

Using Imagery as Media: On the Metaphorical Expression Mode of Xiang Thinking in the *Zhouyi*

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Abstract: *The classic Chinese Book of Changes Zhouyi contains rich theories of natural philosophy and humanistic practice. The Xiang thinking with imagery (namely imagery thinking) as its core laid the foundation for the way of speaking in the philosophy of the Zhouyi. Metaphor, as a means of thinking and cognitive approach, breaks through the theoretical framework of the binary opposition between subject and object in the West from an internal perspective, presenting a cognitive path similar to the Xiang thinking. The paper analyzes the isomorphism between Yi-ology imagery thinking and cognitive metaphor theory, divides the expression patterns of Xiang thinking into several stages, and explains its operation process according to the way of metaphors' presentation.*

Keywords: Imagery thinking, Media, Metaphor, Cognition, *The Zhouyi*.

1. Introduction

The unique discourse system of the *Zhouyi* also exhibits the characteristics of metaphorical thinking patterns. Its emphasis on the integration of body and mind coincides with the metaphorical cognitive theory of embodied cognition, Perceived Style, allowing us to incorporate the expression mechanism of metaphorical thinking into the study of embodied cognition. As Davidson pointed out in his article *the Meaning of Metaphor*: "metaphor is something created through the imaginative use of words and sentences [1]." This indicates that metaphor is a form of language art, whose essence is to indirectly indicate things that have not been expressed explicitly. Rooting in the language of the *Zhouyi*, metaphor has a vast space in the systematic interpretation of it.

Currently, research on Yi-ology imagery thinking in China mostly focuses on two aspects: firstly, defining Xiang thinking from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy, summarizing its characteristics of imagery thinking through comparison with conceptual thinking, and interpreting Chinese traditional classics based on this; The second is to extract the images from the *Zhouyi* for classification and explanation, and to elucidate it through semiotics and linguistics. I believe that by taking the commonality between Xiang thinking and conceptual thinking as a breakthrough point, we can explore the philosophical connotation of the unity of heaven and man 天人合一 (tian ren he yi) in the Chinese philosophy. This article will provide a cognitive metaphorical deconstruction explanation of its operation process, divide the stages of the expression mode of the image thinking. And discuss the expression mode of the image thinking from the perspective of cognitive metaphor, and strive to provide a new method and perspective for the interpretation of the image thinking in the *Zhouyi*.

2. Two Research Contexts and Perspectives

2.1 The Image of the *Zhouyi* in the Philosophical Context

Xiang is a meta category in the *Zhouyi*. Scholars throughout history have had different discussions and generalizations on

the concept of Xiang in the *Zhouyi*. In his book *The Theory of Imagery and Numbers in the Book of Changes*, Zongxi Huang divided it into seven types: images of the Eight Trigrams, the Six-lines hexagram, the pictographic, the line 爻 (yao) position, the opposition, the orientation, and the mutual body [2]. Binghe Shang believed that: "The Four Symbols, or to refer the four numbers of seven, eight, nine, and six (i.e. north, south, east, and west; i.e. spring, summer, autumn, and winter), or to the four things including divine objects, changes, hanging images, and books, or to the specific steps of the four divination methods." [3] The objective existence of objects can be divided into concrete images of all things in the universe and omen images that connect subject and object. The image of all things in the universe is an external natural intuition, and it is also the source of observing and Extracting imageries. The sage's divination and representation originate from celestial and earthly phenomena, which refer to all things in nature, and simulate all things in the universe through "imitating various descriptions". Therefore, Xiang can be regarded as a visual and intuitive image, which is a direct reflection of the external image of things. Image and form have a close relationship.

In fact, the sage's "looking up and looking down" is using their subjective initiative to perceive the phenomena of all things in the universe, which gives rise to omens associated with divination. The phenomenon of omens still belongs to the category of objective phenomena, and the "advance and retreat phenomena" and "day and night phenomena" mentioned in the *Zhouyi* are both indicative phenomena. Biography of the *Zhouyi* states: "When the sky shows the indication, good or bad luck can be seen [4]." Here, the "sky indication" is a sign of good or bad luck reflected by the sky in human affairs. From concrete objects to auspicious and inauspicious signs, it reflects the transformation of the sage's view from the outside to the inside. In this process, the sage combines subjective perception with objective objects, demonstrating their understanding and grasp of the world. Although auspicious and inauspicious signs have the function of predicting personnel, their essence is the perception of the essential attributes of concrete things. That is to say, the symbol of omen is more like a bridge, establishing a connection between the image of all things in the universe and the image of internal laws. It is precisely under the stimulation of omens that the sage formed the meaning of objects and

phenomena in his mind, and has begun to explore them, shifting from surface level image simulation to deep level revelation of truth.

