

# The Application of Painting Language in Literary Translation from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics: A Case Study of Wiley's English Translation

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**Abstract:** Points, lines and surfaces are the expression forms of painting, while words, phrases and sentences are the expression forms of language. The mutual reference and combination of painting art and language art enriches the expression of literary translation, and makes literary translation, like painting, give full play to its unique aesthetic value and artistic emotion. Based on Liu Miqing's translation aesthetics theory, this paper analyzes the aesthetic object and aesthetic subject of translation, combines the viewpoint of painting language with translation, and discusses the use of painting language in Chinese poetry translated by Arthur Waley from two aspects: the use of lines and the construction of geometric figures, and the reproduction of painting language in poetry translation.

**Keywords:** Painting art and language, Theory of translation aesthetics, Waley.

## 1. Introduction

In the study of literary translation, people often use painting as an analogy to explain the understanding process, expression method and translation evaluation of literary translation (Zhang Baohong, 2012: 98). Ezra Pound (1970: 84), an imagist poet, said that different arts in are really have some common connection and some quality of mutual recognition" (Gong Bendong, 2010: 194). Su Shi in the Song Dynasty said: "When read Mojie's poem, the poem presents a portray of imagery; the painting provides a poetic sensation."Poems and paintings are uniform and can be interlinked. Although different arts use different media and techniques, they are similar activities. They all express that literature and painting can be interlinked.

The combination of painting and translation has always been analyzed and studied by scholars. Because poetry translation carries culture and communication, translators should consider easy to understand when translating poetry. However, the author thinks that aesthetic factors can not be ignored in this kind of translation, and the translated text should embody the elements of showing beauty when reading and listening. Taking Arthur Waley's translation as an example, this paper makes an analysis of the translation features between translation and painting, as well as the linguistic art and aesthetic value embodied in them from the perspective of translation aesthetics.

## 2. General Description of Translation Aesthetics Theory

The existing research on translation aesthetics at home and abroad and the inheritance of aesthetic translation theory in western classical philosophy are represented by Saint (347 — 420) and Saint Augustine (354 — 430) (Liu Miqing, 2005). Peter Newmark, a translation theorist, takes poetry translation as an example and emphasizes the importance of aesthetic value in semantic translation in *Approaches to Translation*

(Peter Newmark, 1982).

In the early 1980s, Zhu Guangqian first put forward the term "translation aesthetics", pointing out that translation cannot be separated from aesthetics. The use of imagination to correct the cognition of the original text is visual field integration; On the basis of the translation of classical Chinese poetry, Xu Yuanchong put forward the "three beauties" (beauty of meaning, beauty of sound and beauty of form), Mr. Yan Fu's "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance", and Qian Zhongshu's "Theory of environment" all show the connection between translation and aesthetics. In 1993, Fu Zhongxuan systematically constructed the basic framework of translation aesthetics in his monograph *Practical Translation Aesthetics*. As a disciple of Mr. Zhu Guangqian, Professor Liu Miqing was deeply influenced by Zhu Guangqian's thoughts on translation aesthetics. In 1995, he specifically discussed translation aesthetics in his book *Introduction to Translation Aesthetics*, and for the first time conducted a systematic study on translation aesthetics as a theory of translation (Liu Miqing, 2005). Liu Miqing believes that translation aesthetics can be summarized as the analysis of aesthetic subject (translator and reader), aesthetic object (original text and translation) and their mutual relations. The process of the aesthetic subject's action on the object can be summarized as follows: the subject first utilizes the aesthetic psychological factors, appreciates the aesthetic information of the object, makes aesthetic judgment, then carries out aesthetic representation, and finally carries out the translation conforming to aesthetic standards (Li Jie, 2007:139-147). Liu Miqing divided the aesthetic elements involved in aesthetic object (original text) into two levels: representation and non-representation. Among them, the elements of the representational level refer to the formal beauty of the original language, including phonology; Non-representational elements refer to the artistic conception, verve, momentum, emotion, etc., which have no direct relationship with language form, and are non-material and non-intuitive (Liu Miqing, 2005).

