

On Emotional Reconstruction of Chinese Translation of English Poems in *My Brilliant Career* under Three Beauties Theory

Jiaming Wang, Zhulin Han

School of Applied English, Mudanjiang Normal University, Mudanjiang, China

Abstract

My Brilliant Career is a famous work of Australian female writer Miles Franklin and known as the first Australian novel, which was translated and introduced to Chinese readers by Huang Yuanshen in 1989. This paper attempts to analyze the emotional reconstruction in the translation of English poetry into Chinese under Three Beauties theory, in order to provide reference for scholars on the Chinese translation of English poetry.

Keywords

My Brilliant Career; Chinese Translation of English Poetry; Emotional Reconstruction; Three Beauties Theory.

1. Introduction

My Brilliant Career is a famous work by Australian female writer Miles Franklin, which was published in 1901 and was highly appreciated by the world literature. From the perspective of the heroine Sybylla, the novel truly and naturally spread out the Australian social situation dominated by men from the 19th century to the 20th century, and was hailed as “the first Australian novel”. The work has far-reaching influence and has attracted the attention of scholars at home and abroad. As far as domestic achievements are concerned, many scholars start with the research of literary direction, focusing on the analysis and interpretation of the protagonist's image, the theme of the novel, and the wording of the text. At present, no other scholars have made a comparative study of the original and translated works from the perspective of translatology. From the perspective of translation studies, this paper takes the poems in *My Brilliant Career* as the analysis text, and guided by “Three Beauties Theory” proposed by Xu Yuanchong, mainly from three aspects: beauty in sound, beauty in sense and beauty in form, to interpret how Huang Yuanshen's Chinese translation reconstruct the emotion expressed by Sybylla, the heroine of the original novel. This paper tries to expand the path of studying Australian poetry, and summarizes the guiding role of Xu Yuanchong's “Three Beauties Theory” in English poetry translation, so as to provide reference for the future study of English poetry translation.

2. Overview of “Three Beauties Theory”

“Three Beauties Theory” originated from the principle “three beauties” of Chinese character put forward by Lu Xun in the article “*From Words to Articles*”, “The first one is beauty in meaning, to move the heart; The second one is beauty in sound to please the ears; The third one is beauty in form, to attract eyes.” Xu Yuanchong combined this principle with translation and put forward the ontological theory, “Three Beauties Theory”, in Xu's translation theory system. “The translated poem should touch the reader's heart as much as the original poem, which agrees with the beauty in sense; The translated poem should have the same pleasing rhythm as the original poem, which agrees with the beauty in sound; The translated poem should also keep the form of the original poem as much as possible, which agrees with the beauty in

form.”(Xu Yuancong, 2003: 85) Among the three beauties, beauty in sense is the soul of poetry, beauty in sound and beauty in form constitute the body of poetry. “As far as translating poetry is concerned, beauty in form and beauty in sound should be the first thing to have, but having them is not necessarily shaping a good poem. Only after having the “three beauties” can translation called a good poem.” (Zhang Zhizhong, 2006: 58)

3. Translation Strategies of Emotional Reconstruction of English Poems

Poetry is a literary form in which human beings convey their emotional appeal through the beauty of words. Both Chinese and English poetry have their own pursuit of sound, sense and form, but each has its own emphasis. “Generally speaking, Chinese poetry wins by conciseness, while English poetry wins by precision; Chinese poetry wins by implication, while English poetry wins by boldness; Chinese poetry wins with artistic conception, while English poetry wins with scenes.” (Xu Yuancong, 2003: 98) In *My Brilliant Career*, this very realistic work, the poem strengthens the heroine Sybylla’s harsh environment, the oppression in her life, and her manly character and strong rebellious spirit. Her strong emotions burst out through the poem: dissatisfaction with predicament, irony of ignorance, desire for knowledge and pursuit of independent personality.

