



Artistic Features of Lu You's Cicada Chanting Poetry

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Abstract: Cicadas chanting is an important theme in Lu You's poems, which contains rich ideological and emotional connotation. The image of cicada that appears frequently in poems is not only the catharsis of Lu You's feelings of the ruined country and destroyed family, wandering and homesick, but also the symbol of his noble and pride, leisurely, free and easy spirit, and the expression of his emotions when he chants history and nostalgia. The rich connotation of Lu You's cicada chanting poetry creates an aesthetic realm of the integration of man and nature and the coexistence of emptiness and reality by means of placing feelings on things, image combination and cicada symbol, which forms a value construction from the artistic aesthetic level to the ideological and emotional level.

Keywords: Lu You, cicada chanting, artistic features

For it living on branches and sucking sap, cicada is regarded as a symbol of purity and nobility. Thus, it becomes a common poetic image. There are numerous cicada images in Tang and Song poetry. Lu You of the Southern Song Dynasty especially loves the image of cicada. Lu You's cicada chanting poems have distinctive artistic features in terms of ideorealm construction, image combination and expression methods. He used cicada chanting to express his noble and pride sentiment, and expanded it to express the grief of the ruined country and destroyed family, as well as the leisure of living in the countryside. This paper will comb Lu You's cicada chanting poetry and comprehensively review its artistic expression.

1. Creating a unique ideorealm by describing static scenes with dynamic scenes

The loudness of sound in object chanting poetry is often related to the creation of ideorealm. The more noisy the cicadas, the more they can reflect the quiet and secluded ideorealm created by the author. Since the verse "The forest is more peaceful while cicadas are chirping, the mountain is more secluded while the birds are singing"[1] in Wang Ji's *Entering Ruo Ye River*, the sound of cicadas has an indissoluble bond with the creation of ideorealm. Just as Qian Zhongshu said in *Limited Views*: "If people are in a silent place, some sound will make people feel that this place is quieter than that has little sound"[2]. Lu You is well aware of the dialectical relationship between dynamics and statics. His cicada chanting poems also create a quiet environment and express profound feelings in the noise of cicadas. Therefore, describing statics with dynamics has become a common method for Lu You to create artistic ideorealm. For example, the verse in *Turtle Hall*: "The pine shed is obscuring the sun; the hearse is fluttering in the breeze. The cicadas are constantly singing while the thatched cottage is quiet; the puddles have gone back to the village road."[3]. The shed made of pine branches and leaves obscures the sun. In leisurely, the poet recalls his past achievements. Gusts of breeze blowing, blowing his headgear, also blew away the heat of summer, it's really comfortable. After the accumulated water decreasing, the poet walked happily through the mountains and rocks. However, the poet's good friends could not come because of some reasons, and the good wine of Dongyang could not be tasted, so he became a little sad. At this time, the sound of cicadas was noisy, and the poet was the only one left in the thatched cottage where friends should gather, which highlighted the "seclusion" of the thatched cottage where the poet lived. In addition, the seclusion mentioned by Lu You is not only the "quiet" of the external environment, but also a "serenity" mental state reached by the aesthetic subject. It is just because of the serenity of inner heart and the elimination of all distractions that he can more keenly perceive the beauty of the external environment and express his feelings accumulated for a long time.

2. The combination features of cicadas and other images

In Lu You's cicada chanting poems, the image of cicada is often combined with other images to increase aesthetic expression and enrich emotional connotation. Therefore, the author makes the following table to make statistics on the image combinations with high frequency and strong emotional color, so as to preliminarily understand the emotional trend of cicada image in Lu You's poems.

Table 1. The combination of cicada image

	Image combination	Quantity
Season and climate	Autumn wind	7
	Setting sun	6
	Willow	10
Trees	Sophora japonica	5
	Tung	11
Animals	Cricket	1
	Wild Goose	2

According to the data in the table, it is easy to find that the image of cicada is often combined with other images to form different image groups and construct a unique artistic space of poetry. In Lu You's cicada chanting poetry, the common combination modes of cicada image and other images are as follows:

The first is the combination of seasonal and climatic images. There are 13 direct references to the words "autumn wind" and "setting sun", so the expression of sad mood is more obvious. For example, "Listening to cicadas sounding all over the courtyard to send years, seeing the autumn wind to the seaside again." (*Early Autumn*, vol. 58, p. 253); "I woke up and found that the setting sun was about to set, and there was the sound of cicadas all around." (*Heavy Rain*, vol. 34, p. 269). These verses combine the autumn wind and setting sun with the sound of cicadas, making people feel the desolation and gloom feelings when the autumn wind is bleak and the evening sun is sinking in the west. The lyricism in this environment is combined into one sentence: "all scenes can be translated into language".

The second is the image combination of trees. Because of the cicada's habit of sucking tree juice, its image combination is mostly related to plants. If it is in summer, cicadas chirp in bursts, which is suitable for combination with disorderly cicadas; if it is in autumn, everything withers and leaves fall, it is suitable to match with "disordered cicada". For example, "In retrospect, hundreds of warships galloped through the waves of the Yangtze River towards the enemy of Jin Dynasty, but now what I can only hear are the disorderly chirps of cicadas from the high willows." (*Feeling When Passing Caishi* vol.10, p. 44); "The young swallows emerge as the nest built on the tall building is dry; the cicadas chirp as the locust trees are covered with green leaves." (*Heavy Rain*, vol. 34, p. 269); "The locust flowers fall, and the shade of the Tung is thin. Occasionally, the sound of one or two autumn cicadas came out." (*After Raining* vol. 58, p. 246). These tree images not only show their own traditional aesthetics, but also have poet's feelings. Thus they become common images of sorrow for parting and flying time.

