

## The Literary Features of “Wu Zi”

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**Abstract:** “Wu Zi” is a famous military book in the pre-Qin period. As a part of Wujing Qishu, it has been circulated for a long time and has far-reaching influence. Its content includes many military operations and governing the country. Therefore, few people pay attention to its literary features such as language and rhetoric. “Wu Zi” does talk a lot about military affairs and is limited by its subject matter. Its literary status cannot be compared with the implicit and meaningful Analects of Confucius, the imposing Mencius, and the concise and smooth Sun Zi. However, it still has its own characteristics and certain excavation value and cannot be ignored.

### 1. Introduction

The book “Wu Zi” uses four words, and rhymes appear frequently. The language style as a whole presents the characteristics of conciseness, understandability, plainness and plainness, and there is no lack of heroic spirit brought about by the war from the south to the north.

#### 1.1 Plain and Plain, Concise and Powerful

The core value of “Wu Zi” lies in guiding operations. In military barracks, the cultural level of the soldiers who really go to battle and kill the enemy is not too high, except that commanders and planners need to have considerable knowledge reserves. Most of the soldiers of the Wei state came from civilians or slaves at the bottom of the society. they hoped to change their situation by making military contributions in the war. it is conceivable that their knowledge level and acceptance ability. At the same time, the military script emphasizes practical value. Soldiers must learn the tactics, the array and the way to deal with the enemy. It is too difficult to understand and use obscure words. This requires that the language of the military script must be accurate and clear so that all soldiers can understand and accept it.

Taking “LiaoDi” as an example, Wu Qi's words when explaining the basis for judging the enemy situation are very plain, and some words have colloquial expressions, such as “high winds and severe cold”, “no food, people's resentment”, “not many soldiers, unfavorable geographical situation” and so on. Even ordinary soldiers can understand these scenes according to daily experience. Another example is the “Yingbian” article on how to deal with the water war:” The car cannot be used. Leave it on the shore for the time being. To observe the four directions from a height, one must understand the water regime. Only by understanding the width of the water surface and the depth of the water can one achieve a surprise victory. If the enemy comes by crossing the water, he will take his half crossing to attack it.” The process description is quite clear, simple and fluent, without any words that are difficult to read or recognize.

“Wu Zi” is not only written in plain and plain language style, which is convenient for soldiers to accept and implement, but also uses short and powerful words. This not only shows Wu Qi's own lofty sentiments and ambitions, but also meets the demand of the tight time and the simplicity and ease of operation of the soldiers when commanding the war. It also has the function of inspiring the morale of the soldiers. For example, in Lun Jiang, Wu Qi said when affirming the importance of the law:”Drum and bell, is used to command the army's hearing. Banners and banners are visual commands used to command the army.... there is no local army that the general points to that is not desperate. “Careful structure, hit the floor, can quite recognize wuqi decisive spirit. Another

example is the “Li Shi” in which Wuqi ordered the soldiers to say the day before he led the troops to fight the Qin dynasty. “All soldiers should obey orders to fight with the enemy. If the cavalry, cavalry and infantry can't capture the enemy's chariots, cavalry can't capture the enemy's cavalry and infantry can't capture the enemy's infantry, even if they defeat the enemy, it's not meritorious.” Such imposing manner of issuing military orders has strengthened the soldiers' eagerness for military work and also enhanced their will to fight. They have taken the lead in the battlefield in terms of imposing manner and psychological state.

## 1.2 The Language Form with Four Sentences as the Main and Occasional Rhymes

“Wu Zi” is quite diverse in sentence division. Two, three, four and six words are common, with four words being the most frequently used. Five-character sentences and seven-character sentences are also mixed, but they are used less frequently. Early literary works such as *The Book of Songs* have a high frequency of using four words, which has a certain influence on “Wu Zi”. In addition, it is difficult for the army to express discipline and orders completely only in two or three words. Too many words and seven words also make military orders cumbersome. Giving orders in four sentences is not only clear and concise, but also gives people a solemn and pressing feeling. Such as “Zhi Bing”: “In the array, round array changes into square array, sitting down changes into vertical array, moving forward changes into stop, turning left to right, moving forward changes into backward, scattering changes into aggregation, gathering changes into dispersion.”

