



Research Paper

Translation of Proper Nouns and Flora and Fauna Imagery in Xue Tao's Poems-Evidences from Genevieve Wimsatt's Works

Feier He

School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Panzhihua University

ABSTRACT: Genevieve Wimsatt was an early 20th-century American writer and sinologist who translated poems by many female poets related to Chinese culture. Wimsatt was the first female scholar in the United States to translate Xue Tao's poetry. Her English version of Xue Tao's poems, "A Well Of Fragrant Waters" is the most comprehensive English translation of translated content and genres of Xue Tao's poetry. Xue Tao, a famous female poet of the Tang Dynasty, appeared in her poems with many proper nouns and animal and plant imagery. Taking the English translation of Wimsatt's Xue Tao's poems as an example, this paper analyzes and studies Wimsatt's translation strategies for proper nouns and animal and plant imagery in "A Well Of Fragrant Waters".

KEYWORDS: Genevieve Wimsatt, English translation of Xue Tao's poetry, proper nouns, animal and plant imagery, translation strategies

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I. INTRODUCTION

Xue Tao was one of the three celebrated accomplished women of the Tang Dynasty, and was known in the world for "工为诗"^[1] and "精翰墨"^[2]. Her poems are brilliant and heavily used in allusions, and the poems are concise and comprehensive. there are a mass of proper nouns and animal and plant imagery in her poems. The author considers that translating Xue Tao's poems into English without a correct understanding of these proper nouns and flora and fauna imagery is bound to cause misinterpretation of the poems by readers of the target language. The study of the English translation of proper nouns and animal and plant imagery in Xue Tao's poetry occupies an significant position in the study of the English translation of Xue Tao's poetry.

II. PROPER NOUNS

The nouns in Xue Tao's poetry are divided into two categories according to semantics. First, proper nouns without special cultural connotations, the second is a proper noun with characteristic and affluent cultural connotation significance.^[3] Most of the proper nouns in Xue Tao's poetry contain rich Chinese culture, and Xue Tao is not only extraordinarily expert in using proper nouns in her poems. Moreover, when using proper nouns, it implies metaphors, allusions and other rhetorical techniques to portray the characters appearing in her poems and express her own emotions, while these proper nouns have full-bodied national characteristics of the Bashu (two ancient cities in Sichuan) region. Without understanding the cultural background and cultural characteristics in Xue Tao's poetry, the reader of the translation does not comprehend the cultural background and cultural traits of Xue Tao's poetry. It is extremely untoward for the reader of the translation to have a very thorough understanding of the intrinsic cultural information contained in the proper nouns in her poems. Therefore, author will probe into Wimsatt's translation strategy for proper nouns in Xue Tao's poetry.

A. Names. The names of people who arise in Xue Tao's poems. Majority of proper nouns in the general sense. Wimsatt generally transliterates the names of people in Xue Tao's poems. Transliteration refers to direct translation in the form of Pinyin. For example, in Xue Tao's "Sending Old Poems to Yuan Chen"^[4], Wimsatt translates "元微之" (元稹) as "Yuan Chen", using transliteration. In addition, in Xue Tao's "Answering the Successful Candidate, Chu Thirteen"^[4], Wimsatt translates "十三秀才" as "Chu Thirteenth", which is also

a transliteration. Among them, the names "Yuan Chen" and "Chu Thirteenth" do not have a special referential meaning, Consequently, the names of the people can directly convey information by transliteration.

B. Place Names Wimsatt generally uses literal translations of the proper nouns of place names in Xue Tao's poetry. Such as, in "Separating from Li Lang-chun"^[4], the place name "秦岭" is translated as "Chin Ling", which is preserved in pinyin form. 《续嘉陵驿诗献武相国》中：“卓氏长卿称士女，锦江玉垒献山川”^[1]，“玉垒” is a place name that refers to the mountain on the side of the "Bao Aquarius Mouth" of the Dujiangyan Water Conservancy Project in Sichuan. Wimsatt's English translation is "Cho Shih and Ch'ang Ch'ing were together long renowned, The Damask Stream, the Jade Redoubt, adorn the view" [4], which treats "Jade Lei" as "the Jade Redoubt", which appears in the translation as a literal translation. The author believes that if Wimsatt attaches a vivid and concise annotation to the back of the poem, it will improve the reader's understanding of the cultural connotation of Xue Tao's poetry.

