



外语教学指导与学术研究系列丛书

Literary Translation and Criticism of  
British and American Literature

# 英美文学 翻译与批评

◎ 黄 吟 关立红 孙 兵 著



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## 内 容 提 要

《英美文学翻译与批评》一书的撰写目的—是顺应中西跨文化交流及响应国家号召,发展文化产业的需要;二是借此书的出版参与英美文学翻译及文学批评领域的学术研究。

该书共分为两个部分,第一部分为英美文学翻译部分,主要对英美文学作品的翻译价值、技巧及翻译在英美文学文本中的对接进行了一定的探讨;第二部分为英美文学批评部分,主要针对英美生态文学批评、女性观问题及犹太文学研究等多角度话题进行了讨论,因此具有一定的现实意义。

《英美文学翻译与批评》话题较新,涉猎面广,语言简练,适用于广大英美文学爱好者阅读。

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# 前言

随着我国改革开放步伐的加快及中国国际地位的不断提高，经济全球化、科技一体化、文化多元化促使我国在多方面与世界接轨。政府和民间对外交往不断增加，特别是与世界各国的文化交往得到长足发展。英语作为中西跨文化交际的工具，其作用更加凸显出来。

跨入新世纪，中西方文化交流已全方位展开。国家正大力提倡发展文化产业。顺应这股潮流，为繁荣文化事业，促进英美文学批评和英美文学问题的研究，尤其是在英美文学翻译方面进行有意义和有价值的一点探索，我们三位主讲英美文学的教师，根据自己的研究方向和兴趣，撰写了《英美文学翻译与批评》一书。该书主要分为两个部分。第一部分为英美文学翻译部分。该部分包括五篇英美文学翻译的学术论文，涉及英美文学文本翻译审美、翻译理论在英美文学作品中的对接、基于文学文体学理论下的诗歌翻译的探讨、翻译名家版本研究等。该书的第二部分为英美文学批评部分，共有五篇论作，主要针对英美生态文学批评、女性观讨论、犹太文学热点问题等方面进行了多视角的讨论。

《英美文学翻译与批评》一书具有时代感强，话题新颖，涉猎面广，语言简练等特点。希望能对热衷于文学翻译及文学批评的读者，提供一些可供参考的东西。

因为著者个人水平有限，该书的撰写难免有一些不尽如人意的地方，希望广大读者批评指正。

著者

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# Literary Translation of British and American Literature



## 1. The Aesthetics Orientation in Translation of Literary Works

The aesthetics orientation and nature of literary works are relating people's recognition and understanding of their aesthetic sense from the translation of literary works. Any literary work bears its own aesthetic values. People can perceive it by their reading and deep reasoning activities. However, a majority of classic works in the world are written in different languages, that is, every literary classic work is created by different writers from different countries. For example, in China, the great classic novels such as *A story of Three States*, *A Dream of Red Mansion*, etc. are written in Chinese by the celebrated writers Luo Guanzhong and Cao Xueqin, while in Greek and Roman civilization, the world-famous books *Iliad* and *Odyssey* become classic in Greek or Latin. From this recognition, we can see the important status of translation of literary works for people's cognition, thus it is necessary to convey many world classics from the source language into the target language. During the process of such conveyance, the aesthetic orientation can be passed on by translation.

In translation activity, the author's aesthetic point of view can be embodied in his

or her works through different images, complex syntactic structures, various figurative speeches and so on. It is known people's recognition of the material world have many in common and their cognitive ability is identical, no matter what language they speak, such identical cognition can be found in both source language and target language. In literary work translation, the author's stylistic feature and his or her aesthetic can be demonstrated and conveyed clear in a text and its translating text. So, when we study the aesthetic orientation of translation of literary works, we should observe and focus on the adoption of the translation of figurative speeches made by the author in the original text, and learn to deal with it in the translating version.

