

A Study of the Wilhelm/Baynes's Translation of *The I Ching* From the Perspective of Translation Aesthetic

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The I Ching, the first of the scriptures, is the cultural source of Taoism and Confucianism. The translation of *The I Ching* can promote Chinese culture and make it last for a long time. In this paper, from the aesthetics of Liu Miqing's translation, the translation of *The I Ching* by Wilhelm and Baynes is analysed through formal system of the sound, word, and discourse level and the non-formal system of "emotion" and "ambition", and "image" and "symbol".

Keywords: *The I Ching*, Liu Miqing, translation aesthetics, Wilhelm/Baynes

Introduction

The I Ching is the source of living water for Chinese civilisation and is considered to be "the first of the scriptures" and "the source of the way". The reason for the longevity of *The I Ching* lies not only in its philosophical and scientific nature, but also in its aesthetic value. In *The I Ching*, there is an implicit richness of aesthetic elements, which show the beating pulse of life through the mysterious hexagrams and lines, providing the original point of birth for the classical Chinese aesthetic categories. We can regard *The I Ching* as the goblet of classical Chinese aesthetic thought. How to accurately convey these distinctive Chinese aesthetic elements through translations to the rest of the world has become the focus of many sinologists' research. In the more than 140 years of English translations of *The I Ching*, the two most influential translations were James Legge's (1815-1897), published in 1882, and Richard Wilhelm's (1873-1930)/Cary F. Baynes's (1930), published in 1950. The former is known as the "Old Testament in the study of Yi" in the West, while Wilhelm's German translation is known as the "New Testament in the study of Yi" (Xiang, 2014). Baynes translated the book into English according to a translation of Wilhelm's German version and he inherited Wilhelm's translation aims and ideas. Their target audience was not limited to experts and scholars, but the general western public (Ren, 2008). In this paper, under the guidance of Liu Miqing's translation aesthetics, the English translation of *The I Ching* by Cary F. Baynes is analysed in an attempt to discover how the author presented the beauty of source texts in the formal system of sound, word, and discourse level, and the non-formal system from "emotion and ambition" and "image and symbol".

Literature Review

The real study of translation aesthetics began in the 1930s and 1940s. During this period, many foreign

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translation schools began to combine translation and aesthetics and initiated the exploration of translation aesthetics. Translation theorists of this period, such as Tytler (2007) and Newmark (2001) all mentioned the need to pay attention to aesthetics in translations (Liang, 2012). In China, the aesthetic theories of translation have also blossomed. Yan Fu's translation standards and Xu Yuanchong's theory of the three beauties are well worth studying. In 1995, Liu Miqing published his book *Introduction to Translation Aesthetics*, which builds a literary framework for the theoretical edifice of modern translation aesthetics and analyses how aesthetic thinking is reflected in textual transformations under different circumstances. Translation aesthetics reveals the aesthetic origins of Chinese translation studies (Fang, 2004). Liu Miqing's translation aesthetics is a blend of traditional Chinese literary theory, scientific analysis, and aesthetic aesthetics. It has developed a school of its own based on the inheritance of Chinese aesthetics while drawing on western aesthetics (Li, 2007). The material of the original text that the translator has to process is the "translation aesthetic object", but the original text with vague content and no translation value cannot be called the "translation aesthetic object" (Liu, 2005). All "translation aesthetic objects" have two systematic attributes, the relational attribute and the ontological attribute. The relational attribute mainly discusses the relationship between the aesthetic information of the original text and the aesthetic information of the translated text. The ontological attributes are concretely reflected in the aesthetic composition of the translation aesthetic object, which is mainly divided into the non-formal system and the formal system. The formal system includes the aesthetic information in sound, word, and discourse, while the non-formal system consists of "emotion and ambition", "image and symbol".

Formation System

Form is the configuration of the aesthetic object of translation, including external form, internal form, and conceptual form (Liu, 2005). The meaning and emotion of the translated aesthetic object is embedded in the form. In order to reproduce the aesthetic message of the original text, we cannot do without the study of form. In this section, the aesthetic message of *The I Ching* is analyzed in sound, word, and discourse in the English translation of Cary F. Baynes's.

