

English Translation of Fuzzy Beauty of Classical Chinese Poetry

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to probe into English translation of fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry via imagery. Classical Chinese poetry is the cream of Chinese culture. It attracts millions of Chinese and western readers with its subtle and profound fuzzy beauty. The ultimate requirement of English translation of classical Chinese poetry lies in transferring its fuzzy beauty. Fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry falls into three categories: fuzzy beauty in form, fuzzy beauty in imagery and fuzzy beauty in artistic conception. Imagery, being the soul of classical Chinese poetry, serves as a communicative and operational medium of transference of fuzzy beauty. The essence of fuzzy beauty consists in "gaps of indeterminacy" which conjures up the reader's unrestrained association. "Gaps of indeterminacy" constitute the "appealing structure" in a text which is subject to the reader's free interpretation according to his own "horizon of expectation". Fuzzy aesthetics sheds light on the aesthetic features of fuzzy beauty, and the hierarchical structure of fuzzy beauty in fuzzy aesthetics corresponds to different layers of fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry. Therefore, both aesthetics of reception and fuzzy aesthetics are of instructive value to English translation of classical Chinese poetry. This paper is composed of five sections. The introductory section is concerned with the significance and purpose of the research. The second section reveals in detail fuzzy beauty in classical Chinese poetry. In the third section, the techniques and principle for translation of poetic fuzzy beauty are put forward in light of aesthetics of reception and fuzzy aesthetics and imagery is recommended as an ideal medium of transference of fuzzy beauty. The fourth section centers on how to transfer fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry using imagery as a medium, analyses and proposals are given from such angles as fuzzy modifiers, syntax, juxtaposition, and cultural influences. A natural conclusion is drawn in the last section.*

Keywords: Classical Chinese Poetry; Fuzzy beauty; Aesthetics of reception; Fuzzy aesthetics; Imagery.

1. INTRODUCTION

China is a country of poetry, and classical Chinese poetry is the most brilliant gem in the treasure house of Chinese literature. William Wordsworth once observed, "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". Since strong feelings are deep, complex, and subtle due to human nature, poetry, as an unrivalled carrier of feelings, undoubtedly manifests between its lines the profundity, multiplicity, and indeterminacy of such feelings. Therefore, fuzziness is inherent in poetry. Classical Chinese poetry boasts fuzzy beauty on different levels.

"Poetry is what gets lost in translation". So far no consensus on the solution to English translation of classical Chinese poetry has been reached. The introduction of aesthetics of reception and fuzzy aesthetics into this field is of significant advisory value. Fuzzy aesthetics helps us to better understand the aesthetic features and structure of fuzzy beauty, while reception theory aids us in transferring fuzzy beauty with the target readers' acceptability considered.

Aesthetics of Reception has launched a far-reaching revolution in literary criticism. It emphasizes on the reader's understanding of, response to and reception of a literary work. Aesthetics of Reception encompasses two concepts: "appealing structure" and "horizon of expectation". Poetic fuzziness arises from nowhere other than the "points of indeterminacy" which constitute the "appealing structure" of classical Chinese poetry. Therefore, aesthetics of reception can play an instructive role in English translation of classical Chinese poetry.

Fuzzy aesthetics was established at the end of 1980s, marked by the publication of fuzzy aesthetics written by Wang Mingju. According to fuzzy aesthetics, fuzzy beauty bears such features as uncertainty, totality and inter-permeability. The affinity between the hierarchical system of fuzzy beauty in fuzzy aesthetics and fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry sheds light on the principle the translator should abide by in translation. What's more, we can further elicit the conclusion that imagery, being communicative and operational, is the ideal medium of transferring fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry.

This paper attempts to probe into the transference of fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry via imagery, from the perspective of aesthetics of reception and fuzzy aesthetics. It is hoped that this paper can provide a new approach to C-E translation of fuzzy beauty which is intrinsic in classical Chinese poetry.

1 Fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry

1.1 Fuzzy beauty in form

As far as form is concerned, fuzzy beauty finds expression in sound, semantics and syntax.

Classical Chinese poetry holds in high esteem the beauty of sound, which is realized by means of rhyme, rhythm and repetition. The most typical way to express musical beauty is the adoption of reduplicated words, similar to sequence repetitions in English. This technique is widely employed by classical Chinese poets to convey their implicit and subtle feelings. Thus in it dwells fuzzy beauty.

