

Analysis of Three Beauties Theory in Xu Yuanchong's English Translation of Classical Chinese Love Poems

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Abstract

This study explores Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties Theory and its manifestation in translating Classical Chinese love poems into English. The Three Beauties Theory emphasizes achieving beauty in meaning, sound, and form to preserve the original's aesthetic and emotional depth. Using a qualitative approach, the study examines five of Xu's translated poems selected to represent these three facets. Data were drawn from Xu's published translations, and thematic analysis was applied to evaluate how well his work maintains the nuanced, poetic qualities of the source material. The results of the analysis reveal both the strengths and limitations of the Three Beauties Theory in capturing the original poems' cultural resonance and artistic integrity. The findings of this study highlight Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties theory as a significant method in cross-cultural literary communication and a valuable framework for future translators to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps while retaining the artistic integrity of classical poetry.

1. INTRODUCTION

The translation of Classical Chinese poetry, dating back to the sixteenth century, presents unique challenges. The conciseness and pictorial nature of the classical Chinese language, along with its monosyllabic character, contribute to the poetic expression: imagery, symmetry, and compression. Translators face the task of adapting these elements to the English language while preserving the original's meter and essence. In 1979, Xu Yuanchong introduced the Three Beauties Theory, advocating for translations that are as aesthetically pleasing as the original in semantic, phonological, and stylistic aspects. This theory emphasizes the importance of capturing the original poem's artistic essence: the beauty of meaning, the beauty of sound and the beauty of form. The aim of this paper is through the analysis of the selected poems to understand how Xu balances fidelity to the original text with his Three Beauties theory and to gain insights into how Xu achieves the balance between faithfulness to the original text and the necessity of adapting to the linguistic and cultural alterations of the English language.

Love is an everlasting theme in Chinese poetry, and Classical Chinese poems can be emotional, reserved, moderate, and tender. Seeking the connection and communication with nature spiritually makes Classical Chinese love poems beautiful and unique. Classical Chinese love poetry is a unique linguistic art form characterized by its distinctive rhythms, harmonious rhymes, concise language, profound connotations, and rich artistic concepts. As the predominant medium for creating classical Chinese literature, poetry represents a valuable facet of Chinese traditional culture (Portal, 2014, p 5-7). Moreover, poetry and music have

been inseparable in Chinese art forms: in the “*Great Preface*” to *Shijing The Book of Songs*, it describes the relationship between poetry and music as “言之不足，故嗟歎之，嗟歎之不足，故歌詠之。” – “*If words are not sufficient, then sigh them forth; if sighing is not sufficient, then sing them.*” (Zhang, 2013).

The analysis of this paper aims to shed light on Xu Yuanchong's distinguishing approach and contributes to a more expansive understanding of the complexities of translating poetry across cultural and linguistic scopes. This paper delves into the English translations of Classical Chinese love poems, with a particular focus on Xu Yuanchong's application of the Three Beauties Theory. This paper consists of three parts: An introduction to the features of Classical Chinese love poems, an introduction to Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties Theory and his translation strategies and the analysis of five selected poems to explore Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties Theory in his English translations. The conclusion part will sum up the findings in the research and analysis of this paper.

This exploration seeks to appreciate the artistry and challenges of translating the sublime beauty of Classical Chinese love poems into English, guided by Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties Theory.

1.1. The Features Of Classical Chinese Love Poems

In Classical Chinese poems, the most essential element is the characters. One must pay attention to the characters and the rhythm between them to achieve a harmonious sound and flow while reading an article, which is particularly important in poetry that can be sung. Therefore, it requires the language of poetry to have a sense of music because Chinese has a significant feature of using monosyllabic characters, combining characters to form words, words to form sentences, and sentences to form a text. The fluctuation of voice is significant as an external part of the article. During the Southern Dynasties (5th century AD), Zhou Yong and Shen Yue first proposed the requirements for poetic rhythm: Zhou Yong's “*Four Tone Rhyme Cutting*” and Shen Yue's “*Four Tone Score*” both systematically expounded on this in theory, such as “Four Tones” and “eight rhythmical errors” (Huang, 2022).

To understand and translate Classical Chinese Love poems well, we cannot ignore the three elements that constitute poetic prosody:

1. Pingze-Level and oblique tones

Pingze, also known as level and oblique tones in English, is most important in regulated poetry. There are four tones in ancient Chinese: flat tone, rising tone, falling tone, and entering tone. The completeness of Chinese tones led to a qualitative change in the medieval phonological system (typological transformation), triggering the second rhythmic revolution in the history of Chinese phonology, which led to the emergence of modern-style poetry and the innovative construction of rhythmic poetry (Feng, 2023).

2. Ya yun- Rhyme

The rhythm of classical poetry includes two aspects: format and sound, and sound also includes tone and rhyme. Chinese characters are composed of two parts: initial consonant and final vowel. Characters with the same final vowel are called homophones. The last character of the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth sentences in regulated poetry must be a homophonic character called rhyming. In addition, regulated poetry must have one rhyme to the end, and changing rhymes are not allowed in the middle. Although Classical Chinese rhymes are based on the syllables but mainly are monosyllabic. Rhyming became an essential feature of Chinese poetry three thousand years earlier than it was rooted in English poetry (Kwong, 2009, pp198-205).

3. Dui Zhang - Antithetical Sentences

As mentioned above, the rhythm of poetry includes two aspects: format and tone. The tone and rhyme belong to the rhythm of sound, while the contrast belongs to the poetic form. According to Wang Li (*Chinese Poetry Rhythm* 1947/2015, p18), antithesis refers to words of the same part of speech corresponding sequentially in a sentence and a pair of sentences. Antithesis is necessary for regulated poetry, regardless of the five, seven, or arrangement rules. In the four

couplets of five-character or seven-character-regulated poetry, the first and last couplets can be opposed. Except for the first and last couplets, no matter how many sentences are in the middle, they must be compared.