### The Nature of Literature

What is literature? We can get a great deal of definition about it, since we can define the term of literature from such as anthropological, historical, or sociological respective. From such respective we study literature, we should deal with the ethical value, hierarchy and differentiation of individuals personalities reflected on the literary works. For instance, in Jewish Literary Works which emerged and developed after World War II, we can perceive the remarkable ethical value of the second generation of Jewish writers such as Singer, Bellow and Malamud. These writers emphasize the imperative of Jewish ethical value. In Singer's many short stories we can sense kindness and honesty of protagonists from humble class. To study literary we can also take on the linguistic system and syntactic structure of literary texts. Structuralism is a new literary tendency flourishing in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some western scholars and linguists attempt to study the regulation and rule of literature and art from the integrated system of things. F. de Saussure set forth his idea and doctrine of Structuralism, which can be classified into two categories, deconstruction and reconstruction. Structuralism mainly has two features, integration and mutual time. The integration emphasizes there is an interconnection of one event. In this whole system, there exists the relationship between one part and another, between a part and the whole system. They interact with each other. The mutual time stresses in a whole system of an event, the relationship among different parts of it exists at the same time. Such cases taken above can be found everywhere. But the author of this article believes any study of literary works, any literature is not a concrete thing, thus the aesthetics of literature coexists with literary text.

Chinese famous scholar Sheng Shang in his book *Reversed Beauty* points out the term beauty itself is abstract. It can not be measured by its practical price. We know there exist different races and peoples in the world. They have mutual need of beauty. And literary works are the vehicle of it. Therefore, literary works become something people want to gain. In this case, the core of literature is aesthetics of course. If we study literature we ought to study aesthetics orientation of literary works. In terms of the people's aesthetics, we can acquire not only the shape beauty but also the abstract beauty embodied in a literary work. Different races and peoples possess different aesthetics. An individual's aesthetics is different from another based on his or her own culture, thus to study aesthetics of different people lies in the study of different literary works. Aesthetic psychology marks a writer's literary style. From his or her work we can have a good comprehension of his or her people's aesthetic custom and different aesthetic psychology. So as long as we do a research on study literary, we should concentrate on the study of the aesthetics of a writer, which is of value for us to interpret literary works.

### The Position of Translators' Aesthetics Orientation in Translation of Literary Works

In last part we have discussed the relationship of aesthetics writers and literary works by defining the term of literature. We also have made the brief interpretation of the relation between writers' aesthetics orientation and translation. Now, let us analyze the significance and position of aesthetics orientation in literary translation. Translation is a kind of way from a language into another language. In Chinese Tang Dynasty, Jia Gongyan, a Chinese scholar and writer made a definition in this way "*Translation is an interpretation to one phenomenon in some simple and clear words.*" In this concept made by Jia Gongyan, we can also be taught that translation demonstrates the exchanging of bilingual languages and it also associates everything in which a language involves. It plays a role of language as a communicative tool, a role of language representing an abstract system and a role of language existing codes because translation itself is language exchanging. It combines the two individual linguistic systems with each other, so we can depend on translating property to interpret an abstract conception, beauty existing between the lines of literary works. However, translation stands for the exchanging between



the two language writers. It can be used to convey an author or a speaker's emotion, and idea, thus it is restricted by different contexts. The essence of translation consists in its function of decoding and encoding. Hence in the process of a translating activity, a translator will make his or her adventures. Weng Yuliang a well-known Chinese translations theorist made a comment on the translating activity: translator should pursue for the utmost level of his translation. Although the original text is quite different from the translation of it, the original text and translating version of it are supposed to have to identical quality. The charming of a translation of literary works is embodied in the translator's pursuit for the unanimous and agreement of the original text and its translating version.

The process of a translation activity is a process of the translator's pursuit for beauty of his work. So every work of translation has its own feature. To comment the value of a translated work, we should appreciate it based on such criterion that the translation work is made close to the original text in theme, style and like. For example, *CaiWei* in *The Book of Songs* is generally believed as the best work of it. Its different translation versions reflect the different values. Some reveal the charming of the original text of *CaiWei*. Some express the value of the translation version. Some display the derivative value from the translation version.

Ezra Pound, the American poet who led the Imagist Movement, made such translation in his *Cathay*.

When we set out, the willows were drooping with spring.  
We come back in the snow.  
We go slowly, we are hungry and thirsty.  
Our mind is fuel of sorrow, who will know of our grief?

It is evident Pound reflects the facts in this poem. In Pound's version, he pays attention to making his translation loyalty to the original text, but he can not fully convey the beauty hidden in the lines. Compared to Pound's version, Chinese famous translator of poetry Xu Yuanchong translated *CaiWei* in this way.

