

Expounding on Liu Xizai's Theory of "Zao Kong Luan Dao"

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ABSTRACT

The "General Survey of Arts" by Liu Xizai is an important work of literary and art criticism in the late Qing Dynasty, which discusses the issues related to prose, poetry, fu (descriptive prose interspersed with verse), ci (a type of classical Chinese poetry, originating in the Tang Dynasty and fully developed in the Song Dynasty) and qu (a type of verse for singing, which emerged in the Southern Song and Jin Dynasties and become popular in the Yuan Dynasty), calligraphy and Confucian classics argumentation in different categories. In the opinion of Liu Xizai, different categories of art have their own standards of creation and evaluation, but "zao kong luan dao" is one of the few ideas that runs through several arts. He used "zao kong luan dao" many times to make high comments on the works of the past dynasties, which differed from the original meaning of the expression and formed a great contrast with the mainstream views of historical theory and poetic theory on the need to avoid kong (emptiness) and luan (disorder). The unique artistic condition of "zao kong luan dao" is jointly shaped by the connotation of "having substance" and the creative techniques of "feng and xing", which reflects the characteristics of Liu Xizai's literary and artistic thoughts that are flexible, unconstrained, stable and inclusive.

Keywords: Liu Xizai, General Survey of Arts, zao kong luan dao, having substance, artistic conception

I. INTRODUCTION

As a famous literary and art theorist of the late Qing Dynasty, Liu Xizai left many works. Among them, "General Survey of Arts" is the core text bearing Liu his literary and artistic thoughts. It consists of six "general surveys" — "General Survey of Prose", "General Survey of Poetry", "General Survey of Fu", "General Survey of Ci and Qu", "General Survey of Calligraphy" and "General Survey of Confucian Classics Argumentation". Researchers mainly focus on the analysis of literary theory, poetry theory, ci and qu theory and calligraphic theory, but the overall study of different artistic thoughts is rare.

In "General Survey of Arts", Liu Xizai combs the changes of different categories of arts, elucidates the characteristics of artistic creation, and comments on the works of writers in previous dynasties. Not only do the views of different arts remain consistent, but the ideas of different arts also echo each other. Among the comments and views, there is a phenomenon of considerable concern, that is, Liu Xizai used "zao kong luan dao" (including "luan dao") many times in his "General Survey of Prose", "General Survey of Poetry", "General Survey of Fu", "General Survey of Ci and Qu" to evaluate the works he admired. At present, there is

only one paper in the academic circle — Tu Chengri's "The Poetic Interpretation of Liu Xizai's Theory of 'Zao Kong Luan Dao' [1] ^(P118-121), which studies this proposition. However, the author mainly regards it as an established type of proposition in ancient Chinese literary theory, arguing that "zao kong luan dao" and "abnormal but reasonable" put forward by Su Shi, the famous poet of Song dynasty and "seemingly unreasonable but actually profound" proposed by the scholar He Chang of Qing Dynasty are uncannily parallel. From a macro point of view, he discussed the aesthetic interests that these similar poetic propositions may share and the causes. But in fact, the discussion on the text of "General Survey of Arts" and Liu Xizai's poetic thoughts in the paper is not enough. And this insufficiency also leads to the doubt of the similarity between the three poetic propositions of "zao kong luan dao", "abnormal but reasonable" and "seemingly unreasonable but actually profound": although these three have some common points in word formation and thought, they cannot be regarded as the same type of poetic propositions. From the expression of Su Shi, He Chang and the analysis of the author, the first two are very specific poetic skills and conception construction methods, while "zao kong luan dao" is a poetic proposition proposed by Liu Xizai based on his literary

and artistic thoughts, with unique connotations and artistic features.