As an object of translation studies, the examination of the scansion of Classical Chinese love poems plays a vital role and among various elements of scansion, rhythm, rhyme and vocabulary are the main focuses, since the rhythm closely tied to meter, influences the flow and musicality of a poem. Chinese people mainly rely not on religion but on poetry to achieve transcendence of reality and emotional satisfaction. Chinese people not only sing about our lives and soothe our souls with poetry but also use poetry to enlighten and shape their spiritual world, which is the most dynamic inheritor of poetry and etiquette. Poetry represents the standard aesthetic orientation and value pursuit of the Chinese nation. Chinese poetry was born in the production and life of the Chinese people and grew up in the communication and integration of the Chinese nation.

The discovery of the features of classical Chinese poems is crucial for analyzing the manifestation of Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties Theory in his English translation of classical Chinese love poems. The foundational appreciation of the rich cultural, historical, and aesthetic value of classical Chinese poems is essential for evaluating any translation accurately and grasping how effectively Xu Yuanchong's translations preserve or transform these integral aspects

2. XU YUANCHONG'S THREE BEAUTIES THEORY

2.1. Introduction of Three Beauties Theory

The theory of Three Beauties was proposed by Lu Xun¹ in the first article, "*From The Characters to the Article*", in "*Outline of the History of Chinese Literature*". By Lu Xun, the three beauties are: the beauty of meaning is to touch the heart, the beauty of sound is to touch the ears, and the beauty of form is to touch the eyes. Xu Yuanchong used it in translation, and it became the theory of "Three beauties" in translation. That is to say, the translated poem should be able to move the readers' hearts in the same way as the original poem does, which is the beauty of meaning; it should have the same pleasant rhythm as the original poem, which is the beauty of sound; and it should also maintain the form of the original poem as beautiful as possible (entry point, confrontation, etc.) which is the beauty of form (Xu, 2003, p85).

Xu Yuanchong's translation thoughts are based on ancient Chinese philosophical ideas and are scientifically innovative while maintaining the beauty of traditional Chinese culture. Throughout his extensive experience in translation, he has developed a systematic concept of translation aesthetics. (Chen Jing, 2022) This systematic concept of translation aesthetics can be summarized as "the art of beautification and creating excellence is like a competition". It includes the theory of three beauties: the beauty of meaning, the beauty of sound, and the beauty of form; the theory of three potentials: advantages, the balance of power, and disadvantages; the theory of three transformations: deepening, equality, and simplicity; and the theory of three types of knowledge: knowing, favouring, and enjoying. (Xu, 2003, p79). Xu Yuanchong, based on his rich practical experience in translation, can summarize a theory with a relatively complete framework, strict logic and guiding solid value.

2.2. The Beauty of Meaning

The Beauty of Meaning means that the translation should reproduce the meaning and artistic conception of the original. According to Xu Yuanchong, reproducing the profound meaning of the original poem is primarily accomplished through words and images, which capture the beauty of the original poem. When it comes to the faithfulness of the original meaning of the poems, one of the biggest challenges is the metaphors and metonymies in Classical Chinese

¹ Lu Xun (or Lu Hsun, pronounced "Lu Shun"; 1881-1936) one of China's greatest modern writer, literature critic, and revolutionist of the 20th century.

love poems. Suling Yu in her research of metaphors and metonymies in Classical Chinese poetry pointed out that “The use of metaphors and metonymies has a long history in Classical Chinese poetry. Poets of Classical Chinese poetry usually use plants, birds, beasts, fish, insects, farm animals, the sun, the moon, stars, and household stuff like fans, curtains, candles, and patterns on quilts as vehicles for tenors and images for conveying the messages of the poem. In addition, the natural phenomenon or the behaviour of birds or animals has something in common with the event being discussed or is related to the emotion of the poet or the subject matter” (2015). Additionally, she discovered that in the English translation of Classical Chinese poetry translated by British and American translators in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the translators occasionally or often deleted or omitted the original poems, or added metaphors in the translation which is absent in the original as alterations which could reduce the coherence of the poem (Yu, 2015, p3).

2.3. The Beauty of Sound

In Xu Yuanchong’s translation of Classical Chinese love poems, phonological recreation encompasses various aspects of the sounds and pronunciation patterns utilized in the translation process. This recreation focuses on examining how the translator effectively represents the original Chinese phonology within the target language. Yuan Xingpei² once said, “Poets should not only use the meaning contained in language to influence readers’ emotions but also mobilize the sound of language to move readers’ hearts, making poetry produce musical effects” (Xu, 2003 p 85).

It is far from enough to translate Classical Chinese Love poetry into English and only convey the poetic meaning of the original poem because poetry has its characteristics, and ignoring these characteristics can cause irreparable damage to it. Phonology is the most crucial and indispensable feature of poetry. Without it, words arranged according to grammatical rules cannot be considered poetry but rather general prose. The rhythm of Chinese-regulated poetry is mainly composed of the regular arrangement of the tones and tones of characters. The rhyme pattern of classical Chinese poetry mainly consists of the first- and second lines rhyming (the first line may not be rhymed), followed by double rhymes. Rhythmic poetry requires one rhyme to the end, while longer classical poetry can also change rhymes in the middle. It is almost impossible to use the same rhymes on the same words in English translation as the ones in the original poems (David Hawkes, 1964, p99), and the essential reason is that in English rhyme is at the last stresses vowel and of the speech sounds following that vowel: late-fate; follow-hollow” (Abrams, 1999, p.273). Xu Yuanchong often uses accompanying rhyme and intersecting rhyme when translating poetry. Xu claims that “creative transformation” is “the best way to regain poetry is to recreate it”, thus “a poetic translation should be as beautiful as the original in meaning, sound and, if possible, in form” (Xu, 1987, pp 5-6).

