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ABSTRACT

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I. INTRODUCTION

Song ci-poetry is a vivid artistic production of traditional Chinese society and culture. Its rhetoric, language, expressions and feelings make it a special existence throughout the ages. As a Chinese literary and cultural heritage, Song ci-poetry, together with the Tang poetry, Yuan Qu-poetry and the novels of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, constitute a series of literary legacy in the history of ancient Chinese literature.

The translation of Song ci-poetry is an indispensable part of promoting Chinese literature and culture, and it is a bridge between Chinese and Western cultures. With the development of China, many experts and scholars at home and abroad have made contributions to the translation of Song ci-poetry. However, there are still many deficiencies in the study of the English translation of Song ci-poetry. Most of them focus on specific Song ci-poetry writers and their masterpieces, while no systematic theory has ever come into being. Therefore, the translation of Song ci-poetry still needs more in-depth research.

The theory of “Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria” based on previous translation theories aims to analyze the translations of ancient poetry from the macro-level, middle-level and micro-level. Broadening the perspectives of poetry translation studies, it is conducive to promoting the development of the English translation of Chinese literature and helping traditional Chinese literature and culture to go global.

II. THE "THREE-LEVEL POETRY TRANSLATION CRITERIA"

In spreading the Tang poetry and Song ci-poetry into the world, many Chinese and Western scholars have researched on their translations, and many theories about poetry translation are established, including James Holmes's four translation strategies, André Lefevere's seven translation strategies, Xu Yuanchong's theory of Three Beauties, etc. All these theories have to a certain degree pointed out the directions for the translation of Chinese poetry, but each has its advantages and disadvantages, and these influential translation theories are a little too general. Thus, it is necessary to establish a theoretical system of poetry translation with both general and particular criteria.

On the basis of the theories of those outstanding predecessors, Dr. Wang Feng proposed the "Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria". At the macro level, "Harmony" is regarded as the criterion of poetry translation; at the middle level, "Similarity of styles, senses and poetic conceptions" is put forward, and the Eight Beauties Criteria of poetry translation are integrated at the micro level (Wang Feng, 2011). He applied this theory to the practice of poetry translation and proved that the criteria are operable, scientific and rational for poetry translation practice, and broadened the perspectives of poetry translation studies.

2.1 Macro level: Harmony

Poetry originates from the songs and dances of our ancestors, and the Chinese characters begin from original pictures, and evolve from pictographs into ideographic characters. Therefore, classical Chinese poetry has a strong sense of rhythm, harmonious rhyme, concise language and rich imagery. As Gu Zhengkun (2008) pointed out, Chinese poetry is the best in its picturesque and visual representation in the world. In contrast, there is no necessary connection between the phonetic alphabets in English and the objects in the world. Many

English words are polysyllabic, and the stressed and unstressed syllables give English poetry rhythm and musicality. Besides, Chinese poetry does not change in tense, voice and sex, nor does it have to have subjects, predicates, pronouns and prepositions like English in most cases. While in English poetry, subjects, predicate, tenses and voices are usually indispensable. Moreover, the sentence patterns of Chinese poetry are uniform, as shown in five-character verses and seven-character verses, which are of the same length, and each sentence usually has a complete meaning. But in English poetry, the enjambment helps the meaning running over from one poetic line to the next.

The above generalization is concluded as the six disharmonies of poetry translation between English and Chinese proposed by Dr. Wang Feng: artistic vs. scientific; lyrical vs. narrative; change in tones vs. stress in syllables; parataxis vs. hypotaxis; suggestiveness vs. decorativeness; uniformity vs. enjambment. (Wang Feng, 2015) For these differences, we should accept the translation criteria of "Harmony" at the macro level in poetry translation. In *The Book of Rites: the Doctrine of the Mean* (1980), it is said: "The Mean is the essence of the world; and Harmony is the general law. If the mean and harmony are reached, the sky and the earth will be at its place and everything will be developing." Thus, at the macro level, the translation criterion of "Harmony" can be the essential principle in Chinese and English poetry translation, free from contradictions and opposites.