3.1. Features of Beauty in Sound and Translation Strategies of Emotional Reconstruction

Beauty in sound, that is, the beauty of phonology, refers to the aesthetic feeling of rhythm embodied in poetry. By means of alliteration, connotative rhyme, ending rhyme or repetition, which can achieve a sense of rhythm similar to music. “Rhythm can give people pleasure and beauty; It can meet people’s requirements of life and psychology. Every time a loop repeated, it gives people a feeling of *deja vu*, like seeing an old friend, which makes people feel kind and happy.” (Yuan Xingpei, 2002: 96)

Example 1:

There are others toiling and straining
 'Neath burdens graver than mine;
 They are weary, yet uncomplaining,—
 I know it, yet I repine:
 I know it, how time will ravage,
 How time will level, and yet
 I long with a longing savage,
 I regret with a fierce regret. (Miles Franklin, 2012:388)

Translation:

还有别人也辛苦紧张，
 挑的担子比我身上的还重；
 他们疲惫不堪，却从不埋怨张扬——
 这我知道，但我大声嚷嚷：
 我明白，岁月会如何摧残，
 会如何把万物涤荡，
 但我带着可怕的憧憬期待着，
 怀着极度的悔恨痛惜着。（黄源深，2007:279）

Example 1 is made by A.L.Gordon's poem and quoted in *My Brilliant Career*. To a great extent, this poem forms the beauty of rhythm by means of alliteration and rhyme. It is not only catchy to read, but also gives readers a strong emotion like shouting. The poem adopts the method of interlaced ending rhyme to achieve a kind of rhyme beauty, supplemented by the form of trochee. It brings out a strong sense of endless and unbreakable despair, and at the same time, a small number of rhymes are added in the sentence to achieve the effect of highlighting emotion. For example, the first sentence of the original poem "toiling and straining" is a means of using end rhyme, in which "toiling" and "straining" are synonyms. The repetition in meaning forms a state of "exhaustion" with the help of the ending rhyme of "-ing", and the future situation will still be the same, which will add to the sense of weariness. At the end of the fifth sentence and the seventh sentence, the method of interlaced end rhyme is adopted to compare "ravage" with "savage", in which only the first letter of the word is different, but the meaning is in tremendous difference. This expresses that although the heroine Sybylla has experienced years of weariness, she still has a strong and incomparable desire to get out of trouble, which not only forms the contrast in vision and audition, but also has emotional impact.

The translation does not completely reproduce the beauty in sound of the original rhyme, but abandons the complete conformity in the beauty in sound, gives full play to the advantages of Chinese language to pursue the beauty in sound of the target language, and then embodies the pursuit of the beauty in sound that can show the emotion of poetry. On the one hand, the translation also achieves the profound effect through end rhyme. For example, the first four lines all end with the compound final, the first, third and fourth lines end with the "ang" sound, and the second line ends with the "ong" sound. The compound final often has a magnificent effect, thus reflecting the emotional heaviness; The seventh or eighth sentences adopt the method of repetition, all ending with "着", which is with the aroma of profound emotion, so as to achieve the prosodic beauty of the translation. On the other hand, the translation fully expresses the emotions by virtue of the catchy four-character structure of Chinese, such as the words "辛苦紧张", "疲惫不堪", "埋怨张扬", "大声嚷嚷" and "憧憬期待", which are beautiful in rhyme, short, clear and lively in reading. Among them, the two words "埋怨张扬" and "大声嚷嚷" use method of "particularization" in translation. For the word "repine" in original poem, translator take the word with strong dynamics to show the complaining mood by using a more vivid word "大声嚷嚷" which can forms pictures in mind, and "嚷嚷" adopts the rhetorical device of Chinese reterative locution, which is of great Chinese beauty in sound .

