Image Teaching of Chinese Modern Poetry in Junior Middle School by 
People's education edition— A case study of Jiang He Variations on Stars

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Abstract: In the Poem Words of Canglang written by Yan Yu in the southern song dynasty, there is a saying: "Poets chant their temperament." Poetry is a literary genre of lyrical expression. While appreciating poetry can effectively improve the students’ Chinese accomplishments and understanding, nowadays there are some problems in junior middle school language poetry teaching. One of the main problems is teachers in poetry teaching does not focus on appreciating poetry, but become more examination-oriented. They only pay attention to recite but lack poetry appreciation and analysis. Images are the channel and the window for us to appreciate poetry. If we understand the images in the teaching from the aspects, we can accurately grasp the poet’s thoughts to express their emotions. This article from the image and the meaning of poetry teaching poetry introduces and explains the advantages and the importance of teaching poetry images in modern poetry teaching, with a modern poem in Chinese textbooks for junior middle school as an example to further discuss and interpret.

Keywords: Junior high school; Chinese poetry teaching; image; building atmosphere

1. Introduction

Compared with the appreciation of classical poetry, the appreciation of modern poetry seems to be more difficult for junior middle school students to grasp because the format of modern poetry is more flexible and the images are novel. [11] Because middle school students cannot understand the development and the cultivation of Chinese accomplishment so it is not possible for them to understand the thoughts and feelings expressed by the poets or appreciate Chinese classical poetry only by reading or reciting poetry. Thus, we need deeper analysis and appreciation of the teaching method, to meet the requirements of the exam outline and cultivate students’ ability to appreciate modern poetry. As the soul of poetry, understanding the image can be said as the first step of poetry appreciation if we want to master the image of poetry. The following is a systematic analysis of the meaning and the importance of the image of poetry.

2. Image-Important Factors in Writing Poetry

The existing definition of “Image” is an artistic image created by the objective things through the unique emotional activities of the creative subject. Image produces more profound images through abstraction, general image, etc. Image is the product of the conscious activity of the human brain. [10] in poetry, image is one of the indispensable factors, and it is also the most important medium for poetry to use the two important ways of expression, namely, lyricism through the scenery and expressing one’s aspiration through the object, and it is also the most representative carrier of the author’s emotion.

By the concept of "abstract" in the concept of "meaning" and "representation" in the word "like", what we see by the naked eyesight is the objective, but what the poet does is to integrate personal affection into the image of the subject [5] in the poetry so we need to understand abstract expressions, which reflects the poetry besides the characteristics of concise and implicit. In addition to simple expression, the imaginary also has the ability to make a single object vivid. In other words, imaginary plays an important part in poetry appreciation and is a typical feature.
When Xie Liu first mentioned the concept of "image" in his book The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons in the southern dynasty, he wrote in the article: "make the interpretation of the mystery, find the image and rhythm and then determine the writing. People who grasp the skill will be able to render good writings..." Xie thought images in poetry writing and the overall outline play a core role and he fully affirmed the importance of the role of images in the appreciation. In addition to ancient poetry, modern poetry appreciation also cannot leave the image analysis. In both ancient and modern poetry, imagery is an excellent way to understand and appreciate poetry.

3. The Concrete Method of Image Teaching of Chinese Modern Poetry in Junior High School

3.1 Think about the meaning behind simple images

Teachers in the teaching of poetry should let students understand the poetry composition background, then further analyze the image involved. To do so will help students understand the expression of artistic conception, feelings, and scope of the poetry content to develop a more personal and in-depth understanding. It can also help to teach students to pay attention to personal understanding, develop the students’ consciousness of independent thought, and enrich his or her images of the world. In addition, the perception ability of junior middle school students toward things is still in the basic stage. They cannot well extract from the text what the author wants to express, which is the part of perceptual content. A single object surface analysis will ignore the "meaning" behind the simple "like". They cannot fully appreciate the poetry, so the teacher’s interpretation should be the representative image of explaining the simple image, that is what the poet really want to express to make sure the students understand the meaning behind the "like" is not simple, then from their understanding of the poem from a shallow to a deep appreciation of the whole poem. So that students can feel the picture created by multiple images, instead of teaching according to the original rigid interpretation.