Semantic fuzzy beauty is readily seen in classical Chinese poetry. For example, in the line "千里江陵一日还", "千里" and "一日" are fuzzy words which, in fact, don't refer to accurate numbers, but function as hyperboles to exaggerate the long distance and fast speed respectively. And in "红杏枝头春意闹", the word "闹" has lost its original meaning of being noisy, and gains a touch of fuzziness denoting the overflow of vernal beauty.

Fuzzy beauty is also demonstrated in the unique syntactic features of Chinese language. Chinese is a hieroglyphic and highly uninflected language, and as such, its syntax is very loose and flexible, resulting in fuzzy sentence meaning. Poetic fuzzy beauty in syntax mainly consists in three aspects:

Firstly, In comparison with English, the syntactic function of the subject is much weaker in classical Chinese poetry in which a subject is often omitted. The missing of a subject will always lead to fuzziness of the whole poetic sentence.

Secondly, Chinese is a language not restricted by the agreement in number, gender, case or tense, which gives great elasticity to classical Chinese poetry. For instance, in the two lines "月上柳梢头,人约黄昏后", it is of no importance whether "柳" and "人" are singular or plural, or whether "人" is/are male or female. The poet can ignore such "nuance" of details and concentrate on presenting a picture full of intriguing fuzzy beauty.

Thirdly, in Chinese, as long as the meaning is successfully delivered, unnecessary sentential components can be done away with, and sometimes even verbs can be dispensed with. A shining example is the poem composed by Ma Zhiyuan in Yuan Dynasty, which will be specifically analyzed in the third chapter.

1.2 Fuzzy beauty in imagery

An image is a literary and "concrete" representation of a sensory experience or of an object that can be known by one or more of the senses. Imagery refers to the collection of images within a literary work. Imagery can set off imaginative associations that extend the implications of the work beyond its literal limits.

Classical Chinese poetry is rich in images which is full of cultural connotation and endowed with the poet's feelings and emotion. Due to its implicitness, imagery conveys a kind of beauty which is evocative, subtle and difficult to tell. Images leave much space for reader's imagination. In order to avoid verbal monotony, the poets often employ various images with manifold meanings so as to give the greatest freedom for the readers' own imagination. Take the poetic lines selected from A Dream of Red Mansions for example:

其素若何？春梅绽雪；
其洁若何？秋菊被霜；
其静若何？松生空谷；
其艳若何？霞映澄塘；
其文若何？龙游曲沼；
其神若何？月射寒江。

Instead of specifying the exact height, complexion and appearance of the beauty (Lady Disenchantment), the poet adopts six similes to portray her whiteness, purity, tranquility, beauty, grace, and spirit, comparing them

respectively to spring plum-blossom glimpsed through snow, autumn orchids coated with frost, a pine in a lonely valley, sunset mirrored in a limpid pool, a dragon breasting a winding stream, and moonlight on a frosty river. These images, though being concrete, are fuzzy descriptions which form a nebulous picture of the beauty. If we were asked to draw a painting of such a beauty, different versions would be presented. These fuzzy images conjure up different pictures of the beauty in our minds due to the diversity of our imagination.

1.3 Fuzzy beauty in artistic conception

According to Zhao Zecheng, artistic conception consists in creating an artistic realm capable of leading the reader into an imaginary space by way of artistic description which is characterized by a visualized fusion of feelings with the natural setting. The basic composition of artistic conception resides in a fusion of feelings with scenes which includes two aspects, i.e. the objective reflection of images in life and the subjective creation of the author's feelings and thoughts. There lies no clear-cut boundary between the feelings of love or hatred, happiness or sorrow. The implication and obscurity of artistic conception in classical Chinese poetry should be attributed to the uniqueness of Chinese philosophy and thinking mood. The Chinese prefer standing in the middle rather than to the extremes, revealing the subtle intricacy with implicit expressions while leaving space for imagination. The following is a representative example:

锦瑟
锦瑟无端五十弦，
一弦一柱思华年。
庄生晓梦迷蝴蝶，
望帝春心托杜鹃。
沧海月明珠有泪，
蓝田日暖玉生烟。
此情可待成追忆，
只是当时已惘然。

Some scholars hold the viewpoint that "Jinse" (the gorgeous zither) is the name of a female servant, and this poem expresses the heartfelt love and thus can be regarded as a love poem. Others believe that the poem is composed for Li Shangyin's deceased wife and can be counted as an elegy. Some think that the zither possesses four possible tunes and each sentence corresponds to one of them, so the whole poem is a eulogy of the beautiful melody that flows from the zither. Still others assert that this poem is composed when the poet ponders over the bygone ups and downs and his own pursuit of social recognition. In this case, the poem becomes a nostalgic retrospection of the author's life. Although the sentence meaning is relatively certain, the description, still, can bring about several possible interpretations since the concise and terse language tends to give rise to fuzzy artistic conception.