2.4. The Beauty of form

Xu Yuanchong believes that the aesthetic beauty of poetry translation mainly lies in reproducing the aesthetic beauty of the original poem in terms of sentence length, contrast, and other aspects (Xu, 1987). Classical Chinese love poetry is an art that differentiates it from other literary genres. It is concise, poetic, and has beautiful sound and neat form. Chinese characters are conducive to cultivating the formal beauty of poetry. However, composing poetry is not an easy task; skilled poets can always be adept at expressing meaning through writing. English is an alphabetical writing system, with each word composed of an unequal number of letters. However, the difficulty of translating Chinese classical poetry with concise words and rich meanings into English poetry with limited steps in the rhythmic form is self-evident. The difficulty is even greater if the syllables in a translated poem’s lines are equal. It is an undoubted challenge for the translators to reflect on the symmetrical or parallel structure commonly used in the original poem (Xu, 2003).

2.5. Translation strategies in Xu’s English translations of Classical Chinese poems

² Yuan Xingpei, born April 18, 1936, a Chinese leading scholar, educator, author, and political leader, known for his public service and publications on Chinese literature.

With the growth of Xu Yuanchong in translation practice, he achieved fruitful results through his love for classical poetry, enthusiasm for the dissemination of Chinese culture, diligence in learning and practice, and the establishment of a broad theoretical system. However, due to the differences between cultures and languages in different backgrounds, translators may need help with the specific content to express it accurately and perfectly while maintaining the original poem's charm, thought, and emotion. Xu claims that the translation should make the readers enjoy the aesthetics of the original poems, as if the poet was writing it in the target language which is the recreation of the original text, and it should avail the advantages of the target language to enrich the Culture of the World (Xu, 2003 p243-246). Moreover, he considered the optimization of translation as beautifying art, creating excellence like competition (Xu, 2000).

Xu Yuanchong's translation strategies, as detailed in his 1989 work, incorporate the "Three Transformations": equalization, particularization, and generalization. These transformations represent his unique strategies for translating Chinese poetry into English, aiming to convey the original text's meanings and emotions. Equalization involves balancing the source and target languages, ensuring the translation is as impactful as the original. Particularization focuses on deepening specific aspects of the poem to highlight its nuances, while generalization simplifies certain elements to make the poem more accessible to a broader audience. These comprehensive methods accentuate Xu's commitment to preserving the integrity and beauty of Chinese poetry in English translations (Xu, 1989, pp 79-81).

3. ANALYSIS OF XU YUANCHONG'S THREE BEAUTY THEORY IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF CLASSICAL CHINESE LOVE POEMS

3.1. Literature material selection

A comprehensive search of Xu Yuanchong's English translations of Classical Chinese love poetry was conducted. The relevant materials for this research include published books, online databases, and academic articles. The translation materials selected for analysis were chosen based on their representation of the Three Beauties theory and their accessibility to English language readers. The selection targeted to provide a diverse representation of Classical Chinese Love poems, covering love themes, tones, and imagery from different dynasties in various poetic forms. The sample poems are considered appropriate for a detailed qualitative analysis by examining the manifestation of the Three Beauties theory in various contexts.

3.2. Methodology

The analysis of Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties theory in classical Chinese love poems is conducted through a qualitative lens:

1. Semantic Analysis of the Beauty of meaning in Xu's translation:

The selected poem will be carefully examined to assess the fidelity of its translation to the original poem's meaning. This examination will consider the poet's cultural context, imagery, and metaphors. We will identify the faithful and aesthetic translation and areas where it may fail to convey the essence of the original poem.

2. Phonological Analysis of the Beauty of Sound:

This analysis will inspect the translations' use of sound, focusing on rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration, which play a crucial role in creating an aesthetically pleasing auditory experience for the reader and measure the translators' ability to recreate the musicality of the poetry in English.

3. The Stylistic Analysis of the Beauty of Form:

We will examine each translation's form closely, focusing on aspects such as line structure, stanza arrangement, and overall visual presentation. This analysis will assess whether the translations preserve or fail to retain the poems' original form.

The process of the analysis will involve meticulously examining the selected translations, focusing on the Three Beauties aspects outlined above. Close reading techniques will be employed to delve deeply into the subtle distinction of each translation and its

relationship to the original poem. Findings from this analysis will be presented in a narrative format, highlighting both the successes and challenges encountered by the translators in applying Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties principle to Classical Chinese love poems.

3.3. Analysis of five selected poems

3.3.1. Poem 1 Guan Ju (Cooing and Wooing) Songs of Zhou

1. The beauty of meaning

The Poem Guan Ju (Cooing and Wooing) can be regarded as the beginning of a Chinese cultural classic. The poem's content is simple and direct, describing the pursuit of "gentlemen" towards "ladies" and praising beautiful love.

Original text	Xu's Translation:
关雎	Cooing and Wooing
周南	Songs of Zhou
1. 关关雎鸠，在河之洲。	1. By riverside are cooing, A pair of turtledoves.
2. 窈窕淑女，君子好逑。	2. A good young man is wooing, A fair maiden he loves.
3. 参差荇菜，左右流之。	3. Water flows left and right, Of cresses here and there.
4. 窈窕淑女，寤寐求之。	4. The youth yearns day and night.
5. 求之不得，寤寐思服。	5. His yearning grows so strong, He cannot fall asleep.
6. 悠哉悠哉，辗转反侧。	6. He tosses all night long, So deep in love, so deep.
7. 参差荇菜，左右采之。	7. Now gather left and right The cresses sweet and tender
8. 窈窕淑女，琴瑟友之。	8. O lute, play music bright For the bride sweet and slender!
9. 参差荇菜，左右芼之。	9. Feast friends at left and right with cresses cooled tender!
10. 窈窕淑女，钟鼓乐之。	10. O bell and drums delight. The bride so fair and slender!