To sum up, the central task of translation aesthetics is to show readers the aesthetic elements and artistic features of the original works. However, there are still problems in overcoming the difference in time and space (referring to the distance between the original author's life field, national culture, psychological quality and other factors) and the difference in intelligence (referring to the thoughts and emotions, language skills, aesthetic composition and so on in the original work, which hinder the aesthetic subject from exerting its aesthetic function.). Based on the theory of translation aesthetics and painting language, the translator will solve the above problems, transform and reproduce the aesthetics of the original text, and make the target readers get the same aesthetic experience as much as possible.

### 3. Aesthetic Reproduction of The Combination of Literary Translation and Painting Language

This article will analyze the rich relationship between two important categories: painting and translation. The famous English translator Arthur David Waley (1889-1966) was a classicist. As a Sinologist, Waley first paid attention to Chinese literature, and his first published work was *Selected Chinese Poems*. This collection contains 50 poems, selected from the *Book of Songs*, *Chu Ci*, *Han Yuefu*, folk songs of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, as well as poems by Li Bai, Du Fu, Bai Juyi, Huang Tingjian and others. His translation is known as "like colorful oil painting", the writing is beautiful and accurate, but also can retain a considerable oriental charm.

This paper is selected from the translated works of Wiley - Chinese Poems, and combines the painting language, and explores how translators can realize aesthetic reproduction and transmission in the translated text from the perspectives of choosing word, using phrases or sentence, and then from the formal system and non-formal system of aesthetic objects. This paper explores how translators can realize aesthetic reproduction and transmission in the translated text.

## 4. Application of Line in Translation

Line is the most emotional visual element. Lines produce different feelings and cause various associations through changes such as virtual reality, strength, thickness, length, straightness, smoothness, delay and setback. Different forms of lines can clearly and definitely depict various relationships of objects and express the author's emotional (Chen Qi, 2008: 26).

### 4.1. Horizontal Lines

Painters use lines, pay attention to their qi, demand superb, and carry out artistic sculpture of lines according to objects (Wang Xiaoshu, 2021: 16). Horizontal line conveys the feeling of stability, calm and stretching. It can also express flat and open scenes, restrain the restlessness of the picture. For the aesthetic reproduction of translation, translators need to appeal their aesthetic gains to the translated text, and present the artistic form and effect of the original text as much as possible in the translated text (Liu Miqing, 2005). The horizon, sea surface, vast plain, boundless desert, etc. depicted in poetry can all be associated with straight lines. The expressive words in translation can be long, between, over, through, across, etc.

Example

涉江采芙蓉，兰泽多芳草。  
采之欲遗谁，所思在远道。  
还顾望旧乡，长路漫浩浩。  
同心而离居，忧伤以终老。  
《涉江采芙蓉》佚名

Crossing the river I pluck hibiscus-flowers:  
In the orchid-swamps are many fragrant herbs.  
I gather them, but who shall I send them to?  
My love is living in lands far away.  
I turn and look towards my own country,  
The long road stretches on forever.  
The same heart, yet a different dwelling,  
Always fretting, till we are grown old!

Crossing (the river) picks hibiscus flowers along the riverbank, giving readers an imagination of a line on the riverbank. The left side of the line is covered with hibiscus flowers, while the author walks on the right side of the line to pick hibiscus. The long road stretches on for ever guide readers to constantly extend their horizons, an infinitely long straight line that represents the long journey home, making people imagine the endless distance of the long road. Although the translation does not express this emotion, the translator has not forgotten the principle of psychological perception. With streets, readers can form the emotional beauty of poetry in their hearts.

### 4.2. Jagged Line

Jagged lines look stiff to produce tension, adventure, strange form of psychology, which can also show pain, distortion, fear. In general poetry, the images of chaotic clouds and dusk, rough water, swift snow and wind can be associated with rocks. Decoding the original text, understanding the factors of the author's feelings in the poem, the translator's empathy and imagination, to achieve the realm of "word and I unity". Jagged lines in the translation are tussle, jagged and ragged.