2. TWO THEORIES FOR THE TRANSLATION OF POETIC FUZZY BEAUTY

2.1 Aesthetics of reception and translation techniques

2.1.1 A brief introduction to aesthetics of reception

Aesthetics of reception (or reception theory), originated from the work of Hans Robert Jauss in the late 1960s, is characterized as "a general shift in concern from the author and the work to the text and the reader". It encompasses two important concepts: one is "appealing structure", the other being "horizon of expectation".

According to the viewpoints of Iser Wolfgang, literary works distinguish themselves from general works by their special employment of "descriptive language" which manifests one of the characteristics of natural language: fuzziness. A text is fraught with "points of indeterminacy" and "gaps", both of which constitute the "appealing structure" of the text. The existence of the appealing structure produces a tension that must be resolved by the reader's attempt to fill the blanks by virtue of his "horizon of expectations".

Holub argues that the term "horizon of expectation" refers "to an intersubjective system or structure of expectations, a system of references or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text." A reader's horizon of expectations, which can be further classified into two types: directional and creative, includes at least his world outlook and outlook on life, general cultural horizon, artistic and cultural attainments as well as literary

competence. It awakens memories of that which was already read, brings the reader to a specific emotional attitude, and with its beginning arouses expectations for the "middle and end", which can then be maintained intact or altered, reoriented, or even fulfilled ironically in the course of the reading.

2.1.2 The subjectivity of the translator

The translator is the reader of the original text and the rewriter of the target text. Before translating, the translator should first achieve "fusion of horizon of expectation" with the original text, grasping all literary fuzziness, an embodiment of appealing structure. While translating, the translator should strike a balance between the "appealing structure" and the "horizon of expectation" of the target reader. If he concretizes all the indeterminacies and gaps in the original text, the imagination space left for the reader will be narrowed down, the target reader's interaction with the target text reduced and the artistic charm of the original text weakened, since the target text doesn't satisfy the reader's horizon of expectation and the reader can get nothing new. If the "appealing structure" is retained without necessary alteration, the reader must make more efforts than necessary and becomes frustrated and reluctant to go on reading, since the horizon of target text far exceeds that of his. Therefore, the translator has to decide how to deal with the appealing structure in the original text, mainly literary fuzziness, and choose whether to keep the fuzziness or not.

2.1.3 Translation techniques based on aesthetics of reception

To transfer fuzzy beauty in classical Chinese poetry, the translator should bring his subjectivity into full play. Three techniques are recommended: fuzziness to fuzziness, fuzziness to precision, and precision to fuzziness.

Fuzziness in classical Chinese poetry makes up the appealing structure of the poem and conjures up the reader's imagination and adaptation of horizon of expectations. Meanwhile, the otherness created by literary fuzziness, which is different from the reader's horizon of expectations, triggers off the communication between the reader and target text. In most cases, literary fuzziness can be preserved instead of being concretized by the translator.

Sometimes, fuzziness that is inherent in classical Chinese poetry, if literally rendered, will result in misunderstanding or even astonishment for the target reader owing to cultural clash or differences between Chinese and English languages. The preservation of fuzziness exceeds the reader's horizon of expectation. Therefore, it is necessary for the translator to adopt the technique of rendering fuzziness into precision.

In classical Chinese poetry, there are lots of precise expressions which are typical and exclusive in Chinese but absent in English. Without annotation by the translator, the English reader will be at a loss. However, if such an expression is literally rendered, with an annotation given below, the original beauty will be inevitably harmed. Under such circumstances, it is advisory and necessary for the translator to seek fuzziness for help.

To sum up, when the horizon of expectation of the target reader corresponds with that of the original text, the translator can keep the fuzziness. Otherwise, the translator has to relinquish the indeterminacy the text leaves, either translating the fuzziness to precision or the other way around.