However, the poem uses twists and turns in writing, embodying emotions in the scenery and blending emotions and scenes to render the artistic conception which leads various challenges for translators to reveal the beauties of the original text in the translation. The poem's content of *Guan Ju* is straightforward, describing the pursuit of "gentlemen" towards "ladies" and praising beautiful love. However, the brushstrokes are convoluted, using the technique of embodying emotions and scenery to render the artistic conception.

Line 1-2 of the original poem depict a beautiful scene to us: in the warm spring, with green grass and birds playing in pairs in the water. By the riverbank, a beautiful girl was picking seaweed, and all this beauty aroused the infinite emotions of a young man who was also young. During the annual mating season, the Jujiu bird appears in pairs on the river, playing or foraging. "Guan" is an onomatopoeic word that describes the call of a jujiu (a kind of birds living by the river and catching fish). If a bird chirps "Guan," the other bird that accompanies it will also immediately comply with the "Guan" sound, and such a call and response sound may even lead people to misunderstand that Jujiu originally calls twice in a row. In the original poem, the harmonious singing of Jujiu symbolizes the beautiful relationship between the hearts of male and female birds. In Xu Yuanchong's translation, using "turtledove" to translate "Jujiu" is just right. The word "turtledove" in English not only means "spotted dove", but also lover, which echoes the main idea of this poem. When English readers read this word, they can naturally associate it with beautiful love, creating the same emotional experience as Chinese readers when reading "Jujiu".

2. The beauty of sound

Onomatopoeic words are challenging to translate, and Xu Yuanchong also used the English onomatopoeic word "cooing" when translating "Guan Guan". "Coo" means both to coo and to

Analysis of Three Beauties Theory in Xu Yuanchong's English Translation of Classical Chinese Love Poems

whisper, especially to someone you love. In this way, the harmonious scene of symbolising love birds swimming together on the river is vividly depicted on paper, fully embodying the beautiful artistic meaning of the original poem.

Meanwhile, Classical Chinese Love Poetry is a musical art of language, and to some extent, appreciating poetry is appreciating the beauty of sound. *Guan Ju* is a four-character poem, with rhymes used in every other sentence, but there are changes in sentence structure, flexible and diverse forms, and ups and downs in rhythm. The use of repeated characters, double tones, and rhymed words in the structure enhances the vividness and artistry of language.

Line 4-5 “*Water flows left and right/Of credit long here, short there;/The young days and night/For the good maiden fair.*” matches the original poem’s artistic conception and has a neat and beautiful sentence structure. Among them, “water flows” and “young years” correspond to each other, and “left and right” and “day and night” correspond to each other, which is exceptionally symmetrical and beautiful. For example, in the first stanza, Xu Yuanchong’s translation of the four ending words “cooling”, “pair”, “wooing”, and “fair” adopts the rhyme pattern of “alternating rhyme” (abab). *Guanguan* is the sound that *Jujiu* makes, and the translator uses the onomatopoeic word “*coo*” to express the joy of seeking love. “*Woo*” originally means seeking love, which is not only appropriate in meaning but also forms a final rhyme in rhythm, making people feel the beauty of phonetics. The title in the translation, “*Cooking and Wooing*”, not only rhymes but also highlights the theme of the entire text, making it an ideal finishing touch.

3. The beauty of form

Regarding to the beauty of form, the original poem contains four-letter lines throughout the entire text, and Xu translates it into four and five-word lines which is difficult due to the vast language differences, and thanks to this, the beautiful form of the original poem is preserved in the translation.

Original Text 怨歌行 班婕妤(汉朝)	<i>Xu Yuanchong's Translation</i> <i>To an Autumn Fan</i> Lady Ban (Han Dynasty)
1. 新裂齐纨素,	1. Fresh from the weaver's loom, oh silk so white,
Xīn liè qí wán sù,	2. You are as clear as frost, as snow as bright.
2. 鲜洁如霜雪。	3. Fashion into a fan, token of love,
Xiān jié rú shuāng xuě.	4. You are as round as brilliant moon above,
3. 裁为合欢扇,	5. In my lord's sleeve when in or out he goes,
Cái wéi hé huān shàn,	6. You wave and shake, and a gentle breeze blows.
4. 团团似明月。	7. I am afraid when comes the autumn day,
Tuán tuán sì míng yuè.	8. And chilling wind drives summer heat away,
5. 出入君怀袖,	9. You'll be discarded to a lonely place,
Chū rù jūn huái xiù,	10. And with my lord you'll fall into disgrace.
6. 动摇微风发。	
Dòng yáo wēi fēng fā.	
7. 常恐秋节至,	
Cháng kǒng qiū jié zhì,	
8. 凉飕夺炎热。	
Liáng biāo duó yán rè.	
9. 弃捐篋笥中,	
Qì juān qiè sì zhōng,	

10. 恩情中道绝。 Ēn qíng zhōng dào jué.	
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3.3.2. Poem 2 To an Autumn Fan by Lady Ban

The poem is also titled “*Poems of Tuan Fan*,” “*Poems of Wan Fan*,” and “*Poems of Lament*,” and it is a famous palace lament poem. This poem is a metaphor for the unfortunate fate of the concubines abandoned by the emperor, using the autumn fan to see donations.

Analysis of the poem :

1. The beauty of meaning:

Line 1-2 ‘Fresh from the weaver’s loom, oh silk so white,’ ‘You are as clear as frost, as snow as bright.’ The first two sentences describe the beauty of the quality of the fan: A delicate silk produced by the state of Qi, freshly cut from the loom, is as bright and bright as frost and snow. Wan and Su are exquisite and delicate silk fabrics, originally flawless and newly woven. They are also famous products of the Qi state, known for their abundant silk production. These two lines are a metaphor which implies that the young girl comes from a prestigious family with pure and beautiful qualities and noble aspirations. By applying Xu’s equalization strategy, his English translation mirrors the meaning and form of the original text.