In "General Survey of Arts", "zao kong luan dao" is a positive poetic proposition which can be shared by different literary styles and is consistent in meaning. However, the meaning of the expression "zao kong luan dao" itself is negative. Taking modern texts as examples, such as Ye Beiqing's "Study on the Interpretation of Zhuangzi's Peripateticism in the Song Dynasty": "Luo Miandao, however, proves that the transmission of things in "Zhi Le" is not really something 'zao kong luan dao' (here meaning something negative)." [3] ^(p187) When talking about the academic contribution of "traditional school" and "new school" in the academia of ci, Liu Yangzhong argues that "On the other hand, the so-called 'new school' is not as rootless as some people describe it, nor does it just sell Western theories and is 'zao kong luan dao' in ci studies." [4] ^(p3) It can be seen that in modern Chinese, "zao kong luan dao" is not a "good word". It is usually used to express the author's opinions or research issues without any basis, and it is often used to describe the unreliability of written materials.

II. SOURCE TRACING OF THE MEANING OF "ZAO KONG LUAN DAO"

The expression "zao kong luan dao" (凿空乱道) was not until "General Survey of Arts" that it was frequently used as an idiom as it can hardly be found in documents before Liu Xizai. The part "zao kong" first appeared in "Historical Records · The Biography of Dayuan":

"However, since Zhang Qian was the one who blazed the path, later emissaries to the Western regions were named as Marquis Bowang (Zhang Qian's title) in order to win the trust of foreign countries, and foreigners therefore trusted them." [5] ^(p3169)

In "Ji Jie", Pei Yin quoted Su Lin, saying: "Zao means opening up; kong means breaking through. Zhang Qian opened the way to the Western regions." [5] ^(p3170) It can be seen that "zao kong" means to explore the unknown.

Since then, "zao kong" has been used mostly in a negative meaning, as in Han Yu's "Answer to Scholar Liu on the Compilation of National History":

"What's even worse, there are people who attach themselves to cliques, and thus love and hate in ways that are different from common sense, craft the language and forge the deeds of good and evil. On what grounds can such an approach be trusted to perpetuate itself through cursory biography?" [6] ^(p669)

Another example is in the Volume 4 of Gu Yanwu's "Ri Zhi Lu", "The King Enters the Royal City' Not to be Recorded":

"What did not happen in history cannot be coined even by Confucius; it is said in 'Lu Shi' that the King Xiang of Zhou never resumed his country, yet Wang Zihu kept it for him. This is a parlance adopting 'zao kong'." [7] ^(p331)

The above examples are historical comments. As far as the principle of real recording is concerned, it is indeed improper to use "zao kong" as a technique in the writing of historical books. In poetry theory, "zao kong" is no praise either. For example, Yuan Haowen said in his "Yin on Tu Fu Poetics",

"There are 60 or 70 people who have annotated Du Fu's poems. It will not do them justice to think of their exploration on the secluded but profound thing in Du Fu's poems. However, there are also many miscellaneous and disorderly notes due to the 'zao kong' and rootless contents with wide quotations and wind demonstration of mixed quality." [8] ^(p1221)

Taking Hu zai's quotation of Shangu's remark in "Poetic Notes Taken by the Recluse of the Brook Tiao", "Poetry cannot be created constrainedly; it can be naturally exquisite when artistic conception comes." [9] ^(p320)

It can be seen that both the historical theory and the poetic theory regard "zao kong" as a groundless nonsense or construction of a fictitious association; in other articles other than historical and poetic theories, "zao kong" is often combined with such words as fabrications, groundless remark, nonsense, artificial and strained interpretation, in which the derogation is quite obvious.

As for "luan dao", it can be interpreted as demoralizing, as in "The Book of Jin · Collected Biographies · Dai Kui" by Fang Xuanling,

"Thus the hypocrite who is seemingly moderate, is actually corrupt; a loose fish who may seem generous, but is immoral in reality." [10] ^(p2458)

It can also be explained as speaking carelessly. This kind of usage can be found everywhere in poetic theory, such as the Volume Four of Li Heng's "Quotations from Le'an" in the Song Dynasty:

"The article is based on the conception, but also on sincerity. If the article is not made out of sincerity, it is 'luan dao'." [11] ^(p310)

The 'luan dao' here is synonym to 'zao kong' and the article that is not sincere and has no intention can be called disorderly and careless speech.