3.2 Three images in modern poetry appreciation

Specifically, there are three kinds of images in modern poetry appreciation. They are the original image, the expressive images, and the symbolic image respectively. The emotion expressed by the original image is relatively intuitive, and the image presented is not rendered or modified a lot, which has a straightforward sense of understanding of the emotion. The expressive image is less focused on specific objective things but by the analogy and expressing the author’s own emotional expression. Finally, a kind of symbolic imagery is evolved from ancient literature to form the rule, such as red bean implicates acacia, lotus implicates nobleness, etc. used in modern poetry. It gives poetry a lot of energy and feelings of mystery. In a nutshell, every modern poem can undertake different types of image analysis, which can lead to a full understanding of what the poet contains in his work. It can also make us have a more detailed understanding of modern poetry image teaching.

4. To Explore the Image Teaching of Junior Middle School Chinese Modern Poetry With Examples

We take a modern poem in the ninth-grade textbook of People Education Public (PEP) edition, Variations on Stars of Jianghe, as an example for our discussion, and use the method of image teaching to make a discussion. This image is rich and beautiful, wrote by the impressionist poets Jianghe after the cultural revolution to create a modern poem. Although the composition background of the poem is that the poet has experienced the difficult years of the cultural revolution, the poem looks for a bright future with many beliefs in the heart. This poem expresses the poet’s dissatisfaction with his status quo but there is hope, and he believes the light and good thoughts and feelings of the world will come. Here we will analyze the poem with some main images;

Every corner of the earth was filled with light
Who needs the stars who can
At night
Find comfort in the distance

First, from the image of this paragraph, using the "earth", "corner", "light", "stars" images which build a quiet atmosphere. "Light" and "Star" is on behalf of the meaning of hope. In these two sentences, the night has the little lone star, which likes the hope in the dark. Although it is smaller, it is real and needs to be explored and pursued. This is what is expressed by the poet behind the two sentences of "stare at night" and "distant comfort".

Secondly, the use of "who..." creates a kind of rhythmic beauty of poetry. This kind of rhetorical question has not only a nice format but also reflects the current situation of the "dark" at that time, that the author fully expressed his facing the reality of discontent. The assuming tone has a feeling of mystery, making the reader want to go into the mind of the poet. With the help of the image, the poet tells readers to have hope though it is maybe distant, that the hope does exist, which stands for the determination of the people to pursue the light.
Who is not willing to
Every day,
It’s all one poem
Each word is a star
A quiver in the heart like a bee
Who wouldn’t, have a soft night
Soft as a lake
Fireflies and stars swim among water lilies...

This paragraph uses the imaginary description, that the "poem", "star", "bee" are all metaphors which the poet used to stand for the life. Poetry is full of imagination with the mystery of the unknown. The word "bee" represents the image of spring means the life should be full of vitality in the poet’s eyes, shining like the stars and planets, and in the evening becoming soft and multiplicative, shy and quiet like a southern girl. The "soft night and lake" described this kind of artistic conception incisively and vividly, the starlight "fireflies" represent also heralds light has never disappeared. It just dormant somewhere, and is ready to burst in the quiet.

Who wants years and years
Always write poems of suffering
Each is a group of trembling stars
Like snow in my heart
Who wants to watch the night freeze
As stiff as a field
The wind blows down one thin star after another
Who doesn’t like fluttering flags, like fire
Golden stars are streaming out
When the stars are tired - rise
To shine where the sun does not shine

In this part of the poem, the images of the suffering poem "; "the trembling star", "the snow", "the freezing at night" create a cold, depressing atmosphere. These images can also provide us with many of the emotions the author intended to express. Although he is now in the dark, as long as he yearns for the light, there could be hope. The author revealed the theme of the poem, the reality is not satisfactory, but it is not always in this way. Reading this, our hearts have already begun to cry out because it is yearning for the light and no one likes the cold and dark, we want more light coming in our life, although the hope is too slim to wait for. The poem goes with a rhetorical question that states ideas in people’s minds— their disappointments with reality. And it finally expresses the poet’s willingness to wait until the light comes again.

5. The Conclusion

The style of the whole poem is to use images to create atmosphere and express emotions, and it has the typical characteristics of misty poetry, without the brusqueness of expressing one’s feelings directly, and with more obscure beauty. It expresses the yearning and pursuit of the light in implicit language. Poetry teachers can also refer to things in a similar way of interpretation of the images, to improve the appreciation of students.

The poet’s thoughts and feelings also provide a good way for students to learn and appreciate poetry, to no longer stay on the surface of language, but to understand the deep emotions of the poetry and the real meaning of what the poet wants to convey. In this process, people’s understandings and views are different. Teachers are recommended to let the students express their understanding of the poem after reading. If poetry is a mysterious door, each reader has his key. With different keys to open the door, there are different scenery. Teachers in the class play the role of more guidance so that students master the method of poetry appreciation to the most.[9]

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