2.2 Middle level: Similarity of Styles, Senses and Poetic Conceptions

The theory of "Harmony" can only guide poetry translation practice and poetry criticism at the macro level. Therefore, it is necessary to put forward the theory of "Similarity of styles, senses and poetic conceptions" at the middle level.

1) "Similarity of styles" means that the style of the translation resembles that of the original. Style is reflected in poetry creation, embodying the

author's creative thinking. From ancient times until now, many literati and scholars have classified the styles of poetry. To reproduce these different styles in the target language and culture, translators should use a variety of translation methods, and take into account the cultural differences between Chinese and English, so that the style of the translation will be close to that of the original.

2) "Similarity of senses" means that the meaning in the translation and that in the original are similar. Dr. Wang Feng (2015) pointed out that to achieve "similarity of senses" in translation, translators need to consider the cultural differences between Chinese and English cultures. Chinese culture is a high-context culture, in which words and sentences often have deep meanings, while English culture is a low-context culture, in which the information required is often reflected in the meaning of the text. As for the language of poetry, the differences between high-context and low-context cultures are shown in the differences between "indirectness, subtleties, conciseness", and "directness, profundity, and complication". (Zhu Guangqian, 1997) In order to make Chinese and Western readers better understand the meaning of the original poetry, it is necessary for translators to consider both the meaning of the Chinese context and to explain the missing information to avoid "understatement" or "over translation".

3) "Similarity of poetic conceptions" means that the comprehensive effect of the poetic conception produced by the translated works in the target readers' mind should be similar to that of the original poem in the mind of the original readers. In the views of Wang Changling, Wang Guowei, Huang Xinqu and Qian Zhongshu, the poetic conception is a co-existence of the natural scene, inner emotion, various images of reality and imagination in poetry. Poetic conception is the soul of poetry. Therefore, when translating poetry, translators need to link the poetic conception of different cultures to fully express the poetic conception of the original poetry.

2.3 Micro level: Eight Beauties Criteria

Beauty is an important quality in poetry. As the essence of Chinese literature, Song ci-poetry has typical aesthetic values. From ancient times, many scholars have proposed a variety of different principles of beauty, including the "Five Beauties" principles, namely, beauty in sound, beauty in sense, beauty in spirit, beauty in energy, beauty in form (Lin Yutang 1937: Preface), "Three Beauties" theory, namely, beauty in sense, beauty in sound, beauty in form (Xu Yuanchong, 1979: 39), and "Five Images" theory, namely, visual image, musical image, semantic image, event image, flavor image) (Gu Zhengkun, 1998: 6), etc.

By previous studies, Dr. Wang Feng developed eight criteria of beauty for poetry translation: beauty in form, musicality, image, emotion, suggestiveness, diction, allusion and gestalt. The specific contents of the eight beauties will be discussed in the following analysis of different English translations of a Song ci-poem "Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival."

III. "GREEN JADE TABLE: LANTERN FESTIVAL" AND AN ANALYSIS OF ITS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

3.1 Appreciation of "Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival"

"Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival" is one of Xin Qiji's (1140 -1207) representative works. Among many ancient and modern Chinese poems, it has a unique style and profound meaning. It has always been read and appreciated by people through the Chinese history.