Besides, the "Miscellaneous of Poetry Theorie" records Qi Ji's "Fengsao Zhige", "There are forty categories of poems", the eleventh of which is "luan dao" [12] ^(p384); it then records Xu Yin's "Yadao Jiyao" listing "luan dao" in "different categories" [12] ^(p509),

which carries on Qi Ji's thought. The poem cited in this category is from Li Pin's "Living upon the River; to Guests in the Mountain" in the Tang Dynasty, describing the scenes of continuous rain that makes autumn waters soar and frightening winds that make wild fires fly. This so-called "category" refers to the topic type or writing technique. Here, "luan dao" was regarded as a writing technique, rather than a negative evaluation of morality, ideas or words, from which it can be seen that the "dao" here is used different from that in conventional occasions. Instead, it is an expression of the illogical expression of poetry, where there is a combination of rain and fire, natural phenomena that cannot exist abreast, and there are disorders in both language and image. Although "luan dao" had been regarded as a creative technique in the Tang Dynasty, its influence was so small that it was not widely spread later.

Therefore, Liu Xizai's use of "zao kong luan dao" in the "General Survey of Arts" is more specific and theoretical than that in "Fengsao Zhige", which is in sharp contrast with the vast majority of previous historical and poetic theories. Such contrast is not only the basis of the poetic proposition of "zao kong luan dao", but also fully reflects the characteristics of Liu Xizai's artistic thoughts.

III. "ZAO KONG LUAN DAO" AND "HAVING SUBSTANCE"

As mentioned above, "zao kong luan dao" (including "luan dao") appears in "General Survey of Prose", "General Survey of Poetry", "General Survey of Fu", "General Survey of Ci and Qu".

In "General Survey of Prose", Tang Zixi's comment of Sima Qian "luan dao, yet good" [2] ^(p12) is quoted — "Sima Qian was bold in being luan dao, yet is brilliant and Ban Gu didn't dare to luan dao, yet is unsatisfactory; 'The Commentary of Zuo' is not luan dao yet good and 'Tang Shu' is luan dao but not good." [13] ^(p403). Liu Xizai refuted his remarks and said, "Actually, it is not luan dao", because he thought that although Sima Qian sometimes made seemingly far-fetched and pretentious remarks, in fact, his argumentation was quite detailed. This paragraph seems to be dismissive of "luan dao", but if combined with the expression in "General Survey of Ci and Qu", one may have a deeper understanding:

"If a piece of Ci is well versed in xing, the feelings expressed will be the same even if the things it says are different; the feelings will be profound even if the things said are simple and common. Therefore, what seems to be nothing is what means everything, and what seems to be the most luan dao language is the most reasonable." [2] ^(p118-119)

By combining this with that in "General Survey of Prose", it can be seen that there is an actor between the presentation of luan dao and the essence of reason (not luan dao); and when there is such an actor, "luan dao" will not be "luan dao" any more. The actor in "General Survey of Prose" is its refined argumentation, and that in "General Survey of Prose" is feelings. Whether argumentation or feelings, they can both be called "having substance" according to the "General Survey of Prose", the connotation of which can be embodied according to different texts.

For example, as for prose, "having substance" means argumentation: "In terms of argumentative writing and narrative writing, the most important thing is to find out the argumentation. Only when all the possible argumentation is exhausted can one begins to talk about writing. Otherwise, how cans the pursuit of the art of composition, apart from 'having substance', be enough to be immortal?" [2] ⁽³⁷⁾

"When the writer is good at argumentation, the writing can 'have substance', and when the writer is good at the art of composition, the writing can be well-organized. He who has begun to write boasts of content and order. Why not be realistically by pursuing argumentation and the art of composition?" [2] ^(p41)

Liu Xizai emphasized "having substance" in his literary theory, which was inherited from the classic prose theories of Tongcheng School. It was first publicized by the Fang Bao, as in "Composed After the Propagation of the 'Zhi Huo Zhuan': "The argumentation and art of composition of 'The Spring and Autumn Annals' were carried forward by Sima Qian, a Taishi official, and those with deep attainments later can achieve both. In 'The Book of Changes', the argumentation is the so-called "speech has content", and the art of composition is the so-called "speech has order". Argumentation is longitude and the art of composition is latitude; a systematic essay can only be composed when its longitude and latitude meet each other." [14] ^(p58)

The literary theory of Tongcheng School is based on the theory of argumentation. However, in Liu Xizai's opinion, although the argumentation and art of composition of the article are very important, the former of the article are superior to the latter, because the argumentation can ensure the content of the article, otherwise it is just empty talk. In poetry, fu and ci, "having substance" is having feelings, ambition, and will.