Line 3-4 ‘Fashion into a fan, token of love,’ ‘You are as round as brilliant moon above,’ describe the craftsmanship of making a silk fan: Cut this precious and exquisite silk into a double-sided fan with a pattern of acacia. The shape and bright color of the fan resemble a round moon in the sky. These two sentences describe their exquisite craftsmanship, which enhances their appearance and beauty. 合欢 ‘Hehuan’ is a symmetrical pattern symbolizing harmony and joy between men and women. Xu’s translation is ‘token of love’ simply and directly conveys the meaning of it. Not only does it highlight the exquisite beauty of the fan, symbolizing a woman’s outstanding appearance, but it also embodies the girl’s longing for beautiful love. The bright moon not only symbolizes a woman’s radiance but also her longing for eternal reunion. Xu’s translation captures the fan’s craftsmanship and symbolic beauty, emphasizing its aesthetic appeal. The generalization strategy is evident as he uses universally understood moon imagery to convey the fan’s shape and luminosity, maintaining the poem’s emotional and cultural depth.

Line 5-6 ‘In my lord’s sleeve when in or out he goes,’ ‘*You wave and shake, and a gentle breeze blows*’ highlight the fan’s practical use and intimate connection with its owner. The fan is kept in the lord’s sleeve, used to create a gentle breeze. Xu effectively conveys this sense of closeness and utility, reflecting the original’s intimate imagery. His translation ensures to retain the fan’s practical and symbolic significance.

Line 7-8 ‘I am afraid when comes the autumn day,’ ‘And chilling wind drives summer heat away,’ the poet used the fear of a fan to indicate her dreary of losing the Lord’s love and in Xu’s translation he adds ‘*I am afraid*’ to highlight the hidden meaning of the poem, which it is helpful for the readers to understand the poem so that they can eventually appreciate the beauty of the poem.

Line 9-10 “You’ll be discarded to a lonely place, and with my lord you’ll fall into disgrace” describe the fan’s fate, discarded and forgotten, symbolizing the severed bond between Lady Ban and her Lord, and her desperate situation in court. Xu’s translation poignantly captures this abandonment, aligning with the original’s emotional depth. His translation ensures the imagery of discarding the fan and the associated disgrace is conveyed.

2. The beauty of sound

While using the same rhymes is challenging due to structural differences between Chinese and English, especially, this poem is very special because there are no rhymes at the end of each line, neither at the middle of the sentences; however, thanks to the neat structure of the poem, it still presents the lyrical beauty, thus Xu’s “creative transformation” method allows for poetic

re-creation. He uses rhyme patterns common in English, such as accompanying rhyme at the end of each line. This creative flexibility enables Xu to maintain the poem's musicality without compromising its aesthetic and emotional integrity. For example, the intersecting rhyme in lines like "white" and "bright" (lines 1-2), "above" and "love" (lines 3-4) and "goes", "blows" (lines 5-6), "day" "away" (lines 7-8) and "place" "disgrace" (lines 9-10) creates a flowing and engaging

auditory experience.

3. The beauty of form:

By maintaining the form of ten syllables per line, the translation is visually and audibly consistent with the original poem which not only preserves the sense of neatness and symmetry of the original poem but also enhances the musicality of the translation.

One of Xu Yuanchong's notable translation strategies is the harmonious blend of literal and free translation. This approach allows him to preserve the imagery and metaphors of the original poem, as seen in the direct conveyance of the symbolic meaning of the "joyous fan" through "token of love", and the accurate depiction of the fans shape and brightness with "brilliant moon". This balance not only stays true to the original text, but also renders the translation more vivid and comprehensible to the English readers.

3.3.3. Poem 3 : Tune: Slow, Slow Song -Li Qingzhao Song Dynasty

Tune: Slow, Slow Song by Li Qingzhao(1084-1155AD) is a famous Ci poem from the Song Dynasty. Li's Ci poems reveal her stylistic features of gentleness and exquisiteness. Li Qingzhao is exceptionally skilled at using the rhythm of words to express complex emotions, using commonly used real-life situations to carry indescribable feelings.

Original text

声声慢

李清照

- 1.寻寻觅觅，
- 2.冷冷清清，
- 3.凄凄惨惨戚戚。
- 4.乍暖还寒时候，
- 5.最难将息。
- 6.三杯两盏淡酒，
- 7.怎敌他晚来风急？
- 8.雁过也，
- 9.正伤心，
- 10.却是旧时相识。
- 11.满地黄花堆积，
- 12.憔悴损，
- 13.而今有谁堪摘！
- 14.守着窗儿，
- 15.独自怎生得黑？
- 16.梧桐更兼细雨，
- 17.到黄昏点点滴滴。
- 18.这次第，
- 19.怎一个愁字了得！

Xu Yuanchong's translation

Tune: Slow, Slow Song

By Li Qingzhao (Song Dynasty)

- 1-3. I look for what I miss,
I know what it is.
I feel so sad, so drear,
so lonely, without cheer
- 4-5How hard is it
To keep me fit
In this lingering cold!
- 6-7Hardly warmed up
By cup on cup
Of wine so dry,
Oh, how could I endure
at dusk the drift
Of wind so swift?
- 8-10.It breaks my heart alas!
To see the wild geese pass,
For they are my acquaintances of old.
- 11-13. The ground is covered with yellow flowers,
Faded and fallen in showers.
Who will pick them up now?
- 14-15. Sitting alone at the window,
How could I but quicken
The pace of darkness that won't thicken?
- 16-17. On broad plane leaves a fine rain drizzles
As twilight grizzles.
- Oh, what can I do with a grief Beyond belief?