Reproduction in Sound

One of the basic means by which language carries aesthetic information is phonetics. In both Chinese and English, texts focus on phonetic beauty, particularly in ancient Chinese texts. However, due to the differences between the Chinese and English languages, exact formal correspondence can be encountered but not found, so when formal correspondence is not possible, correspondence in terms of effect can be sought. When it comes to phonetic beauty, the use of superlatives is naturally inseparable.

Example 1: 震来虩虩，笑言哑哑。震苏苏，震行无眚。震索索，视矍矍，征凶。（易经·震卦）

Translation: Shock comes-oh, oh! Then follow laughing words-ha, ha! Shock comes and makes one distraught. Shock goes hither and thither.

There are five superimposed words in the Zhen Gua of *The I Ching*, namely 虩虩, 哑哑, 苏苏, 索索, 矍矍. "虩虩" describes a person who is very fearful and anxious. The word "哑哑" describes a person who laughs in a low voice. Baynes translates these two words as "oh, oh" and "ha, ha" respectively, which not only enhances the vividness of the original text, but also uses the corresponding superlative to match it. The translation is playful and cute while conveying the ideas of the original. At the same time, it also enhances the

sense of rhythm and rhyme, preserving phonetic characteristics of the source language and enhancing the readability of the text. The word “索索” is used to describe a person who is depressed, and “矍矍” to describe a person who is very frightened. The translator's translation of the two superlatives as “hither and thither” omits some of the content of the original text, but accurately conveys the main idea of the sentence, which is “danger”. There is no doubt that the translation captures the essence of the original and reproduces its phonetic beauty.

Reproduction in Word

The aesthetic message of words strongly reflects the basic characteristics of linguistic symbols in their entirety. Aesthetic information at the word level is mainly concerned with word choice, register, and collocation. Words with aesthetic value need to meet the three criteria of “accuracy, beauty and precision”.

Example 2: 龙战于野，其血玄黄。（易经·坤卦）

Translation: Dragons fight in the meadow; their blood is black and yellow.

This sentence indicates that the dragons fight in the meadow and their blood stains the sky and the earth red. In these few words, we can see the sun setting, the red of the sky and the blood on the ground reflecting each other. The dragons are bruised and dying, which shows the gruesome battle. In the translation, the word “野” is translated as “meadow”, which refers to the endless grass. The green grass gives people a sense of prosperity which contrasts sharply with the bloody red of the post-war period. It also connotes the translator's reverence for life and his desire for new things. The original meaning of “玄黄” refers to a state of bloodshed, but the translator directly translates this state as “black and yellow”. The blood is red, while the more it is shed, the darker it is, and the more seriously it is wounded. By mixing the two colors we can visually see the dragon's miserable state. The interplay of black, yellow, and the green paints such a miserable picture. So in this sentence the translator has chosen three very subtle words, which shows the beauty of the translation's diction.

Reproduction in Discourse

Aesthetic information in discourse can be divided into three categories: syntactic variation, frequency, and discursive-functional arrangement of sentences. Syntactic variation refers to the use of grammatical ambiguity and the adoption of structures that differ from normal grammar. Frequency refers to the use of repetition of forms to produce beauty, such as omission, prose, and counterpoint. Linguistic and functional sentence arrangement, this type of aesthetic information, is embedded in the overall beauty of the form and belongs to the macro level.

Example 3: 往蹇来誉。往蹇来连。往蹇来硕。（易经·蹇卦）

Translation: Going leads to obstructions; coming meets with praise. Going leads to obstructions; coming leads to union. Going leads to obstructions; coming leads to great good fortune.

The rhetoric of these lines is enhanced by the parallelism of prose, which not only gives the language a sense of formal beauty, but also explains the truth more eloquently and thoroughly: We must know how to be able to stop in time in case of danger. After retreating, we must wait for the right moment and then find another way around it. We also must be able to share the same boat with those around us and always think of the interests of them. Ultimately it will benefit each other. In the translation, the author also adopts the technique of prose according to the original text. The first half of the sentence uses the same sentence “Going leads to obstructions”, which simply and directly indicates that advancing will encounter difficulties. The words

“coming” and “going” rhyme with the head which is compact and neatly structured and is rich in formal beauty. Although not fully explained, this expression, which contains the essence of profound Chinese culture, is refreshing and eye-opening to the readers. It also can stimulate their interest in exploring the original culture.