To be specific, fu's "having substance" requires both facts and expression of feelings.

"Fu (賦), with 貝 as one component, requires substance; with 武 as the other component, requires order." [2] ^(p101)

"Talking about facts, or expressing feelings, all the literary works are no other than these two types. And for fu in particular, both are indispensable." [2] (p97)

In terms of ci, "having substance" means having feelings, which in the final analysis is "presenting 'self'; and this 'self' is a righteous one.

"People in the past chanting the ancient and objects, are actually voicing feelings for the most part, because there is 'self' in it. Yet who don't have 'self'? Among so many, only the 'fair and square one' is admired." [2] (p118)

"The writer of ci should first recognize 'feelings'." [2] (p123)

The "substance" of poetry is the emotional sustenance, allowing readers to have strong emotional resonance of the emotion, aspiration and will.

"Shi Jiu Shou (The Chinese Nineteen Ancient Poems)" is zao kong luan dao, after the reading of which one pauses and ponders and has all kinds of feelings well up in the heart. At this point poetry can be called having substance in it." [2] (p52)

That is to say, Liu Xizai argued that the "substance" of poetry begins with "Shi Jiu Shou", and the poems before that cannot be called "having substance": Before commenting on the "Shi Jiu Shou", the "General Survey of Poetry" starts with the characteristics of "Feng", "Ya" and "Song", and discusses the "Book of Songs" and poems. Liu Xizai believed that "the poem with a good knowledge of the subtleness of things is close to the Feng"; the poem expounding the key points of the governance is close to "Ya"; and the poem that reveals the profound mystery of heaven and earth, ghosts and gods, is close to "Song" [2] (p51). Feelings for objects, human governance, heaven, earth and ghosts and gods are the general content of "The Book of Songs" but its implication is subtle. Then Liu Xizai commented on the five-character poems of Su Wu and Li Ling: "Li Ling's five-character poems to Su Wu only relate the sad feelings of parting, without a word involving the fact, but the language has infinite implications, which overwhelms people with gloom". [2] (p52) He compared it with the "Shi Jiu Shou", holding that the similarity between them is grief, while the difference is that Su Wu and Li Ling are implicative, and "Shi Jiu Shou" has the aura of boldness and broad-mindedness.

In short, from the perspective of the content of the poem and the readers' feelings, the "Book of Songs" involves facts yet with hidden meanings; Su and Li talks about only grief of parting without mentioning the facts and the meanings are all beyond the language. By contrast, "Shi Jiu Shou" involves both feelings and facts, and thus contains not only grief, but also boldness. It can be seen that to the period of "Shi Jiu Shou", poem is full of both feelings and facts. It can be

described as a combination of hidden feelings and facts, opening up a wide realm and creating a unique artistic realm. Therefore, the "zao kong luan dao", which seems to be empty and disorderly, can become the key to the important poetic proposition in "General Survey of Arts", due to its connotation of "having substance". This kind of connotation can make the seemingly empty and disordered words produce the effect of fully arousing the emotional resonance of readers, and create a kind of abnormal yet extraordinary art state through "zao kong luan dao".

IV. "ZAO KONG LUAN DAO", AND "FENG" AND "XING"

"Zao kong luan dao" can only get rid of its empty appearance and become an important poetic proposition in "General Survey of Arts" because of "having substance. However, "having substance" is the central element of prose, poetry, fu, ci, qu, calligraphy and Confucian classics argumentation, and the poetic connotation of "zao kong luan dao" is further advanced on this central element.