Example:

遇天雨之新霁兮，观百谷之俱集。湍汹汹其无声兮，溃淡淡而并入。

滂洋洋而四施兮，蓊湛湛而弗上。长风至而波起兮，若丽山之孤亩。

《高唐赋》宋玉

After long rain the sky has cleared afresh.  
A hundred valleys hold concourse! In silent wrath  
Mad waters tussle, the high floods  
Brim abreast and tumble to their home.  
The shallows spread and spread, the restless pools  
Mount their steep shores.  
Ever the wind blows; great waves are piled  
Like barrows on a lonely field.

The poem describes the flowing water overlooking the river from the high Tang Dynasty, when the rain is fresh and the water is surging. "Tussle" describes the water as overwhelming, and readers feel the momentum of the flowing water. Facing the river and the bright moon, each author will have different aesthetic feelings; Faced with the same word, each translator will produce a "self-oriented" aesthetic judgment (Liu Miqing, 2005) [4]. "Steep" presents steep spikes, as water jumps up the steep bank and waves rise and fall. The lexical beauty of the translation shows the aesthetics

of the form system level, and flexibly conveys the tense and thrilling feeling in the original text.

### 4.3. Curved Line

The curved line express lively, conveying light and happy feelings. Artistic conception is the artistic space in which the subject attaches emotion to the object in the aesthetic experience, and it is the artistic combination of idea, and emotion (Liu Miqing, 2005) [4]. Wavy line can give people smooth, ethereal uncertainty; "S" line gives people beautiful, graceful, soft and other feelings; The helix is a line that rotates from the outside to the inside, which can guide the person's sight and move from the outside to the inside. In poetry, "soaring, glancing and meandering" can be associated with curves.

Example:

鸿飞满西洲，望郎上青楼。  
楼高望不见，终日栏杆头。  
栏杆十二曲，垂手明如玉。

《西洲曲》佚名

The Western Island is full of wild geese.  
To look for her lover she climbs the Blue Tower.  
The tower is high: she looks, but cannot see:  
All day she leans on the balcony rails.  
The rail is twisted into a twelve-fold pattern,  
She lefts fall her hand white like the colour of jade.

The poem describes the beautiful memories of the woman and her lover in the past and the missing of her lover. In the translation, Wiley uses the word "twist" to describe the woman who climbs the burrow all day and leans against the railing to find her lover. The railing is bent into twelve folds, like an "S" line, giving people a lyrical and nostalgic dynamic effect. This curved railing expresses the woman's deep yearning for her lover. This word has the function of lyric expression, and the author's rich emotional word is with emotional beauty.

## 5. Application of Geometry in Translation

References Plane is the most commonly used element in painting. It has the characteristics of being clear, eye-catching, concise, strong and generous (Zhao Qinguo, 2015:42) [7]. Geometric figures are generally composed of straight lines or curves, is a regular figure. The circle in the geometric figure can bring the viewer complete, satisfied, solid and other visual experience. The "triangle" mainly brings a stable visual experience to the viewer, while the "cross-shaped" has a lofty and far-reaching feeling. In Wiley's poetry translation, "cross shape" is often reflected in poems with war meanings.

### 5.1. Triangle

The upright triangle is the most stable, giving people a solemn, quiet, heavy and stable feeling (Jiang Yue, 2012: 51) [8]. In poetry, "ancient willow, reminiscence" and so on is accord with upright triangle to express emotion.

Example:

花间一壶酒，独酌无相亲。  
举杯邀明月，对影成三人。  
《月下独酌》李白

A cup of wine under the flowering tress,  
I drink alone, for no friend is near.  
Raising my cup I beckon the bright moon,  
For he, with my shadow, will make three men.

The beauty of image in translation aesthetics expresses the feeling of image through the translation of the original meaning of the idea. Li Bai's Drinking Alone under the Moon describes the poet's feeling of being depressed when he drinks under the moon with no one around him. But the poet made the moon his friend, and drank and sang. With the shadow and the moon as three people, Wiley directly portrays a triangle picture, the image of "shadow, moon" translates the author's emotions, expressing the poet's personality from lonely to not lonely, optimistic and expansive in frustration, and seeking fun.

