

A Study of Mythological Metaphors in *The Rebirth of the Goddess*

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ABSTRACT

Guo Moruo is one of the founders of Chinese new poems. His collection *Goddess* borrows a lot of mythological themes in theme and image, among which *The Rebirth of the Goddess* borrows themes such as Nuwa repairing the sky and Gong Gong angrily hitting Mount Buzhou. These mythological constructions are metaphors for the reality of China at that time, and express the poet's imagination and desire for the era of democracy and peace. It is precisely for this reason that primitive myths can be reinterpreted in the poet's writings and obtain a different era personality.

Keywords: Guo Moruo, Mythological metaphor, Goddess

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern metaphor theory holds that metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon to continue to speak of, but also a human cognitive means. Metaphor refers to the cognitive model in which knowledge in one field is often mapped to the corresponding structure of knowledge in another field in the process of human thinking, and the experience in one field is used to explain or understand the experience of another field [1]. In other words, metaphor reflects the way the human brain knows the world. Broadly speaking, the concept of metaphor is very broad, including words, phrases, sentences or texts. From the perspective of cognitive function, metaphors can be divided into root metaphors and derivative metaphors [2]. The former refers to metaphors that can be used as a central concept. They are usually implicit and undetected by people. The understanding of the early world can express a metaphorical theme without a metaphoric statement of specific context. In this sense, myths themselves are metaphors. Myths are one of the important artistic creations of ancient humans. They are products of thought, created by ancestors through imagination processing, rather than completely objective stories. Guo Moruo also said in *The World of Myths*: "The world of myths is produced from the perceptual nature of people. So all the gods in the world of myths arise from poets, and they are the supreme gods believed by religious scholars, Going back to the root is only the son of the poet [3]." The poetry drama *The Rebirth of the Goddess*, which was written in 1921 with the background of the Civil War, used a lot of mythological allusions to construct a mythical world. At the same time, it also metaphorically expresses the real world, beautiful imagination and expectations for the future.

2. NUWA PATCHING THE SKY: A DEMOCRATIC AND PEACEFUL Mother GOD WORLD

In *The Rebirth of the Goddess*, the first act is the reappearance of the goddesses feeling the catastrophe. They walked down from the niche and started a dialogue: "Since the five-color stone was refined, the sky hole was completed." It is the poet who draws material from *Liezi-Tangwen* "Everything in heaven and earth is insufficient, so Nuwa makes up for the deficiency with five-color gems, and cut off one beast is enough to raise the world." Guo Moruo's article is based on the theme of Nuwa patching the sky. In the long history of China, Nuwa has always appeared in the image of a mother god and is regarded as the ancestor of mankind. As early as in the *Shan Hai Jing-The Great Wild West Jing*, it was recorded that there are ten gods, it is said that Nuwa's intestines became gods, living in large croplands, lying on the road while sleeping. The story of Nuwa's creation in *Fun Su Tong* has been circulated to this day, and there is no doubt that Nuwa is the mother of many gods.

In the legend of Nuwa patching the sky that prevailed in the Han Dynasty, Nuwa was interpreted as a creation hero. The feat of patching up the sky has the meaning of recreating the defective world [4]. From the perspective of Nuwa's mythological archetype, it implies the concept of reproductive worship and maternal dignity. It is the love and forgiveness of the mother god who created and protected mankind. This coincides with Guo Moruo's view of women. Guo Moruo once said in *A Brief Comment on Faust*: "In general, the symbol of male can be regarded as independence, and his shortcoming is autocracy. The symbol of female is love. Forgiveness, its ultimate is democratic peace. Therefore, men are subordinate to women, that is, an independent, anti-authoritarian democratic peace based on loving forgiveness. This should

be the reliable protection of human happiness [5].” In the poet’s view, women bring democracy and peace are the way to achieve human happiness. Therefore, in *The Rebirth of the Goddess*, the goddess became the creator of the world. The opening of the drama talked about the world of the goddess, which was repaired on this day. The selfless spirit of taking care of the overall situation in the world is closely related to the *Goddess*. It is the love of the goddess that makes the song of life play, and the majestic creativity of the goddess makes the world drive away the darkness.

In the poetry drama, the poet chose to use many goddesses to replace Nuwa, making them the creator of all things and the creator of the times, which weakened Nuwa’s personal worship as a single god. From one to many, it echoes the eternal woman in Goethe’s poem quoted at the beginning. From elite worship to group worship, the subject of the world’s destiny is no longer a certain god and supreme self, but a group that creates the world [6]. The goddesses are metaphors for the famous Chinese nation, and the world created by the goddesses is a metaphor for the poet’s attempt to eliminate the boundary between heroes and common people, and to improve the status of the people in the creation of the times. This also confirms that the ultimate of poets and women is the concept of democracy and peace.