In "General Survey of Arts" Liu Xizai's makes the comments on Li Bai's poems: "Li Bai's poems mostly unfold in a path-breaking way (zao kong er dao), and it is difficult to exhaust the purported interest. This is because there are more feng than ya and more xing than fu." [2] (p58)

Combined with the above poem theory: "The thoughts in Taibai's poems are far beyond his oral poetic languages" [2] (p58), it can be seen that "zao kong er dao" and "zao kong luan dao" actually express similar meanings. Similar to the comments on "Shi Jiu Shou", "it is difficult to exhaust the purported interest" describe readers' similar feelings about reading the work, namely pausing and pondering and having all kinds of feelings well up in the heart; finding it difficult to exhaust the extensive and profound purport. But more importantly, Liu Xizai explained the formation mechanism of this creative construction — reading experience: "It is because there is more feng than ya, and more xing than fu." That is to say, the extensive use of "feng" and "xing" can create the extraordinary artistic realm of "zao kong luan dao" This point is also reflected in the previous quotation of "General Survey of Ci and Qu" [2] (p118-119).

There are many treatises on "feng", "ya", "xing" and "fu" in "General Survey of Arts". The theoretical starting point is naturally "Book of Songs", but they all focus on the poetic techniques. In his "General Survey of Poetry", Liu Xizai quoted "Foreword to Mao Poems", Kong Yingda's "Maoshi Zhengyi", Liu Xie's "The Literature Mind and the Carving of Dragons · Bi and Xing" as well as Jiao Ran's "Poetic Structure" to explain the six-meaning of feng, ya, song, fu, bi and

xing, emphasizing that the significance of feng is profound, while the changes in "Ya" are mostly due to worries about life and the world, where "bi" is obvious and "xing" is obscure.

To be specific, Liu's analysis of the definition and recognition of "feng", "ya" and "fu" is as follows.

"Poetry that is well versed in the subtleties of objects is close to the 'Feng', that expounding the key points of the human governance is similar to "Ya" and that reveals the profound mystery of heaven and earth, ghosts and gods, is close to "Song" [2] (p⁵¹).

"The fu talking about feelings originates from 'Feng', upholding righteousness comes from the 'YA', and representing virtue stems from the 'Song'." [2] (p⁸⁶)

"Foreword to Mao Poems': 'feng, refers to enlightenment, which aims to move people through enlightenment.' From this it can be seen that the meaning of feng is very profound." [2] (p⁴⁹)

"Being simple yet refined, straightforward yet gentle, is the characteristic of 'Ya'." [2] (p⁵²)

From this it can be seen that the content of "feng" is feelings for objects and it features profoundness. The content of "Ya" is human governance and it features uprightness and righteousness; if it can be elegant and agreeable it will be praised for the accommodation. According to Liu Xizai, it can be summed up in a sentence: "It is harmoniously beautiful as the refreshing breeze that nourishes all things" [2] (p⁵⁰). The content of "Song" is the virtue of gods, featuring in profoundness and subtleness.

The contrastive analysis of "xing", "bi" and "fu" in "General Survey of Arts" is as follows:

"Li Zhongmeng said, 'Narrating things to express feelings is called fu, looking for things to hold feelings is called bi, and generating feelings after being touched by things is called Xing.' This explains the difference between fu, bi and xing. However, there is also the meaning of bi and xing in fu." [2] (p⁸⁶)

The case in which fu bears the characteristics of bi and xing is a fact in language, telling about the multiple purposes beyond language." [2] (p⁹⁷)

There is a difference of range between xing and bi. This is because bi has only affirmative side without a reverse one, while xing has both." [2] (p⁸²)

"Fu is created in a situation of complex feelings which cannot be expressed by poetry and the writer therefore writes a fu to narrate them in detail. The writer can describe the various feelings and things that come in succession freely" [2] (p⁸⁶)

Although the discussion of "fu" often involves stylistic features, both the "fu" of "six-meaning" and the

stylistic "fu" have the characteristics of narration. It can be seen that the contents of "xing", "bi" and "fu" are all feelings for objects, but they are managed in totally different ways: xing is vague and broad, producing feelings after one is touched by things; "bi" describes the actual situation in the speech, looking for things to place emotion; "fu" is expansive and vast, narrating things to express emotions. When the three are combined, 'fu' can also bear the function of bi and xing.