3.2. Features of Beauty in Sense and Translation Strategies of Emotional Reconstruction

Beauty in sense is the beauty of artistic conception and the beauty of association. "Beauty in sense" is a deeper demand developed on the basis of the pursuit of "resemblance in sense" to accurately convey the original content. Among the three beauties, beauty in sense is the primary standard to be met by the translated text. "Rhyming of 'beauty in sound' and neatness of 'beauty in form' are necessary conditions, while 'beauty in sense' is both necessary and sufficient." (Xu Yuanchong, 1984: 74)

Example 2:

The restless throbbings and burnings
 That hope unsatisfied brings,
 The weary longings and yearnings
 For the mystical better things,
 Are the sands on which is reflected
 The pitiless moving lake,

Where the wanderer falls dejected,
By a thirst he never can slake. (Miles Franklin, 2012:65)

Translation:

未曾满足的希望，
带来了不安的悸动和燃烧，
对神秘而更美好的东西，
怀着倦怠的渴望。
这些内心的颤动和渴求，
都像是一片沙漠。
那沙漠映着无情地移动着的湖泊，
湖泊边倒着垂头丧气的流浪者，
他因为永远止不了干渴而倒卧。(黄源深，2007:45)

Image is a common writing technique used in poetry to convey beauty in sense, with profound sense. Example2 is the third poem in *My Brilliant Career*. The images in the original poem include the scorching “sands”, the unreachable “lake” and the exhausted “wanderer”. The combination of these three images forms an artistic conception, that is, the restless and eager hope is in sight, but it can never be touched. Sybylla, the heroine, used this poem to express her desperate desire for knowledge, but because of environmental restrictions, she couldn't be watered by knowledge. At the same time, the writer uses words “throbbings” and “burnings” to reflect heroine's inner anxiety, while the successive two synonyms of “longings” and “yearnings” reveal the inner urgency. The heroine Sybylla's thirst for knowledge is too strong, just like the desert that keeps her thirsty, while the lake that can quench her thirst is around the corner, just like the knowledge beside the heroine in illusion, but she can never touch it, which eventually leads to physical and mental exhaustion, pain and despair.

Xu Yuancong once discussed the relationship between “beauty in sense” and “resemblance in sense” and the corresponding translation methods. If there is a distance between the surface sense and the depth sense of the original text, or if the ‘resemblance in sense’ between the translated text and the original text can't convey the ‘beauty in sense’ of the original text, then translator can use translation method ‘generalization’ or ‘particularization’” (Xu Yuancong, 1984: 65) The surface and deep meanings of the above-mentioned poems are consistent, so the translation method of “equalization” can be adopted. Huang Yuanshen's method of dealing with the translation is consistent with this method. The translation adopts the flexible equivalence, and the content of the original text is accurately translated on the surface structure. Although the original text is eight lines, it is a whole sentence, in which the first four lines are the subject part and the last four lines are the predicate part. Because English is a chain structure and Chinese is a bamboo structure, the translation can't be translated into one sentence on the basis of ensuring the surface meaning of poetry. Therefore, flexible equivalence is adopted to divide the two meanings of the first four sentences of the original into two sentences in the translation, and the last four lines are treated in the same way as the first four lines, thus ensuring the “resemblance in sense” of the translation.

3.3. Features of Beauty in Form and Translation Strategies of Emotional Reconstruction

Beauty in form, that is, neat beauty in form, refers to the aesthetic beauty embodied in the forms of long and short sentences, antithesis and number of lines, so as to give readers visual enjoyment. Beauty in form is the external expression of beauty in sound and beauty in sense of poetry, which to a extent restricts the creation of poetry. Different from prose translations which are required with “casual in form but not in spirit”, poetry requires both “not casual in

spirit” and “not casual in form”. Therefore, it is said that poetry is the highest form of translation art.