2.2 Fuzzy aesthetics and translation principle

2.2.1 Three levels of the structure of fuzzy beauty

Fuzzy aesthetics, a comparatively newly-emerging discipline, has taken shape under the influence of science and the free thought trend in 1980s. Up to now, Wang Mingju's *Fuzzy Aesthetics* and *On Fuzzy Arts* have been the most systematic and contributive works on this subject. According to fuzzy aesthetics, fuzzy beauty holds its particular characteristics, including uncertainty, totality and inter-permeability. More importantly, fuzzy beauty is not a flat, but rather, a hierarchical structure, with definite beauty dwelling at the lowest level, generalized fuzzy beauty higher, and pan-fuzzy-beauty at the highest level. Correspondence can be found between different kinds of fuzzy beauty in classical Chinese poetry and the three levels of the fuzzy beauty structure.

Fuzzy beauty in form of classical Chinese Poetry bares some similarity with definite beauty which stays at the lowest level in the hierarchical structure of fuzzy beauty. The quintessence of poetry consists in its beauty in artistic conception, with imagery subordinate to artistic conception and form lower than imagery in terms of artistic value. Fuzzy beauty in form is a kind of definite beauty.

Generalized fuzzy beauty is a kind of fuzzy beauty that can be captured by language, words, or signs. Imagery is the hallmark of classical Chinese poetry, and whatever its connotation, it exists as a certain sign that can be expressed by language, thus belonging to generalized fuzzy beauty.

Pan-fuzzy-beauty, which tops the hierarchical system of fuzzy beauty, is highly elusive. It can be sensed, but can not be expressed by words. Artistic conception in classical Chinese poetry, the cream of Chinese cultural heritage, is characterized as being connotative, ethereal and mysterious; therefore it is a kind of pan-fuzzy-beauty.

2.2.2 Translation principle based on fuzzy aesthetics

Poetry is the most condensed literary form, and the beauty of poetry resides in none other than its fuzziness whose meaning is subject to the reader's free interpretation. To translate classical Chinese poetry is, in a sense, to transfer in the target language its fuzzy beauty as faithfully as possible.

According to the hierarchical structure of fuzzy beauty, Pan-fuzzy-beauty >generalized fuzzy beauty >definite beauty, it is reasonable for us to elicit the following principle of translation of classical Chinese poetry:

Artistic conception >imagery >form

Therefore, if it is impossible to preserve fuzzy beauty in the three or any two of them at the same time, priority should be given to the translation of fuzzy beauty in artistic conception, with imagery the next focused on and form the last. When rendering a classical Chinese poem into English, the translator should abide by the principle mentioned above.

2.2.3 Imagery as a medium of transferring poetic fuzzy beauty

Although artistic conception is the first and foremost requirement in transferring fuzzy beauty, it can not be treated as a medium of translation. A translation medium should be operational and communicative, acting as the carrier of transferring both culture and information. Imagery is just fit for such a role, not only because images are concrete and culture-specific, but also for the following advantages:

Firstly, image reconstruction helps to leave imagination space for readers. The one-many relation between an image and its connotations provides wide space for readers' various interpretations. Readers have to give free rein to their imagination so as to dig out what its connotations are.

Secondly, image reconstruction helps to form artistic conception. Artistic conception, the concentration of fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry, is constructed with images, yet higher than the latter. It is a harmonious aesthetic quality of poetry. The artistic conception comes into being when images acquire their substance and interact to form a harmonious but dim picture. Artistic conception, a fuzzy set, ethereal and indistinct, is often successfully reproduced by means of images which are rather concrete.

2.3 Summary

Aesthetics of reception enlightens the translator on the techniques for translation. The translator has to be cautious when dealing with the "gaps" and "indeterminacies", i.e. fuzzy beauty, which constitute the "appealing structure" in classical Chinese poetry. Generally, three techniques are suggested: fuzziness to fuzziness, fuzziness to precision, and precision to fuzziness. As to whether to keep the fuzziness or not, the criterion is that the fuzzy beauty to be preserved should run parallel with the target reader's "horizon of expectation".

Fuzzy aesthetics is also of instructive significance in translation of poetic fuzzy beauty in that it lays down the principle the translator should abide by. In the process of transferring poetic fuzzy beauty, priority should be given to fuzzy beauty in artistic conception rather than that in imagery or form. However, artistic conception doesn't qualify as a translation medium which should be communicative and operational. Imagery is just the ideal medium for it not only helps to leave imagination space for readers but also aids in forming artistic conception.

3. TRANSFERRING FUZZY BEAUTY OF CLASSICAL CHINESE POETRY VIA IMAGERY

As has been analyzed in Chapter 2, imagery serves as an ideal medium in transference of poetic fuzzy beauty. In this chapter, further illustration on transferring fuzzy beauty via imagery will be given from the following aspects.