The whole Chinese poem is as follows:

东风夜放花千树，更吹落，星如雨。
宝马雕车香满路，凤箫声动，玉壶光转，一夜鱼龙舞。
蛾儿雪柳黄金缕，笑语盈盈暗香去。
众里寻他千百度，暮然回首，那人却在，灯火阑珊处。

First of all, this ci-poem was written by Xin Qiji when he was in Lin'an in the first or second year

of Song Chunxi (1174-1189). At that time, a powerful enemy was invading the state, and the national strength was on the decline. However, the ruling class in the Southern Song Dynasty was still indulged in pleasure and did nothing. He tried but had no way to serve the country, so he wrote this ci-poem in describing the scene of luxurious bustle on the Lantern Festival in Lin'an. Through the colored lanterns, the beautiful fireworks, songs and dances, and the noise of horses and carriages, the first part described the prosperous night on the Lantern Festival. In the second half, the author saw the wandering person walking alone. "The person" came lightly and walked away lightly. When the author suddenly looked back, that person was alone in the dim light. In the face of national difficulties, the royal court and ordinary people were addicted to music and enjoyment, and no one was worried about the troubled country. Only "that person" was indifferent and aloof, standing there otherworldly. The "person" actually refers to the noble character of the poet himself, who is entrusted with his political frustration, worried about the country and the people, and unwilling to concurrently associate himself with those indulged people.

3.2 An analysis of the English versions of "Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival" under the "Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria"

1) Analysis at the macro level of "Harmony"

The differences and contradictions between Chinese and English poetry and culture have led to various controversies in the practice of poetry translation. The English translation of poetry must face the six kinds of disharmony between the two languages and cultures of English and Chinese, taking "Harmony" as the macro criterion in poetry translation. We compared the English versions of Xu Yuanchong, Xu Zhongjie, Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, Michael Farman and so on, and found that translators should pay attention to the artistic, lyrical and metrical features of the original ci-poem, the way of paratactic thinking, the implicit style with little enjambment; and at the same time, translators

should lay emphasis on the fact that English culture is characterized by its emphasis on science, narrative, hypotaxis, complication and enjambment.

Take "蛾儿雪柳黄金缕，笑语盈盈暗香去" as an example to analyze the difference between parataxis and hypotaxis. The two sentences have not indicated who is wearing the "moth-shaped jade," "snow-willow ornaments" and "gold thread ornaments," or who is "smiling," which reflects the rich connotation of traditional Chinese poetry: no grammatical signs, but the usual omission of subjects. Michael Farman displayed a series of images in the order of the original ci-poem, but did not specify the subject; Zhang Bingxing added the subject "pretty women" to the beginning of his translation and connected two lines with another pronoun "they". Therefore, in translating "Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival", translators should make a choice between literal and free translation, domestication and foreignization, the pursuit of similarity in form and spirit, the selection of the criteria of faithfulness and creation. Only by taking "Harmony" as the macro criterion, can translators preserve the meaning of the original ci-poem, and allow the target readers to accept, understand and appreciate it.

2) Analysis at the middle level of "similarity of styles, senses and poetic conceptions"

Firstly, "similarity of styles". This ci-poem by Xin Qiji not only describes the lively scene, but also presents various images, which makes readers understand the poetic conception and have profound enlightenment. Therefore, the translation of this ci-poem should not be confined to the surface. The translation of Michael Farman is mainly descriptive and narrative, showing a big difference between the original ci-poem and the translation. However, the translations of Liu Guoshan, Zhang Bingxing, Xu Zhongjie, Chu Dagao, Xu Yuanchong, and Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang are better in showing the style of the original ci-poem, while the translation of Gong Jinghao is slightly straightforward without much profundity.

Secondly, “similarity of senses” aims to achieve the similarity regarding the meaning of the ci-poem. As Chinese culture is a high-context culture, and English culture low-context, in translation, translators should pay attention to those “implicature” in Chinese. After “falling like rains,” Gong Jinghao added a note, “display of fireworks on a festive night.” Liu Guoshan gave a commentary after the translation, which can help readers understand better. Additionally, “the east wind” (Dongfeng) in Chinese culture generally refers to the spring wind, while in Great Britain, it is the west wind that comes with the Spring, as shown in “Ode to the West Wind” by Percy Bysshe Shelley. “The east wind” was translated into “the spring wind” by Chu Dagao, and the other translators all translated it into “the east wind.” To help Chinese culture going out, translators should consider conveying this concept in the Chinese tradition and translate it literally into “the East wind.”