The image of symbols has always been regarded as the most basic meaning of the imagery in the *Zhouyi*, which is a image of physical form. In a narrow sense, the image of symbols refers to hexagrams and line images. In a broad sense, the image of symbols includes not only hexagram and line symbols, but also abstract numbers derived from them, as well as the textual system that interprets images. These surface symbolic symbols can all be classified as the images of symbols. The line symbols in the *Zhouyi* are based on yin-yang lines, and are combined to form Eight Trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams, in order to refer to nature and society. The Yin-Yang Line is the most fundamental attribute abstracted from all things in the universe, containing the laws of change in the movement of things. From a formal perspective, it is a schematic symbol with high symbolic significance, while from its symbolic meaning, it is a manifestation of the metaphysical original image. The Eight Trigrams composed of two lines are divided into yin-yang hexagrams due to the different positions of the yin-yang lines. The Eight Trigrams are stacked in pairs to form the 64 hexagrams, and their intricate and complex structure can provide a profound explanation of the ever-changing nature of human beings and society.

The original image in the *Zhouyi* is based the perspective of philosophical ontology, with a metaphysical transcendental color, points to the way of heaven and earth, and is the way of yin-yang movement that governs all things. the *Zhouyi* states that "unpredictable yin-yang are gods", which means that the divine mechanism of the movement and change of things lies in the opposition and mutual transformation of yin-yang. "One yin and one yang are called the Dao" and "the metaphysical is called the Dao", indicating that the original Dao gave rise to all things and is the existence of existence. However, once the image of yin-yang was proposed, it became an objective object that was external to humans. The original image that *the Book of Changes* aimed to achieve through the thinking of images is the unseen image hidden in the secret realm, which is a state of original creation.

In summary, the image in the *Zhouyi* has different connotations from concrete to abstract. The objective existence of objects is the starting point for saints to create hexagrams, while the specific symbolic images are the beginning for later generations to interpret hexagrams. Therefore, the core issue of the *Zhouyi* is the understanding of imagery. Observing objects and taking images is the transmission of the sage's intention, while establishing images to express the meaning fully is the tracing of the spiritual world. The two paths progressively demonstrate the cognitive mode of Xiang thinking.

2.2 Xiang Thinking from the Perspective of Cognitive Science

From the perspective of the development of Western philosophy, there has been a significant shift since Kant, especially with the rise of cognitive science, which has brought philosophical research into a new era of cognition.

The academic community is gradually focusing on the discussion of intuition and phenomena, starting from the subject to explore "being sought and discovered in the superficial" [5] state the phenomenal world. From the perspectives of objects and subjects, Kant's emphasis on intuition starting from the subject and his emphasis on the image itself starting from the object are actually different paths and the same goal. From the perspectives of objects and subjects, Kant's emphasis on intuition starting from the subject and Xiang thinking emphasis on the image itself starting from the object are actually different paths and the same goal.

2.2.1 Metaphor based cognitive patterns

In the field of cognitive linguistics, cognition focuses on studying the process of human understanding of things, that is, the thinking structure of humans. The process of how people organize their understanding and experience of the world through what means, and how they express the meaningful concepts formed, is called representation. Therefore, the cognitive metaphor school believes that metaphor is not only a basic cognitive way for humans to understand the objective world, but also an important means of representation, that is, metaphor dependent on language is the most important dimension of representation in thinking [6]. In the 1980s, Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. indicated that metaphor is not just a rhetorical device, but also a cognitive way of thinking. They believed that metaphor, as the foundation of human experience, cognition, thinking, language, and behavior, is the main and fundamental way of human survival [7]. Their views tend to be non objectivist, emphasizing that concepts, meanings, language, etc. are formed through the body, brain, and experience of the world, and can only be understood through them. This laid the foundation for the later argument of experiential philosophy.

The school of cognitive metaphor believes that the unconsciousness of cognition "hides under the level of thinking that cognition can be aware of, and cannot be noticed because of its speed" [8], and it is concluded that cognition has unconscious characteristics. This characteristic is not only reflected in language communication, but also in language acquisition - it is during this process that highly correlated metaphors begin to play a role, and a large number of metaphorical expressions are formed. Vico's viewpoint suggests that as early as in the chaotic primitive society, metaphor became the fundamental path for human understanding and grasping the world before logical reasoning and other means. Jiaying Chen proposed that human concepts themselves come from many different fields, and this so-called commonality cannot represent the true state of the objective world. Humans do not acquire knowledge of the world through concepts, but through metaphors, they can internalize their knowledge of the external world into personal experience and obtain understandable cognitive experiences [9]. From this, it can be seen that it is the metaphorical expression behind the potential forms of language expression that connects human beings and the objective world. The exploration of the mechanism of metaphorical cognitive patterns will also dispel the fog, reveal the ways in which humans understand objects, and then reconstruct the boundaries of human thinking. Based on experiential

philosophy, the cognitive metaphor school has proposed two major theories in the field of linguistics, supporting the framework of cognitive metaphor studies. The conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson mainly focuses on static interpretation of specific metaphors, while the conceptual integration theory proposed by Fikonia and Turner has strong persuasiveness and practical value in understanding poetic or dynamic metaphors.

