A Research on Aesthetic Representations in Three English Versions of *Transient Days* from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics

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Abstract— Transient Days is a famous prose written by Chinese famous writer Zhu Ziqing. It gives people a sense of beauty so it is appreciated by people nowadays. As a result, it is translated by many people into English version. The translation of prose must be guided by aesthetics. Translations aesthetics provides people a new perspective to analyze the translation of prose. The purpose of this research to find the merits and shortcomings of three different English versions respectively translated by Zhang Peiji, Zhu Chunsheng and Zhang Mengjing on the basis of Liu Miqing's translation aesthetics theory and finally to draw an conclusion that Zhang Peiji's version is the best by a contrastive analysis of three three English versions from the perspective of translation aesthetics.

Keywords—translation aesthetics, prose translation, Transient Days.

I. INTRODUCTION

China has a long history of prose writing, and modern prose was emerging during the "May Fourth Movement" on the last century. In this period, a great number of famous prose came into people' sight. Among them, Zhu Ziqing's *Transient Days* is popular with people. By Zhu Ziqing's vivid description, it expresses his helplessness and pity towards time's transient passing without halt. What's more, this prose boosts well-formed structure, natural coherence, elegant and meaningful text, so it gives the reader a sense of beauty.

Many scholars from home and abroad do some research on Transient Days and Aesthetic Translation in different aspects. In western world, it is generally believed that Plato (427-347bc), the ancient Greek philosopher, is the pioneer of western classical aesthetics. He puts forward the concept of "beauty in itself", which is the first discussion on beauty in western history and exerts a huge effect on western translation theories. It is the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) who first formally names "aesthetics" and proposes to establish it as a new subject in his book Aesthetica published in 1750. Aesthetics, he argues, is "the study of beauty by perception"; its definition is "the perfection of perceptual knowledge", and aesthetics is the study of "the science of perceptual knowledge". Baumgarten's book marks the entrance of aesthetics onto the translation arena as an independent discipline, and he is recognized as the "father of Aesthetics" (Mao Ronggui, 2005: 1). In China, based on Julian House's Translation Quality Evaluation Model, Sun ling(2018:140-141) analyzed and evaluated the English version of Transient Days translated by Zhang Peiji. She makes a qualitative analysis of the translated text and the original text from four aspects of language field, tenor, form and genre, and makes an inductive and comparative study from three levels of vocabulary, syntax and text. From the perspective of ecological translation, Guan Yanmei (2018:68-69) analyzed and interpreted the adaptation selection of Zhan Peiji's and Zhu Chunshen's translation versions in three dimensional translation through comparative analysis.

In addition to these, there are many other perspectives to study *Transient days*. Although the research aspects is quite broad and comprehensive, this research still find there are not many studies on *Transient Days* from the perspective of translation aesthetics. Therefore, the research aims to analyze three different English versions of *Transient Days* respectively translated by Zhang Peiji, Zhu Chunsheng and Zhang Mengjing on the basis of Liu Miqing's translation aesthetics theory from the aspects of formal system and non-formal system which belong to translation aesthetic object. And then it's going to find out that Zhang Peiji's version is the best by a contrastive analysis of three three English versions.

II. THEORETIC FRAMEWORK

2.1 An Overview of Translation Aesthetics

of Translation In Dictionary Study. Fang Mengzhi(2004:96). defined translation aesthetics as follows: "Translation aesthetics is an aesthetic approach of translation theory, a theoretical construction of a branch of translation science, and an important part of modern translation theory. It is supposed to reveal the aesthetic origin of translation studies, explore the special significance of aesthetics to translation studies, apply the viewpoints and basic principles of aesthetics, understand the science and artistry of translation, put forward the aesthetic standards of different styles of translation, and analyze, elaborate and solve the aesthetic problems appearing in interlingual transformation." Liu Miqing's theories in An Introduction to Translation Aesthetics is in the framework of the basic theory of modern aesthetics.

Aesthetic object, or AO, is the objective thing that people's aesthetic behavior involves. In this world, not everything is an aesthetic object. The so-called AO must be an objective thing that is opposite to the aesthetic subject(AS).They are a pair of concept. Only when aesthetic subject deals with the aesthetic object, it can be called aesthetic object. Generally speaking, the translation aesthetic object(TAO) is the original text that need to be translated by translators. It links closely with aesthetic value, which can meet people's aesthetic needs. Therefore, not all original text can be thought as translation aesthetic object. Because if the original text itself is meaningless, it loses the value to be translated.

According to Liu Miqing (2012:67), "the translation aesthetic object has five features: Firstly, translation aesthetic object depends on the aesthetic constitution of source language. That is to say, the translator must be faithful to the original text. Secondly, translation aesthetic object is equivalent to the aesthetic effect of the source language. Thirdly, translation aesthetic object gives the aesthetic subject some room for flexibility. Because the aesthetic constituents of translation aesthetic object are very complex, the equivalence of many components can not be found in the target language, so the translator should deal with it flexibly in the process of translation. Fourthly, the aesthetic value changes with the development of history. Different historic circumstances produce different aesthetic values. So aesthetic value of the translation aesthetic object is not always the same. Fifthly, the aesthetic value of translation aesthetic object has different requirements. For different genres of text, the aesthetic requirements are different."

