
The Subjective Metaphor of Image in the Translation of “On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk”

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Abstract: "Image metaphor" comprehends and expresses the known or unknown world in a holistic, comprehensive and emotional way, and has multiple connotations such as the original concrete image, cognitive intermediary and ontological meaning. The subjective metaphor of poetry is expressed by poetic feelings and views with typical intentions. The subjective metaphor of the subjective image can be used as the guiding ideology of the poet's own creation. It often "uses an image to express feelings and ideas." Ideas are nurtured in the heart and become pearls. Imagery is just like these pearls, which are transformed from the ideas in the poet's heart. Li Bai, a poet of the prosperous Tang Dynasty, his poems are separated by more than a century, and he wrote the famous poem "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk" from the inspiration of poetry creation and with emotion in the scenery. This paper takes Li Bai's poem "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk" as an example to analyze the subjective metaphor of its typical images. Through case analysis and comparative analysis, this paper analyzes the versions of Xu Yuanchong and Alley, trying to explain the rationality of the typical images in the two versions.

Keywords: Subjective Metaphor, Image Combination, Typical Image, Li Bai

1. Introduction

"Yellow leaf tree in the rain, white head under the lamp" is the successful creation of image. But thinking about it carefully, these two moving pictures do not exist in real life [1]. The rainy night is dark and the light looks like beans, it couldn't recognize that the leaves in the rain are yellow. However, for thousands of years, people have repeatedly recited it, never feeling it is "false", but only beautiful [2]. In order to express certain ideas, the poet chooses specific images that can cause some association to express his inner world [3]. "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk" is written by Libai when he was young, but it has already could be seen a beautiful heart and talent [4]. The first four sentences are extremely beautiful, "Flying ladder in green clouds" is also written in white language with fairy spirit. The two sentences "twilight rain" directly describe the natural scenery. A poet always writes about his most familiar feelings. Sometimes some familiar feelings will haunt his life. The works of his poems are mostly based on such feelings. Many poems are written, but he doesn't feel repeated [5]. Because the most familiar feeling is the most vivid. When poets write

this kind of feeling, they will form a group of images that are connected with each other in their poems [6], therefore, the subjective metaphor are formed.

This paper will combine two translated versions of the famous poem "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk" to analyze the typical feature of image: the subjective metaphor.

2. The Subjective Metaphor of Image

As a psychological activity of poets, the creation of images is nothing more than the reappearance or recollection of the experience related to the past or perception in the mind [7]. This kind of reappearance and memory is a display of one-time experience or a combination of two or more experiences. It is the author's personal experience or indirect knowledge. It is consistent with the life facts or even if there is no such thing in the world. The existence of such uncertain factors make the images in the works filled with the strong subjective idea of the writer.

As regard to the situation which the subjective consciousness of the writer is mixed in the image management, we can use the sentence in Hegel's Aesthetics to illustrate: the

perceptual things are spiritualized, and the spiritual things are also manifested through the perceptual. The so-called spiritualization is subjectivism, sensibility is also visualization. The "manifestation" of image based on the soul is the so-called subjective metaphor of image.