Overall, both Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Integration Theory are based on the perspective that concepts originate from experiences. In terms of the mechanism of generating metaphorical meanings, it is a psychological spatial mapping at the mental level, and multi-dimensional mapping can occur inside itself system. From the perspective of research content, conceptual metaphor theory mainly focuses on metaphors in everyday language, focusing on analyzing normative conceptual relationships and interpreting static concepts metaphorically. Conceptual integration theory, on the other hand, is based on novel and complex metaphors, with a greater focus on the online generation of metaphorical meanings. By exploring the correlation of psychological space, it makes layered inferences about metaphorical meanings. We can use cognitive metaphor methods to systematically explain its expression patterns and clarify the operational process of Xiang thinking as a cognitive mechanism. To discuss traditional Chinese Xiang thinking, one cannot avoid the *Zhouyi*, which is the source of Confucianism and Taoism. It can be said that the *Zhouyi* established the form of Xiang as a unit of thinking, opening up the path of achieving true knowledge through images. Therefore, observing the imagery in it from the perspective of cognitive metaphor is not only a reflection on the cognitive process, but also a deeper understanding of the differences and similarities between Chinese and Western ways of thinking.

2.2.2 Yi-ology imagery thinking

As the head of all the Chinese classics and the source of the great Dao, the *Zhouyi* inherits the ancient Xiang thinking with a strong divination color and endows it with a broad and profound connotation through the theoretical form of the 64 hexagrams. From a diachronic perspective, the Yi-ology imagery thinking exhibits a cultural development thread from witchcraft to philosophy. Firstly, the Yi-ology imagery thinking originated from the activities of witchcraft officials in ancient times. They used oracle bone to inquire about various natural and social phenomena, and predict good or bad luck through specific images. From here on, there is a direct connection between imageries and Xiang thinking. Although this kind of foresight activity has a certain superstitious color, it cannot be denied that in the process of making prophecies, wizards not only engaged in associative thinking about the object, but also gain insights into certain facts hidden behind the imagery. Secondly, the philosophical transformation of imagery thinking in the *Zhouyi* is prominently reflected in its pursuit of true knowledge. The process of people's way of thinking in the primitive state is explained through the way of "observing things and taking images" to themselves, human beings, and nature. It is worth noting that observing phenomena from the perspective of "observing things" is not just about staying at the surface, but

about deeply exploring the fate of nature and even humanity through images. On the one hand, it is based on the classification of the modality of all things in the world through imageries, and on the other hand, it is through imageries to demonstrate the Yi Daoism and promote virtue. Therefore, it can be said that the *Zhouyi* is not only the culmination of ancient witchcraft history and culture, but also the beginning of Chinese philosophy.

According to the generation of hexagrams, lines, and imagery in the *Zhouyi*, it can be divided into three stages. Firstly, it is the schematic stage of nature, which is essentially a class abstraction of concrete objects. This stage is to classify, induce, and summarize the things observed in nature and society based on the principle of "observing things and taking images", and integrated them to form the Eight Trigrams, revealing the order of nature and the universe. the Eight Trigrams here are the essence of form and substance, the abstract form behind tangible objects in the world, and have objectivity. However, in the next stage, which is the construction of hexagrams, it inevitably introduces subjective artificial construction and reverse construction of the natural world in the process of interpreting the world through schema. In this process, the natural human affairs were corresponded with the Eight Trigrams one by one, taking the Eight Trigrams as the universal law. The intricate specific phenomena are tightly attached to the diagram of Eight Trigrams in different forms, so that natural laws and artificial worlds form the relationship between essence and phenomena, as well as the whole and the part. It is precisely in the transformation and circulation of specific objects that the Eight Trigrams pattern began to develop in depth and eventually evolved into the exquisite 64 hexagrams system. At this point, natural laws are increasingly hidden under the shadow, and artificial patterns have replaced nature as a medium for people to face fate. The third stage is the interpretation stage of hexagrams and lines. At this stage, the philosophical essence of the *Zhouyi* was fully demonstrated. Observing objects and taking images is not the goal. Utilizing images to grasp potential destiny is the fundamental pursuit of the *Zhouyi* and even Chinese philosophy.

