

# Study of Love Metaphors in Xu Zhimo's Poems

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**Abstract.** This paper will attempt to summarize the mapping process and underlying experience of love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry from the source domain to the target domain from the perspective of conceptual metaphors, analyze the uniqueness of Xu Zhimo's love metaphor system by counting the number of occurrences and usage of different source domains among them, and explore the influence of cultural and social context on the love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry in the context of cognitive linguistics.

**Keywords:** Xu Zhimo; Cognitive linguistics; Metaphor.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Life of Xu Zhimo

In 1897, Xu Zhimo was born in Kipsi, Haining, Zhejiang, with the genealogical name of Zhang Qiaoxian. In 1907, he entered Kipsi's Kaizhi Academy. His teacher is Zhang Zhongwu. He wrote classical Chinese On the Defeat of Goshuhan at Tongguan, and then he wrote On the Relationship between Novels and Society. In the summer of 1915, Xu graduated from Hangzhou No. 1 High School and enrolled in the preparatory course at Peking University, where he married Zhang Youyi in mid-March.

In the spring of 1921, Xu Zhimo enrolled in the Royal College of Cambridge as a special student befriended his friend Russell and began to compose new poems. In October 1924, Xu Zhimo became a Peking University professor of English and American literature and foreign literature. In 1925, Xu Zhimo arrived in Germany via the Soviet Union in Siberia and then traveled to various European countries. In 1928, Xu Zhimo became a professor at Shanghai Guanghua University, Dongwu University and Daxia University, and the first issue of New Moon was released in March, with Wen Yiduo, Liang Shiqiu and Pan Guangdan as editors. Xu died in a plane crash on November 19, 1931 [2].

Xu Zhimo was a romantic and sincere poet by nature, and he was the most influential poet in the history of modern Chinese poetry for his new poetry, which combines both classical imagery and modern spirit. His poems were published during his lifetime, including The Poems of Zhimo (August 1925, Shanghai Chinese Bookstore), One Night in Florence (September 1927, Shanghai New Moon Bookstore), and The Fierce Tiger (August 1931, Shanghai New Moon Bookstore), and after his death, his poems were compiled by his friend Chen Mengjia and published in July 1932 in Shanghai New Moon Bookstore. There are more than 60 poems in the collection.

### 1.2 Current status of Xu Zhimo's poetry research

The study of Xu Zhimo's poetry began in the 1920s and has gradually formed a systematic theoretical map of Xu Zhimo studies. Scholars have explored Xu Zhimo's life situation, ideological changes, humanistic background, and poetic status, and then developed into a stylistic study of Xu Zhimo's poetry, a translation review of Xu Zhimo's poetry, the poetic themes of "love, spirituality, and freedom" and the construction of the phonetic beauty of his new style poetry, and then into the classification and analysis of specific groups of imagery, or an in-depth study of a famous poem. The research results include various aspects of literary history, aesthetics, translation studies, and literary theory. For example, Ye Pan (2017) discusses in detail Xu Zhimo's early poetic creation from the perspective of poetic style and textual poetics [3]. Cao Dian (2019) compares Xu Zhimo's poetry with

classical Chinese poetry and Western poetry from the perspective of Sino-foreign cultural interactions, thus exploring the intertextual nature of them [4]. Li Miao (2005) focused on the study of Xu Zhimo's later poetic creation and explored its modernist tendencies in it [5]. Liu Tianhao (2009) analyzed the artistic style of Xu Zhimo's poetry in detail from three aspects: classical meaning, modernist tendencies, and modernity expression [6].

However, as the Russian formalist critic Roman Jakobson put forward in 1920, the poetic principle that "literariness exists primarily at the linguistic level of the work" [7], it is imperative and meaningful to analyze Xu Zhimo's poetry from the perspective of linguistics, but reading through a large amount of literature, we found that studies that place Xu Zhimo's poetry in the However, by reading a large amount of literature, we found that the studies that place Xu Zhimo's poetry in the linguistic perspective present a fragmented state. For example, Zhang Xiaoling (2016) explores the metaphorical connotation of the "snowflake" imagery by comparing "The Joy of Snowflakes" with Keats' "Bright Star" from a comparative literary perspective [8], but lacks sufficient theoretical support and systematic structural discussion. Ye Qiongqiong and Chen Danlu (2019) analyzed the metaphorical connotation and causes of the "water" imagery in Xu Zhimo's poetry from the perspectives of rhetoric and criticism [9]. Ma Hongxue (2019) systematically explained the love metaphor in Xu Zhimo's poetry from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, and analyzed the sociocultural perception behind the metaphor using conceptual integration theory [10]. In her master's thesis, "A Study of Xu Zhimo's Poetry in 'Classical Tradition'", Xue Wenqing (2021) devoted a separate chapter to the modern reconstruction of classical imagery in Xu Zhimo's poetry [11].