Thirdly, “similarity of poetic conceptions”. In the original ci-poem, the emotion is in harmony with the scenery. “星如雨” is to describe the fireworks. Michael Farman translated it into “stars fell like rain,” which is lack of a similar poetic conception, because the original ci-poem is describing the spattering fireworks, which are like stars falling from the sky. “Like rain” is not so good as “like showers” in showing the magnificent scenery. Although Gong Jinghao has annotated it, it cannot reflect the spectacular fireworks and the corresponding poetic conception. Moreover, “鱼龙舞” means fish-shaped and dragon-shaped lanterns dancing in the air. Gong Jinghao translated it to “fish and dragons dancing,” and Michael Farman translated it to “fishes, dragons, dancing,” which will make readers mistake it as the dances of fish and dragon or people’s dancing imitating the fish or dragon in the Lantern Festival. So, it is not consistent with the poetic conception in the original ci-poem.

3.3 Analysis at the micro level of “Eight Beauties”

3.3.1 Beauty of Form

The beauty of form refers to the appearance of poems. The number of lines, arrangement, length, indentation, and structure of poetry determine whether it has a higher beauty in form or not. Song ci-poetry is different from the Tang poetry in that it has two characteristics of literature and music, with long and short lines. The Song ci-poem “Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival” is composed of two stanzas. The upper stanza describes the scenery, and the lower expresses the author’s emotions. The words of the upper and lower stanzas are equal or almost equal, and the rhyme and rhythm are roughly the same.

However, a word in English poetry contains various number of syllables, and the number of letters in a word is not fixed either. After comparing and contrasting different versions, we find that only Xu Yuanchong, Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang and Zhang Bingxing’s translations can better reproduce the formal beauty of the original ci-poem, and the beauty in form in other translations is more or less lost.

3.3.2 Beauty of Musicality

The ci-poem “Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival” is harmonious and rhythmic on the whole. The upper and lower stanzas share the end rhymes /u/ in “树” “雨” “路” “舞” “缕” “去” “度” “处”, and so on. They are written for reading or singing aloud to reflect the musical beauty of the Song ci-poetry. However, different languages have different rhythms. English poetry is diversified in forming musicality. In translating poetry, such methods as alliteration, end rhyme, assonance and consonance can be used. As a matter of fact, Xu Yuanchong, Xu Zhongjie, Liu Guoshan and Zhang Bingxing showed a strong sense of rhythm and music in their translations. The syllables in Xu Yuanchong’s translation are between 6-12, divided into two stanzas of 6 lines each, and the rhyming scheme is AABBCC. The syllables in Xu Zhongjie’s translation are between 10-11, with a rhyming scheme of AABBCC; Xu also used alliteration in

“stars” and “skies”, and in “from” and “fallen”. However, Michael Farman and Gong Jinghao adopted free verse, which failed to reproduce the beauty of musicality in the original.

3.3.3 Beauty of Image

The original ci-poem is rich in images. As discussed above, “东风” is better translated as “the East wind”, because the translation of “the east wind” is more consistent with the original image, and it can also be intelligible in the context of translation. “千树” should also be translated as “thousands of trees” to represent the countless images of trees. “宝马雕车” refers to the exquisite carriages with precious horses, however, the translations of this image are different, such as “horses and carriages” by Xu Zhongjie, “fine steeds and carved cabs” by Xu Yuanchong, “scented chariots and stately steeds” by Liu Guoshan and “painted carriages and precious horses” by Zhang Bingxing. In these translations, Xu Yuanchong reproduced the original images and translated it in the original sequence.

Then look at “蛾儿雪柳黄金缕,” in which the three images imply the adornment worn on the beauty’s head. Most of the translators have translated these images. Only Zhang Bingxing did not translate them specifically but into “ornaments on their heads of various kinds.” In this way, the original images were not completely present in the target language.