The imagery thinking has connotations such as wholeness and directness. The wholeness is reflected in its stylistic. By integrating hexagram names, hexagram paintings, and hexagram diction, the *Zhouyi* has formed a complete system of ideographic expression. Xiang thinking is expressed through words, images, and meanings, and can be mutually interpreted and verified. It cannot be explained in isolation and one sidedly. On the other hand, the holistic and non objective nature of the Yi-ology thinking is related, and its core is the morphology of with no distinction between things and me (subject and object), like the unity of heaven and man. Secondly, what the directness related ultimately is the method of observing things, which Mr. Shuren Wang referred to as "overall intuition"[10] believes that the Xiang thinking starts from the imagery and inevitably cannot be separated from observation. However, observation here is not limited to visual perception, but rather a dynamic and intuitive understanding of the big and small universes. In other words, the Yi-ology imagery thinking not only requires to observe images, and watch objects, but also consider nothingness. In the process of observation, visual intuition and mental

comprehension work together, and Xiang thinking operates accordingly, achieving the transcendence of the object in the overall grasp of the object and achieving the purpose of thinking. Therefore, overall, the Yi-ology imagery thinking is an advanced thinking mode that focuses on spiritual perception. It uses imagery as carriers and uses metaphors, signify, and other methods to internalize objective objects into subjective images, and then expands subjective images to construct a systematic cognitive system for world truth.

In summary, the *Zhouyi* takes imagery as the starting point and destination, and constructs a creative thinking full of vitality and overall intuitiveness in the flow and transformation of it. It is different from fixed and abstract conceptual thinking, but highly dynamic. The abstraction from reality to hexagrams is the interaction between objective objects and subjective psychology, while the mapping from hexagrams to reality reflects the transfer of language and even thinking patterns. With imagery as the core, the *Zhouyi* constructs an all-encompassing metaphorical world. Therefore, for the deciphering of the metaphorical thinking in the *Zhouyi*, we can also use metaphorical tools to interpret it in an experiential way.

3. Discussion: the Metaphorical Expression Path of Yi-ology Imagery Thinking

From a philosophical perspective, there is a commonality between the cognitive metaphor starting from "bodily experience" and the imagery thinking of "taking and abstracting imagery from body closely" in the *Zhouyi*. From the perspective of representation methods, cognitive metaphor's representation of the world is based on criticism of traditional conceptual thinking, which proposes the deconstruction of concepts through metaphor, followed by the organization and expression of experiential knowledge. On the other hand, in the *Zhouyi*, metaphorical thinking condenses this into images and restores the process of thinking and its underlying meaning through the interpretation of object metaphors. The two approaches are similar in methodology.

The starting point of Yi-ology imagery thinking originated from the "observing things and taking imagery". The establishment of hexagrams is the result of the metaphorical mechanism of "taking and abstracting imagery from body closely, and from objects distantly", and expressing the Yi Daoism through hexagrams reflects the cognitive process of metaphor. Therefore, analyzing the mechanism of embodied metaphor in observing objects and taking imagery can be discussed from two aspects: first, the understanding of reality images depends on embodied cognitive experience; second, the transformation from reality images to the Eight Trigrams is a mapping from the source domain to the target domain, which is a metaphorical framework carried out according to the thinking method of analogy and taking imagery.

3.1 Based on Experience

As mentioned earlier, Lakoff and Johnson summarized the essence of cognition as follows: the experiential nature of the mind, the unconscious nature of cognition, the metaphorical nature of thinking. Yangming Wang described the formation

of cognition in this way: "All the sights, words, sounds, and actions are all in your heart. The sight of your heart lies in your eyes, the hearing of your heart lies in your ears, the speech of your heart lies in your mouth, and the movement of your heart lies in your limbs." [11] From this, it can be seen that the connotation of heart originates from sensory experience, and it is with the participation of sensory experience that cognition is formed. The acquisition of sensory experience relies on the body, and the actions of the body induce sensory experience. Therefore, based on the direct experience from perception to movement, an imagery of the object being observed was formed, which is generated in the spiritual space and ultimately expressed through hexagram symbols. It can be inferred that the recognition activity is actually established on the interaction between the body and the situation, and its path is the "body mind world" mode. In the context of traditional Chinese philosophy, this model can be summarized as "the unity of heaven and man", while in the context of Western cognitive metaphor, it refers to the embodiment of cognition.

Unlike traditional analytical philosophy and formalist philosophy, the cognitive metaphor school proposes that thinking is metaphorical, and human categorization and conceptualization of the world cannot be separated from the role of metaphor. This school of scholars has put forward a clear viewpoint: the process of human cognition of the world is based on body's physical experience, and is mapped inward and outward through metaphor. In this process, experience plays a crucial role. Taking this as a starting point, Lakoff and Johnson traced back to the dualistic problem of mind and body, and proposed the viewpoint of "experiential nature of the mind", thus establishing the philosophical foundation of cognitive metaphor-experiential philosophy. They conducted a systematic and comprehensive discourse on experiential philosophy, believing that the human mind has experiential qualities, and therefore both reason and human cognitive processes are experiential.