The third category is the image combination of animals. Comparing animal images with plant images creates a new ideorealm. This mixed style achieves the artistic effect of complementing each other. For example, "Every time the sound of cicadas rises, the Tung leaves and the willow leaves wither together." (*South Hall Miscellaneous Xing* vol. 72, p. 13). The different whining sounds of cicada and cricket are combined into a sad song, which is all in line with the poet's nostalgia and sadness when living in Shanyin. The other kind appears most is the wild goose. Like the cicada, the wild goose will also make a very loud and rapid cry when flying. The timbre of both has the characteristics of loud. But because of the different distance, cicadas chirp closer and wild geese honk farther. For example, "The honking cry of wild geese brings news of desert, the noise of cicadas worries about the sunset." (*Return Late in Early Autumn, Fang Weng Yi Gao, the lost drafts of the Liberated Old Man*, p. 166). The chirps of cicadas and geese add to the solemn feeling of autumn. This sorrow is actually the poet's feelings about the flying time.

It can be seen that the combination of cicada images and emotional types tend to be a sad aesthetic, and the basic tone is also sad. However, the combination mode built by cicada is not limited to these kinds. Lu You always selects suitable images to match with "cicada" according to the needs of poetry, so as to create the best combination mode of "cicada" image and achieve the ideal ideorealm.

3. Comprehensive application of various rhetorical methods

In order to be more unique style in cicada chanting poetry, Lu You often uses multiple rhetorical methods. Symbols and allusions are the most frequently used. From the perspective of symbolism, the ancients believed that cicadas only drank dew and did not eat grain. *Xunzi — the Great Compendium* says: "Cicadas are those who drink but don't eat." [4]. *Outer Chapter*

of Bao PuZi says: “A man should be like a noble cicada. He would rather starve than be dirty in order to satisfy his stomach like a dung beetle”[5]. In addition, cicadas like to live in high trees, and their sounds are bright. Compared with other species, they are indeed of extraordinary quality. Lu You also depicts the cicada’s habit of drinking dew and living in high. For example, “I drunk across the Yangjia River; the cicadas chirped in high willows.” in *Hearing Cicadas and Thinking of Nanzheng* (vol. 13, p. 261). Another example is that “A cicada chirps in high locust; two butterflies fly around grass.” *Early Sunny the Next Day* (vol. 72, p. 3). The cicada in Lu You’s cicada chanting poetry is a noble image, just like Lu You who was dismissed. The poet tries his best to depict the lofty character of cicada, compares himself with the cicada chirping in high trees, sublimates his realistic personality into the spirit of poetry through cicada, and symbolizes his good quality through cicada. Therefore, in addition to the function of creating ideorealm, cicada image is also the externalization of Lu You’s soul and personality, which is his aesthetic review for real life.

From the rhetorical methods of allusions, Lu You’s cicadas chanting poetry has much sustenance and focuses on expressing feelings. Therefore, he often selects allusions that fit with the things he chants, organically combines objective images with subjective emotions, and points out the theme without any trace. For example, the allusion of “cicada belly and turtle intestine” appears many times in Lu You’s poems. *Book of Southern Qi · Wang Sengqian* records: “I’ve been starving for a long time. If the hungry tiger and hungry Lin don’t get angry, who will give them food”[6]. The ancients regarded cicadas as spiritual animals. Cicadas drank dew and had empty stomachs, while turtles were hungry and had thin intestines. Therefore, it is often used to describe the situation of poverty and the noble quality of a person. For example, the verse in *Chang Ge Poem* (vol. 39, p. 149): “The stove is smoke-free, and I’m used to it now. The turtle and cicada have become friends with me.” and the verse in *Face Poverty with Humor* (vol. 47, p. 108) “Misfortune is irresistible, and poverty and hunger can be endured”. They all express the poet’s lofty and pride feelings under the poor living conditions by the allusions of cicadas. Lu You uses allusions skillfully, which broadens the language expression of poetry, connects the meaning of the whole poem, and makes people feel a sense of crisscross of time and space between ancient and modern times.

4. Conclusion

Cicada, as a common image in poetry, has formed a relatively stable internal meaning through the chanting of scholars in previous dynasties. In the development of image, Lu You paid attention to use symbols, allusions and other methods. At the same time, he absorbed the emotional connotation of cicada literature given by predecessors, further deepened on the basis of inheritance, and formed his own unique charm. Through studying Lu You’s cicada chanting poetry, we have a more overall understand of his artistic expression. We also feel the thoughts of family and country, the feelings of leisure and the sighs of sadness in the times as shown by Lu You in his cicada chanting poetry under the special background of the times, which is helpful to better know the characteristics of the times, the change of mentality and spiritual character, and clarify the development context and evolution of cicada literature from point to area. Cicada and Lu You explain eternal sadness in the integration of nature and life, and chant unchanged feelings in the change of time and space.

References

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