to open up the newly-weaved world. In my own opinion, that the image is traditionally and popularly regarded as the re-production of the sensual impression has made some recognitionism-proposed philosopher omit the signal features of the image. And it is just the signal feature of the image that gives all-round answers to why the sensual character of the image is generally so ambiguous, transient that the image is almost hard to be described; and also why the sensual image is always irresemble to its real physical image." (Susan Langer, 1983, p.126) And Wellek and Warren in their book the theories of the Literature discusses the image in the field of "analogy and comparison" and think that the image "is one essential part of the syntactic construction and the stylistic level" Wellek and Warren Besides some other scholars study the image from the similar or some different perspectives and also give us a lot of enlightens. We do not enumerate their opinions here for the limitation of the length of this paper.

From all the understandings of the western scholars about the image, we partly feature the literary image mentioned in Western literary works. First, much later when the theory of the image was used in the literary works as one efficient

measure to convey the writer's meaning, it came into the theory of the image. This point is similar to the history of the origination and development of the image in Chinese. Second, when it comes to the nature of the image in the literary field, the theory of the image is deeply influenced by that of Chinese theory. Both concern the interactive relationship between the physical image and the image formed in mind, and also stress on the transmissible function of language to melt these two sides together. Third, although the image has been discussed from the literary, aesthetic, psychological, or cultural perspectives, the western scholars have attempted to make further study from the signal aspects and especially fix their eyes on the permanent role of language which have set up the base for the born of the new branch of the linguistics—Cognitive Linguistics. And in turn, Cognitive Linguistics has now becoming the overwhelmingly developing trend of Linguistics in 21th century, which sheds light on the development of modern linguistic theories in China.

3. The manifestation of the image in the literary works

3.1 *The manifestation of the image in Chinese literary works*

There are varieties of criteria to classify the images in the field of Western literature. Of course, different classification means different routine images appearing in the literary works. In this paper, the author adopts the one among all those measures of classifying, which is easily understood and also familiar to every-day life, in order to make clear discussion about this topic. Thus, we take as the criteria of the classification what category the object belongs to.

The statistical measure of the image is one effective method in studying and analyzing the image, which have been ever popular in the West academic field. Caroline Spurgeon, an English scholar, invented this method. And she wrote the book *the images in Shakespeare's works*, in which the ratio of the images occurring in the works was statistically figured out in order to study the mood and atmosphere of the Shakespeare's, and consequently to predict Shakespeare's career, interests and personality traits. To our joy, one American scholar has done the statistical work about the natural images sampling Poetry of Tang Dynasty. And the writer refers to his method and re-organizes his achievement in form of the statistical table to construe the images in this Chinese classical book logically and explicitly as Table1:

Table 1. The statistical graph of the natural images in Poetry of Tang Dynasty

category	content	times	ratio
weather	wind, cloud, rain, snow, mist, dew, frost, frog	359	22.9%
mountain	mountain, hill, stone, canyon, gorge, valley	309	19.8%
water	river, water, sea, wave, spring, tide, pond	260	16.7%
celestial body	the moon, the sun, sky, star, the Milk Way, the Big Dipper	269	17.1%
tree	tree and woods, willow, pine, bamboo, peach, mulberry, cypress, laurel, pear, plum	159	10.2%
flower	flower, hibiscus, lotus, lily, thoroughwort, chrysanthemum	106	6.8%
creature	bird, wild goose, phoenix, swan, mandarin duck, unicorn, swallow, warbler, oriole, gull, egret	101	6.5%

In this statistical table, it can be found out one significant phenomenon that the occurring times of the image standing for the general conception, for example the image of "tree, flower, grass and bird" in the latter four categories, take on increasing trend, compared with that in the former. Therefore, the poet living in Tang Dynasty sketched the natural scenery briefly instead of aspiring for a minute description. In this way, the general concept is conventionalized through the figure of speech metaphor or symbolism as the literary image which aims to transfer the poet's connotative meaning by the superficial description.