Besides, what is the image of “他”(he) in “众里寻他千百度”? The translations by Gong Jinghao and Chu Dagao are “that man” and “him”. In ancient Chinese, both men and women are referred to as “他” (he, him) rather than “她” (she, her). From the context and what is discussed above, it is easy to find that “他” refers to the ci-poet himself or his noble character. Thus, it’s better to translate it into “he” or “him”, so as to embody the poetic conception and enrich the emotions of the original ci-poem.

3.3.4 Beauty of Emotion

As mentioned earlier, the lower stanza mainly expresses the author’s emotions. Therefore, the key to the reproduction of the emotional beauty of this ci-poem is to show the emotions in the second stanza. The original ci-poem is implicit and obscure, while Michael Farman, Gong Jinghao and Xu Yuanchong’s translations are rather straightforward. Other translations can better reflect the poet’s eagerness in searching for “that person” and his sudden delight in finding him. For example, the last sentence, “众里寻他千百度 蓦然回首, 那人却在, 灯火阑珊处” shows that the author searched for “that person” a thousand times but in vain. But inadvertently, he was glad to find him in the dimly light. All these translators have generally translated the meanings of the ci-poem, and Xu Zhongjie’s version is “a thousand times or more in quest of none, who, I have concluded, cannot be found; for, everyone, on trace of her can be seen, when, all of a sudden, I turn around, that’s her, where lanterns are few and far between”. It excellently reproduced the ci-poet’s mood of waiting, searching, anxiety, disappointment, and great joy when he suddenly found out whom he was looking for. However, his translation is cumbersome in that it has too many words composed of too many syllables, which are not concise enough, thus making the emotions less intense than it should be, let alone the loss of the formal beauty, the musical beauty and the misunderstanding of the sex of “that person” the ci-poet is looking for.

3.3.5 Beauty of Suggestiveness

The original ci-poem is subtle and fascinating. It seems to describe love, but it expresses the author’s worries about his home and country. Gong Jinghao did not correctly represent the original meaning. “Looking for that man in the crowds a thousand times. Turning suddenly, she saw the man standing where the lights were low.” In addition, the change of the angle of view is not faithful because it is not “she” seeking for “him”, but “I” the ci-poet searching for “him”. Moreover, in Zhang Bingxing’s translation there appeared a

phrase “look for my love”, which directly classified the ci-poem as a love one, having failed to grasp its implied meaning, thus losing the beauty of suggestiveness.

3.3.6 Beauty of Diction

The meaning of the original ci-poem should be translated with the best words in the best order. “东风夜放花千树” in the original ci-poem refers to the fact that the lanterns on the trees are like flowers in the Lantern Festival, just like a spring breeze making thousands of trees blooming at night. The appropriate understanding and translation of “放” and “花” in this line is a good example in reproducing the beauty of diction. Xu Yuanchong, Chu Dagao, Zhang Bingxing and Gong Jinghao all translated “花” into a noun or verb “flower”, and Liu Guoshan translated it into a verb “has flowered”. Comparatively speaking, when a noun is converted into a verb, the expression is more refined, highlighting the image of the original ci-poem, and manifesting the beauty of diction.

3.3.7 Beauty of Allusion

Allusion is very common in ancient Chinese poetry, but this ci-poem does not contain allusions, so it would not be discussed here.

3.3.8 Beauty of Gestalt

The above seven kinds of beauty can be analyzed specifically, but they cannot reproduce the beauty of poetry as a gestalt, which is an organized whole perceived as more than the sum of its parts. Here the beauty of gestalt can be understood as all the undiscussed beauties that the poem or ci-poem has. “Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival” is rich in imagery and deep in emotion. It is also good at using numerals, full of similes and metaphors. If we can translate the beauty of figures and the beauty of similes and metaphors, we can better reproduce the beauty of gestalt.