Analysis of the poem:

1. The beauty of meaning:

In this Ci poem, the most impressive aspect of this poem is the fourteen reduplications at the beginning. These fourteen words reflect loneliness and melancholy and reveal the protagonist's inner turmoil, which is the atmosphere and artistic conception of the entire poem : Line 1-3 尋尋覓覓, 冷冷清清, 淒淒慘慘戚戚。 *xún xún mì mì, lěng lěng qīng qīng, qī qī cǎn cǎn qī qī*"; There are not onomatopoeic words but are the verbs and adjectives meaning: want to retrieve everything that has been lost, showing a very empty, and disconsolate spirit. Li Qingzhao utilizes the pronunciations of these words forming a rhyming and short-long-short rhythm which is unique and challenging for the translators. From the back translation we can see there is no subject of each line which can be confusing or less direct and accurate to express the poet's feelings: Lonely and lonesome, bleak and bitter, deep in dreary thoughts I missed you miserably so. However, Xu Yuanchong added the subjects in his version of translation "I look for what I miss, I know what it is. I feel so sad, so drear, so lonely, without cheer", which suited the English language readers more. By using "I"-the first-person subject, Xu gave the readers the lonely, dreary and sad feelings more directly. Moreover, the techniques of adding rhymes on the first word and last word of each line are faithful to the original poem and preserve the beauty of sound, meanwhile, this paralleled patterns in the translation maintain the beauty of form.

Line 4-5: Suddenly warm and then cold and it refers to the weather in autumn, which suddenly warms up and then turns cold again; Xu's translation "In this lingering cold, Hardly warm up" expresses the poet's helplessness, the word "lingering" vividly expresses the unbearable sorrow is like autumn chill, once gone and once back, laying the groundwork for the following text to drown his sorrows with alcohol in line 6-7 'By cup on cup. Of wine so dry, OH, how could I endure, at dusk the drift, Of wind so swif' The word "endure" clearly express the poet's unbearable sorrow and the "wine so dry" cleverly make the English language readers associate with the least sweet wine which gives a sour and bitter feeling directly.

In Line 8-10 the wild geese are symbols of loyalty and messengers in Ancient Chinese culture. In this poem, when the poet saw the goose (or geese) flying and heard them singing, she felt deeply sad, because they reminded her of the loss of her state and family. In Xu's translation, he uses the exclamation word "alas" which brilliantly indicates the grief of the poet and by using "acquaintances of old" he strengthens the loyalty to the meaning and form of original text.

In Line 11-13, Xu Yuanchong did not only understand her feeling, but also translated into a vivid and poetic scene 'The ground is covered with yellow flowers, Faded and fallen in showers. Who will pick them up now?'. The word "yellow" adds a color of Autumn, "Faded" "fallen" add dynamic movements to it and "in showers" indicates the big amount leaves falling in the autumn wind. Meanwhile the colour of yellow is also used to refer the royalty, since this poem was composed after the collapse of the Northern Song Dynasty, it adds another layer of meaning to it-the devastation of losing her nation.

2. The beauty of sound:

Line 16-19 In Xu Yuanchong's English translation "*On broad plane leaves a fine rain drizzles. As twilight grizzles. Oh, what can I do with a grief. Beyond belief*". In the translation "the broad plane leaves" and "a fine rain" make the contrast obvious yet harmonious; "drizzles" and "grizzles", "grief" and "belief" not only rhyme but also deliver the poet's subtle and sensitive emotions. Undoubtedly the beauty of the meaning and sound has been shown fully in the translation.

In addition, Xu Yuanchong successfully conveyed the original poem's emotional tension and lyrical atmosphere through the changes in syllables and the arrangement of accents, allowing readers to experience similar emotional resonance and aesthetic pleasure while reading.

3.3.4. Poem 4 Tune: A riverside town dreaming of my deceased wife on the night of the 20th day of the first moon, 1075 by Su Shi Song Dynasty

Original text	Xu Yuanchong's translation
江城子-乙卯正月二十日夜记梦 苏轼（宋）	Dreaming of my Deceased Wife on the Night of the 20th Day of the First Moon, 1075 by Su Shi Song Dynasty
1.十年生死两茫茫，	1-3. For ten long years the living of the dead knows nought.
2.不思量，	Though to my mind not brought,
3.自难忘。	Could the dead be forgot?
4.千里孤坟，	4-5. Her lonely grave is far,
5.无处话凄凉。	a thousand miles away.
6.纵使相逢应不识，	To whom can I my grief convey?
7.尘满面，	6-8. Revived, e'en if she be,
8.鬓如霜。	oh, could she still know me? My face is worn with care And frosted is my hair.
9.夜来幽梦忽还乡，	9-11. Last night I dreamed of coming to our native place.
10.小轩窗，	She's making up her face Before her mirror with grace.
11.正梳妆。	12-13. Each saw the other hushed,
12.相顾无言，	But from our eyes tears gushed.
13.惟有泪千行。	When I am woken, oh, I know I'll be heart-broken
14.料得年年断肠处，	14-16 Each night when the moon shines O'er her grave clad with pines.
15.明月夜，	
16.短松冈。	

In the history of Chinese literature, Su Shi is credited with creating the mourning Ci poem, cementing its importance in ancient literature. *Dreaming of my Deceased Wife on the Night of the 20th Day of the First Moon, 1075* reflect the poet's sincere and sorrowful longing. This poem is the first nominal eulogy in literary history, written by Su Shi, to mourn his original wife, Wang Fu.