3.1 Fuzzy beauty in images with fuzzy modifiers

3.1.1 Fuzzy beauty of reduplicated words modifying images

Chinese poets often resort to reduplicated words in creating poetic fuzzy beauty. Though they are simply formed by repeating the same words twice, they add much flavor of fuzzy beauty to poetry. The two simple words combined together have miraculous and wonderful power, not only strengthening the artistic effects and poetic senses but putting a veil to the poetic world by either augmenting the number of the image or fortifying the poetic verve.

In Chinese, such reduplicated words as "红红" in "红红的玫瑰" are frequently used, while in English, sequence repetitions are also commonly seen, for instance, "A red, red rose" as in Robert Burns' poem. So generally speaking, reduplicated words modifying images in classical Chinese poetry can be directly rendered into English sequence repetitions which are proper, idiomatic and can evoke similar aesthetic feelings in English readers' mind. An example goes as follows:

迢迢牵牛星，
皎皎河汉女。
纤纤擢素手，
札札弄机杼。

Far, far away the Cowherd star;
Bright, bright riverside Weaving Maid.
Slender, slender her fingers are;
Clack, clack her shuttle's tune is played. (Xu Yuanchong)

Some other techniques can also be used to transfer the fuzzy beauty of reduplicated words modifying images, e.g. interval repetition, alliteration, end rhyme etc. Examples are given below:

Interval repetition:

照野弥弥浅浪，
横空隐隐层霄。

Wave on wave glimmers by the river shores;
Sphere on sphere dimly appears in the sky. (Xu Yuanchong)

Alliteration:

世事茫茫难自料，
春愁黯黯独成眠。

The world's ways- dim and distant, hard to foretell;
Spring griefs- dull and dark, I sleep alone. (Burton Watson)

End rhyme:

无边落木萧萧下，
不尽长江滚滚来。

In the boundless forest, falling leaves swirl and twirl around;
On the endless Yangtze, rolling waves crash and splash along. (Ding Hengqi)

However, the meanings of some reduplicated words are too vague to be explicated, and it is difficult to translate them into English repetitions. For example, "悠悠" is a very beautiful reduplicated word with rich and implicit artistic conception. Under such circumstances, the translator may as well render it into non-repetition.

Non repetition:

念天地之悠悠, 独怆然而涕下。

Version 1

Thinking of the endlessness of heaven and earth,
Alone in despair, my tears fall down. (Burton Watson)

Version 2

The sky and earth forever last,
Here and now I alone shed tears. (Xu Yuanchong)

3.1.2 Fuzzy beauty of approximate numbers modifying images

Approximate numbers possess the quality of indeterminacy and fuzziness. When an approximate number is used to modify an image, its indeterminacy strengthens the fuzzy beauty in the image, thus making the fuzzy picture fuzzier.

Literal translation is advisable when an English counterpart can deliver the fuzzy beauty carried by a Chinese approximate number.

For example:

(烽火连三月,)家书抵万金。

...A family letter is worth ten thousand gold in price.

Chinese and English each have their own norms in terms of usage of approximate number. Sometimes the translator has to make some alteration, by either increasing or decreasing the number, so as to comply with English reader's horizon of expectation.

千山鸟飞绝,
万径人踪灭。

Not a bird o'er the hundreds of peaks,
Not a man on the thousands of trails.

In some cases, the approximate number can be omitted as long as the fuzziness is faithfully delivered.

欲穷千里目,
更上一层楼。

You can enjoy a grander sight,
By climbing to a greater height.

Shift in word class is also helpful in transferring the fuzzy beauty of approximate numbers. Shift can be made from approximate numbers to adjectives, adverbs, participles, verbs, etc.

军书十二卷,(卷卷有爷名。)

The roster consists of many muster rolls...

(有三秋桂子,)十里荷花。

...Lotus flowers bloom far and wide in summer.

(出门登车去,)涕落百余行。

With blinding tears...

(相顾无言,)唯有泪千行。

...But from our eyes tears gushed.

What deserves mentioning is that these techniques aforementioned don't exclude each other. The translator should adopt one or combine several of these techniques to transfer the fuzzy beauty to the best.