Therefore, "zao kong luan dao" appears more in "feng" and "xing", which can express feelings for objects and arouse people's resonance in its profoundness and extensiveness. The effect of this approach can also be echoed in other arguments:

"Quatrains mostly adopt feng and xing in the six meanings; so compared with other themes, they especially uphold euphemistic, implicit, natural styles." [2] (p⁷⁴)

It can thus be seen, whether Li Bai's poetry which is "zao kong er dao", or quatrains as a poetic style, adopt "feng and xing" in their creative techniques. This is because ties of matter and human feelings are often deeply rooted in the heart, and it is difficult to express the hidden "substance" without "feng" or "xing". Therefore, the excellent literati gave the rein to their imagination, explored the profound and subtle realm, and created a subtle, implicit, and natural artistic realm. While readers find it difficult for to exhaust the purport of reading, they resonates deeply with the work.

V. THE ARTISTIC CONCEPTION AND THOUGHT OF "ZAO KONG LUAN DAO"

The reason why "zao kong luan dao" is not "luan dao" lies in "substance"; in order to show the "substance" in "kong (emptiness)" and "luan (disorder)", the writer must adopt "feng and xing" more. As for the artistic conception created by "zao kong luan dao", besides "euphemism, implicitness and naturalness", Liu Xizai had more discussions:

"Jia Yi's 'Condolences to the Covenant', 'Mourn for Quyuan' and 'Fu Fu' had the meaning of zao kong luan dao, and the feelings of the sao writer (sao refers to literary writings or short for 'Li Sao' by Qu Yuan) were quite obvious here." [2] (p⁹¹).

From the perspective of these three pieces of fu, "Condolences to the Covenant" is a speech made for Qu Yuan, expressing his sadness and anger at being expelled from the country and his mixed feeling of longing to travel far and nostalgia for his hometown. "Mourn for Quyuan" was composed by Jia Yi by way of to reminisce Qu Yuan when he was estranged by the emperor, condoling with Qu Yuan's solicitude for his country and king. The wording of the two pieces of fu is quite similar. In the writing, the writer's train of

thought covers the heaven and the earth, thinking about the present and recalling the past, making the work magnificent. "Fu Fu" is made when Jia Yi was in Changsha in exile. He expresses his concern and indignation through his dialogue with the pengornis. The work is detached and made to console himself. No matter from the conception or content, the three pieces give full play to the acme of imagination, allowing thoughts to roam in the ancient and modern world. The writing is natural and unrestrained, but the meaning is profound and the sentiment is implicit.

In Liu Xizai's opinion, Jia Yi's "Condolences to the Covenant", "Mourn for Quyuán" and "Fu Fu" had the characteristic of "zao kong luan dao", from which the feelings can be seen, which is right the artistic conception of "zao kong luan dao".

In "General Survey of Arts", the purport of the so-called "poet" is mentioned several times.

"A turn brings depth, and depth brings ingeniousness, which are the three realms of sao writers. If the writer is well versed in this art, he can rise above mediocrity." [2] (p114)

"Ouyang Xiu's article is similar to Sima Qian's in its purity; and his deep feelings and elegant charm come more from the purport of sao writers." [2] (p28)

"Su Xun said, 'Poets are unruffled and free from worry, while sao writers are stern and profound', but actually their stern and profound manner contains a connotation of easiness." [2] (p7)

"While the writers of ya has far-reaching purport, those of feng and sao also have their profound interest." [2] (p81)

It can be seen that, although the evaluation objects are different, the expression "sao writers' feelings" is generally used to describe the transformation of the writing style of the works, and the ultimate purport is focused on the depth, such as the stern and profound feature, far-reaching feature, and profound subtleness.

Based on the discussion in the last section, it can be seen that the artistic conception of the "zao kong luan dao" lies in the transformation of the writing style of the works without continuous trace in terms of scene; in the profound implication, elegant charm in terms of purport; in all kinds of thoughts being crowded in together, which is inexhaustible in terms of reading experience. Therefore, "zao kong luan dao" is a poetic proposition of the whole dynamic process from creation to reading. This process may be felt by referring to a description of the poet by Miu Yue:

"And so the poet's observation of living creatures is very profound in both sorrow and joy. What seems to be zao kong luan dao and a utter disorder is in fact well-developed and refined. It is enough for the reader to

feel the author's profound feelings, and to have a soul-stirring feeling, and to grasp the essence of life in the exquisite realm. As for the author's purpose, there is no need to be obstinate; since the purpose of readers is merely to appreciate the profoundest purport, there is no point in clinging to the author's purpose." [15] (p60)

The literati make creation in line with the principle of "having substance" and form the artistic conception. However, the reader should never disregard the changing circumstances by holding on to the presentation, but get emotional resonance from the shallow to the deep and from the seeming truth to real truth, so as to grasp the true meaning of life under the thoughts expressed through "zao kong luan dao".