The commonality between cognitive metaphor theory and Xiang thinking can be explained based on the two principles of empiricism. One is to emphasize the role of body in human thinking, that is, embodiment and experience. If a person's relationship with the object world relies on bodily experience, objectivity will be disrupted, and the entities hidden behind the phenomenon will be constantly changing. This uncertainty, in a sense, is accord with the state like eternal existence and change of Xiang thinking. Secondly, experientialism proposes the viewpoint of "metaphorical of abstract concepts" based on the metaphorical nature of thinking. This indicates that highly abstract philosophical concepts are mostly products of metaphorical expansion, and due to the fragmentation of metaphorical mapping, philosophical concepts are closer to imagery that are in flux and change. As a result, the connotation of imagery in Western conceptual thinking has been further expanded, which has led to the emergence of new research perspectives in Western philosophy, as well as new research methods and breakthroughs in Chinese philosophy.

Xiang thinking is connected through the unity of heaven and man, and it does not belong to the image of objective existence and cannot be completely constrained by subjectivity. Its concept is mysterious and has a certain degree

of ambiguity. Therefore, the grasp of the image of Xiang thinking cannot be achieved solely through simple conceptual statements, but requires the use of metaphors to re-enter the realm of "unity between man and nature" and "forgetting both things and myself" by the way of experience and insight. For the receiver, it is necessary to comprehend concrete and perceptible objects from abstract schematic symbols, then abstract and summarize the objects, extract the philosophic theory contained therein, and trace back to the level of yin-yang original images when needed. So, the key to "using imagery to convey meaning completely" lies in the understanding of imagery. The receiver's interpretation of the image is not only about examining the imagery as an objective cognitive object, but also about integrating individuals into the dynamic process of observation, experiencing it through the object and its underlying truth, to understand the connotation of the image, and to understand and explore the constantly evolving world. Therefore, the understanding of the imagery also requires the participation of personal experience. In this process, the receiver once again radiates the field of the image with the body experience as the center, thus achieving the observation of the existence and approaching it.

3.2 Using Metaphor as a Means

From the correspondence between hexagram and line symbols and line words, it can be seen that a structural metaphorical type was constituted with hexagram and line symbol symbols and line language discourse. "Structural metaphor", as the name suggests, refers to the mapping and deduction of abstract conceptual structures using a clear conceptual structure, with a particular emphasis on the similarity of structures between two conceptual domains. the *Zhouyi* uses hexagram symbols as the source domain and line words as the target domain for metaphorical mapping. Although it uses abstract symbols to metaphorically represent concrete objects, the structure between the hexagram symbols and the six lines is clear and the meaning is clear. Compared with the infinite nature of textual direction, it is more in line with the characteristic of metaphor mapping unknown things from familiar things.

The discourse on the *Zhouyi* is carried out through metaphor, and the object of discourse is the imagery. Xiankun Li believes that the entire book of the *Zhouyi* is a metaphor, and reading this book "is to interpret its metaphor"[12], the discussion of the expression mode ultimately boils down to the issue of "explicating imagery". By using metaphor as a starting point, one can clearly see the understanding and operational mechanism of metaphorical cognition in the conversion of words and imagery, and also clarify the cognitive process of metaphorical thinking in the *Zhouyi*.

With imagery as the core, ancient people's understanding and grasp of the world unfolded. Imagery, as the most basic thinking unit, completed the expression of meaning through metaphorical symbolism. The symbolism in Xiang thinking is somewhat similar to the function of metaphorical thinking, indicating how to understand the world's thinking path from the perspective of association and similarity. Among them, some theories of the cognitive metaphor school clarify how to capture the image of association, how to unfold imagination

centered around the body, and explore cognitive expression patterns through metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson believe that metaphor is a way of thinking for humans to cognize the world. Through metaphor, humans understand the world and then reshape their thinking through the generated metaphorical structure. The process in which metaphor takes effect is generally to understand and cognize another abstract thing or concept through a specific experiential thing.

Comparing cognitive metaphors and imagery analogies, it can be found that there are commonalities in their thinking patterns, and the relevant theories of cognitive metaphors have certain reference significance for explaining the complex process of establishing hexagrams. First, from the perspective of cognitive structure, metaphor means understanding one thing through another, so structurally speaking, there must be two things that belong to different domains. The theory of metaphorical interaction defines these two things as ontology and metaphor, while the theory of metaphorical mapping also refers to them as origin domain and target domain. In the process of observing objects, extracting imagery and establishing hexagrams, we can summarize three levels of mapping among images: the mapping between concrete images, between concrete objects and auspicious or unlucky divination, and between real images and hexagram symbols. It needs to be clarified that the reality as the origin domain does not only refer to the appearance of the reality, but also to the abstract concepts and the Dao of heaven and earth yin-yang that are condensed behind it. It is precisely because the connotation of reality is very rich that hexagrams can have full connotations, and then exhaustively represent all things in the world.