Non-formal Systems

The non-formal system refers to the non-external parts that cannot be inferred intuitively. Its essence is ambiguity, so it needs to be grasped as a whole. The non-formal system is made up of emotion, ambition, image, and symbol. In this section, we will look at the two components of “emotion and ambition”, “image and symbol”.

Emotion and Ambition

“Emotion” and “ambition” refer to the emotional aspirations expressed by the author of the original text, which is the soul of the text. Generally speaking, “emotion” and “ambition” are inseparable and intertwined with each other. It is a basic requirement of the translation to reproduce the “emotion” and “ambition” of the original text.

Example 4: 鹤鸣在阴，其子和之，我有好爵，吾与尔靡之。（易经·中孚卦）

Translation: A crane is calling in the shade. Its young answers it. I have a good goblet. I will share it with you.

A crane is calling in the shade of a mountain, and the young will answer it. I have a good goblet of wine, and I will share it with you. The immortal crane calls in the shade of the mountain, which is difficult for ordinary birds and animals to hear, but only his kind can detect and give a response to it. In this context, the cranes refer to people who are like-minded. If they are honest and support with each other, they will fly to the sky and eventually get the results they want. I have a pot of good wine here. If you are honest to me, I would like to drink it with you. The author expresses his desire for honesty through the crane and the wine, warning people that only honesty is the foundation of a person's life. Likewise, a king can only govern his country well if he is honest with his people. In the translation, the author translates the words “鹤” and “爵” as “crane” and “goblet”. This gives us a picture of cranes flying in the sky and the author drinking wine in the mountains. We can feel a sense of arrogance and solitude that mirrors the emotions the author is trying to express.

Image and Symbol

In ancient Chinese poetry, “Image” and “Symbol” are combined, with “Image” referring to artistic conception and “Symbol” to the representative.

Example 5: 睽孤。见豕负涂，载鬼一车，先张之弧，后说之弧。（易经·睽卦）

Translation: Isolated through opposition, one sees one's companion as a pig covered with dirt, as a wagon full of devils. First one draws a bow against him, first one draws a bow against him, then one lays the bow aside.

The word “睽” means to disobey others. Two people disobey each other, resulting in isolation and bad manners. On the road one man saw a pig covered with mud and a cart full of people dressed like totems running. First he tried to shoot them with his bows and arrows, but he put them down. There are four imagery in this sentence, “豕”, “鬼”, “车”, and “弧”. We can't help but hold our breath as we come face to face with pigs and grotesque people in a scary forest, not knowing the good or evil of them. As we read this, we know that a counterattack is imminent. Here the translator translates the imagery as “pig”, “devil”, “wagon”, and “bow”. The word “鬼” refers to person wearing a totem. Instead of translating it into “person”, the translator translates

it as “devil” according to the literal meaning of the original. This not only shows the crisis of the situation, but also the fear and helplessness of the main character, which adds a kind of eerie and horrible atmosphere.

Conclusion

Under the guidance of Liu Miqing's translation aesthetics, the following conclusions can be drawn from the study of the Richard Wilhelm's/Cary F. Baynes's translation of *The I Ching*: Firstly, in terms of the aesthetic reproduction of the formal system, when it is not possible to achieve complete correspondence in form, correspondence can be formed in effect to give the same aesthetic feeling. Secondly, in terms of the aesthetic reproduction of non-formal systems, “emotion”, “ambition”, “image”, and “symbol” are the essence of the canonical texts. When translating a canonical text, the translator must grasp the overall emotional tone of the text. If the translation can reproduce the aesthetic message of both the formal and non-formal systems, this is naturally the highest level of translation, but when the two conflict with each other, more attention should be paid to the “emotion” and “ambition”, “image” and “symbol”.

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