When I left here,

Willows shed tear.  
I come back now,  
Snow bends the bough.  
Long, long the way,  
Hard, hard the day.  
Hunger and thirst,  
Press me the worst.  
My grief o'er flows.  
Who knows, who knows?

From Xu's translating version, we can understand translation can convey not only the facts, but also the images and the translator's emotion and recognition of the original text. Reading his translation, readers can be taken into the scenes Mr Xu's translation made. So, if we try to appreciate a good translating work, we should follow the translator's work to experience the aesthetic orientation he owns.

To sum up, the aesthetic orientation of a translator reflected in his or her translation works is recognition which tests good or ill translation, such conclusion is made in the basic of translation not merely a way of bilingual language conveyance, but its position and function.

Translation of literary works is different from other forms of translation. It emphasizes the established beauty while a translation is being made because it is determined by the nature and quality of literature based on such concept. To translate a literary work, the translator should attach importance to the beauty embodied in the original work first, and then tries on his or her own taste of the work.

## 2. English Song Translation from the Respective of Metrical Pattern

### Function of Metre in English Song Translation

When talking about song, the first important topic is certainly its metre and rhyme. These two are unique factors which are different from general literatures. Also, there are many factors that constituent metre: well-balanced intermittence;

the repeated appearing same tone; the harmonious combination of using the same rhyme and intonation and the combination of syllable's heavy and light, strong and weak, long and short, quick and slow. The tone of a song is shaped, so its translation must compile with original tempo arrangement and then achieve the "perfect" combination. At the same time, the arrangement of translation's metre should consider original scene, style and content. It's certain that each country has its own regular means of metre, so we had better pay attention to the metre comparison and dubbing translation in English song before translation.

There are many differences in song's rules of metre and rhyme because of the different language structures of English and Chinese. English song devotes particular care to rhythm which comes from its metre, foot or the variety of beat and rhyme. Rhythm is very important for song. As Guo Moruo, a famous Chinese poet, has said, "*Rhythm to song is like her appearance and her life. We can say, there is no song that without rhythm. Without rhythm, it's not a song anymore.*" Rhythm not only adds the musicality of song which makes song sounds beautifully, but also strengthens their expression. The metre of English song is distinguishable on the basis of foot which concludes number of foot and the position of stressed syllable. American singer Don Mclean's *Vincent* is written to memorize Vincent Van Gogh, a famous Dutch painter, and his masterpiece "*The Starry Night*." One section of this song is as followed:

Starry starry night  
Paint your palette blue and gray  
Look out on a summer's day  
With eyes that know the darkness in my soul  
Shadows on the hills  
Sketch the trees and the daffodils  
Catch the breeze and the winter chills

Version [tr. Fu Zi Shangshu (夫子上树)]

(The number after each Chinese translation shows the same syllable  
in both English original song and Chinese translation)

- 在星星点点的夜晚 8  
 你在画板上涂抹蓝灰的油彩 12  
 在某个夏日里向外张望 10  
 恰恰正是你那能看透我灵魂的双眼 15  
 群山的影子里 6  
 勾勒出树林与水仙花的美貌 12  
 捕捉春天的风和冬天的冷

In the example above, we can say it's a dubbed translation because of its keeping the equal syllable. Both the original and translated versions are beautiful and full of poetic feelings.

In English, there is one special poetic type that can be sung: sonnet. The two basic forms of it are iambic and trochee. Always there are syllables in one foot, one is heavy and the other is light. When the light syllable is placed first and the heavy latter, such foot is called iambic; or it's called trochee on the contrary. Sonnet is a kind of lyricism with strict metrics. Shakespearean, a special kind of sonnet, which is combined with three stanzas and two-line couplet; there are 10 syllables in each line and the whole rhyme is abab cdcd efef gg. Shakespeare used to make the strict logical deduction become lively and interesting, rise and down with evocative expression, and then come into being the results of humanism in his works. *Sonnet 29* is one of them. The first four lines of it are as followed:

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
 I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate.