Another feature of “Wu Zi” in language form is the use of rhymes in some chapters. Rhymes have been used in creation for a long time, and there are many rhymes in Zhou Dynasty inscriptions. Rhymes have become more common in Lao Zi and Sun Zi during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. “Wu Zi” is at the stage of combination of loose rhyme from fragment rhyme to piece rhyme. It has not formed a perfect rhyme style. There is no rhyme in the whole piece. Some rhymes do not take words strictly according to rhyme parts. Only sentences expressing thoughts with rhyme rhythm are occasionally used. Such as “Tu Guo”: “He can't believe that his plan is right. He has to tell the ancestral temple and make fortune telling. When he looks at the sky, he gets the auspicious omen and acts.” Planning natural climate conditions, geographical environment and people's mind. Liao DI:” The emperor and his ministers are extravagant, ignoring the interests of the people, the decrees are lax and the treatment is uneven. For a while, the hearts of the people are not even. The troops are heavy before the deployment and light after the deployment, so the battle situation is huge but not solid.” The people, unequal treatment and firmness belong to one part. Rhyme has no fixed rules, is more casual, more inclined to the unconscious behavior, still focusing on the text without rhyme. There are few rhymes in narrative titles. Tan jiajian wrote in “a new probe into the art of prose before qin dynastic” about why soldiers prefer rhymes: “the reason may be that military books need to be highly summarized and concise, with doctrine, close to aphorisms and rhymes, and easy to remember and recite.” This sentence is very correct.

## 2. Rich and Varied Rhetorical Devices

“Wu Zi” is not only aimed at soldiers marching and fighting, but also a ruling book of kings. Therefore, various rhetoric techniques are used in the book to adapt to various scenes and audiences.

A vivid, concrete and accurate metaphor. “Tu Guo” article Wu Qi explained to Wei Wenhou that war should be fully prepared, citing counter-examples to say: “If you are ready to fight, but not to seek people who will use them. It's like a hen brooding to fight a wild cat and a puppy suckling to invade a tiger. Although it has the determination to fight, it will inevitably lead to death. “ Wu Qi used livestock as a metaphor for the country, adding adjectives to describe the state. The chicken is “fu chicken” and the dog is “milk dog”. It looks weak at first sight, adding image color to the text and enhancing the appeal of the language. And all the things used are everywhere in life, which is easy to arouse people's sympathy.

Second, the antithesis of distinct rhythm and neat condensation. Liu Xie, *Wenxindiaolong* · Lici:”To oppose is to be good, to be right is to be bad.” In *Wuzi*, antithesis appears more frequently and is mostly opposed, such as Tu Guo's “glory in advancing and dying,

humiliation in retreating and survival” and “making the sage live on top and the person with bad conduct live on the bottom”. Not only in the form of the text has a stronger sense of beauty, the antithesis of each other is also convenient for the generals to understand and remember.

Third, the imposing and hierarchical parallelism. Parallelism is one of the rhetoric commonly used by soldiers. It is used to list things of the same scope and nature. It is quite overwhelming when listed, which is in line with the soldiers' spirit of galloping on the battlefield. The sentences in “Wu Zi” are mostly scattered and the use of rhymes is not very much, but the use of parallelism makes the article more orderly and hierarchical. Such as “Tu Guo's” said: “It is inappropriate to act under four uncoordinated circumstances: domestic will is not unified and troops cannot be dispatched; the army is disunited and cannot go into battle. It is impossible to enter a war if the battle appearance is irregular and the soldiers cannot win if their actions are uncoordinated.” With the word “he” as the center, the country, the army, the array, the war and the decisive battle are arranged in the order that needs to be reached. The sentence pattern is “not at odds with ... cannot ...”, neat and precise, clear in concept and progressive in layers.