As a matter of fact, "zao kong luan dao", the unique and abnormal proposition of poetics fully reflects the overall characteristics of Liu Xizai's literary thought, summarizing by quoting the comment on composition layout and rules in his "General Survey of Confucian Classics Argumentation": "Starting in the air, standing on the ground, and shin in unexpected way" [2] (p176).

First of all, Liu Xizai's literary and artistic thoughts are flexible and unrestrained.

As far as "General Survey of Arts" is concerned, in addition to the echo of views among the six "general surveys", Liu Xizai also has his own views on the six categories of arts, namely, prose, poetry, fu, ci, qu, calligraphy and Confucian classics argumentation, among which the most prominent is his open position on different literary forms. "General Survey of Arts" first admit the particularity of each style itself, namely "standard"; for example, "prose has standard" [2] (p47), "it is better not to infringe the standard of ci" [2] (p121), "Fu is good at imitating, which is not as good as expressing itself" [2] (p103), and the specific standard varies in different literary forms. These standards, however, are not something that cannot be added or subtracted. On the contrary, ideas and methods may be shared between different literary forms. For example,

"But are the social functions of ci, such as the inspiring emotions, investigating the society, having social contact and complaining about social injustice lower than those of poetry?" [2] (p122)

"Jiao Ran, a monk in Tang Dynasty discussed poetry on its conception, and his thoughts can be used to discuss Fu." [2] (p99)

"Poetry, means having something (an idea or opinion). This meaning is also connected with fu." [2] (p104)

They even complement each other, for example, in:

"What cannot be express by a text can sometimes be expressed by a poem." [2] (p80)

"Ci is like fu, and qu is like ci. Fu can complement poetry...and qu can also complement the ci." [2] ^(p124)

This view of bending the rules, which runs through different literary forms, has a wide range of applications, covering all aspects, such as wording, rhymes and themes. There are no fixed standards, but the principle of avoiding the mundane and platitude. Therefore, Liu Xizai strongly advocated that creators should come up with new ideas and have profound conception.

Secondly, Liu Xizai's literary thoughts seek truth and reality.

It can be seen from the poetic proposition of "zao kong luan dao" that although Liu Xizai advocated the idea and conception of "opening and changing", he would eventually put it into practice — "having substance", so that "kong (emptiness)" would become "fullness" and "luan (disorder)" would become "order". Taking "General Survey of Prose" as another example: "Articles advocating flowery language are declining, while articles advocating quality are flourishing, which is similar to that with the growth of age, the appearance is declining while the wisdom is increasing" [2] ^(p45). Comparing "flowery" and "entity", Liu Xizai took the latter and believed that it is more lasting and applicable. When discussion on the beauty of ci and qu, "General Survey of Ci and Qu" puts forward the key point of "integrating entity with emptiness" [2] ^(p121). In "General Survey of Calligraphy", it is argued that calligraphy requires firm strokes with a flexible management, but the pursuit of flexibility must be based on firm strokes." [2] ^(p167).

In addition to "entity", Liu Xizai also quite emphasizes "genuineness". For example,

"It is important that articles learn from the ancient scholars, but one should never be possessed by the word 'ancient'. This is because what is valued by article writing is only 'right' and 'genuineness'. Does learning from the ancient scholars mean imitating the ancients and abandoning 'right' and 'genuineness'?"