Version (tr. Unknown)

当我受尽命运和人们的白眼，  
 暗暗地哀悼自己的身世飘零，  
 徒用呼吁去干扰聒聒的昊天，  
 顾盼着身影，诅咒自己的生辰。

This translation makes full use of sonnet's advantages, which adopts iambic and gives prominence to its theme level by level. And in general, Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18*, the one that is among the most famous poems in the entire sequence, belongs to iambic, as well. There are many varieties in it. Take the first line for example: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The first and third syllables are both light syllables so that are placed at the heavy syllable position. There's only faint accent when read. And its translation is "能不能让我来把你比作夏日?" Although there are many varieties in this sonnet, the major tone is still iambic pentameter. What's more, such changes would make the song more sweet-sounding.

All in all, the metre of English song usually exists in those full of ancientry. It rarely exists in modern songs. Although the learning of English metre is endless, it's really less existing in modern songs. To general composers and crowds, they pay more attention to song's rhyme instead. For the author's part, if a song is full of complete rhyme, it's a comparable good one. Although it's a little shallow, it's the fact. So next, the author's going to talk about rhyme emphatically.

### Function of Rhyme in English Song Translation

The language of song is a musical language. Rhyme is one factor which contributes greatly to the musical appeal of song. In modern English songs, in order to show the completeness of a song, composers will try their best in keeping a complete rhyme. During song translation, people should pay attention to the appearing problems and each solution as followed.

Firstly, people should avoid the phenomena of inversed words in rhyme's translation of English song. Kenneth L. Pike, an American linguist, said that "The absolute height of a syllable is not important; whereas one syllable and another's relative height is very important." In western song, stressed syllable must be arranged at strong beat or relative strong beat. And such inversed words would occur when strong beat and stressed syllable is misplaced with the comparable weak beat and unstressed syllable. This would cause the change of tune, and influence its performing effect. In Chinese, stressed syllable usually placed at the first word. So during translation, people should keep an eye on it. Here is an interesting example for it. The highlight of Chinese singer Fei Xiang's *Clouds From*

*Homeland* “归来吧，归来哟。” The intonation of “归来” is from high to low while the melody is an upstream from fifth to sixth. So it sounds like “鬼来哟” which presents that the composer sometimes takes melody’s development logic into account but neglects partial song intonation. Of course, the reason why it caused such interesting effect is that the similar pronunciation between “归来” and “鬼来” in Chinese. In English, there would not produce such meaning’s ambiguity because of its own pronunciation.

Secondly, it needs to coincide with rhyme. Generally speaking, people need to keep the original rhyme if it’s possible. However, because of the different rhythm rules between English and Chinese, it’s difficult to do it. So, people should develop a new rhyme to make up this weak point. The most frequently used rhymes in English are end rhyme, alliteration and assonance, but only end rhyme in Chinese. For example, the American singers Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel’s *Scarborough Fair* “Blankets and bedclothes, the child of mountain” is translated into “大山是山之子的地毯和床单”; the American singing group The Mamas and the Papas’ *California Dreaming* “And I pretended to pray” is translated into “并假装祈祷”; the American singer Mariah Carey’s *Hero* “And you cast your fears aside/ And you know you can survive” is translated into “把你的恐惧甩到一旁，你明白你能活下来”，etc. Such examples are various. And through these examples, it’s clear that it’s hard to keep the alliteration and assonance in Chinese. So, when translating an English song into Chinese, people should follow Chinese rules: using the end rhyme.

Thirdly, whether we choose the original rhyme or create a new one, we should keep the same rhyme in the whole song: keep the end rhyme from beginning to the end. This will also give people a complete feeling and shape a simple harmonious beautiful rhyme. In order to keep such a complete feeling, people had better not lose the rhyme. For instance, an English ballad named *Greensleeves*, which is covered by English singer John Gay and translated by Lian Bo:

Greensleeves was all my joy  
Greensleeves was my delight  
Greensleeves was my heart of gold

绿袖招兮，我心欢朗；a  
绿袖飘兮，我心痴狂。b  
绿袖摇兮，我心流光；a

And who but my Lady Greensleeves

绿袖永兮,非我新娘。b

This version rhymes “ang” and abab. Such arrangement presents a sense of completeness. And from both the original and translated versions, people can sense its happiness and relaxation in the selected part.