First of all, how many trees are there in the phrase “花千树”? How many times is in the expression

“千百度”? The translations of Michael Farman, Xu Yuanchong, the Yangs, Liu Guoshan and Gong Jinghao regarding “花千树” are all “a thousand trees,” and the translations of Xu Zhongjie and Zhang Bingxing of that are “thousands of trees.” The former translations give a clear quantitative description, but the latter’s vague expression leaves people a space for imagination.

For the translation of “千百度,” Xu Yuanchong did not translate it; Liu Guoshan translated it to “tens of thousands of rounds,” and other translators translated it as “a thousand times.” Xu’s translation may not be faithful to the original, and Liu’s translation is a bit too complicated. Only “a thousand times”, corresponding to the original expression, can make it more concise to highlight the beauty of numbers in the original ci-poem.

Secondly, there are five similes or metaphors in this ci-poem, which are “花” in “花千树”, “星” in “星如雨”, “玉壶”, “鱼龙” and “蛾儿雪柳黄金缕”. Is it necessary for us to translate all the five similes or metaphors? Michael Farman only translated the vehicles, which is inconvenient for readers to understand. The translations of Xu Yuanchong and Xu Zhongjie showed the tenor but ignored the vehicle “玉壶”. Both of them translated it into the “moon”, which sacrificed the rhetorical devices of the original, but at the same time, it did not quite affect the reader’s understanding. Liu Guoshan translated “玉壶” into “jade-pot-flashing lanterns”, which not only showed the tenor “lantern,” but also showed the vehicle “jade pot,” which enhanced the transparency of the translation. As for “蛾儿雪柳黄金缕,” with relevant background knowledge, we know here it refers to women, because these three images are ornaments worn by women. However, for readers who are not familiar with Chinese traditional culture, they may need the translator to translate the tenors to understand their meanings.

According to the “Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria” described above, the co-authors would also like to present their translation.

Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival

Xin Qiji, trans. by Zhang Shuyue and Wang Feng
 At night the East wind flowers thousands of trees,
 And brings showers of glowing stars down the
 streets.

Fine steeds and carved carriages with perfume
 strew the way;

The Phoenix flute music spread away.

The jade-pot lanterns revolve its ray,

While all night long the fish and dragon lanterns
 sway.

With moth-shaped jade, snow-willow and gold
 thread ornaments,

The lady giggles and whispers, leaving a trail of
 subtle scents.

A thousand times I search for him in the crowd,

But when I turn around all of a sudden,

There he is in the dim light of a lantern.

IV. CONCLUSION

There are significant differences between Chinese and Western languages and cultures; thus, there are a variety of disharmony in translating poetry, which can be best dealt with by taking the “Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria” as poetry translation criteria and poetry translation criticism criteria. At the macro level, “Harmony” is the principle in dealing with the disharmonies in the two languages and cultures, the middle level of “similarity of styles, senses and poetic conceptions” is to enhance the reader's’ understanding of the original poetry, and the Eight Beauties Criteria at the micro level provide a detailed basis for the practice of poetry translation and its criticism.

In general, the “Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria” provides a broader perspective for the study of poetry translation. It is scientific and applicable for poetry translation and poetry translation criticism. However, this system of criteria also has certain limitations in that some criteria may not always be relevant. Therefore, in translating different ci-poems, translators should carefully consider how to reproduce each of the eight beauties.

With the guidance of the “Three-Level Poetry Translation Criteria,” this article analyzed and compared eight English translations of the Song ci-poem “Green Jade Table: Lantern Festival”. It can make the target readers understand the original ci-poem from different angles, and it has irreplaceable guiding significance for the development of the theory and practice of poetry translation. Furthermore, it can also promote the inheritance and exchange of literature and culture between different countries, and accelerate the globalization of traditional Chinese literature and culture.

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