3. The Theme Image of "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk"

The poem "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk" was written by Li Bai when he visited Chengdu again in 722 AD (the tenth year of the Kaiyuan era) [8]. He was 22 years old at that time. This poem is based on the line of time, from dawn to dusk, and it is also based on orientation, Shuangliu City in the south and the Three Gorges in the east [9]. The vivid image and elegant artistic conception express the pleasure of climbing the stairs of the Flowery Tower. Under the light of the rising sun, the Flowery Tower is more magnificent and magnificent. The high ladder looks like into the cloud, and the tower connects with the heaven. Then, the poet looked at the sky and felt relaxed and happy, therefore, he lingered on. From a distance, evening rain drifting towards the Three Gorges, overlooking the spring river around the city, and the scenery is panoramic. The poet was intoxicated by the beauty of the Flowery Tower. After that, the poet will travel eastward to the Three Gorges. At this time, climbing upstairs was like up to the sky. The poet did not describe the architectural scale, construction characteristics, location and layout of the Flowery Tower, but through the color, light, shape, state changes and reflections of the golden window, embroidered door, bead foil, silver hook, flying ladder and other objects, to highlight the typical image combination, showing the elegant and unique image, to reveal the magnificent Flowery Tower." By golden windows and embroidered doors, The pearly curtains hang on silver hooks", these two verses vividly depict the scene of the Flowery Tower in Chengdu in the early sunshine by the use of rhetoric. "Into green clouds a flight of stairways soars, The gloom's dispelled at such sunny outlooks." are very important in the poem, which can be said to be "poetic eyes". The image in the first sentence constitutes a very clear picture, and the following sentence describes the poet's pleasure. These two sentences initially unveil the appeal of Li Bai's extreme exaggeration. The last sentence "As if I visited Celestial Sphere" is to emphasize the joy and cheerfulness of climbing the Flowery Tower.

4. The Subjective Metaphor of Translated Poems

4.1. Image Combination with Mixed Feelings and Scenes

The most typical representation of the main imagery in the poetic image is the image combination which mentioned about the scene is not at the same time, and the object is not in a same place [10]. For example, the famous poem "Jianghan" by Du Shi, which is famous for its combination of feelings and

scenes:

Jianghan thinks of returning guests,
The universe is a corrupt scholar.
The sky is far away,
The moon is alone forever.
The heart of the sunset is still strong,
The autumn wind is sickening.
Old horses have been preserved since ancient times,
There is no need to take a long distance.

The four couplets of this poem are antagonistic. Each couplet forms its own fragment, and the juxtaposition of separated sentences is formed between the couplets. For example, the first sentence "return home" ends with the sentence "long distance", the second sentence "corrupt scholar" combines with the seventh sentence "old horse", the third sentence "cloud" combines with the sixth sentence "autumn wind", the fourth sentence "solitary moon" combines with the fifth sentence "sunset", they can be related to each other, and the two lines can form a rich and full image world. However, from the whole scene of the operation of the whole poem, it is impossible to see the "sun" and "moon" together and share the same distance in real life. Similar combinations are in the poem "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk". These two translation versions by Xu Yuanchong and Alley are as follows:

Example 1

Version Xu: Into green clouds a flight of stairways soars,
The gloom's dispelled at such sunny outlooks. [11]

Version Alley: but its stairs were so steep it was as if I
climbed right up into the clouds; then when I arrived at the top
and looked over the land troubles were washed from my heart.
[12]

There are three interpretations of "LùYun" in ancient Chinese dictionaries, one of which refers to blue clouds; The second is the metaphor of thick leaves; The third is a metaphor for a woman's dark and thick hair. In this poem, Li Bai goes up to the Flowery Tower to overlook the whole city. The trees are shaded and green, climbing the building like flying up to the sky. Therefore, green clouds here should be understood as dense bushes and shaded trees. Xu Yuanchong translated "LùYun" into "green clouds", "green clouds" in English refers to "dark clouds" when bad weather comes, the second meaning is a potential environment that can provide benefits to society through the Internet [13]. No matter which connotation, readers will inevitably be confused, and it cannot achieve the best image restoration effect of "LùYun" Alley uses a paraphrase, using the metaphor "but its stairs were so deep it was as if I clipped right up into the clouds" to highlight the height of the Flowery Tower, and then adds cohesion. After the poet reaches the peak, all the troubles may disappear, it forms a continuous image of climbing and looking far away from the tower.