C. Object Names. Wimsatt uses literal translation of object names in the general sense. Some literal translations of object names can convey information directly, conveniently and completely. When the cultural connotation of proper nouns is luxuriant, Wimsatt adopts an alienated translation strategy, directly abandoning the original meaning of the proper noun and choosing a translated vocabulary that is consistent with the cultural significance and emotional expression of the original poem. 《春望词》：“玉箸垂朝镜”^[1]，“玉箸” means chopsticks made of jade, and it also means tears falling. Wimsatt translates this poem as "at dawn between jade mirror-hooks tears flow".^[4] It is mistranslated, "jade mirror" means “玉镜”，but "jade mirror" does not appear in the original poem. Wimsatt translated the hidden image of "jade" which is "tears flow". Author think it may be that Wimsatt used a "creative rebellion" translation strategy in order to preserve the "jade" in the poem.

D. Scene Names. Xue Tao is a female poet who ardently loves nature and is imbued with temperament interest in her life. Xue Tao's poems also exist a large amount of proper nouns that represent scenery. 《斛石山书事》中：“今日忽登虚境望，步摇冠翠一千峰。”^[1] The translation of Wimsatt is “Today, behold those summits lifted to the skies, Their thousand dazzling peaks all capped with jade!”^[4] “虚境” originated in Taoist culture, and “虚境” in Xue Tao's poetry is the dimly discernible and vibrant scenery on the Hushi Mountain, and neither "summits" nor "dazzling" demonstrate the Taoist color implied by "virtual realm". Wimsatt's translated poems, while showing the majestic beauty of the mountain peaks as a whole, lost their Taoist style in the translation process. Numerous proper nouns for place names that emerge in the cultural significance of Xue Tao's poetry. She uses a combination of free translation and literal translation. Wimsatt translates ancient Chinese into a text that is acceptable to the reader of the translation. 《新服裁制初成三首》：“紫阳宫里赐红绡，仙雾朦朧隔海遥”^[1]，《寄词》：“紫阳天上神仙客，称在人间立世工”^[1]“紫阳宫” in Wimsatt's translation “A well of Fragrant Waters” translates as "a the castle of the sun"^[4] meaning the castle of the sun. Wimsatt's translation embodies the location of the "Ziyang Palace", which is in heaven. In fact, “紫阳宫” is a palace, the residence of a Taoist immortal named "Ziyang Zhenren". Although Wimsatt's translation does not translate the cultural Lingering charm of Taoism in Xue Tao's poems, it also restores the mythological color contained in the original poems.

E. Position Names. With her remarkable talent in poetry and striking poetic talent, Xue Tao had affiliated with multiple talents, many officials, and a lot of nobles in the Tang Dynasty. Xue Tao had contacts with most officials in Shudi (Chengdu, Sichuan), and often had poems of mutual reward and gift. Therefore, in her poetry creation, Xue Tao wrote a cloud of responsory and presenting poems for rewarding officials, including proper nouns for a large amount of positions. For instance, "School Book", "Lang Zhong", "Yuanwai", "Tai Wei", "Xiang Guo" and so on. Wimsatt's English translation of such proper nouns uses literal translations in a multitude of cases during the translation process. For example, the title of the poem 《酬韦校书》^[1] · Wimsatt translates as "Answering Courtesan Wei"^[4] ; In the poem 《和李书记席上见赠》^[1] , Wimsatt translates the title of the poem as "Harmonizing with Li, the Ya Men Secretary" [4]; in the title of the poem 《春郊游眺寄孙处士》^[1] , Wimsatt translates as "Strolling the Countryside in Spring and Sending a Poem to the Recluse Sun"^[4] . In the process of translation, Wimsatt's translation of the official names that come forth in Xue Tao's poems is as close as possible to the original poem, although Wimsatt cannot yet fully match the original poem, but it is still generally appropriate.

F. Allusions. Allusions are manifestations of the accumulation and precipitation of Chinese culture. There are many significant stories contain in Chinese allusions, and although they are short and concise, they can express far-reaching cultural significance. The poet's use of allusions in poetry can trigger the reader's association of ideas, enhance the cultural connotation of the poem, and also contributed to the poet express her feelings. Xue Tao has 91 poems in the world, but the number of allusions used is as high as 60 times. Wimsatt's translated poems are similar in form to the original poems, using quatrains. In the process of poetry translation, the number of words, chapters, and grammar of poetry is restrictive, and Wimsatt mostly uses literal and free

translation when translating allusions in poetry. In addition, Wimsatt uses literal translation and appends annotation to show the deep-seated cultural connotation of the allusion, abandons the literal meaning of the allusion, and uses additional annotations to introduce part of the plot of the allusion or all the story content in the allusion.