The American singing group Gun N's Roses' *November Rain* and its translated version by Ru Yi, an internet user, are as followed:

When I look into your eyes

凝神细看双目中,

I can see a love restrained

幽情难抑心忡忡,

But daring when I hold you

与君并坐两相拥,

Don't you know I feel the same

问君可知此心同,

'Cause nothing lasts forever

我叹万事皆成空,

And we both know hearts can change

哪堪两情多变更,

And it's hard to hold a candle

如秉残烛影憧憧,

In the cold November rain.

摇曳萧瑟秋雨中。

This version rhymes “ong” and combines with the melody and the two-minute long guitar solo, such complete rhymes give the author such a feeling that the hero of this MTV is real inconsolable. And rhyming “ong,” such an open syllable, presents this song's magnificence and singers' strength better.

Generally speaking, such rhymes usually appear in such artistic translation as what we've quoted above. However, there is no rule but has exceptions, such as the version of Canadian singer Avril Lavigne's *Innocence*:

“Waking up I see that everything is ok

The first time in my life and now it's so great

Slowing down I look around and I am so amazed

I think about the little things that make life great

I wouldn't change a thing about it

This is the best feeling”

Version (tr. Unknown)

“睁开双眼,我发现一切如期上演,  
我的生活从未如此美好呈现,  
放慢脚步环顾四面,我感到惊艳,  
那些让生活美好的细节我开始看见,  
我不会让它改变,这感觉毫无缺陷。”

Although it does not apply the artistic translation, it is still an exception which rhymes “an.” This version has not only achieved the rhyming demands, but also has achieved the easily-understood.

To sum up, whether people create a new rhyme or follow the original one, they should be coincident with the original emotion and content. As the translation of *November Rain* above, although its version applies a new rhyme, people still can feel the singer's suppression and inconsolable feeling strongly. In *Shi Yun Xin Bian*, “ong” belongs to zhong dong zhe, it's an open syllable and shows a vehement expression of emotion which is consistent with the original mostly. If people choose a close syllable, such as “ou,” it would destroy the original on the emotional expressing, might as well not keep the same rhyme in the whole song. And such completeness in Chinese stresses its feeling more.

### Conclusion

The author of this paper believes, on one hand, in the process of English song translation from the perspective of English literary stylistics, image, metre and rhyme are the most difficult parts because of containing the most professional skills. Both English and Chinese have their rules and specialties in image, metre and rhyme, which may cause big differences in some certain conditions. Even the simplest image, people need to do some research both in English and Chinese, and then achieve its uniformity. When encountering some unfamiliarly or unusually used images, such simple online enquiry may be not enough, so people need to check some more powerful and authoritative data or information to find an accurate answer which would cost more spirit and time.

On the other hand, in the process of English song translation from the perspective of English literary stylistics, the diction selection is the most important part because it needs to combine all of these respective of English literary stylistics



which the author's analysed in the thesis. Here let's take the "Shijing Style" translation into consideration, and take the Team Song of Rafa Benitez's Premier League, *You'll Never Walk Alone*, for example, no matter from the point of rhetorical device or the rhyme, the image or the diction selection, it's totally a successful and comprehensive translation. Thus it can be seen that the diction selection is the most important part among them.

Fu Lei, a famous translator, says, "According to the effects, translation should be like a picture painted from a copy, the real important thing is similar in form instead of being alike in spirit. However, according to the practical work, translation is harder than painting from a copy. If you really want to do a better job on translation, you must amend it again and again." Also, there has no exact correct answer in translation; there are only differences between worse, bad, good and better. The more related knowledge a person has, the better version he would create. Only when people infuse themselves into the original language completely during English song translation, will they achieve the functional equivalence and attract target readers more. Meanwhile, the accepting of English songs and the delivering of native literary culture are very important in international communication. So we should try our best to overcome these difficult points during translation and show people the essences of different countries through such different cultural exchange.

### 3. On the Gains and Losses of the Interpretative Theory of Translation

The French Interpretative Theory of Translation was first established in the late 1960s and became mature between the 1980s and the 1990s. It was represented by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer and their representative works are *Interpretation Theory and Practice of Teaching* in 1984 and the *Interpretive Theory of Interpretation and Translation* by Lidere in 1994. And thanks to the translation and introduction of several Chinese scholars who studied in France, this theory has been familiarized to the Chinese researchers later and had a positive influence in the field of interpretation of China.

The time when this Interpretation Theory became mature coincided with the