3.2 *The manifestation of the image in English literary works*

And the criteria and the measure used in section2.1 still work well in this part, so then we get the following three general categories exemplified with some typical representatives. Namely, the first category is the natural image referring to the mountain, the water, the flower, and the grass etc. which are the real things remaining in the nature; the second refers to the human-related image characterizing the travel, the get-together, the war and the farming etc. which are loaded with imagery meaning in the given literary situation; and the third involves in the god-and-spirit-related image featuring in the imaginative people and creature which are created to hint peculiar connotation in the folks and legends. (Faxiang Zhou, <http://book.5ivote.com>)

A fundamental requirement in any empirical science is that a theory be in substantial accordance with known facts. In order to make all-around comparison with the statistical number and the corresponding ratio of the images in the

Chinese classical poetry Poetry of Tang Dynasty, we, at first, intentionally choose the well-known Western classical dramas--Shakespeare's Eight Dramas (A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant Of Venice, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth)(Beiling Qiu, 2006, p.49)---as the researching target material here, and try to count up the total number of the images and figure out their corresponding ratio in Table2:

Table 2. The statistical graph of the images in Shakespeare's Eight Dramas

category	number	Percentage
animal	165	32%
Plant	24	5%
color	6	1%
nature	28	6%
Gods and spirits	147	29%
slang	68	13%
others	73	14%
totality	511	100%

The number in Table2 is taken from page 49 of the book the Changing Course of the Beauty written by Beiling Qiu. In this table, almost all the images appearing in Shakespeare's Eight Famous Dramas are categorized in terms of their originations and also counted the percentage in the totality.

As rating in the first place in 32% proportion in contrast with other images in Shakespeare's Eight Dramas, the animal images amount to 165 cases in these seven categories listed in the above statistical graph. Therefore, we just instantiate these animal images here as the special representative in the Western literature to show what are fixed as the well-established images. And then Table2 (Beiling Qiu, 2006, p.51) statistical table can help us to make a bird-eye's look about the animal images entrenched in each drama respectively.

Table 3. Animal Images in Shakespeare's Eight Dramas

Dramas	Animal images
A Midsummer Night's Dream	sucking dove, nightingale, duck, dove, spaniel
The Merchant Of Venice	Parrot, colt, swan
As You Like It	dog, Chanticleer/cock, Irish rat, goose
Twelfth Night	mouse, ass, dog, turkeycock, beagle, lamb, dove, hare
Hamlet	Nemean lion, porcupine, hawk, Hyrcanian beast, paddock, bat, gib, adder, Danish dog
Othello	Fly, old black ram, Barbary horse, wildcat, haggard, goat, monkey, wolf, raven, fitchew, serpent/viper, Spartan dog
King Lear	dragon, vulture, hog, fox, wolf, dog, lion
Macbeth	Scorpion, serpent, Russian bear, Hyrcan tiger, lion, monkey, hellhound

Generally speaking, this figure provides us a unitary understanding about the typical animal images implemented in Shakespeare's Eight Dramas from what kind of animals these images have originated. However, if we divide this table into two comparable units—the former four comic dramas versus the latter four tragedies, we can be aware of the subtle differences implied here that the animal images used in the comic dramas are usually originated from some lovely, active, especially heart-won little animals, in contrast, those in the tragic dramas from some low type of life, insects and reptiles strikingly compared with some other animals of a certain dignity and grandeur. In this way, Shakespeare intended to convey his personal prejudice about the characters in the dramas through attached different emotions to some well-established animal images. For the limitation of this thesis, we don't plan to give more examples to demonstrate this point here.

3.3 The comparison of the images in Chinese Literature and in English Literature

All the theories of the literary images at home and abroad are always focusing on its function as the artful measure to convey the special meanings. From this perspective, the image refers to residing the meaning intentionally expressed into some existing things, i.e. the subjective emotion finds its spiritual substance in the physical image coming from the objective world. The Chinese famous modern poet, whose penname is Shahe Liu, in his book The Twelve Images gives his individual understanding about the literary image that the literary image is the unified unit by melting the mental image with the physical image. This nature of the literary image is really similar to what have delineated in the

definitions discussed in the above part. And it happened that the outstanding artful critics Elliot point out that “the unique artful way of expressing oneself is to find out the physical image transmitting the hints. This image appears as a series of the physical images concerning some stories in a given situation aiming to foreground some particular meanings immediately stirred up at the sight of the sensual images.” (Yuanluo Li, 1987, p.148) Above all, what is the focus of the literary image in Chinese literature is naturally true of that in the field of English literature. The following table is about the literary images in Shakespeare’s Eight Works compared with their counterparts in Chinese versions translated by Shenghao Zhu, Shiqiu Liang, Ping Fang respectively. The writer resorts to the consequence made through the software Wordsmith by Beiling Qiu, and revises on the base referring to Miss Qiu’s statistical tables (Beiling Qiu, 2006, pp.335-336) to get this following table.