From a comprehensive point of view, there is still great room to explore the metaphorical study and linguistic perspective of Xu Zhimo's poetry. Therefore, this paper will attempt to summarize the mapping process of love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry from the source domain to the target domain from the perspective of conceptual metaphors, count the number of occurrences and usage of different source domains, and explore the influence of cultural and social context on love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry in the context of cognitive linguistics.

### 1.3 Xu Zhimo's poetry corpus construction

This paper combines the views on poetry interpretation and appreciation from Chen Congzhou's Xu Zhimo: A Chronology and Commentary, Liang Xihua's Xu Zhimo Biography, and Jiang Tao's Tupen Xu Zhimo Biography, and takes Xu Zhimo's love experience as a clue to summarize the synonyms of love and related idioms appearing in the poems, and finally select 88 of Xu Zhimo's 193 poems (excluding the translated poems) with the theme of love or the use of love metaphors. The corpus was formed as shown in table 1. Based on the corpus, the selected love metaphors were further divided into categories and frequency of occurrence to form a quantitative analysis chart of the source domains of love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poems.

**Table. 1** Corpus

Serial number	Poetry	Serial number	Poetry
1	The breeze blows away the dream of spring	45	Ask the Who
2	Listen to the Waper Musical	46	It's a Cowardly World
3	Liebstch (Death by Love)	47	No Longer My Boy
4	The Little Poem	48	I Have a Love Affair
5	Whispers	49	She Was Sleeping
6	Farewell to Cambridge	50	The Youth Song
7	The Autumn Moon	51	The Moon Watch
8	Who are you?	52	The White-bearded Sea Lord
9	The Burial of Hope	53	"Don't blame my face again
10	Mourning for Mansfield	54	The New Remembrance Song

11	Essays on the Revisit of Shaston	55	Lute in the Midnight Alley
12	Waiting under the Moon for the Cuckoo to Not Come	56	Serendipity
13	Listening to the Piano on a Moonlit Night	57	"Take it back, please, sir."
14	The "Two Nuns" or "Strong Practice"	58	Untitled
15	The Leifeng Pagoda (Hangbai)	59	The Remains of Spring
16	A Prayer	60	The Autumn Insect
17	The Years in the Mound	61	The Dry Rush
18	Thunderbolt Under the Moon Film	62	The Last Day
19	Spring	63	The God-like Heroes of Heaven
20	Nature and Life	64	"I don't know which way the wind is blowing"
21	Eighteen Songs of Shayan Nala	65	Untitled
22	The Poison	66	What is it about love?
23	A Nightmare	67	The Grudge
24	The Joy of Snowflakes	68	Late Night
25	In Search of a Star	69	In Vain
26	By the Mountain Road	70	The Casting of Spring
27	The One Weak Star	71	The Cuckoo
28	Thank God! My Heart Beats Once Again	72	Deserved
29	The Decision	73	I Wait for You
30	The Rhythm of the Sea	74	The Season
31	The Little Flame of God	75	The Wreckage
32	"She's Afraid He'll Say It	76	For the sake of
33	One Night's Words	77	The Carp Jump
34	For Mother	78	The Inspiration of Love
35	Building a Wall	79	A Reply to Mr. Shulu
36	I came to buy a handful of lotus flowers by the Yangtse River	80	In the Mountains
37	The Guest in	81	The Dedication
38	No More Thunderbolts	82	Here...
39	The Coral	83	You Go
40	The Logic of Destiny	84	"Don't Screw Me, It Hurts
41	A Dream by the Sea	85	Wake Up! Wake Up!
42	Dingdong - Fresh	86	There She Is
43	The Su Su	87	The Desolate City
44	The Little Singing of Falling Leaves	88	The Knot of Trouble with Laughter