Fourth, there are well-founded and substantial allusions. In the book *Wuzi Tuguo*, Wuqi leads the songs to attach great importance to culture and morality, abolish military preparation, and destroy the country without sufficient preparation before the war. There are some allusions that the Hu clan is too keen on the war and loses the state, so he exhorts the Marquis to pay attention to the national defense. Another example is the article “So Shang Tang crusaded against Xia Jie, the people of the Xia Dynasty were very happy, Zhou Wuwang crusaded against Yin Zhou, and the people of Yin did not oppose it.” Through the reflection of the enemy's people when Tang and Wu Wang, two typical figures, crusaded against the enemy, it was shown that only monarchs who carried out benevolence and righteousness could gain public support, win without fighting, and persuade monarchs to govern the country with morality. The use of allusions can not only make one's words rich in historical significance and conclusive evidence, but also make one's remonstrance more tactfully to avoid being too straightforward and causing death.

Another technique similar to the use of allusions in “Wu Zi” is quotation. The quoted content can be verses, proverbs and idioms. The book mainly quotes ballads and proverbs. Guo Changbao put forward in “Pre-Qin Style and Discourse Style”: “Chinese traditional argumentative prose emphasizes 'no sign of disbelief' ... the function of quoting is to gain credibility and to strengthen one's discourse power by means of some authoritative words.” The quoted content of “Wu Zi” has no obvious mark, and there is no words such as “a book is called” or “a person is called”. However, by comparing with other books, we can roughly judge which words and proverbs are common in the Spring and Autumn Period. The quoted content is mostly the default rule that soldiers have circulated for a long time. Some of them have been circulated from “Jun Zheng” and “Jun Zheng” in the Western Zhou Dynasty. The ballad and proverb used in “Wu Zi” sometimes add “so-called” before the proverb, indicating that this is a quotation, and some are directly used in the text without signs. In terms of words, such as “seizing Qi first” in “Liaodi”, it should be changed to use “so that the three armies can seize Qi and the general can seize heart” in “Sun Tzu army contest”, or “the so-called” advancing with insight and retreating with difficulty “This sentence is also found in the twelve years of *Zuozhuan Xuangong*: “when you see it, you can advance, when you know it, you can retreat, and the army is good at governance.”

In addition to the above detailed rhetoric, other techniques can also be found in “Wu Zi”. For example, “Zhibing” said, “The terrain is convenient for riding horses, the horses are convenient for driving, the cars are convenient for carrying people, and the people are convenient for fighting.” With “one person learning combat skills, ten people can be taught. Ten people learn, can teach one hundred people. A hundred people can learn to teach a thousand people. One hundred people can learn, can teach dry people learn can teach ten thousand people. Ten thousand people learn, can teach the whole “, link layer by layer, is the use of true technique. Another example is *yiingbian*: “if we have few enemies, we can encircle them with separate forces. If we have few enemies, we can gather forces to attack them and attack them constantly. Even though there are many enemies, we can subdue them.” It shows that the method of war is the use of comparative tactics. All these make

the article more logical and convincing.

### 3. Wu Qi's Art of Speech in “Wu Zi”

“Xunzi Chen Dao”: “the minister's father and brother can give advice to the king, what can be used can be poured out, what cannot be used can not be used, so-called admonition.” In ancient times, monarchs had a high position and held the power of life and death in their hands. Courtiers often needed to pay attention to the situation of exhortation objects and their own way of speaking, and to achieve the desired effect by means of rhetoric and argumentation. “Wu Zi” also recorded part of Wu Qi's advice to the monarch, mostly taking Wei Wuhou as the object of advice. According to the content of the advice, it can be divided into two categories, one is related to military actions, and the other is about how to govern the country. Military-related advice accounts for a larger proportion of the book, with clear levels and strong logical reasoning. It is mainly based on actual situations to convince people. The comments related to national governance are similar to Zuo Zhuan. Confucian morality is used as the standard to judge the monarch's behavior, and many argumentation methods such as citation and illustration are used to move people emotionally.