3.2 Fuzzy beauty in images derived from syntax

According to James J. Y. Liu, Chinese grammar is fluid, not architectural, whereas in a highly inflected language such as Latin, words are solid bricks with which to build complicated edifices of periods and paragraphs, in Chinese they are chemical elements which form new compounds with great ease. A Chinese word cannot be pinned down to a "part of speech", "gender", "case", etc. but it is a mobile unit which acts on, and reacts with, other units in a constant flux. This enables Chinese poets to write with the greatest possible conciseness, and at the same time achieve impersonal and universal quality by dispensing with all accidental trappings.

The absence of grammatical indicators can give birth to fuzzy beauty in imagery, for instance:

人闲桂花落,
夜静春山空。(王维《鸟鸣涧》)

It is of no consequence whether "人", "桂花", "春山" are singular or plural and whether "人" is/are male or female, as the Chinese language doesn't require any indication of number or gender. The missing of such indicators brings out fuzzy images which enable readers to interpret according to their own horizon of expectations. What's more, the absence of tense allows readers not to interpret the scene from any particular time point, not restricted to the past, now or the future, but to fully feel the timeless tranquility of the spring night.

Frequent missing of subject is another syntactical feature that contribute to the fuzzy beauty of imagery in classical Chinese poetry.

For example:

空山不见人,
但闻人语响。
返景入深林,
复照青苔上。(王维《鹿寨》)

Here, the subject is missing, and consequently, the scene seems to be detached from the poet's own personality, for instead of being "I", the subject can be readily identified with anyone, whether a reader or some imaginary person. A sense of impersonality and universality occurs to the reader's mind, and he is invited to feel the presence of the nature as a fuzzy whole. To retain the fuzziness, it is advisable to resort to the passive tense:

On the empty mountains no one can be seen,
But human voices are heard to resound.
The reflected sunlight pierces the deep forest,
And falls again upon the mossy ground. (Liu Ruoyu)

One more example:

欲把西湖比西子，
浓妆淡抹总相宜。(苏轼《饮湖上》)

West lake may be compared to Lady of the West,
Whether she is richly adorned or plainly dressed. (Xu Yuanchong)

However, in most cases, the translator has to adopt the fuzziness to precision technique and bring out the missing subject according to his understanding due to the rigidity of English grammar .

不识庐山真面目，
只缘身在此山中。(苏轼《题西林壁》)

Of Mountain Lu we cannot make out the true face,
For we are lost in the heart of the very place. (Xu Yuanchong)

3.3 Fuzzy beauty in juxtaposition of images

Chinese poetry is very concise and condensed owing to frequent and seemingly arbitrary omissions of sentential components, even verbs, and as a result, a line can only consist of a sequence of images. The juxtaposition of images forms the totality of the fuzzy beauty in artistic conception, arousing emotional association and enriching poetic context. The following is a typical and much cited example:

枯藤老树昏鸦，
小桥流水人家，
古道西风瘦马，
夕阳西下，
断肠人在天涯。(马致远《天净沙·秋思》)

Version 1:

Autumn

Crows hovering over rugged trees wreathed with rotten vine - the day is about done. Yonder is a tiny bridge over a sparkling stream, and on the far bank, a pretty little bridge. But the traveler has to go on down this ancient road, the west wind moaning, his bony horse groaning, trudging towards the sinking sun, farther and farther away from home. (Weng Xianliang)

Version 2:

Tune: Tian Jing Sha

Withered vines hanging on old branches,
Returning crows croaking at dusk.
A few houses hidden past a narrow bridge,
And below the bridge a quiet creek running.
Down a worn path, in the west wind,
A lean horse comes plodding.
The sun dips down in the west.
And the lovesick traveler is still at the end of the journey. (Ding Zuxin and Burton Raffel)

Version 3:

Autumn Thoughts
Dry vine, old tree, crows at dusk,
Low bridge, stream running, cottages,
Ancient road, west wind, lean nag,
The sun westering,

And one with breaking heart at the sky' edge. (Cyril Birch)

The poet unfolds a scene like a scroll of Chinese painting, and the reader's attention moves from one image to another. The missing of verbs creates a peculiar sense of stillness in movement, and the juxtaposition of fuzzy images forms a whole picture with fuzzy beauty.

In version 1, the translator adopts the style of prose and gives a detailed description of the images, making the implied meaning explicit. Unexpectedly, the translated version undermines the indeterminacy hidden in the original poem and deprives the target readers of the right of participating in recreating the poetic beauty. In version 2, the translator makes the syntactical relationship clear in order to comply with English hypotactic norms; however, implicitness in the original poem is destroyed to some degree. In version 3, the translator intends to retain the syntactical feature of the original, and such translation is better in terms of transferring the fuzzy beauty.