Analysis of the poem:

1. The beauty of meaning:

In the original Ci poem, Su Shi used many images, such as 千里孤坟 'Her lonely grave is far, a thousand miles away.' 尘满面 'My face is worn with care'; 鬓如霜 'frosted is my hair'; 小轩窗, 正梳妆 'She's making up her face, before her mirror with grace', and 明月夜, 短松冈 'Each night when the moon shines. O'er her grave clad with pines'. These images represent a desolate and lonely mood, expressing Su Shi's sadness and yearning. The translation mainly retains images creating a desolate atmosphere. When translating 千里孤坟 'Her lonely grave is far, a thousand miles away.', additional translations were used to highlight further the desolate atmosphere and atmosphere of the entire poem. However, the translator removed the 小轩窗 'Xiaoxuan Window' image, which Xu Yuanchong believed "Xiaoxuan Window" is not a tiny window but implies the dressing table of the deceased wife. It has a special meaning for Su Shi and is where they once shared sweet years. The beautiful scenes of the past contrast the current desolation, so deleting it in the translation is inappropriate. In addition, Xu Yuanchong translated 鬓 'sideburns' as 'hair' in order to cater to the rhyme of "care" in the previous text.

However, this is inaccurate because sideburns are not equal to hair. To preserve the original context, some accuracy in wording had to be sacrificed, resulting in a deviation from

the exact words. In the translation of 明月夜, 短松冈 ‘Each night when the moon shines. O’er her grave clad with pines’ Xu Yuanchong did not treat the original text literally but instead concretized it and translated the deep meaning of the original text: she covered the grave of the pine tree, which was a place only illuminated by moonlight, further expressing Su Shi’s longing for his deceased wife.

In addition, Su Shi used vague imagery such as 千里 ‘thousands of miles’ and 千行 ‘thousands of lines’ to express the distance and depth of longing. 千里 is a concept of imaginary numbers in Chinese, not actual numbers, emphasizing the concepts of “many kilometers” and “far”. Xu Yuanchong’s translation of it as ‘a thought and miles away’ is inaccurate because the Chinese word 里 does not correspond to the English word ‘mile’ (1 里=0.31 mile). It was necessary to correctly translate the concept of virtual reference and emphasizes the notion of distance. On the contrary, Xu Yuanchong used “tears gushed” to translate ‘a thousand lines’, translating the concept of virtual reference in the original text into ‘tears gushing out’, which was more specific and detailed and highlighted the author’s grief.

2. The Beauty of Sound:

This Poem has the beauty of rhythm, with both sentence-by-sentence and interval rhymes. The first, second, and third sentences of the upper and lower stanzas rhyme sentence by sentence, while the fifth and eighth sentences rhyme every other sentence. From the perspective of rhythm, the arrangement of tones in the previous section is as follows: Ping Ping Ping Ze Ze Ping Ping. Ze Ping Ping, Ze Ping Ze. Pingze Pingping, PingZeZePingping. Ze Ze Ping Ping Ping Ze Ping, Ping Ze Ze, Ze Ping Ping. There is no distinction between tone and tone in English, but emphasis is placed on stress and intonation. Compared to the translated text, the translation’s fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth lines maintain a certain rhythm. The fourth line has six “rise and fall” intonations, four of them in the fifth line, three in the seventh line, and three in the eighth line, with alternating light and heavy stresses on pronunciations, giving people a sense of rhythm and beauty. Besides, the rest of the lines did not maintain a fixed rhythm.

3. The beauty of form:

There are two stanzas in this Ci poem: the upper and lower stanzas. The upper stanza records the truth and describes the pain of ten years of separation between yin and yang in love.; In the second stanza, “Last night I dreamed of coming to our native place”, in which Su Shi recreated the beautiful past scenes. This Ci poem is full of deep emotions, with words full of blood and tears, expressing the Su Shi’s endless sadness and longing. Since the original poem has two stanzas, Xu also used two in his English translation. The original text has eight long and short sentences in the upper section and the corresponding eight long and short sentences in the lower section. Xu Yuanchong’s translation consists of 8 lines in the first section and eight in the second section, reproducing the original text in form. In terms of line length, Xu Yuanchong translated the long and short sentences of the original poem into long and short sentences, striving to be consistent with the original text.

The number of syllables, the first sentence of the upper section and the first sentence of the lower section correspond to the first line of Xu Yuanchong’s translation of the first verse and the first line of the second verse, respectively. Xu Yuanchong translated them into eleven syllables. For example, Xu Yuanchong translated 不思量, 自难忘 into ‘Though to my mind not brought, Could the dead be forgot?’; 尘满面 into ‘My face is worn with care’; 鬓如霜 ‘frosted is my hair’; 小轩窗, 正梳妆 into ‘She’s making up her face. Before her mirror with grace’, 明月夜, 短松冈 into ‘Each night when the moon shines. O’er her grave clad with pines’. The original Ci poem has three Chinese characters per sentence, and the translation has six syllables per sentence, with each word corresponding to two English syllables. The original

Ci poem is well aligned before and after, and the translation also corresponds neatly between the top and bottom lines, conveying the beauty of the original text's form very well.

The English translation also has a high degree of dynamic and emotional beauty. It adopts a variety of tenses and tones to reflect Su Shi's rich emotional changes. This Ci poem is a work of Su Shi's dream of his beloved wife, who had passed away ten years ago, waking up with sorrow and longing. The translation accurately grasps the characteristics of time, and the transition between the simple present tense and the simple past tense precisely reflects the seamless transition between reality and dreams. Based on the vast differences between English and Chinese, it is difficult to fully reproduce the original poem's beautiful meaning, sound and form in the specific translation practice, especially the beautiful meaning of the original. In general, Xu Yuanchong's translation successfully reproduced the aesthetic elements of the original in terms of artistic conception, form and phonology to a certain extent; in contrast, it is better to reproduce the sound and form of the original. Regarding the reproduction of beautiful meaning, sometimes the translator, for sound beauty, has little deviation in translating individual images and adopts flexible methods to convey the beauty of the original text to achieve the best effect.