Example 2

Version Xu: The evening rain towards Three Gorges flies,
Around the town wind rivers crystal-clear. [11]

Version Alley: as evening came and rain fell; from here in
spring, gazing over to where the great rivers meet. [12]

In the original text, the rhetoric of antithesis is used. In a few words, the magnificent scenery of the drizzling rain at dusk and the river flowing down is written. The noun "twilight rain" corresponds to "spring river", the verb "toward" corresponds to "around", the "Three Gorges" corresponds to "Shuangliu", the rivers flows around Chengdu, and the spring water adds a strong spring color to Chengdu. There was a rain in the evening, and the river was full and flowing down to the Three Gorges. The poem presented a beautiful scene of Chengdu with spring after the rain. There is no similar structure in English. Xu Yuanchong translated it with "The evening rain forwards Three Gorges flies; Around the town wind rivers crystal-clear". Although there is no confrontation in the structure as in the original, "The evening rain" and "rivers crystal-clear" form the mutual echo of the meaning and it is also easy to read. The newly translated "crystal clear" describes the clear water of the Chunjiang River as a mirror, adding another aesthetic sense to the translation, making Chengdu presents a beautiful picture in the reader's mind, and enhancing the image restoration of the original text. Alley's translation "from here in spring, gazing over to where the great rivers meet", "spring" deviates from the original intention of "spring water", and does not correspond to the original meaning. Alley also misinterprets the word "Shuangliu". Here, it is the river diversion, and the river is divided into two, not refers to "great rivers meet".

4.2. Image Combination Regardless of Time and Place Restrictions

In order to pursue the figurative beauty and symbolic beauty of images, poets often take other forms regardless of time and place restrictions in their works. For example, Wang Wei's "Birds Sing in the Stream": osmanthus flowers fall at leisure, and the night is quiet in the spring sky. The previous sentence is a typical scene of autumn, while the next sentence is used to combine "Spring Mountain". According to the comment of Zhang Yanyuan on Wang Wei's poem, "Wang Wei's poems are often dispaly in the same scene, such as peach, plum, hibiscus and lotus". The following is an analysis of the two versions' features of "On the Flowery Tower in the Town of Silk", taking the form of regardless of time and place restrictions as an example.

Example 3

Version Xu: The sun shines on the Town of Silk, the Tower is steeped in morning glow as strewn with flowers. [11]

Version Alley: Sun drenched the tall Chengtu city gates, so that the San Hua Tower shone brilliantly. [12]

There are two words in the original poem: "Jincheng" and "Sanhualou". Xu Yuanchong translated it into "the Town of Silk" and "the tower", realizing the range image combination of the city and the tower, from large to small, from wide to narrow. The translation of the two translators almost restored the image combination. "Jincheng" is the Jinguan City, which is the synonym of Chengdu, Sichuan. Sichuan is China's sericulture production area. The ancients used "beautiful and magnificent scenery" to describe Chengdu. In the Shu Han Dynasty, there was an official in charge of brocade, and the residence was

called Jinguan City, hence the name of Jingcheng. Here, Xu Yuanchong's translation of "Jincheng" is not handled by its modern name "Chengdu", but translated as "Town of Silk", which is the same as the original meaning of Jincheng. When the readers read it, they will naturally associate it with a city which is famous for its beautiful silk. Alley's translation "Chengtu city gates" corresponds to "the San Hua Tower", specifically reduces the broad sense of "city" image to the narrow sense of "gate", together with another specific image to form a corresponding concrete image combination of city images, so that readers can associate memory with specific things and deepen their understanding of Chengdu.