## 2. Basic Theory

### 2.1 Perception and Metaphor

Among the many schools of linguistics, cognitive linguistics focuses on the connection between the universal rules of language and the cognitive laws of human beings. Therefore, in the field of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cognitive one. Between language and reality, there is an intermediate level of conception and cognition. Zhao Liang (2017) in "Theory and Application of Cognitive Linguistics" points out that language is the result of human cognitive process of categorization and conceptualization, and metaphorical mapping is an important means of the conceptualization process. [12] A Metaphor makes most abstract thinking possible, is the way humans normally perceive the world, and is the most fundamental feature of human thinking,

commonly found in cultures and languages around the world. The rich metaphors of love in Xu Zhimo's poetry are precisely the mapping of the poet's unique experience of love, based on his sociocultural perceptions and full of individuality, over and over again.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their book "Metaphors We Live By" listed three main types of conventional metaphors: structural metaphor, orientation metaphor, and ontological metaphor. [13] Most of the love metaphors in Xu's poems use structural metaphors and ontological metaphors. Structural metaphor refers to the construction of one concept by the structure of another concept, so that the words used to talk about the original concept can be used to talk about the new concept, resulting in the phenomenon of multiple meanings, such as "time is money". Ontological metaphors, also known as entity metaphors, are constructed by associating psychological cognitive semantic domains such as emotion, physical condition, social status, etc., perceptual semantic domains and abstract concepts therein with concrete material domains, e.g. "love is a rose".

## 2.2 Conceptual metaphors

Conceptual metaphors help us understand and perceive abstract, difficult concepts through familiar, concrete, and figurative concepts by mapping the structure of the source domain onto the target domain. Such a mapping is achieved between two different cognitive domains, the basis of which is experience. Thus, conceptual metaphors have four basic elements, namely, the source domain, the target domain, the underlying experience, and the mapping process.

As an abstract concept, the richness of its connotation and the determination of its boundaries must be constructed through metaphorical terms and understood by means of metaphors with the help of concrete things. For example, love is a "flaming smile" ("I wait for you"), love is a "dream of an autumn night" ("A prayer"), love is "a horse without a cage" ("What is love about?"), love is "the color of the moon" ("Film of Thunderbolt under the Moon"), etc. Through different metaphors of love, Xu Zhimo constructs and expands different aspects of the concept of love, thus enriching and deepening the connotation of love.

## 3. Love Metaphors in the Poetry of Xu Zhimo

### 3.1 Types of expression of love metaphors

In Xu's poetry, the metaphorical understanding for the abstract concept of love relies mainly on the mapping of the structure of experience between different cognitive domains and is perceived and refined by means of structural and physical metaphors. Structural metaphor systematizes the mapping of the concept of love, while entity metaphor views non-natural things as entities and substances, allowing the source domain and expression of the metaphor to be referred to, quantified, and identified.

Through the analysis of 88 poems of Xu Zhimo, the source domains that appear more frequently and have common characteristics are grouped into one category, and those that appear more sporadically and do not have obvious common characteristics are unified into other categories, specifically: love is human; love is plant; love is animal; love is sun, moon, star, light and god; love is fire, water and ice; love is nature, etc. The frequency of use of source domains in love metaphors in Xu's poems reveals that Xu prefers to use human and plant metaphors for love, and the variety of source domains in these two categories reaches as many as tens, and the frequency of occurrence in the corpus is nearly one hundred times.

Love is human. Love is the concentrated expression of man's deepest feelings and nature, and is a deep and long emotional experience unique to mankind. "If it were not for love, / the source of the light and heat of the spirit, / all the bright and amazing things / would not be possible" ("Inspiration of Love"), "This naked heart, please take it, my God of Love!" ("A Prayer"), "Yah! They are bursting with tears / Bright red, dry, fierce tears" ("Who are you?"). . Xu uses both the whole, individual human

being immersed in love as a metaphor and the human body's tears, looks, physique, organs, and even dreams and thoughts to enrich the physical and psychological perceptual characteristics of love.

In the use of overall metaphors, Xu Zhimo prefers to construct images of beautiful, innocent and delicate maidens and persistent, bitter and heartbroken disillusioned ones, for example: "There is infinite earnestness in their flowing glances; / like the fragrant wind and flower-like freedom" ("Eighteen Songs of Shayanara"), "Pity that there is no more No one will reproach me for my transgressions, / Who mocks my weakness, and more / Who pities my tears" ("The Desolate City"), the praise of female beauty and the poetic development become the distinctive features of such source fields. Among some of the metaphors used, the most frequent one is "heart": "Then I, with my lightness of body, dabbled in her lapels and drew close to her soft wave-like heart" ("The Joy of Snowflakes"). "A pure heart that loves me, / So devoted! So true!" ("Youth Song"), the purity and exuberance of emotions when one is young and loves Ai are depicted in great detail.

