

An Analysis of Wang Anshi's Density of Landscape Poetry in Nanjing

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Abstract: Image is an important concept in Chinese classical poetry, and the density of image is of great significance to the formation of poetic style. Wang Anshi's early poetic style belittled image and was regarded as the representative of argumentative poetry. However, in his "Nanjing poems", Wang Anshi deliberately increased the image density of his poems, and finally formed an elegant and exquisite style of poetry. Wang Anshi's reasonable arrangement of image density not only reflects his own poetic skills, but also makes an effective distinction between "Tang poetry" and "Song poetry".

1. Introduction

The so-called image is an artistic image created by the objective object through the creative subject's unique emotional activities. Image is the language in which the poet places his subjective meaning in the objective image and makes it artistic, so that the objective image seems to have human emotional meaning naturally [1]. The image density will have an important impact on the artistic conception and emotional expression of poetry. A large number of images in poetry will obscure the main idea and hinder the expression of emotion, so successful poets often can arrange the density of images well. Wang Anshi's scholarly poetic style in his early years therefore used less images. In his later years, he changed his poetic style by increasing the density of images. In particular, his Nanjing poems, which are of high research value, have become a major representative of his poetry style in his later years because of the high density of images.

Table 1. Distribution of Wang Anshi's Landscape Poems in Nanjing

scenery	quantity
Zhongshan	47
temple	31
Yangtze River system	9
pavilion and terrace	7

2. Expression of Image Density

Li Inpei, a poet in the Qing Dynasty, criticized the five-character arrangement of poets in the early Tang Dynasty, which was "dense in meaning and heavy in language, but also stagnant in spirit"[2]. The images in the famous Tang poems are so dense that the poems written by Wang Anshi in Nanjing are close to the style of Tang poems because of the increase of image density[3]. This kind of performance can be seen from the use of poetry, poetry and similar images (Figure 1).

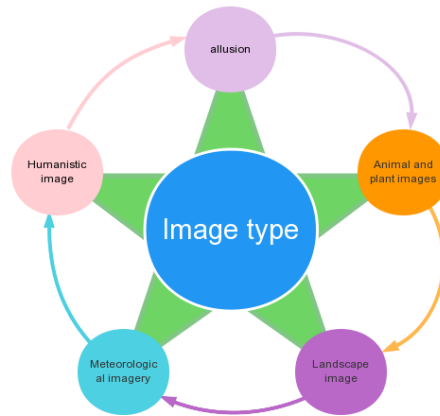


Figure 1. Categories of Wang Anshi's poetic imagery

2.1. Image Density of Sentences

Most excellent works are not too full, but leave a lot of blank for the readers to complete. The French literary critic Saint Bove once said: "In our view, the greatest poet is such a poet: his works can stimulate the imagination and thinking of the readers most, and he can inspire the readers most, so that he can create the artistic conception of poetry himself." [4] Therefore, it will be too simple to express the poet's own point of view too directly, and the use of images is an important way to avoid this defect. However, image density must be coordinated with emotion in order to establish its own poetic space. Image overcrowding, lack of emotional gap and blank, it is impossible to produce space; the image density is too low, and too few images will lead to difficulty in building a vast space of emotion [5].

For sentences, dense images often lead to famous sentences. For example, Wang Anshi deliberately increased the density of images in his poems in Nanjing. For example, "white earth Changgang Road, Zhuhu Small Cave"[6], in a short sentence of ten words, four images are used. Similar high-density image verses also include "golden mother-of-pearl embracing turnips, and green quilts covering alfalfa"[6], and "a burning furnace without ambush fire, and a cold mountain with a cold canopy" [6]. The image density of Wang Anshi's poems in Jinling has greatly increased. Compared with Han Yu's remarks in his early years, Wang Anshi increased the use of images in

single sentences. During the ten years of Wang Anshi's retirement in Nanjing, his Taoism temporarily surpassed the Confucian spirit of entering the world, so his poetry also paid more attention to the density of images. It is normal to use multiple images in a poem, which is why Wang Anshi's poems in his later years contain many beautiful lyrical lines.

2.2. Image Density in the Whole Poem

For the whole poem, some works succeed because of the high density of images, while others fail because of this. One is that too close images will make it difficult to grasp the theme, and the other is that too close images hinder the flow of emotion[3]. Chinese classical poetry is short and meaningful. As Liu Xie said, "If there is something to delete in a sentence, it is not concise enough; if there is nothing to delete again, it is known that the sentence is very dense." [7] Although this principle applies to all kinds of styles, it is more obvious in poetry.