"One can stop writing poems for some years, yet should never write one that is not genuine." [2] ^(p55)

"Fu should talk about truth and hypocrisy, not orthodoxy and evolution. It is better to evolve and be true than to be orthodox yet false." [2] ^(p88)

No matter what kind of literary form, Liu Xizai stressed the importance of "genuineness". He holds that the genuineness of the matter, feelings, truth, righteousness, are the bottom line of the work. This "genuineness" is definitely the thing and reason that the creator realizes from his own heart; the work comes out of the internal and external interaction of the creator; a chord can be stroke after the reader generates feelings. All of Liu Xizai's literary and artistic

thoughts are generating discussion and improving skills based on the mutual understanding between the creator and the reader, just as Xia Jingguan commented on his poetic theory: "Starting from the apprentice, he speaks plain and has much insight." [16] ^(p497)

Finally, the essence of Confucianism is carried in Liu Xizai's literary thoughts.

Liu Xizai was a jinshi During the Daoguang reign, transformed into Shujishi, and was appointed in the Hanlin Academy as Bianxiu. In his later years, he became a provincial education commissioner in Guangdong province and a lecturer in the Longmen Academy in Shanghai. He devoted almost all his life in studying the four books and the Five Classics and giving lectures, and was also familiar with Buddhist sutras, Taoism, astronomy, calendar and other fields, gaining extensive knowledge. The "General Survey of Arts" takes Confucianism as the basic guiding ideology to discuss and provide guidance for various literary and artistic activities.

For example, it emphasizes the decisive role of creators' personality in works — "Grades of poetry comes from the personality" [2] ⁽⁸²⁾. Liu Xizai referred to Han Yu in the "Sending to Lu Tong" "Recommending Meng Jiao" in praise of the two people in strict discipline and practicing rules, so exclaimed over "Lu Tong, Meng Jiao's poetry fame. But what Han Yu strongly recommended was actually their personal characters, which is really the highest criterion for writing poems through the ages!" [2] ^(p63)

For another example, "General Survey of Arts" emphasizes the function of the work — to study and conduct theoretical research, which must be combined and applied in practice to be useful to the society. In "General Survey of Arts", Liu Xizai made a comment on the advocacy of rhetoric in writing. In response to people's criticism of Zhuge Liang's pragmatic and unadorned remarks, Liu Xizai asked: "But what's the use of those flowery articles?" [2] (p17) When evaluating Qu Yuan's wording in "Lisao", he put forward: "Qu Yuan's words can arouse readers' ideas of upholding loyalty and eradicating evil, which is of great use." [2] (p7) As for ci that has never been part of the Canon of literature, he also entrusted it with the mission of refining mores: "Therefore, a man of noble character does not create words that are useless to education and have nothing to do with exhortation." [2] (p132)

For another instance, the work emphasizes that of emotions and aspirations should be in line with moral principles — "derived from feelings and in compliance with decency". Liu Xizai had specific standards for measuring "aspiration": "The aspirations that poetry attaches importance to and express must be based on integrity, gentleness and clemency and dignity." [2] (P80). What's more, it is also believed that the people

who most respect Confucian morals are the most upright people: "Foreword to Mao Poems' holds that 'poetry comes from feelings; it is said in 'Wen Fu' that 'poetry is inspired by feelings'; the feelings valued are upright and fair; and loyal officials and filial sons, righteous husbands and virtuous wives, are the most affectionate people in the world." [2] (p123)

Just like this, Liu Xizai's poetics inherited a lot from the traditional Confucian poetics, on the basis of which he adopted a flexible position, absorbed various thoughts and viewpoints with an open attitude, and gradually formed his own unique literary and artistic concepts. Among them, the representative of "zao kong qu dao" shows the combination of "stability" and "change" in his poetic thought.

VI. CONCLUSION

In a word, although the "General Survey of Arts" is divided into six parts, the interpenetration and the intercommunication of ideas as well as the interconnectedness of thoughts expressed in different literary forms all make Liu Xizai's poetic thoughts unique and systematic. Among them, "zao kong luan dao" spans several literary forms and different types of arts, and presents a completely different semantic outlook from the original meaning of the expression. This is determined by the connotation of "having substance" and the approach of "feng and xing" adopted by the creators, which is also the key that "zao kong luan dao" can become the original poetic proposition of Liu Xizai and reflect the overall characteristics of his literary and artistic thoughts.

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