Love is a plant. The different species of plants and the different life stages and physiological parts of specific plants can be used to refer to love. Love is the fragrant lily, which makes people happy when they look at it, "This lily is a bright and beautiful bush" ("God-like Hero"). Love is a passionate and beautiful pomegranate flower, is the love to the thick red cheeks, "look at my face / burning red as the flowers of the pomegranate" ("love inspiration"). Love is a lotus in the middle of the water, which is hard to reach, "She is still a cold white lotus" ("Broken"). The bitterness of love is like the heart of a lotus, "My heart is more bitter than the heart of a lotus" ("I came to buy a lotus by the Yangtse River"). Love goes hand in hand with the tastes and hardships of the heart, "He is like a hand full of seeds of various emotions, scattering them in all directions in the heart field; / the laughter of this house, the sobbing of the other side" ("Essays on the Revisit of Saston"). The death of love is like a leaf in autumn, which makes one's mind shrivel up, and makes one despondent, "in an emaciated autumn willow, / on a timid autumn branch, / on an autumn leaf that is about to turn yellow" ("Whispers"). The fragrance and beauty of flowers and the transience of their flowering period make Xu Zhimo's preference for flowers as a metaphor in his botanical metaphors, which appear more than dozens of times in the corpus.

Love is an animal. In addition to the obscurity and turbidity of human nature, the ignorance and purity of animals fit the impulse and courage of love to the point of blindness and recklessness. Love is the flying fireflies to the light, "like thousands of flying fireflies throwing themselves into the light" ("Spring's Birth"), and love is the fish that leap to life, "the water waves are full of the haze of carp scales" ("Carp Jump").

Love is the sun, the moon, the stars, the light and the gods. In a world of deceit and deception, full of fog and deceit, love is a bright light for humanity, a star in the sky that shows the way in the eternal night, and a ray of constant mercy from the gods who have pity on the living. "Love is the only glory at the Lord's heel" ("The Last Day"), "Love, you are always a star above my head" ("A Night with Words"), "As the bright moon in the blue sky:/ You have risen on the happy You've risen to the peak of happiness / And shine your light on the bumps of the ground!" ("Looking at the Moon").

Love is fire, water, and ice. Sometimes love is like fire, which brings warmth and continues to torment, "Though my heart burns with fire, / I hunger and thirst for everything you have" ("I wait for you"). At other times, it is as tender as water, "The tide of love floods my heart's shore" ("Listening to the lute on a moonlit night"). When the love is not answered, the love that cools the heart is as cold as ice, ""the ice flowing through your whole body / full of depression, a sea of tears"" ("Listening to the lute on the moonlit night").

Love is nature. Love is as clear and vast as the sky, "The sky tonight is like her love" ("Youth Song"). Love is calm and quiet like the night, "The sweet night rests in the dewy zhan" ("Cuckoo"). Love is as gorgeous and ethereal as a rainbow, "secrets turn into benevolent storms, into rainbows that point to hope" ("Love's Inspiration"). The ebb and flow of love is a natural change, just like the alternation of morning and evening, the rotation of seasons, "I sway inside like a faint" ("Inspiration of Love"), "Spring / casts itself into the corpse of the waning winter" ("Spring's Casting").

In addition to the above categories, Xu Zhimo also uses metaphors of love such as architecture, treasures, homecoming, road, compass, footprints, and so on. The metaphors of different categories depict the millions of situations of the concept of love, while the different expressions of the metaphors of the same category systematically construct the specific content of the concept of love.

### 3.2 Mapping of the source and target domains of love metaphors

Love metaphors build bridges between abstract emotional concepts and concrete, familiar things, producing a mapping from other cognitive domains to the cognitive domain of love, thus creating and expanding the meaning of the love category. Among the many love metaphors in Xu's poetry, concrete experiences including physical experience, life experience, physical experience, and emotional experience lay the foundation for bridging the source domain and the target domain. In the following, we will analyze the mapping process of love metaphors from the source domain to the target domain and the connections that the two have from the perspective of the underlying experiences.