Many of Wang Anshi's poems in Nanjing focus on the construction of image density, and many excellent works have been produced. Compared with his early works, although the number of words in the whole poem is reduced and the length is shortened, the use of images is further strengthened, and the image density in the whole poem has been greatly improved. Take the poem "Eating at Qize Temple" as an example, "the white plum has long stamens and the yellow willow buds are short"[6]. In addition to the introduction of the background of the first couplet and the discussion of the last couplet, there are a large number of natural images in the poem[8]. It is with the help of these images that a picture of "Peach Blossom Land" that has been quiet for a long time can be displayed to the readers and understand the author's love for life and landscape. Such techniques are not uncommon in Nanjing poems such as "Two Songs to Cai's Women", "East Gate" and "Tour the North Mountain". Therefore, we can see that in Wang Anshi's poems in Nanjing, the image density has also been greatly improved.

2.3. The Density of the Same Type of Image

Repeated use of a certain kind of image, especially a certain kind of object image, in a poem is easy to cause monotonous defects [9]. This is the successful experience that literary theorists have summed up from the literary creation of past dynasties. If the image density of the two poems is the same, the one that uses the same image more often will give the reader the illusion of a higher image density, because the constant appearance of the same image will strengthen the reader's sense of its density [10]. The French thinker Pascal once said: "When there are repeated words in an article, we try to modify them, but find that they are so appropriate that we may spoil the article, so we have to let it stay still. This is its sign; but we are out of blind envy at this point, which does not understand that repetition is not wrong in this place; because there is no general rule." [11]

The real literary creation is full of freedom. The intertextuality of Wang Anshi's poetry works is the embodiment of this free creation. Therefore, he can be defined as a poet with outstanding personality and outstanding achievements. Generally speaking, the length of ancient Chinese poetry is relatively short, and it cannot reproduce an image in a poem like modern poetry. In particular, metrical poems are limited by metrical rules, and the possibility of image repetition is less. However, in Anshi's works, it is common to use a poem or a group of poems to repeat an image and express a symbolic meaning, such as "Between the Mountains"[12]. This poem was written in Anshi's late years, but it reflects the contradictory mood that Anshi once had in his life. "You never tire of the mountains all day long, and you will always stay in the old mountains when you buy them. The flowers fall and the mountains grow, and the mountains and rivers flow freely." - The poem "Tour of Zhongshan"[13]. Shares eight "mountains". The position of the first three "mountains" has been changed, making the image of the mountains closer and stronger, and more

and more strongly engraved in the minds of readers. In Wang Anshi's Nanjing poems, the images of mountains, water, birds, fish, sun, road, wood, flowers and so on appear repeatedly. This high-density image repetition is also an important manifestation.

3. The Effect of Image Density on Poetry

The image density in Wang Anshi's Nanjing poetry not only restored the environment in which the poet lived, but also provided evidence for the study of the reasons for the formation of his poetic style in his later years. The improvement of image density and the reasonable construction method are the important reasons for the formation of "Jinggong style". At the same time, the study of the image density in Wang Anshi's Nanjing poems also proves his literary acceptance of Tao Yuanming and Xie Lingyun, which is of great significance in breaking through the barriers of the late Tang Dynasty (Figure 2).

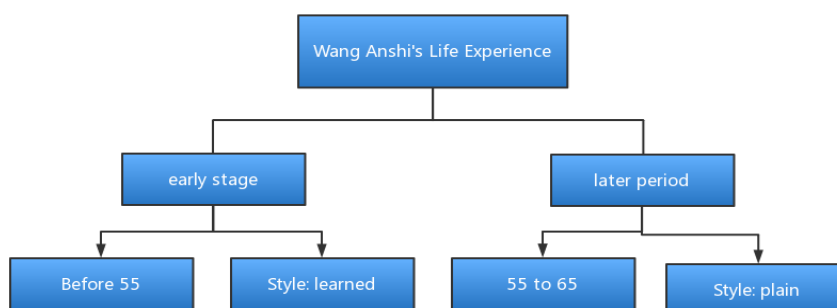


Figure 2. Division of Wang Anshi's Poetry Style

3.1. Elegant and Exquisite Poetic Style

Hume, a British poetry theorist, said: "Two visual images constitute a visual chord." In fact, several visual images and auditory images or other images that can leave a distinct impression on readers can be combined into a harmonious poetic environment. Wang Anshi's Nanjing poetry enriches the poetic meaning from the visual image and the auditory image, and displays an extremely vivid picture of Nanjing for the readers. Wu Zhizhen said: "Wang Anshi's poetry looks very free and easy, but in fact, its solemn and stirring is hidden in leisure." Wu Zhizhen said that "solemn and stirring" is actually the self-spirit of Wang Anshi's poetry, and the formation of this style is the result of Jinggong's life experience[14]; It is the tortuous expression of his self-satisfied and stubborn personality; It is also an expression of his inner pain to the landscape; It is also the performance of his aging in his later years.