The Rebirth of the Goddess is a poem with the background of the Civil War era, and the poet has also verified the reality and rich connotation of this poem in other texts. The use of the myth of Nuwa patching the sky not only creates a loving and democratic world, this world metaphors the reality of being suffering from catastrophe, and patching the sky metaphors the transformation and salvation of this country in the past. Why repair the sky? It is because everything has shortcomings, and there are shortcomings between the world and the earth, which points to the reality of the backward and backward old China in modern times and being bullied by foreign powers. Patching the sky is a metaphor for the movement of saving the nation from extinction in modern times, and the main body of patching the sky has been replaced by the goddesses from Nuwa, which also shows that saving the sky should be the choice of the masses, a historical choice, not a decision made by an elite. It also shows that in the eyes of poets, democracy is the way to create a new world.

The Rebirth of the Goddess created a world of mother goddess through the myth of Nuwa patching the sky. This mother god world was created by the goddesses. The democratic peace represented by the goddesses is the true color of this world. Only the Chinese nation represented by the goddesses stepped down from the niches and participated in this world transformation, creating a new democratic and peaceful world is the real way for China.

3. THE GREAT WAR BETWEEN GONG GONG AND ZHUAN XU: POWER WAR AND CONSCIOUSNESS OF RESISTANCE

In the second act of the poem drama, there is a struggle between Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu for world rule. This paragraph is also based on *Liezi-Tangwen*: “Then Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu competed for the position of the tribal emperor. He was defeated badly in the war and hit the mountain in anger.” In Chinese mythology, Gong Gong appears as a god of water. *Shan Hai Jing* records Gong Gong as the descendant of Emperor Yan, and Zhuan Xu is the descendant of Emperor Huang. The record of the war scenes in *Liezi-Tangwen* is very brief, and it does not mention why the two fight for the emperor. From the perspective of tribal inheritance and the purpose of the war, this war can be regarded as a continuation of the war between Emperor Yan and Emperor Huang. In the mythological prototype, there are many reasons for this war, but the goal is the same to become the only leader. The consequence of this war was that the Emperor Huang won and became the co-lord of the world, while the Emperor Yan was defeated and lived under the people.

As the creators of this world, it is difficult for the goddesses to agree with Zhuan Xu and Gong Gong’s struggle. In their eyes, Zhuan Xu and Gong Gong are both martial arts and brutal groups. The fight to be the leader is too much trouble and will bring catastrophe. Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu first appeared in poetry dramas as negative images of destroying the world. They directly brought wars and disasters. The mountains collapsed, the sky and the earth flew sand and rocks, and the earth moved and the mountains shook. This was a metaphor for China at that time. The war experienced. In *Ten Years of Creation*, the poet explained: “*The Rebirth of the Goddess* is a symbol of the Civil War in China at that time. Gong Gong is a symbol of the South, and Zhuan Xu is a symbol of the North.” *The Rebirth of the Goddess* was written in January 1922. The Civil War that the poet said corresponds to the law-guarding movement led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The wars between the North and the South have been endless for many years. According to this, Gong Gong should be a metaphor for the revolutionary forces in the south and the warlords in the southwest, and Zhuan Xu should be a metaphor for the warlords in the north. The shepherd boy in the poetry drama said that these are two dog fights who often only fight for steamed buns, which also shows its predatory nature. In addition, the poem drama also interspersed with the description of the scene of the war: “When will the water of the Yellow River become clear? When will the life of human beings end?” It describes the hard life of the people and the destruction of their homes under the war. This is a true portrayal of the dying life in old China.

As male images, Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu are extremely destructive. The poems are portrayed as the source of destruction. This not only emphasizes the status of men as the main body of war, but also embodies the men’s pursuit of power. In the poet’s concept, the disadvantage of men is

autocracy. Here, men are metaphors for dictatorship and despotism, and men's wars ultimately lead to the destruction of the world. It also metaphors that despotism is the fundamental cause of disaster. In addition, the poet creatively set up a dialogue between Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu before the war. Zhuan Xu was originally the descendant of the Yellow Emperor and the ruler to whom the destiny belongs, so he said: "I am a man who is ordered by the heavens, and God has ordered me to rule the world." Follow his heart to be emperor and satisfy my impulse to be emperor and king. Gonggong appeared as a rebel, showing his strong personal will. Although from the perspective of the world's self, Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu are both villains who caused disasters. Gong Gong also has a rebellious color due to his rebellion against the orthodox power, reflecting a distinct independent will and human subject. In a certain sense, Gong Gong's struggle against Zhuan Xu can be regarded as a revolution, which is against the so-called orthodox forces. This also just shows that Gong Gong is a characteristic of the revolutionary forces in the South, and Zhuan Xu fits the long-standing rule of the northern warlords [3]. And this struggle ended with Zhuan Xu's victory over Gong Gong, who was destined to do so, which meant that the resistance was suppressed by the rulers. Coincidentally, *The Rebirth of the Goddess* was finished at the beginning of 1922, but the defending movement failed at the end of the same year. Perhaps the poet had already foreseen the end of this series of wars through various signs. But the end of the war does not mean the end of the resistance. Even though the shouts of Long live Zhuan Xu! Long live the emperor! Gong Gong never gave in to Zhuan Xu. He realized that my lifeblood had been cut off like the mountain, so he turned and knocked down the northern pillars, unleashing a powerful force of destruction that threw the heavens and the earth into chaos. Zhuan Xu also died with this disaster, the orthodox rule ended, and the chaotic world ended. Their death and the destruction of the world also imply that the power rule will eventually be overthrown, that the war in old China will eventually end, and that the chaotic social order will eventually end with the disappearance of the struggle.