Love is the person. In this metaphor, the source domain is the person and the target domain is love. Love generally begins during adolescence, with the secretion of a series of bodily hormones such as hormones, the psychological and physiological stimulation of the human body, the redevelopment of the reproductive organs, and the emotional sensitivity, and the birth and growth of the consciousness of love. The self-consciousness of people in love is at an all-time high, and love becomes the awakening of individual life and selfless giving, thus love can "wake up the spring, wake up life". Love makes a person mature spiritually, from a sheltered child to an adult who cares for others, "only I have newly learned to love, / no longer like the innocent child's love, / which is now the love of an adult. In addition, the unusual changes in some organs of the human body are also mapped to the concept of love, for example, the heart feels warm and beats faster due to the arrival of love, "Friend, your heart is pounding, / and mine is not always at peace;" and also the pain of lost love, as if it is broken, "and suddenly I hear a fresh - / this is the love of an adult". I heard a fresh sound - / This time it was my heart that was broken". The eyes, for example, are either glowing with love, "the secret of the heart's spring rippling in the light of the eyes", or red and dry from love, "recognized in the eyes of dried tears". Therefore, the metaphor of "love is human" is mainly based on human physical experience and bodily experience, because human emotional experience is always closely related to human physical changes. The main mapping of the metaphor can be summarized as follows: the growth of human being leads to the birth of love consciousness; the accelerated heartbeat and joyful eyes are the creation of love; the broken heart and dried tears are the end of love.

Love is the plant. The source domain is the plant and the target domain is love. The different parts of the plant, such as branches, leaves, flowers, seeds and fruits, show the process of love from youth to maturity, while the life state of the plant, which grows in spring and declines in autumn, also maps the complete experience of love's flourishing and declining. The budding and burgeoning of emotions buried deep in the depths of reason, like the spring shoots that break the ground after the spring thunder, "like the new shoots in the bamboo garden / not afraid of the wind and the rain, the same / he still grows upward" ("Youth Song"), represents the infinite vitality and courage of love in its beginning stage. The blossoming of the buds and the fragrance of the garden is the state in which love grows to its fullest. The fact that the fruit does not bear and the flowers wither prematurely represents the process of love coming to an end before it can be consummated, "as fragrant, she said, full of flowers and broken flowers" ("In the Guest"). Thus, the metaphor of love as a plant is mainly based on life experience and common biological knowledge, and the main mapping can be summarized as follows: the different stages of plant life are the complete process of love from nothing to something, and from something to nothing.

Love is the animal. The source domain is the animal and the target domain is love. The natural wildness and more intuitive action of animals are similar to those who are in love than those who are disciplined by society. Love is to lovers as the source of fire is to the flying fireflies, "My breath is cast on your body / as thousands of flying fireflies are cast on the flame of light" ("The Casting of

Spring"), expressing the powerful, instinctive attraction of love. Love is lively, leaping, and brings a relaxed and joyful mood, just like the lightly fluttering bees and butterflies, "butterfly-like in their brilliance, nymph-like in their lightness" ("Eighteen Songs of Shayanara"). Therefore, the metaphor of love as an animal is mainly based on life experience and emotional experience, and the main mapping can be summarized as: The survival instincts and biological characteristics of animals are the behaviors and feelings of those who experience love.

Love is the sun, the moon, the stars, the light and the divine. The source domain is the light, the celestial bodies, the gods, and the target domain is love. The orbits of the celestial bodies are macroscopic greatness beyond human reach, and the light they bring provides guidance for people, very similar to the gods guiding the destinies of humans. Moreover, the light is often the embodiment of the gods as well. The beginning and end of love are not under human control; love gives courage and direction when one is in trouble and at a low point, and love is as abstract as the mystery of the gods. In Xu Zhimo's poetry, love is the light at the end of darkness, "I can't forget you, the day you came, / like a dark future seeing light" ("A Night with Words"), and love is sometimes the gods themselves, "Have mercy, my God of love!" ("A Prayer"). Thus, the metaphor of love as sun, moon, and stars, as light and gods is mainly based on life experience, physical common sense, and cultural experience, and the main mappings can be summarized as follows: the prominence of light in darkness maps love's guidance in distress, the mystery of gods maps love's abstraction, and the powerful force and uncontrollability of celestial movements maps love's power over human controllability and transient state.