《送郑资州》：“双连干骑骈东陌，独有罗敷望上头”^[1]，“罗敷” is the name of a beautiful woman. (“罗敷” was a peasant girl in the ancient Chinese Zhao kingdom of Handan City, who made a living by picking mulberries.) She is one of the eighteen beauties of ancient times and is the representative of the beauties of Handan in the ancient Chinese Zhao kingdom. Later, “Peacock Flying Southeast” has the sentence “There is a virtuous woman in the east family, who calls herself Luo Shi”, which is used by later generations to refer to a wise and virtuous peasant woman. Due to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, foreign translator Wimsatt chose the method of literal translation by sound, translating this sentence as “Paired flags precede the thousand horsemen toward the east; Standing alone Lo Fu stares into space and grieves.”^[4] Among them, “Luo Shi” is translated as “Lo Fu”.

《和郭员外题万里桥》：“万里桥头独越吟”^[1]。“越吟” uses allusions (during the Warring States period, Zhuang Gang, a Yue guo, became a dignitary in the Chu state, but he still did not forget his homeland, and when he was ill, he still sang the songs of Yue Guo to express his thoughts about his homeland), Hereafter, people used words such as “Zhuang Bird Yue Yin, Zhuang Bird Si Gui, Tai Sheng, Yue Yin” to express his miss and affection for patriotism and not forgetting his homeland. Wimsatt translates “越吟” as “lone and humming songs”^[4], displaying the sense of the thought behind the allusion of “Yue Yin”. 《试新服裁制初成（二）》(Trying on a Newly Finished Gown): “春风因过东君舍，偷样人间染百花”^[1] Wimsart translates it as: “Spring winds have trespassed, prowling through the Genii's bowers, Bringing to earth this pilfered Hundred-flowers design”^[4]。“东君” is the Chinese spring god, and Wimsatt uses paraphrasing to translate it as Genii, making the translation direct accomplish. However, “Genii” is interpreted in the Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary as “Spirit or Goblin with Strange Power”. It means elves or goblins with magical powers in Arabic stories. For Western readers, the term is associated with the demon in “The Fisherman and the Jinni” in “One Thousand and One Nights” or the demon servant in “Aladdin's wonderful Lamp”, which has nothing to do with the spring god in the Chinese cultural sense. Choosing a translation counterpart that is not fit in with the original text in the allusion translation may cause the target language reader to misread the heterogeneous culture.

《酬雍秀才贻巴峡图》：“感君识我枕流意，重示瞿塘峡口图”^[1] Xue Tao uses the allusion of “枕流” to allude to her own desire to return to the hidden rivers and lakes and send love to the landscape. Later generations used the word “pillow stream” to secretly mean seclusion. Wimsatt translated the verse as “Thank you for Recognizing Flowing Pillow Hopes, In Picture Giving Sight of Pa Channel Anew.”^[4] (Thank you for recognizing my intention to seclusion and showing me once again the scenery of Baxia map.) Her translation is faithful to the literal meaning of Xue Tao's verses. Nonetheless, for Western readers “Flowing Pillow” is inevitably puzzling and even misreading. Wimsatt chose to use literal translation annotation to maximize the compensation for the cultural connotation of the translation. Wimsatt in order to restore the “Flowing Pillow” contains the traditional Chinese cultural information. Wimsatt adds to her annotated supplement to the allusions after the literal translation of the allusions: “As is so Often the Case in Hung Tu's Writings, Here the Inner Meaning is Overlaid with Allusions Which Eclipse Its Significance to the Casual Eye, Whether Western or Occidental. In this instance, the Allusion can Readily be Traced to one Sun Chu, A Young Visionary of Shansi Who Announced to the Worldlings of His Circle that He Was Determined to Wash His Mouth with the Rocks and Pillow His Head on the Running Stream. Since the Utterance of his Desire the Term, Flowing Pillow, Has Been Used in Reference to the Hermit Lot, Though Occasionally It is Employed in Connection with Travelers.”^[4] Wimsatt's strategy of literal translation and annotation preserves the coherence and conciseness of classical Chinese poetry in language, while avoiding the risk of the cultural connotations in the allusions being filtered.

