A Comparative Study on the Translation of *Fairy Tale* From the Perspective of the "Three Beauties Theory"

XIA Jing

University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, China

Fairy Tale is the English version of the Chinese song *Legend*, which enjoys great popularity in China. As a result, once *Fairy Tale* was released, it was widely sought after by people and has many Chinese versions online. From the perspective of Xu Yuanchong's "Three Beauties Theory", this paper makes a comparative analysis of three Chinese versions from three aspects of beauty in meaning, beauty in sound, and beauty in form, and discusses the application of "three beauties".

Keywords: *Fairy Tale*, Xu Yuanchong, Three Beauties Theory, translation of contrast

An Overview of Xu Yuanchong's "Three Beauties"

Xu Yuanchong (2003, p. 90) believed that poetry translation should pursue three beauties, that is, the translation should not only convey the meaning of the original poem, but also convey the beauty of sound and form. Song and poetry are interlinked and therefore applicable. The translation should try to keep the sentence structure of the original poem (such as neatness, parallelism, conciseness, etc.), which is beauty in form. The cadence, rhythm, and rhyme of the original works should be fully reflected; this is the beauty in sound. At the same time, the translation can bring the reader to the heart of the moved and shocked, emotional resonance like original works, this is beauty in meaning. The basis of the three beauties is the similarity of meaning, sound, and form (Xu, 1987, pp. 70-77). Due to various different factors, it is usually difficult for the translator to perfectly interpret the "three beauties" in the real translation. Based on this, Xu Yuanchong (2006, p. 58) proposed that if the "three beauties" cannot be fully expressed, the translator should firstly convey the "beauty in meaning" of the original work, and then try his (her) best to express the "beauty in sound" and "beauty in form".

Analysis of the Original *Fairy Tale*

Fairy Tale is the English version of the Chinese song *Legend*, which was released in 2008. The melody is melodious, the lyrics are emotional and the song is rhythmic. Here is the part of lyrics of *Fairy Tale*:

> In that misty morning when I saw your smiling face
> You only look at me and I was yours
> When will I see you again
> When will the sky stop to rain
> When will the stars start to shine

XIA Jing, Master, postgraduate student, Foreign Language Institute, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, China.

When will I know that you're mine
Did I ever meet you in the sunshine
And when we were both a thousand years away
Did I ever hold you in the moonlight
Did we make every minute last another day

The Beauty of Rhythm and Form

The full text consists of 16 sentences. The number of syllables in each sentence is uneven, the middle part of the rhyme is neat, and the full text seems to be unchanged, thus adding a special phonological beauty. Among them, the fifth to eighth sentences use parallel rhetoric, the sentence patterns are neat, and they sound pleasant. Beside this, it is emotionally progressive and very contagious. In addition, the fifth to ninth sentences use the same rhyme, all ending with /ɪn/, and the 10th and 12th sentences also maintain the rhyme of /eɪ/ across lines.

The Beauty of Artistic Conception

The original work uses a variety of images, such as: "misty morning", "smiling face", and "stars". These images create a hazy mood, as if the encounter between the hero and the heroine is a dream. The hero faintly sees the smile of the heroine and he is fascinated. But she turned and disappeared. The scene when the hero looks forward to meeting again is on a rainy day, a sunny day, or a moonlit night; the choice of these images make the emotions are vividly expressed, giving readers and listeners a strong resonance.

Comparative Analysis of Three Chinese Versions

Fairy Tale has many online translation versions. The author chooses three versions for comparison and analysis. Because I cannot find three versions of translators, I use Translation One, Translation Two, and Translation Three to refer to the three versions. The first translation is the official translation provided by the lyrics. The second and third translations are poetic styles with similar styles. Both have similarities and have their own characteristics. I will choose a few examples to explain the presentation of "three beauties".

Example one:

In that misty morning when I saw your smiling face, You only look at me and I was yours

Translation version one:

在那个薄雾清晨，我看到你微笑的脸庞。只那一眼，你便将我俘虏。

Translation version two:

白雾深深，邂尔于晨。浅笑嫣颜，吾心深陷。

Translation version three:

晨雾依稀隐笑颜，入伊眼帘，入我心田。

Comparing these three translations, the first version is more vernacular than the latter two. In terms of "beauty in meaning", the three translations all highlight the images of "misty morning" and "smiling face" in the original text, creating a hazy atmosphere. The first version translates it as "薄雾清晨", which is very appropriate to the original expression. The second version translates them into "白雾深深，邂尔于晨", highlighting the original artistic conception of "misty morning" in one sentence and expressing this emotion more complete and full. The third version is "晨雾依稀隐笑颜", which is very appropriate to describe the hazy feeling of the fog and delicately depicts the hazy state of the woman in the morning fog.