Love is fire, water and ice. The source domains are fire, water and ice, and the target domain is love. Fire brings the physical intuition of blazing heat and warmth, water gives the sensation of dampness or coolness, and ice makes people feel cold. When one is in love, the heart beats faster, the blood flow is accelerated, and the body develops a feeling of heat, as if a flame is burning, "Don't kiss me; I can't stand this fiery living" ("A Night with Words"). When love is completely gone, the lovers are discouraged and no longer have the desire to comfort each other, their blood vessels contract when they are depressed, and the amount of blood flowing through the body surface decreases, thus feeling cold. When love comes to a standstill and stagnation, it causes a physiological reaction of human tears, "I, accompanying me there is cold, there is darkness, / I shed tears, kneeling alone before the bed" ("Love's Inspiration"); when love steps into smoothness, there is a watery and silent tenderness, "like the light waves in a dream spitting and recoiling, / saving the heart When the love is smooth, there is a watery tenderness, "like the light waves in a dream, / saving the mind from the rising and falling of the tide" ("Waiting for the cuckoo under the moon"). And the physical sensation of hot and cold brought by the mingling of ice and fire maps the emotional state of love, "fire and ice reverberate between my heart and chest" ("By the side of that mountain road"). Thus, the metaphor of love as fire, ice and water is mainly based on physical experience and bodily experience, and the main mapping can be summarized as follows: the interaction between fire, ice and water and their characteristics maps the different emotional experiences brought by love at its peak and trough as well as at its steady state.

Love is nature. The source domain is nature and the target domain is love. The all-encompassing and changing nature gives people a rich perception and experience. The metaphor of love as nature can find direct description in Xu Zhimo's "She is there": "She is in the brightness of the white clouds:/ In the tantalizingly distant new moon;/ She is in the timidly dewy valley lotus:/ In the dewy splendor of the lotus heart ..... She is in the supreme essence of nature!" In addition to the inherent scenery, Xu prefers the two seasons of spring and autumn to show the dynamic sense of love's birth and disappearance. Spring is the time when everything revives, and love is one of them, thus the descent of spring maps the beginning of love, "The harmonious spring light, / Filled the pond of mandarin ducks" ("Awake! Awake!"). In autumn, when all the grasses are withered and all the beasts are absent, the sorrowful mood metaphorically indicates the end of love: "The maple leaves of the dewy autumn are spread over your new grave" ("The Burial of Hope"). Therefore, the metaphor of love as nature is mainly based on life experience and emotional experience, and the main mapping can be

summarized as follows: the breadth of nature maps the inclusiveness of love, and the change of nature maps the change of love.

#### **4. The influence of social and cultural cognition on love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry**

##### **4.1 The development of love metaphors in social context**

The social context is the root of the formation of metaphorical thinking and the understanding of metaphorical effects. The love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poems not only express his love ideals, but also reflect considerable social reality. In the late Qing and early Republican period, Chinese society was extremely complicated and in a stage of comprehensive changes in the political, economic and cultural fields. The May Fourth Movement and the New Culture Movement were launched by progressive intellectuals in the political and cultural fields. During this fierce cultural movement to save the country, traditional moral concepts were sharply impacted, and the concept of love also underwent a great transformation, as the arranged marriages of parents and matchmakers were replaced by the new concept of free love and marriage autonomy! After all, dissolution, troubles are hard to tie, troubles are bitter to tie. /For example, "How! "Bride, press the tomb door of the hook to your heart: / (This hall is your graveyard, / your life is buried from now on! ("New Remembrance Song") is an indictment of the killing of young souls by loveless marriage from the opposite perspective. In addition, the turbulence of the times and the poverty and weakness of the country make people's emotional life deeply suppressed and distorted, forcing love into a non-permanent state, often deformed or aborted due to various factors. / There is her tombstone in this wasteland: / Drowned in the vines, her grief; / Drowned in the vines, her grief - / Ah, the blood-stained roses that have been incarnated in this wasteland! ("Susu") is a metaphor for the beautiful but prematurely fading love in the chaotic world, and "Love, you follow me; / Let the thorns pierce our feet, / Let the hail split our heads," ("It's a Cowardly World") shows the hardship and suffering of love in a straightforward way.