Liaodi wrote that Wei Wuhou was worried about its own situation because Wei was surrounded by other vassal states and asked Wu Qi for countermeasures. Wu Hou's question is related to the survival of the state of Wei. It is also an old question that has remained unresolved for several generations of the monarch of the state of Wei. Naturally, it cannot be answered clearly in a few words. However, too general comments will make the monarch unhappy and put himself in a dilemma. Wu Qi once again demonstrated his foresight in military affairs and his agility and clarity in conversation. His answer can be divided into two levels. The first level is from the beginning of the answer “the way to live in peace” to the beginning of the answer “far from disaster”. He stressed that the most important principle of national security is to take warning as a treasure. The summary is quite brief and the full text is always available. The second level is from “please talk about the customs of the six countries” to “can be doubled”. In order to achieve the best effect of “abstinence”, we should know the relevant situation of our country and the six countries and take corresponding measures. This layer can be divided into three sub-layers. First, four words are used to describe the weaknesses of the armies of the six countries. They are concise, neat, easy to say and easy to remember. Secondly, the analysis of the causes of the weakness is related to the country's unique natural environment, political measures and folk customs, and is not accidental. Thirdly, taking the confrontation with Qin Jun as an example, it describes how to take corresponding measures according to the characteristics of the armies of various countries. Wu Qi's answers are closely linked, dividing big problems into small ones and solving them one by one, fully demonstrating his high level of learning and meticulous thinking, which also won praise from Wu Hou.

Wu Qi is not only good at using the art of advice in military affairs to make the monarch more receptive to his proposals, but also his advice to the monarch in governing the country is quite infectious and artistic. “Wu Zi” records that when Wu Hou was discussing state affairs with his ministers, he “brightened up” because no one could reach him. Wu Qi immediately came forward to exhort him. If you choose the way of outspoken criticism to remonstrate, I'm afraid it is difficult for the monarch to accept the suggestions of his officials. Wu Qi did not mention a word about Wu Hou's complacency, but told a story. Chu Zhuangwang was “worried” when facing the same situation as Wei Wuhou, and feared “Chu's perilous state”. Thus, there was a contrast between Wu Hou and Zhuang Wang. Wu Qi's tactful persuasion has achieved satisfactory results. After hearing the story, Wu Hou changed his look from “happy” to “ashamed”, which shows the effectiveness of quoting examples and advice. Similarly, Wu Qi's advice when Wu Hou and his ministers traveled to the Xihe River, which is recorded in the Warring States Policy, is also exemplified by the fact that Xia Jie and Shang Zhou relied on the difficult terrain but were not good at government and were eventually defeated by the crusade to destroy the country. It shows that the key to the country's long-term prosperity lies in the government of loving the people, not the superior geographical conditions. The lessons of the first king and the example of the kings of his time were all used as arguments by Wu Qi, making it impossible for Wu Hou to refute them and more reasonable. It can

be seen that Wu Qi fully mastered how to mobilize and respond to the king's response when he made his speech, which is indeed an art.

“Wu Zi” has been circulated for a long time. The characters in it must be mixed with later revised parts. It may have been polished to a certain extent before it was formed. However, the level and backbone of the characters should be inherent in this book. The above-mentioned literary features of “Wu Zi” are not only the absorption of many creative techniques from the previous generation of literary works, especially the writing of military books, but also closely related to the national conditions of Wei, thus forming its own unique style and providing an example for later generations of military books. In a word, “Wu Zi” uses four words with simple, plain, concise and powerful sentences. At the same time, it uses a variety of rhetorical devices such as metaphor, antithesis, parallelism, and allusions to enhance the readability of the text. It also uses a variety of argumentation methods such as metaphor argumentation and contrast argumentation to deepen the logic and credibility of the text. It is a military book with both literary and martial characteristics.

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