4. GODDESS CREATION DAY: CREATING A BRIGHT NEW WORLD

In the last scene of the poetry drama, the goddesses reappeared. Faced with the devastated world, they created a new sun, determined to bring new light and new warmth to the world. This passage is not based on a certain ancient book, but a re-creation of the myth of Nuwa patching the sky. According to Guo Moruo, we should keep a certain degree of myth, not blindly believe in it or stubbornly resist it. Myth contains precious historical and spiritual wealth, and we should learn from it in the world of myth. The plot of creating a new sun reflects the poet's understanding of myth and creation [7].

The direct reason why the goddess created the new sun is

that the war between Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu made the sky tilt to the northwest, so the sun, moon, and stars moved to the northwest. The southeast corner of the earth collapsed, so the cement and sand of the river flowed towards the southeast corner. It can be said that the goddesses are cleaning up the mess for this war. The war between Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu was a male war and an autocratic one, while the goddess represented democracy and peace and created a sun for the world after the war. This not only shows that the poet criticizes and questions the male war history, but also praises and pursues the female peace feelings. It reflects the poet's high and optimistic spirit, which is exactly in line with the spirit of The Times when the May 4th movement was raging. It also implies that the end of despotism is the beginning of democracy and peace, which will heal the pain left by despotism and become a reliable protection of people's happiness. Similarly, the goddesses are also metaphors for the Chinese people, which also warns people that the consequences of war will ultimately be borne by the people.

Goddess Creation Day is not only a re-creation of mythology, but also reflects the creativity of the theme of the times. Look carefully, the main story of *The Rebirth of the Goddess* is to create a new world. The goddess' emotions about the catastrophe are to explain the story background and shape this mythical world, and the war between Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu is not only to create a new world. The direct cause is also going on with the creation of the sun, giving the world a new life at the end. In *Ten Years of Creation*, the author not only reveals the two forces represented by Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu, but also expresses his wish to build a third world outside of these two, a beautiful China. In the poet's writing, the myth of Nuwa patching up the sky extends to the goddess creating the sun, which is to break away from the war of all forces and build a beautiful China. Therefore, the goddesses no longer did the tinkering, but carried the remains of men into niches to make idol. Let despotism sit on the sidelines, no longer interfering in the world's every move, but playing silent music. The goddesses themselves have to embrace the new sun, and often create new light and new warmth to supply the new sun so that it will never get tired and shine through the world inside and outside the sky. This also implies that if you want to maintain a democratic and peaceful life, you must maintain this achievement when necessary so that it will not be stolen by the dictatorship. It can be seen from this that the poet has his own set of opinions on how to build a beautiful China, which is exactly where the reality of the theme of *The Rebirth of the Goddess* and the spirit of the times lies.

The Rebirth of the Goddess reflected many social phenomena in old China in the use of mythological themes. In terms of discourse coherence, from Nu Wa repairing the sky to the war of Gong Gong and Zhuan Xu and then to the goddess creating a new day, it is a metaphor for the road of the old China from saving the nation and trying to survive to the civil War and ushering in a new era of democracy and peace. The concept of sacrificing oneself to change the chaotic situation runs through the whole drama,

connecting the whole poem and drama as a whole from the old world falling apart to the warm and fresh new world. From this we can also see the poet's imagination and expectation of a beautiful China. It is this kind of expectation and poetic grasp of primitive myths that Guo Moruo can enable historical legends and myths to continue to interpret their stories in the contemporary era, and have the personality of the times. The goddess walks out of the niches and creates a new world in the primitive myths. The spirit and national core contained in the poet's works have been further developed.

5. CONCLUSION

Until the end of the poem, the new sun was still far away and never showed up. But the goddesses have felt the fresh warmth, and the bell ringing by the sea is both the death knell of the old world and the morning bell of the new world. This is just like in China at that time. Although the era of democracy and peace has not yet fully arrived, it has already had light and enthusiasm. The poet is eager for light in the dark world, waiting for new beauty with a heart of expectation. The time is coming.

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