At the level of conveying meaning through imagery, the role of metaphor is first reflected in the receiver's associative imagination starting from hexagram symbols. the *Zhouyi* uses metaphor as a means of expressing meaning, which cannot be separated from the mutual interpretation of imagery and lingo. The Xiang here refers to the imagery system formed by the combination of hexagram and line images, while the lingo refers to the hexagram and six-lines' words as well as the *Ten Wings* 十翼 (shi yi) [13]. The first level of lingo, metaphorical mapping, begins in the process of interpreting the object. Contrary to the establishment of hexagrams, lingo expresses itself through the connotation behind the metaphorical object, with the image as the source domain and the possible meaning as the target domain. This is not entirely the same as Lakoff's emphasis on mapping abstraction with concretes and clarity, and mixed metaphorical mechanisms, but from the perspective of form and content, hexagrams are also fixed and clear, and can therefore serve as the origin domain. There is a dynamic correlation between the Yao (one of the six lines in the hexagram) and another, but their structure and interpretation are regulated by a clear set of standards. Therefore, from a formal structure perspective, using hexagrams as the origin domain for metaphorical mapping is feasible.

Each Yao line in the *Zhouyi* represents different stages of the development of things, and at the same time, the current state is expressed and symbolized, according to whether the yin-yang lines in its position that should be. Among them, the first line usually represents the starting state of things; The

second often follows the first line, indicating the consequences and impacts of the problem; The third indicates the current difficulties faced; The fourth represents the development of things towards success; The fifth represents the development of things to a complete stage; And, the sixth line, indicates that things have entered the final stage. From the position of lines, the development process of the six Yao lines conforms to the common symbolic meanings of line positions in the *Zhouyi*. Therefore, the mapping process from hexagram symbols to the line system is clear and completes the mapping of structural features.

About how the *Zhouyi* maps the meaning of hexagrams by using structural metaphors, the *Yizhuan* 易傳 (an ancient philosophical and ethical work that interprets the *Zhouyi*) also provides detailed discussions. It states:

“The second and fourth, with equal achievements but different perspectives, symbolize different gains and losses. The second line is mostly praise, the fourth line is mostly afraid. Because the fourth is close to the fifth, and the fifth is the throne, one must be cautious when approaching the throne. The second line is in the Yin position which is gentle. Its position is far from the fifth line, and was originally disadvantageous, but in most cases, the second is still blameless. This is because it is achieved through softness, which is both in the Yin position and within the internal hexagram. The third and fifth line are both in the position of yang and hardness, with the same function and different positions. The third is at the end of the lower hexagram, so it is more dangerous. The fifth is in the middle of the upper hexagram, so it has more merits. This is the difference in the ranks of high and low status [14].”

This passage clearly illustrates the formation process of the meaning of the hexagram, meaning that every line symbol has the preset meaning of yin and yang. The combination of yin-yang meanings and yin-yang objects' images, is directly manifested as the interpretation of hexagram and line words, and behind it metaphorically generates the meaning of hexagram body.

Secondly, in the *Zhouyi*, there are hexagrams named after specific objects, reflecting the principle of "observing objects and taking images" in naming. Some name based on the imagery of the internal and external hexagrams. For example, there are three ways to solve the hexagram of Jing 井 (means well). The first explanation takes Xun 巽 as the meaning of "along", while Kan 坎 refers to water, indicating that the formation of well is along the permeability of water. Digging downwards to create a well, and then making water to play the function of the well. The second explanation regards Xun as wood and Kan as water. It is believed that water is on the wood, symbolizing that the wooden barrel is placed in a well, and water is drawn from the well through the barrel for human consumption. This process is called Jing (used as a verb, means fetching water from a well). The third explanation holds that Kan represents water drawn from wood, meaning that the water at the upper end of the tree is supplied by the root system at the lower end, and the water vapor transport from bottom to top is similar to the function of a well. Therefore, it is used to refer to Jing. The three explanations all believe that the generation of the meaning of Jing is closely

related to the reference of the two hexagrams of Kan and Xun. This means that the symbolic meaning of the Eight Diagrams plays a decisive role in the symbolic meaning of the 64 different hexagrams.

Furthermore, from the perspective of cognitive media, the endogenous driving forces of analogy and metaphor are both comparisons. Through comparison, the similarity between imagery can be revealed, and more importantly, it is in the process of comparison that new metaphorical meanings are generated, creating new similarities. Zhou Changle believes that creating new things is the most important cognitive function of metaphor, and it is also the root of metaphor as a form of thinking.[15] It is precisely because the process from reality to hexagram establishment constantly generates new metaphorical meanings, giving rise to novel meanings, which then point to the ultimate transformation of yin-yang.