III. FLORA AND FAUNA IMAGERY

Xue Tao's poetry features a great deal of flora and fauna imagery with traditional Chinese cultural connotations. These flora and fauna imagery not only contain abundant cultural connotations, but also express the emotional direction of the poet. Exploring the flora and fauna imagery in Xue Tao's poetry is conducive to understanding the thoughts and emotions of Xue Tao's poetry and enhancing the reader's comprehension of traditional Chinese culture.

1) 《别李郎中》(Separating from Li Lang-chun): “花落梧桐凤别凰，想登秦岭更凄凉”^[1]， Wimsart translates as: The Wu t'ung leaf has fallen, Feng from Huang must part...^[4]， Perhaps it will be still more lonely at Chin Ling..., “凤” and “凰” are retained in pinyin form. Wimsatt will also translate “凤凰” into pinyin instead of “male and female phoenixes” that English readers are accustomed to using. In the English-

speaking culture of the Western world, the "phoenix" is a symbol of immortality, while in Chinese culture, "凤" is a male bird, "凰" is a female bird, and "凤" and "凰" flying together symbolize love and marital happiness. Xue Tao's poems use the flowering of the Chinese parasol and the separation of the phoenix to allude to the tremendous grief of Li Langzhong's loss of his wife.

2) 《送友人》：“水国蒹葭夜有霜，月寒山色共苍苍。谁言千里自今夕？离梦杳如关路长。”^[4] The poem uses the plant image of “蒹葭”，which is originally a combination of two plants, “葭” refers to grassy plants without long spikes, “蒹” refers to the nascent reeds, and later more commonly refers to reeds. Ordinary plant names in classical Chinese poetry symbolize the pain of parting from sorrow and lovesickness. Among them, the most typical example is the famous passage “Crab Leaf” in the “Book of Songs”：“Concurrently leafy, white dew is frost, the so-called Yi people, on the water side.” In Wimsatt's translation：“Aquatic flowers shimmer as though frosted by night”^[4]，reeds are translated as Aquatic flowers (Flowers that grow in water), which is reminiscent of lotus flowers. Although both plants are aquatic, the mood of the whole poem is completely changed. In classical Chinese poetry, the lotus flower represents symbolism, such as purity or incorruptibility and so on. In addition to, lotus flowers usually bloom in the summer. In the poem 《送友人》，Xue Tao describes the scene of sending off friends on autumn nights, and translating “蒹葭” as a lotus flower will not only lose the cultural connotation of “蒹葭” in poetry, but also indirectly lead to the lack of this element of autumn in the original poem.

3) 《鸳鸯草》：“绿英满香砌，两两鸳鸯小。但娱春日长，不管秋风早”^[1]，translated as：“In sweet green grasses by the stair, Mandarin ducks-a darling pair! Basking in lengthened spring tide days, Spare coming fall no thought, no care”^[4]。“鸳鸯” is a famous unique aquatic bird of anatidae in China, and foreign translations are usually translated as "Mandarin Ducks", but this translations cannot reflect the cultural significance contained. “鸳鸯” is a compound word, and, “鸳” and “鸯” respectively refer to male birds and female birds respectively. In traditional Chinese culture, the "Mandarin Duck" is a beautiful symbol of love, with a very beatific moral, Xue Tao used “鸳鸯” as a metaphor in her poems to open out her romanticism of yearning for great love. Besides, the title of the poem 《鸳鸯草》 is translated as "Mandarin ducks in the grass". In Chinese culture, "Mandarin duck grass" is another name for "honeysuckle", named after the flowers are two opposite each other. Owing to Wimsatt's deviation from Chinese culture, Xue Tao's poem of about plants was translated into a poem about bird. If Wimsatt knew that "Mandarin Duck Grass" was "Honeysuckle", she might suddenly be enlightened.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the English translation of Wimsatt's poetry, there are three main translation strategies for proper nouns and Flora and fauna imagery: transliteration and literal translation, free translation and literal translation, and literal annotation. In addition, the author found that due to the lack of cultural literacy of the translators herself, Wimsatt had a number of mistranslations in the translation of poetry.

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