Example 3:

Soul of the leaping flame,
Heart of the scarlet fire,
Spirit that hath for name
Only the name—Desire! (Miles Franklin, 2012:384)

Translation:

跳跃的火焰有一个灵魂，
绯红的火有一颗心，
心灵呵有一个名字，
只是个名字，叫愿望！（黄源深，2007:276）

Example 3 is the sixth poem in *My Brilliant Career*, which describes that the heroine Sybylla was forced to leave from her grandmother’s house where she came into contact with the long-awaited art. Then she continued to endure the burning of her heart and yearned for the art. Although the form is concise, it clearly and powerfully shows the emotion that the heroine wants to highlight. First of all, poetry has strict requirements on controlling the number of words in two adjacent lines. The first three lines of the poem are all with five words, and the last sentence is specially treated, ending with four words, which plays an important role in content through the special form. Secondly, the first two lines of the poem are all in the form of “of phrase” in structure, which embodies the symmetry beauty of sentence number and the antithesis beauty between sentences and lines.

Chinese and English language systems are quite different, and it is difficult to achieve complete “resemblance in form”, which can only be roughly similar. As Xu Yuanchong pointed out, “As for the beauty of poetry, there are two aspects: length and symmetry, which are best to be of resemblance in sense, or at least generally neat compared.” (Xu Yuanchong, 1984: 58) Huang Yuanshen adopted the translation method of “equalization” when dealing with the translated text. Although it failed to achieve the complete consistency between words to the original text, it almost retained the symmetry beauty of the number of words and the antithesis beauty between sentences. First of all, judging from the number of words, the last three lines in the translation are all of eight characters, and the first line is of ten characters because it keeps the original meaning and gives up the consistency to beauty in form of the original poem. On the whole, the translation achieves the symmetrical beauty in the number of words. Secondly, from the comparison of sentences, in the first two lines of the translation, “跳跃的” and “绯红的” are counterparts of attribute, “火焰” and “火” are counterparts of subjects, two characters “有” are counterparts of predicate, and “一个灵魂” and “一颗心” are counterparts of objects. Therefore, it can be said that the translation takes the method of “equalization” successfully achieving the same aesthetic effect as the original.

4. Conclusion

Among the “Three Beauties Theory”, “beauty in sense” is the centre, and beauty in sound and beauty in form are frames. The “three beauties” are different from the replicated beauty pursued by “three resemblances”, but they seek the profound beauty that is superior to the original poetry by using the advantages of the target language on the basis of respecting the “three beauties” of the original poems. Huang Yuanshen’s poetry translation of *My Brilliant Career* conforms to the standards of “beauty in form, beauty in sense and beauty in sound”. In

dealing with the translation method, the translator mostly adopts the method of “equalization”, then with “particularization” to give full play to the advantages of the target language, thus achieving a better effect in “beauty in meaning” than the original poems. The “Three Beauties Theory” not only plays a guiding role in the foreign translation of Chinese classical poetry, but also plays an important guiding role in the Chinese translation of foreign poetry.

Acknowledgments

1. Basic Scientific Research Funds of Heilongjiang Provincial Universities in 2020: A Research on Huang Yuanshen’s Australian Literary Translation(1355JG007).
2. Foreign Language Education Reform and Innovation Project of Heilongjiang Province Universities: A study on Foreign Language Education and International Talent Cultivation under Curriculum Ideology and Politics(HWX2022019-B).
3. Educational Science Planning Project of Heilongjiang Province in 2021: Research on Innovative MTI Talents Training Model Based on Serving Border Economic Development (GJB 1421367).
4. Graduate Science and Technology Innovation Project of Mudanjiang Normal University in 2021: A Practical Study of Literary Translation from the Perspective of Eco-translatology (kjcx 2021-100mdjnu).
5. Heilongjiang Province University Students Entrepreneurship Practice Project: Mudanjiang Culture Media and Translation Company(S202110233082S).

References

- [1] Miles Franklin. My Brilliant Career[M]. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2012.
- [2] Miles Franklin, Huang Yuanshen. My Brilliant Career[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2007.
- [3] Xu Yuanchong. Literature and Translation[M]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2003.
- [4] Zhang Zhizhong. Xu Yuanchong and His Translation Art[M]. Wuhan: Hubei Education Press, 2006.
- [5] Research on Chinese Poetry art[M]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002.
- [6] Xu Yuanchong. Art of Translation[M]. Beijing: China Translation & Publishing Corporation, 1984.