One more example is illustrated:

浮云游子意,
落日故人情。

Version 1:

Drifting clouds - a traveler's will;
Setting sun- an old friend's heart. (Burton Watson)

Version 2:

Those floating clouds are like the wanderer's heart,
Yon sinking sun recalls departed days. (W. J. B. Fletcher)

Version 3:

With floating cloud you'll float away;
Like parting day I'll part with you. (Xu Yuanchong)

The juxtapositions of images, free from syntactical bondage, seems to present a motion picture in which the technique of montage is employed. Since no connectives are used to link them, the relation is somewhat fuzzy.

In version 1, the fuzziness is preserved and the indeterminacy in the line is left for the reader's free association and fulfill, whereas in version 2 and 3, the fuzziness is regrettably lost due to the translators' interpretation.

3.4 Fuzzy beauty in images distinctive of Chinese culture

In classical Chinese poetry, there are many fuzzy images distinctive of Chinese culture, which are usually beyond English readers' understanding. Generally speaking, fuzziness resulting from cultural factors falls into the following categories according to figures of speech.

3.4.1 Fuzzy beauty in allusive images

An allusion is a figure of speech making reference to a famous historical or literary figure, place, thing, or event beyond the work with which the reader is presumably familiar. An allusion may be explicit or implicit; the reference real or imaginary. An appropriate allusion serves to add new meaning to a literary work, and it is left to the reader to make the connection. When an allusion appears as an image in a poem, the image is endowed with rich connotation thus becomes fuzzy. In classical Chinese poetry, there are many allusive images which are unfamiliar to English readers. Generally, there are three ways to translate allusions in classical Chinese poetry: annotation, omission or domestication.

Annotation:

雾失楼台,

月迷津渡，
桃源望断无寻处。

The towers lost in mist,
Dimmed ferry in moonlight,
Peach blossom land ideal beyond the sight. (Xu Yuanchong)

Professor Xu appended an annotation to accustom English readers with the Chinese allusion: the peach blossom land was the Utopia for Chinese literature.

Omission:

邓攸无子寻知命，
潘岳悼亡犹费词。

There have been better man than I to whom heaven denied a son;
There was a poet better than I whose dead wife could not hear him.

Although Deng You and Pan Yue are historical figures, they are not as famous as Li Bai and Du Fu. The translator omits the allusion in the original poem and make plain the implied meaning in the translated version, so that the English reader needn't bother to figure out who these two people are and can grasp the general meaning of the whole poem.

Domestication:

沧海月明珠有泪，
蓝田日暖玉生烟。

In moonlit pearls see tears in mermaid's eyes:
With sun burned mirth let blue jade vaporise.
In the first line, there is a implicit allusion. (Xu Yuanchong)

In the first line hides an allusion. "鲛人有泪" is a well known story in classical Chinese literature, while the story of "the mermaid's tears" is familiar to English readers, and both of the two stories are love romances. Here, the translator flexibly renders the allusion in the first line into an English allusion with the same theme, thus appealing to English readers' horizon of expectations.

3.4.2 Fuzzy beauty in homophonic puns

A homophonic pun refers to the use of two or more words of the same or nearly the same sound with different meanings. In classical Chinese poetry, there are many images with special connotation owing to the homophonic puns under operation. A homophonic pun puts a veil on the image, making it fuzzy and implicit. These images with associative meaning can hardly find their counterparts in English. While translating, the translator should take into consideration both the fuzzy beauty of such images and the target readers' acceptability. More often than not, the fuzziness would be regrettably lost, but sometimes compensation still can be made.

Pun to pun:

东边日出西边雨，
道是无晴却有晴。

In Chinese the word "晴"(clear or fine, as said of weather) is homophonous with the word "情", which means "affection" or "love". In this line the lass implies "He may seem cold", but he does care for me."

In the west it rains, in the east shines the sun,
Is it a fickle, or a constant one? (Ma Hongjun)

"Fickle" refers to the state of weather and attitude toward love, and so does the word "constant". Moreover, they form a pair of antonyms as the words "无晴" and "晴" do in the original poem. The fuzzy flavor of the Chinese poem is faithfully preserved.