The path of later generations' interpretation represented by Confucius generally starts with concrete hexagrams, uses metaphorical means, and expresses abstract political and cultural concepts graphically. Therefore, in the *Legend of Imagery* 象傳, the symbolic meaning is often explained by the thought and behavior of gentleman or monarch, which is actually an interpretation of the metaphorical meaning of hexagrams at the level of humanistic sequence. In addition to the humanistic sequence, interpreting hexagrams also has many thoughts on the kinetic energy of life in the universe, heaven and earth. So, "from a linguistic perspective, metaphor is just a rhetorical device, but its extensive use in the *Zhouyi* indicates that it has completely become a way of thinking." [16] The *Shuo Gua Zhuan* states: "Observing changes in yin-yang and establishing hexagrams" is the deepening of the object and the interpretation of the original image of metaphysical transcendence. As can be seen from the above, the intention of "using images to express meaning" still extends infinitely to the meaning of sages. However, due to the differences in intuitive minds and the individuality of metaphorical thinking, there may also be different side to incise for decoding hexagram symbols, which leads to the formation of a metaphorical world that encompasses everything in the *Zhouyi*.

3.3 Using Imagery as Media

The basis for the imagination of saints is the similarity between images, while the connection that we cannot clearly explore is the result that cognitive function playing a role by creating things through metaphors. The process of using imagery extract and analogies to create hexagrams is actually a manifestation of metaphorical thinking trajectory. Therefore, we can demonstrate the rationality of "imagery extracting thinking" by analyzing the metaphorical nature of using analogies to establish hexagrams.

In terms of the process of establishing its hexagrams, although all things in the universe have different forms, they belong to different categories and have their own attributes. In the process of understanding the world, ancient philosophers first identified eight basic things, namely: heaven, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountains, and lakes. These eight natural phenomena constitute the starting point of their cognition. Afterwards, with the deepening of interaction between

humans and nature and the improvement of their own cognitive level, more intuitive representations entered the ancient philosophic "image taking" space. The wise men classified subsequent things based on the characteristics of the prototype object, making the complex and diverse objects clear and gradually becoming orderly. At this stage, different images were classified based on their similarities. Such analogies as Qian 乾 refers to heavens, also to horse, may seem to have a big jumping, but there must be some characteristic fitting between sky and horse, which is why they can be clustered and belong to the category of heavens.

After categorizing simply, the characteristics of classification images soon was conceptualized. This process still revolves around the special attributes of the eight fundamental things, but as analogies continue to deepen, the sage has shifted from observing concrete objects to summarizing abstract concepts or concepts, and has formed various hexagrams and their merit based on this foundation. And this further abstraction of surface attributes can refine the laws of heaven and earth that divide yin-yang. All things in the world have the attribute of yin-yang without exception, so yin-yang can exhaust the images of all things in heaven and earth, and represent all existence with highly abstract schematic symbols. Fung Yu-lan mentioned in his book *New original Daoism*: "The 64 hexagrams and 384 lines are all imageries. Imageries are like the variables in symbolic logic. A variable can be substituted into one or many types of things. Regardless of what type of thing, it can be substituted into a certain variable as long as the conditions are met." [17] This passage illustrates that the hexagram symbol system has variability and directionality. The 64 hexagrams are able to point to specific objects because they cover them, and they also undergo variability due to the transformation of yin-yang attributes hidden behind them.

Once the indication symbols based on the yin-yang lines in the *Zhouyi* are established, their concreteness and emotional significance begin to fade away. The hexagram and line symbols, as indication symbols, do not refer to specific things, but are used to metaphorically represent various abstract concepts. From the perspective of Xiang thinking, the image of individual ideation generation by saints after the establishment of the hexagram, have rich connotations from concrete to abstract and to the original image. Then the path of image transmission was began with hexagrams as concrete perceptual objects, starting with the original image. Therefore, for future generations, how to interpret images to achieve their meanings has become the key to deciphering the *Zhouyi*, and the issue of "establishing images to express their meanings fully" has become prominent.

Ancient scholars such as Yingda Kong and Yong Shao have provided explanations on the relationship between words, images, and meanings. In modern times, Binghe Shang also proposed:

Where the meaning cannot be fully expressed, the hexagrams can do; What cannot be described in words sufficiently can be manifested in images. Therefore, "establish the image to express one's intention fully, and establishing hexagrams to display thing's modality to the greatest extent." [18]

It can be seen that the meaning content of the words that

cannot be fully expressed in the *Zhouyi* also needs to be revealed through the symbolic system of the images. From a fundamental perspective, the process of later generations observing is actually a retrospective of the meaning of the sage, and its means naturally cannot be separated from metaphors. Therefore, metaphor is the fundamental method for later generations to interpret images, and image thinking, also known as metaphorical thinking, has an infinite and vast space for interpretation.

However, sometimes imagery cannot fully convey its meaning. The meaning mentioned in the *Zhouyi* actually specifically refers to what the sage wants to convey, which condenses his subjective psychological understanding and feelings. Later generations cannot obtain all the meanings conveyed by observing. Due to the different mental states of the subjects involved in imagery and observation, there may also be differences in their grasp of meaning. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to fully replicate the meaning of the sage. Even if one can break through the constraints of language and catch the meaning by imagery, the obtained implication can only infinitely tend towards similarity and cannot fully match.