Based on "beauty in sound", the first version is relatively simple. In contrast, version two and three boldly break through the limitations of the source text and are very aesthetic in the prosodic treatment of the translation. The rhyme between two short sentences of the first sentence in version two is /en/, the two short sentences of the second sentence end in rhyme /an/. In the third version, the first sentence rhymes with the second sentence /an/, which is more complete and rhythmic in the view of "beauty in sound".

From the perspective of "beauty in form", the second and third versions are concise and neat. In particular, the second version respectively selected four phrases in four-character form, which not only makes the sentence pattern antithesis neat, but also concisely expresses the artistic conception of the original work, which is very eye-catching. The third version is slightly inferior to the second one in sentence comparison, but it is also very concise. The author thinks the description of artistic conception of third version is more complete.

Example two:

When will I see you again, When will the sky stop to rain, When will the stars start to shine, When will I know that you are mine

Translation version one:

何时能再见你，天空何时停止下雨，星辰何时会闪耀，我何时才能拥有你。

Translation version two:

何日再见你笑颜，何时天晴思雨断，何时众星光华灿，何日相携伊人还。

Translation version three:

何时才能再相见，何时待到连阴雨，何时星辰光芒闪，何时抱得美人归园田。

From the perspective of "beauty in meaning", the three translations all contain the images of "rain" and "stars", but based on the view of aesthetic, the first translation simply describes the state of rain, slightly insipid. The second use "天晴思雨断", which not only describes the image of "rain", but also gives it a richer meaning. This is the rain of love-sickness. The third translates it as "连阴雨", which depicts the long time of the rainy day, but the original sentence literally means "waiting for the rainy day to stop". Here, the translator translates it as "待到连阴雨", which seems to be inconsistent with the meaning of the original text.

From the perspective of "beauty in sound", all three versions are parallel sentences. There is a slight change in the first version, but it still maintains the parallelism sentence pattern as a whole. Version two rhymes at the end with /an/, which maintains the rhythm of the original rhyme. In the third version, except for the second sentence, it also roughly rhymes /an/. Here, the translator translates the second sentence as "何时待到连阴雨", is it the best? The author is more inclined to rhyme. So, it can be re-translated as "何时待到阴雨连". So that it can better conveys the strong emotional expression effect of the parallelism sentence.

Based on "beauty in form", the three translations all achieve the basic antithesis of sentence patterns and the language is concise. Each line of the translation basically maintains seven syllables, which is basically consistent with each sentence of the original poem, which not only maintains the formal beauty of the original sentence, but also expresses the artistic effect of overlapping chapters and sentences and repeated chanting of the original poem (Zhang, 2018, p. 167).

Example three:

Did I ever meet you in the sunshine, And when we were both a thousand years away, Did I ever hold you in the moonlight, Did we make every minute last another day

Translation version one:

你我是否曾在阳光下相遇，那相遇仿佛隔了千年，我是否曾在月光下拥你入怀，是否让每一分钟都变成了永久。

Translation version two:

却疑非梦曾相见，交睫之罅愈千年，再疑月下曾执手，共写瞬隙若经天。

Translation version three:

曾否邂逅晴潋滟，曾否等待逾千年，曾否月色撩人手相牵，曾否把须臾萤火熔成恒久想念。

Based on "beauty in meaning", the image of "sunshine" in the original text is translated into "阳光" in the first version, while the second hides the image. Translation three translates it with "晴潋滟", the meaning of "sunshine" for the fullness of processing, which is the best translation in terms of aesthetic delivery of imagery. In the last sentence, the words "须臾萤火" and "恒久想念" can be seen that the translator's words are concise and ingenious, and at the same time, the sentence fully reflect the protagonist's deep feelings for the woman.

From the perspective of "beauty in sound", the version one is relatively plain. Compared with the second translation, version three performs better in "beauty in sound". The original sentence is the alternate rhyming form of "ABAB". In the second translation, the first, second and fourth sentences all end in the rhyme /ian/. In the third translation, the translator still treats it as a rhyming form in all sentences, which is consistent with the four sentences above. The translator adopts the pattern of four rhetorical questions to fully convey the woman's haunting state. It gives a person a feeling full affection and endless aftertaste (Zhang, 2018, pp. 139-140, 143).

In terms of "beauty in form", the language of first translation is not concise enough, but rather redundant. The second version is four seven-character forms, which is the best one with neat sentence pattern and concise language. The third translation is a series of four parallel sentences, which are very neatly matched. Except for the slight asymmetry of the last two sentences, it does not affect the conveying of the artistic conception.

Conclusion

Based on the theory of three beauties, each version has its own merits. The readers listen carefully, taste earnestly, from the morning fog encounter, a glance, love at first sight to the haunting, a sad love story emerged in front of the eyes (Wang, 2013). If a translation wants to reproduce the original meaning and lasting appeal, the translator must deeply understand the original poem, and consider the different cultural background, adopt appropriate translation skills, pay attention to the whole and grasp the details (Lin, 2019, pp. 48-50). Only by doing, so can he or she achieve the complete reunification of artistic conception, rhythm, and form.

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