Clarification:

春蚕到死丝方尽，
蜡炬成灰泪始干。

Spring silkworm till its death spins silk from lovesick heart;
Candles only when burned up have no tears to shed. (Xu Yuanchong)

In Chinese, "丝" and "思" are identical in sound, thus Chinese readers easily associate "丝" (meaning silk) with "思" (meaning longing for one's beloved). However, an equivalent of such a pun doesn't exist in English. In Xu's translated version, the pun is perfectly clarified by the two skillfully chosen words, "silk" and "lovesick". On the one hand, the meaning is delivered; on the other hand, alliteration formed by "s" brings much musical beauty to English readers, which may be counted as a compensation for the loss of fuzzy beauty.

3.4.3 Fuzzy beauty in symbolic images

A symbolic image is an image that stands for or suggests other images by reason of relation, association, convention, or accidental resemblance; especially a visible sign for an invisible image. Usually the implication of such an image is stereotyped in the course of history. Pun, which has been discussed, is one of the causes of symbolic meaning. Besides, there are other symbolic images that are unique in Chinese culture due to national psychology.

In classical Chinese poetry, for example, the moon usually symbolizes homesickness, and the full moon stands for family reunion, as in the line "举头望明月，低头思故乡", and the Mei blossom is a symbol for nobility, as in the line "零落成泥碾作尘，只有香如故" in 《卜算子·咏梅》 by Lu You.

露从今夜白，
月是故乡明。

Version 1:

The crystal dew is glittering at my feet,
The moon sheds, as of old, her silvery light. (H. A. Giles)

Version 2:

Dew turns into frost since tonight;
The moon viewed at home would be bright. (Xu Yuanchong)

In this poem, the poet expresses his yearning for his family and hometown. Both "月" and "故乡" are central images which should be retained in the translated poem. However, in version 1, due to his ignorance of the symbolic meaning of the moon, Giles leaves out the image of "故乡", therefore he fails to associate the moon with homesickness, impairing the original artistic conception. In version 2, the images are faithful reproduced and the fuzzy beauty preserved.

However, some images may engender sharply different associative meanings in Chinese and English cultures, for example, the owl in Chinese means bad luck, yet it represents wisdom and brightness in English. "玉颜" in Chinese refers to beautiful ladies, but it cannot be literally rendered, for in English, "jade" refers to vulgar girls. In translation, the translator should give due consideration to cultural clash in two languages, and adopt applicable to transfer the fuzzy beauty in such symbolic images.

For example:

玉颜憔悴三年，
谁复商量管弦？

Her face has languished for three years long,
Who would ask her to play on flute or sing a song? (Xu Yuanchong)

Considering different associative meanings of jade in Chinese and English, the translator make clear the symbolic association of the word "玉颜". If it is literally translated, the English counterpart with derogatory connotation will exceed English readers' horizon of expectation. So here it is necessary to employ the fuzziness to precision technique.

4. CONCLUSION

Fuzzy beauty is intrinsic in classical Chinese poetry, and it is embodied in form, imagery and artistic conception. Aesthetics of reception is of instructive significance in the translation of classical Chinese poetry. To transfer poetic fuzzy beauty is, so to speak, to preserve the "indeterminacy" in the original poem. The translator should strike a balance between the "appealing structure" and the target reader' "horizon of expectation", and choose whether to keep the fuzziness or not. Generally, three techniques are suggested: fuzziness-fuzziness, fuzziness-precision, and precision-fuzziness. Layers of fuzzy beauty in classical Chinese poetry correspond to the hierarchical structure of fuzzy beauty in fuzzy aesthetics, and their affinity sheds light on the principle for transferring poetic fuzzy beauty. Though priority should be given to artistic conception, it can not be treated as a translation medium. A translation medium should be operational and communicative. Imagery serves as an ideal medium of transferring fuzzy beauty, not only because it is concrete and culture-specific, but also for the fact that reconstruction of images helps to form artistic conception and leave space of imagination for the reader. In translation of poetic fuzzy beauty via imagery, problems may crop up as to how to deal with images with fuzzy modifiers, images in syntax, juxtaposition of images and images distinctive of Chinese culture. The translator should abide by the principle and flexibly adopt the techniques to transfer the fuzzy beauty to the best.

Due to the limit of time, reference and the author's knowledge on the subject, this paper only scratches the surface of English translation of classical Chinese poetry. And the author is unable to give all the problems involved thorough analyses and perfect solutions. There is inevitably much space for improvement and the author sincerely hopes that this paper can call for further and deeper studies in the field of English translation of fuzzy beauty of classical Chinese poetry.

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