3.3.5. Poem 5 At Parting -by Du Fu (Tang Dynasty)

Original Text

Xu Yuanchong's translation

《赠别》杜甫（唐代）

At Parting by Du Fu, Tang Dynasty

多情却似总无情，

Deep deep our love, too deep to show;

duō qíng què sì zǒng wú qíng

唯觉尊前笑不成。

Deep deep we drink, silent we grow.

wéi jué zūn qián xiào bù chéng

蜡烛有心还惜别，

The candle grieves to us part,

là zhú yǒu xīn huán xī bié

替人垂泪到天明。

It melts in tears with burnt— our heart.

tì rén chuí lèi dào tiān míng

Analysis of the poem:

1. The beauty of meaning:

Line 1: Xu captures the profoundness of deep emotions that are not easily expressed. The repetition of “deep” emphasizes the intensity of the feelings, maintaining the meaning's beauty by reflecting the depth and complexity of the original sentiment. Line 2: Xu conveys the solemnity and the inability to smile genuinely. While he does not mention the goblets directly, the repetition of “deep” again links the act of drinking to the depth of their emotions, and “silent we grow” captures the same sense of inexpressible sadness. Line 3: Xu personifies the candle as having the ability to grieve, which aligns with the original's depiction of the candle's empathetic sorrow. This maintains the beauty of meaning by preserving the personification and the sentiment of shared grief. Line 4: Xu conveys the idea of the candle “weeping” (melting) until daybreak and relates it directly to the hearts of the parting individuals. The translation maintains the imagery and emotional impact, preserving the beauty of the original meaning.

Xu Yuanchong's translation remains largely faithful to the original text in terms of conveying the deep emotional experience of parting. He preserves the imagery and the sentiment of each line while using poetic devices, such as repetition and personification to maintain the poem's emotional depth and beauty. Although there are slight deviations in wording which are not explicitly mentioning goblets, the

essence and emotional impact are effectively captured, demonstrating a balance between fidelity to the original and the aesthetics of the translated poem.

2. The beauty of sound

The original poem did not have rhyme. The beauty of Tang poetry's phonetics is not only achieved through rhyme but also through the natural rhythm and rhythm generated by the changes in Chinese tone. It can be seen from Xu Yuanchong's translation that he had already set an ideal rhyme pattern before translating. To achieve this ideal pattern, he adopted specific temporary measures such as adding content and inversion. To rhyme the first and second lines, he inverted "we grow silent" in the second line to "silent we grow". Although this inversion has no grammatical error, his motivation for rhyming is clear. However, this inversion is unnecessary for expressing the translated poems content, and its expression is unnatural. It is just a temporary measure adopted for rhyme. Similarly, he added with "burn - our heart" after line four for the rhyme between lines four and three; however, the added information is absent in the original poem. To enhance the effectiveness of expression, he could use creative translation without being limited by the original content, thereby adding content that is not present in the original text. But the critical issue is that "with burn -- our heart" is illogical from the perspective of English vocabulary and sentence rules, while the natural expression is "with our heart burn". Therefore, the increase in this information is also due to the need for rhyme, as he once again used inversion to rhyme, changing "with our heart burn" to "with burn our heart". This inversion lacks a grammatical basis, resulting in a stiff expression and obscure meaning. The result is that although the translation has a rhyme pattern, the translation itself does not have true rhythmic beauty in language rhythm because this forced rhyme is at the cost of sacrificing the natural expression of language. In *"On the beauties of meaning, sound and Form"* (1983), he said that: the beauty in sound of Tang poetry is rhyme first. If the translation does not rhyme, it is impossible to preserve the style and taste of the original poetry. Apparently, his view of advocating rhyme is one-sided.

At Parting is a poem of Tang Dynasty, and the main characteristic of Tang poetry is being natural and free, however, if the translators force themselves to translate all the poems into rhythmic poetry, rhyming can become a trap in poetry translation. Under certain circumstances, free from the constraints of rhyme, translators can more freely interpret the true emotions and feelings of the original poem. In a conclusion, the translation of this poem fails to represent the beauties of the original poem due to the force of pursuing the rhymes and losing the beauty of the meaning of it.

4. CONCLUSION

Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties theory, a unique and comprehensive translation theory, is not only a theoretical framework for translation but also a practical guide. In a detailed analysis of five poems, this study found that the theory not only provides a theoretical framework for translation but also offers specific guidance for translation strategies in practice. It shows that this theory can indeed make the English translation restore and present the beauties in meaning, sound, and form of the original poems, thereby highlighting its real-world relevance. By maintaining the original poem's core meaning and emotional depth, the translated works can convey the original work's essence. Although the Three Beauties Theory has important guiding significance in poetry translation, there are also some limitations in its practical application: firstly, the translator's judgment of beautiful meaning, beauty in sound and beauty in form is subjective, and different translators may have different understandings and choices, leading to the diversity of translation results. Secondly, difficulty reproducing phonological beauty: due to the significant differences in phonological structure between Chinese and English, it is difficult to reproduce phonological beauty fully in the translation process. Thirdly, the differences in syntactic structure and vocabulary length between Chinese and English often need help maintaining the beauty of the original poem in translation, especially for ancient poetry. Fourthly, readers from different cultural backgrounds may have different

Analysis of Three Beauties Theory in Xu Yuanchong's English Translation of Classical Chinese Love Poems

understandings and feelings of beautiful meaning. Some words and sentences with profound cultural meanings in the original text may lose appeal due to cultural background differences in translation.

The research in this paper has literary translation implications. Primarily, it showcases the specific application and effectiveness of Xu Yuanchong's Three Beauties theory in practical translation, offering a valuable reference for translation practice. Next, by analyzing the translation process of five poems in detail, this study uncovers the challenges and solutions encountered in translation, particularly in dealing with the phonetic and formal beauty of poetry, providing profound insights. Lastly, this study underscores the importance of maintaining the cultural connotations and emotional expression of the original work in translation, offering useful guidance for cross-cultural literary communication. The author aspires that this study not only enriches the practical application of translation theory but also provides a solid foundation and direction for future translation research.

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