If it is not for the dense image, it is difficult to show its rich connotation. Wang Anshi's poetics in his whole life has a bright color of Taoism and pragmatism, but there are many adaptations, from attaching importance to diction, to appreciating the common people, to advocating the fresh and charming, and constantly pursuing the paradigm of poetic beauty. "It seems to be the most common and strange, but it is easy but difficult to achieve" is his evaluation of other people's poetry[15], but it can also be seen as his own poetic proposition. Wang Anshi's poetics thought has many variations from the beginning, from attaching importance to the words, to appreciating the common people, and then to advocating the image density of poetry. It is this kind of variation that makes Wang Anshi's poetry not rigidly adhere to the expression of ideas, but constantly pursue the paradigm of poetic beauty, and finally achieved remarkable poetic achievements. If it is not for the pursuit of

"image density", it is also difficult to achieve Wang Anshi's "elegant and exquisite" style of pursuing Tang poetry in his later years.

3.2. Neutralization of Tang and Song Poetry Aesthetics

From the characteristics of Wang Anshi's seven-character quatrains, which seek refinement and meaning renovation, he is the pioneer of Jiangxi poetry school. From the perspective of Wang Anshi's inheritance from his predecessors, he studied Du Fu and attached importance to his realistic spirit; He learned from Han Yu and fused his personality into a strange and vigorous spirit; He learned from Li Shangyin to pursue modern style poetry. Wang Anshi's sense of taking the model of the previous generation of poets and the trend of the style of Song poetry can be described as a pioneering work[16]. The image density is the key to this achievement. Wang Anshi's ingenious arrangement and construction of the image density has made his poetry style in his later years a unique one, and has deeply influenced poets such as Yang Wanli and Lu You (Figure 3).

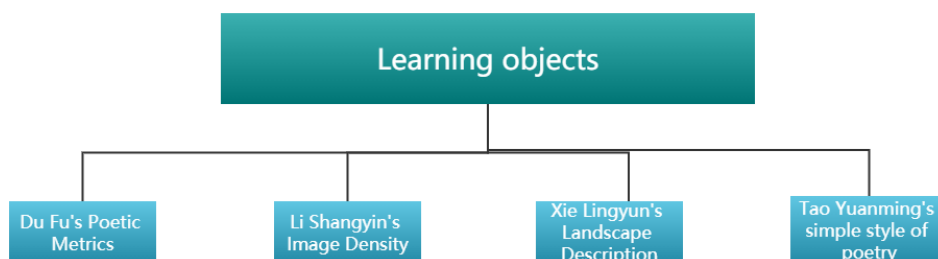


Figure 3. Wang Anshi's learning from his predecessors

In the context of the pursuit of "plain as beauty" in the Song Dynasty, Wang Anshi first transformed the book image into the landscape and pastoral image in Jinling's poems, in order to approach Tao Yuanming's ancient and simple style of poetry. At the same time, we should learn the fineness of the late Tang style and Du Fu's poetic rhythm, and reasonably construct the image density in the short poems. With its own emotion and relaxation of other verses to make up for the shortcomings of the late Tang style of "there are good sentences but not the whole", and at the same time enrich the artistic form of poetry with the antithesis of high-density images. Wang Anshi turned to learn from the Tang Dynasty in a way of increasing the density of poetic images, which is different from the dull and over-exposed poetry of the Song Dynasty; At the same time, it also reasonably arranges the image density of different verses in the poem, and uses daily images in the poem, and deliberately repeats a certain image to achieve the purpose of "showing clumsiness", which is different from the ethereal and romantic of the Tang Dynasty, and tries to close to the plain beauty of the Song Dynasty. In the rational arrangement and unique construction of image density, Wang Anshi achieved the goal of transforming the late Tang Dynasty with the characteristics of Song poetry, and neutralizing Song poetry with the advantages of Tang poetry, and finally became a family of his own, which is a milestone in the history of Song poetry, has a pioneering work, and has provided valuable nutrients for future generations' poetry creation.

4. Conclusions

Wang Anshi's Nanjing poetry presents a characteristic different from the early poetry - a reasonable image density. Whether it is a single poem, the whole poem or other images of the same kind, the density has greatly increased. Wang Anshi has formed his own unique style in the process of benefiting many teachers. He uses reduplication to widen the perception distance of images, uses

verbs to connect images and emotions, and uses antithesis to improve the space of images in poetry, and finally forms an elegant and exquisite style of poetry. Because of the image density perspective, we can see Wang Anshi's acceptance of the literature of his predecessors and the aesthetic harmony of Tang and Song poems.

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Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Conflict of Interest

The author states that this article has no conflict of interest.

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