On the other hand, although imagery cannot fully convey meaning, they can play an enlightening role. This can be explained by Zongsan Mou's discourse on the form of knowledge. Mr. Mou believes that if the purpose of knowledge is only to point to and acknowledge objective existence, then the knowledge is narrowly limited to the field of "extended truth"; If knowledge belongs to the subject, cannot be objectively affirmed or judged, and cannot be extended, then it is called "content truth" [19]. According to his *Talent and Metaphysics*, if a certain truth is summarized through images, it still belongs to the category of extended truth and is therefore exhaustive. If we understand the meaning of sages from the perspective of imageries, or if it is difficult to grasp the original images with concepts, then it is content truth, which cannot be fully understood even if by imageries. So in order to approach meaning or original image, one can only grasp it as a whole through metaphorical methods, and understand its original meaning through abstract hexagram symbols. This involves the question of how metaphor plays a role in the mechanism of imagery.

In the *Zhouyi*, the generation of implicit meanings is reflected in lingo and imagery, as well as in the elucidation of the deeper meanings behind yin-yang. The hexagram of Xiaoxu 小蓄 is located on the upper part of the *Zhouyi*, and its painting of divinatory symbols' below is Qian, above is Xun. In the innate Eight diagram, the Qian hexagram is belong to Yang and the Xun is Yin. Therefore, in the Xiaoxu hexagram, the upper part is Yin and the lower part is Yang, forming a harmonious relationship between yin-yang. This combination hinders the upward movement of Yang-qi, while the downward movement of Yin-qi cannot obstruct things, forming effective accumulation. Therefore, it can only form a small accumulation momentum, which is the most intuitive grasp of the hexagram. The explanation of the hexagram is as follows: "Xiaoxu hexagram, means Smooth, accessible, and well connected. The thick clouds overcast the whole sky without rain, while gathering from my western suburbs (小蓄, 亨。密雲不雨, 自我西郊)." The hexagram provides a vivid explanation, the "Western Suburb" here fits the northwest

direction of the Qian hexagram. Combining the lingo and images, the Yao's words are the most superficial explanation of the indicative meaning of hexagrams, which can to some extent match the intuitive perception of saints when observing objects and creating images. The interpretation of this hexagram in the *Biography of Corollary* 象傳 and the *Legend of Imagery* 象傳 has led abstract symbols and objective natural phenomena to the field of social humanities. Thus, the mapping between the origin domain of hexagram symbols and the target domain of the final formed imagery is not just a simple conceptual mapping, but a dynamic mapping of the metaphorical generation process.

In summary, the hexagrams, Yao lines, and images in the *Zhouyi* metaphorically summarize the laws of all things in the universe in the form of symbols. As a representation, image is not only an objective formal symbol, but also re-enactment of meaning. By contemplating the profound roots, it can be concluded that the entire lingo of the *Zhouyi* conveys individual feelings and insights through concrete symbols, which tends to express the content of the inner soul, giving birth to such a proposition "difficult to fully express meaning in words". And Xiang thinking, using metaphor as a cognitive tool and imagery as media, mobilizes the fit sufficiently between humans and imageries, and integrates the subject's feelings into the images as much as possible, and uses images to convey ideas. Therefore, its cognitive expression mode can also be explored and studied. From the perspective of philosophical ontology, to establish an image and fully express the meaning can inevitably achieve the circumstances of the original image and great imagery. As a result, Xiang thinking connects practical rationality and the thinking of heaven and earth, possessing infinite tension in explaining experience and transcendence.

4. Conclusions

The Xiang thinking starting from the "observing objects and taking images" in the *Zhouyi* is the most representative way of thinking in traditional Chinese thought. Observing the Xiang thinking from the perspective of cognitive metaphor can delve into the level of language logic and thinking mode, providing a new perspective and method for interpreting the Yi-ology imagery thinking. The commonality between cognitive metaphor theory and Xiang thinking can be explained based on experientialism. Based on embodiment and experience, imagery of the observed objects was formed by Chinese ancient philosophers, and was expressed through the hexagram symbols. The path pattern is the "unity of heaven and man" in the context of traditional Chinese philosophy. The subject and the external world are fused together as a result.

Metaphors in cognitive science transcend rhetorical functions and become a way of thinking, which is the key to the operation of imagery thinking patterns. The imagery in the *Zhouyi* has gone through a path of "concreteness-abstraction-concreteness", and at the ontological level, it has also been restored to the realm of original imagery through "forgetting imagery". Using cognitive metaphor as a research perspective and tool to approach the thinking of images in the *Zhouyi* can more accurately and clearly outline the process of meaning generation and presentation centered on images.

Based on relevance, the metaphorical meaning in the perspective of cognitive science is not limited to the surface similarity between objects, but also aims to explore the relationship similarity between two different types of things. The dynamic and relational mechanism of the generation and expression of Yi-ology imagery thinking, also based on this, enables reflection and expression of knowledge and truth between nature and human beings.

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