Table 4. The original images Versus their Chinese translating counterparts

category	Number I	Number II	Ratio I	Number III	Ratio II	Number IV	Ratio III
animal	165	134	81.2%	146	88.5%	151	91.5%
Plant	24	21	87.5%	19	79.2%	19	79.2%
color	6	3	50%	5	83.3%	4	66.7%
nature	28	22	78.65	23	82.1%	17	60.7%
Gods and spirits	147	114	77.6%	132	89.8%	117	79.6%
slang	68	37	54.4%	58	85.3%	48	70.6%
others	73	30	41.1%	50	68.5%	48	65.8%
totality	511	361	70.6%	433	84.7%	404	79.1%

In Table4, Number I refers to the total number of the images used in Shakespeare’s Eight Dramas, Number II in Shenghao Zhu’s Chinese-translating versions, Number III in Shiqiu Liang’s, and Number IV in Ping Fang’s. And Ratio means the proportion of the literary images in Chinese-translating version to those in Shakespeare’s Eight Dramas. Ratio I, Ratio II and Ratio III respectively is the literary images in Shenghao Zhu’s Chinese-translating versions, Shiqiu Liang’s, and Ping Fang’s rated to those in Shakespeare’s.

From Table4, we know the literary images are very popular in the literary works. The statistical numbers (Number I, II, III, IV and Ratio I, II, III) can obviously prove this statement. Associated with the statistical results in Table1 and Table2 and together with the typical examples in Table3, we can make a reasonable statement that the literary images, whatever in the field of Chinese literature or of English literature, have a lot in common with each other in contrast with uncommon points typically reflecting in the linguistic forms. And some literary theorists in the eastern and western academic circles have got identical understanding with respect of the theory of the literary images to a large extent. Especially, Shahe Liu, after studying the ten varieties of the definitions given at home and abroad, points out that “the images used in Chinese or Western literary works as one effective literary measure naturally mean the same except that the images differ essentially in aspects of their corresponding linguistic forms.” (Shahe Liu,1987, p.189)

4. The relationship between the literary image and the cognitive image

To be honest, it is very hard to talk out the similarities or differences between the literary image and the cognitive image because both are basically different theories in different academic fields; in other words, the literary image is one of the most important principles in the literary field, but the cognitive image is one newly-developed theory in linguistics, especially in the domain of cognitive linguistics.

As Linguistics and Literature are closely connected and some theories are overlapping on some level, we can predict that there must be some things between them. At first, we make it clear that both theories have revealed the different level of the theorization, the literary image being more concrete concerning the physical and mental images which constitute one implied course of the emotional transmission, and the cognitive image comparatively more abstract which focuses on how this course works in terms of the linguistic forms. Secondly, the scope of the cognitive image is much larger than that of the literary image. (Yesheng Tan, 2003(4), pp.19-22) And the image in the literary field is the typical usage of the cognitive image, then all such typical images are abstracted to form the schema which is further conceptualized to get the cognitive conception covering all the prototypical character of the constituent. Thirdly, whatever focal point of the literary image or the cognitive image is, there is some common place overlapping these two theories as Jiakuan Shen says: “All the human being can form some sensual recognitions out of the initial intuition, and then such sensual recognitions will be highly rationalized to some natural rules of the worlds. In this way, there remains the similar process of growing the cognitive mentality by which the modern man can touch the mental process of the ancient man, and surely by which Chinese can understand the way that the foreigner conceptualizes some general rules out of the objective world.” (Jiakuan Shen, 1994(1), pp.12-2)

Therefore, we can borrow raw materials from the literary image if we try to study the cognitive image, and the cognitive image will in turn supply the theoretical guidance.

5. Conclusion

This paper mainly studies the nature of the literary image in Chinese and English literary works. We have compared the similarities and differences of the Chinese literary image and the English literary image on the ground of analyzing some authentic definitions at home and abroad, and at the same time exemplifying their concrete occurrence in the classical works—Poetry of Tang Dynasty as the typical representative of Chinese literary works and Shakespeare's Eight Dramas as the typical representative of English literary works. From a cognitive perspective, the literary images as one important principle in the field of Chinese and English Literature show more consistent characters, strikingly in contrast with their different linguistic-expressing forms.

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