The metaphorical logic implied by the themes of his poems points more to the individual's inner feeling of love, so his love metaphors present a delicate, novel and beautiful overall style. The metaphorical logic of the poem's theme is more directed to the individual's inner feeling of love, so his love metaphors present a delicate, original and beautiful overall style, such as the compass ("the traveler's light and the south needle"), the hammer ("under the hammer of love"), the telegraph ("the vibrating hand writes the vibrating love telegram") and other innovative Through the circulation of the poems, the metaphors were recognized and tolerated by the society, thus continuously expanding the scope of love metaphors constructed by Xu Zhimo, making the semantics more complex and richer, and eventually promoting the expansion and extension of love metaphors.

##### **4.2 The development of love metaphors in cultural perception**

Cultural experience and cultural cognition are the cornerstones of the metaphorical system, and poets inevitably have to sift through and select cultural materials in the process of using and innovating metaphors. Since his childhood, Xu Zhimo received a relatively systematic education in ancient languages, possessing a deep knowledge of ancient literature and an extremely deep affection for and attachment to traditional Chinese and Buddhist culture. For example, Xu Zhimo's love of "movement" and "change" in his poetry often coincides with Shelley's. For example, Shelley's repeated use of "Ode to the West Wind" in his poem For example, Xu Zhimo's love of "movement" and "change" often coincides with Shelley's, like Shelley's repeated use of "wind" in "Ode to the West Wind," and Xu Zhimo's "Eighteen Songs of Shayanara," which includes the lines "The fragrant wind and the fragrance of flowers are like freedom. As the poet himself says, "The best examples of poets: I love most the Chinese Li Bai and the foreign Shelley", it is clear that Xu Zhimo's poetry and love metaphors are influenced by the perceptions of both Chinese and foreign cultures.



Restraint and elegance are the aesthetic characteristics of the classical Chinese tradition, and the metaphorical expressions of love derived from them are often hazy and beautiful, rich in the philosophical atmosphere of nature worship and the unity of heaven and man. For example, "The waning moon hangs at the top of the willow, / Ah, the half-wheeled waning moon, like a broken hope" ("Pipa in the Midnight Alley") is a direct paraphrase of Ouyang Xiu's poem "The Moon at the Top of the Willow". The lotus is the most widely known traditional love metaphor in the poem "Your heart and mine are like a snow-white lotus" ("The Last Day"), and among Xu Zhimo's many love metaphors, the metaphor of love as a lotus is the most frequent in the category of love as a plant.

Compared to the elegant and reserved nature of classical China, the metaphorical expressions of Western culture tend to be more spirited and passionate, full of personal orientation and heroic narrative style, and with certain religious overtones, such as love as a metaphor for the gods, "Take this naked heart, my God of love! / For there is no one else but you to give him warmth and life" ("A Prayer"). Love, crowned by God, makes even mortals into heroes, "But when love nestled her in my arms, / I too became a hero like the gods of heaven" ("A Hero Like the Gods of Heaven"), reflecting the supremacy and incredible power of love. Also in the context of love as a plant, the "rose" is a metaphor that is quite characteristic of Western culture: "The rose, the red rose that overwhelms all the flowers" ("Liebstch"), which is bold, flamboyant and striking, showing a very different style from the traditional Chinese love metaphor. metaphor is very different from the traditional Chinese love metaphor.

Historical and cultural traditions are important sources of conventional metaphors and the default forms of metaphorical thinking and metaphorical expression. The intermingling of classical Chinese culture and Western liberalism has contributed to the individual characteristics and artistic connotations of the love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry.

## 5. Conclusion

Love, as a highly abstract emotional concept, relies heavily on the construction and linkage of metaphorical systems for its connotation expansion and cognitive expression, and the metaphors themselves are profoundly influenced by social context and cultural cognition. The love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry are mainly structural and physical metaphors, bridging love and other cognitive domains through basic experiences such as physical experience, physical common sense, life experience, cultural experience, and emotional experience, and gaining understanding and perception through multi-level and multi-angle metaphorical mapping. In addition, the excavation of Xu Zhimo's sociocultural cognition focuses more on the tracing and comparison of metaphorical thinking. From a vertical perspective, the background of the era of the alternation of old and new contributed to the entry of innovative metaphors into the realm of the concept of love and its wide acceptance; from a horizontal perspective, the cultural ethos of the intermingling of East and West makes the love metaphors in Xu Zhimo's poetry present a unique and individual style.

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