### 5.2. Round

The visual sensation of round shape is full, complete, soft and clustered (Jiang Yue, 2012:53) [8]. Because the circle gives a warm, friendly and comfortable feeling, its sense of rhythm and movement are relatively strong, and the shape is easier for the eyes to accept. In the poem, "袅袅不绝、声声回旋、雾霭缭绕" and so on give people a circular picture. Wiley even uses "spiral, coil, crown and hover" to translate related words or phrases in his poems.

Example:

昔者楚襄王与宋玉游于云梦之台，望高之观，其上独有云气，崒兮直上，忽兮改容，须臾之间，变化无穷。  
《高唐赋》宋玉

Once when Hiang, king of Ch'u, was walking with Sung Yu on the Cloud-Dream Terrace, he looked up at the Kao T'ang Shrine. Above it was a coil of mist, now pointing steadily skywards like a pinnacle of rock, now suddenly dissolving and in a single moment diffused into a thousand diverse shapes.

In the word "云气缭绕", Wiley translated "云气缭绕" into "coil", which switches parts of speech to convey the beauty of a word. "Coil" represents the visual sensation of a round cloud moving slowly. Wiley's circular artistic composition brings a dynamic imagination to the reader.

### 5.3. Cross shaped

The cross shaped composition enhances the tension of the poem. Cross shaped composition refers to the interweaving of horizontal and vertical lines in a painting. Due to its tendency to evoke the "cross" of Christianity, it is conducive to creating a calm and solemn atmosphere, inspiring philosophical thinking (Jiang Yue, 2012:54-55) [8].

Example:

南游赤野，北陟幽乡。西经昧谷，东极扶桑。  
《鬻鬻赋》张衡

In the red desert to the south I sweltered,  
And northward waded through the wintry burghs of Yu.  
Through the Valley of Darkness to the west I wandered,  
And eastward travelled to the Sun's extreme abode,  
The Stooping Mulberry Tree.

When Zhang Pingzi was traveling around the world, he met Zhuangzi's skull and talked with him. In the dialogue,

Zhuangzi's skull talked about the truth that "life is labor, death is rest" and death can be "at ease." "Through" draw a horizontal line across the earth, while "stoop" is a vertical line from top to bottom, and the two lines cross to form a cross shape. The cross shape that Waley painted here adds to the calm, solemn atmosphere.

## 6. Strategy

To sum up, the use of lines in Waley's translation is to guide readers into the artistic conception of poetry, appreciate the inner meaning of poetry and feel the emotion to be expressed in the original, thus overcoming the distance between the translator and the factors such as the creation age, the original author's life style, national culture and psychological quality, as well as the time and space difference. The graphic elements of painting used in Waley's translation, from his use of words with graphic meaning to the construction of graphics in the whole translation, add poetic connotation to his translation, and completely explain the ideological content, language skills and aesthetic composition of annotating people in the original work. His translation embodies the national culture and psychological quality, and the intelligence difference that hinders the aesthetic subject is broken, so Waley exerts his aesthetic function.

Therefore, on the basis of understanding the painting language, the translator incorporates the translation aesthetics theory, and the connotation of translation becomes vivid and intuitive because of painting analogy, which fits the original meaning. So that foreign readers can feel the ancient charm and elegance of Chinese classics and the profound charm of Chinese culture.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper discusses the translation aesthetics of Wiley's poems from four aspects: word selection, sentence structure, image construction and implication presentation, and then discusses the combination process of translation and painting elements from the perspective of translation aesthetics. From the perspective of translation scope, the combination of painting and literary translation not only adds the artistic flavor of painting to literary translation, but also brings new practice and research methods to literary translation, which undoubtedly helps to expand the research scope of literary translation, enrich and deepen the cross-artistic connotation of its research, and innovate the vision of translation criticism (Zhang Baohong, 2022:157). On the basis of being familiar with the emotion expressed in the painting language, this paper analyzes the translation of Chinese poetry under the guidance of the painting language, and tries to reproduce the beauty of the original text to the greatest extent, so as to bring the readers the deepest sense of poetry appreciation. As the saying goes, "Art has no limits, so does the art of translation"

(Liu Miqing, 2005).

## Acknowledgment

"Innovation Project of Guangxi Graduate Education".

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