Example 4

Version Xu: By golden windows and embroidered doors, The pearly curtains hang on silver hooks. [11]

Version Alley: its windows like gold, doors like bits of embroidery, bamboo curtains as if made of pearls. [12]

In the original poem, the "golden window", "embroidered door", "pearl foil" and "silver hooks" are fuse into one scene, forming a combination of images that reflect each other, these things are artifacts of ancient China. "Golden windows" and "embroidered doors" refer to ornate doors and windows. The pearl foil is the pearl curtain, the curtain decorated with pearls, and the "silver hook" is hook made of silver. These artifacts are symbols of the rich material culture of the ancient Chinese people. The two translators vividly shows the elegant, unique, bright and luxurious scenery of Chengdu under the early sunshine. Xu Yuanchong used literal translation method when translating "Golden Window", "Embroidery", "Pearl Foil" and "Qionggou", which not only makes readers associate with the splendor of Chengdu City, but also well reflects the historical characteristics of the source language culture. Alley's translation may have omitted "Qionggou" in order to maintain the consistency of the sentence pattern in the whole poem, resulting in the lack of image in the translated poem, which is a slight regret.

4.3. Image Combination That Do Not Conform to the Logic of Life

Ancient Chinese poets wrote imaginary things and conveyed subjective feelings with real things or people [14]. The most typical is the so-called "illusion" that poets often describe in their works. For example, Wang Wei's "O'er the wild smoke lonely curls straight; To the river the sun round sets late." in his "To the Front as an Envoy", which describes the visual illusion of the poet suddenly exposed to the desert and smoke by juxtaposing the long river and the setting sun.

The poet created images that do not conform to the logic of life, but both the creator and the admirer believe that it is more real and beautiful than the real image. "The author gains from the heart, and the reader will gain from the mind". The "psychological distance" between art and real life is a good proof of the subjective metaphor of image.

Example 5

Version Xu: Today I come to feast on this my eyes, As if I visited Celestial Sphere. [11]

Version Alley: it is as if I had climbed right up to heaven to sport there. [12]

Li Bai came to the Flowery Tower to enjoy the bustling and beautiful spring scenery of Tianfu when he was in the prime of his youth. Naturally, he felt very happy and felt as if he had visited the heaven. Here, the figure of speech of metaphor is used to compare Jincheng Flowery Tower to "Jiu Tian". In Chinese Taoist culture, it is believed that there are empyrean. "Jiu Tian" is the place where the Jade Emperor lived, which was later extended to be a very high place. Li Bai believes in Taoism, which is deeply influenced by Taoism culture. In the original poem, the poet did not really go to the sky, but only used it to exaggerate his own ecstasy. Considering the different religious environments in the East and the West, Xu Yuanchong translated "Jiu Tian" into "Celestial Sphere". According to the explanation in the British Concise Encyclopedia, "Celestial Sphere" means the surface of the sky, and stars seem to be fixed on it. Alley translated "Jiu Tian" into "heaven", which also means the highest place in the sky, and the blissful land. It is similar to the meaning in the original poem, which reduces the difficulty for readers to understand, so that readers can feel the meaning that the poet wants to convey and the happy mood of "As if I visited Celestial Sphere" without much effort.

5. Conclusion

For many years, we like to use the two standards of romanticism and realism in modern western literary theory to measure the translation of Chinese classical poetry [15]. It seems to make sense to distinguish the style of some works of Li Bai, Du Fu and others who have obviously different tendencies in their creative methods. But in fact, it is difficult to use these two methods to evaluate a large number of works in classical poetry. Compared with romanticism, ancient Chinese poetry is realistic; Compared with realism, it has several elements of ideals. When translating, the translator should perceive the characteristics of the image. The image created by the poet is not too far away from the real life as some western idealists do, but it isn't like some realists who are too close, or even completely lose their distance. Emphasizing the subjective feelings of poets is the self-expression of poets, it is a basic literary concept with a long history in ancient Chinese literary theory. The so-called "poetry expresses ambition" and "text is based on integrity" mean this. The subjective metaphor of image in translation requires the translator to focus on the poet's inner world. Formally, there is a tendency of subjective idealism, in essence, the spiritual world of poets is a reflection of their actual life, and the mental outlook. Thoughts and feelings of poets in specific circumstances reflect a part of the whole social life. Therefore, a translation that is exquisite to the poet's spiritual realm can restore the creative guiding ideology of the original poem "expressing feelings and ideas with an image".

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