Among all of these features of translation aesthetic object mentioned above, the most basic one is its dependence on the original text. It is of no use to pursue or discuss the beauty of the translation versions without considering the original text.

2.2 An Overview of Formal System and Non-formal System

"The formal system refers to the forms and devices at linguistic level, such as phonological level, lexical level and syntactic level, which are concrete and could arouse certain aesthetic feeling on readers" (Yang Zijian,Liu Xueyun,1994:511). In other words, formal system is the formal feature of language and the aesthetic value can be felt by the people, namely beauty in form. It is a natural attribute containing the external characteristics of aesthetic object. The aesthetic composition of the formal system can be reflected in various aspects of language, such as phonetics, vocabulary and syntax.

In addition to the material form, perceptual external elements, the translation aesthetic object also includes non-material, non-perceptual and non-external elements that can not be directly perceived by intuition. The non-external image components, like the external image components, can form a system, which is an uncertain, indefinite and non-quantitative system. It's essential characteristic is its fuzziness and uncertainty. This is non-formal system, also known as fuzzy sets or sets of fuzziness. Liu Miqing divided non-formal system into "emotion", "idea", "image" and "style".

III. A CONSTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF AESTHETIC REPRESENTATIONS OF FORMAL SYSTEM

Aesthetic representation is to transform translators comprehension of the original text into the outer form. The key of aesthetic representation lies in the materialization of aesthetic experience In terms of formal system, aesthetic representations lie in the level of sound, lexis and syntax.

Because different translators process the original text in different ways and their translation versions have an evident characteristic of their personal style. More importantly, there is no denying that each translation version has its own shinning points and deficiencies. Therefore, it is necessary to make a contrastive analysis of three translation versions from the aspect of aesthetic representations in formal system and non-formal system. So in the next part, the research will analyse these three versions from their beauty at sound level, lexical level and syntactic. The paper refer to Zhang Peiji's translation as Zhang1'version, Zhang Mengjing's translation as Zhang2's version and Zhu Chunshen's translation as Zhu's version.

3.1 Beauty at Sound level

Sound is one of the basic means of carrying aesthetic information—musicality. Zhu Guangqian (1984:43) pointed out : "the affaire could be known through meaning of words, while the sense must be experienced through sound of words". Nida(1993:24)stated:"good essays, like good poetry, should have the phonological and semantic ups and downs, in order to let the readers experienced the changes in rhythm". The sound beauty in Chinese and English represents in different ways. Chinese is a tonal language whose four tones make up the pronunciation of intonation. While English is a stress language whose most words are multi-syllables . It has stress but without tones. So translators should make no efforts to handle it appropriately in order to reach the same aesthetic effect of the original text.

3.1.1 End Rhyme

End rhyme is a kind of rhyme that occurs at the end of two or more words or phrases in which their sound is the same. End rhyme is one of the simplest and most common forms of rhyme. It can be quite enjoyable for people to read and hear.

Eg.1 像针尖上一滴水滴在大海里,我的日子 滴在时间的流里,没有声音,也没有影子。 (2004:55)

Zhang1: Like a drop of water falling off a needle point into the ocean, my days are quietly dripping into the stream of time without leaving a trace. (2004:57)

Zhang2: Just like water drops a pinpoint dripping slowly into the vast ocean, my days been dripping into the river of time, quiet**ly** and invisib**ly**. (1999:32)

Zhu: Like a drop of water from the point of a needle disappearing into the ocean, my days dripping into the stream of time, sound**less**, trace**less**. (1994:65)

In the original text, the author uses"没有声音","也 没有影子"to describe that time's pass is intangible and it is difficult for people to capture it. In Zhnag2's translation and Zhu's translation, they respectively use two coordinate adverbs and adjectives as adverbial to depict the time in order to achieve the same effect as the original form, What's more, these two groups of words have end rhyme and give reader a sense of rhythm. More importantly, by the end rhyme, readers can have a much more intensive feeling that there is no trace of time. However, Zhang1 combines them with the former sentence. He uses "quietly" to describe the verb "dripping" and deals with "也没有影子"as "without leaving a trace". Compared to Zhang2's translation and Zhu's translation, Zhang1's version doesn't do so much well in formal equivalence and lacks a sense of sound beauty.

3.1.2 Alliteration

Alliteration is an important term in stylistics, a branch of English linguistics. Alliteration is one of the rhetorical devices of English phonetics, which contains the music beauty and the neat beauty of language. It makes the sound of the language and the emotion intertwined. Therefore, it has a strong sense of expression and appealing. It usually refers to the repetition of sound in the first phoneme of the first part or the first consonant group. If the first part is completely missing, the main vowel will have to be the same. Alliteration is a means to strengthen the sense of rhythm within the line. And it is also an important to show that English pursues formal beauty and sound beauty.

Eg.2 在逃去如飞的日子里,在千门万户的世界里的我能做些什么呢?只有徘徊罢了; (2004:55)

Zhang1: Living in this world with its fleeting days and teeming millions, what can I do but weaver and wander and live a transient life? (2004:57)

Zhang2: In these swiftly escaping days, what can I do in this world among thousands of households? I can do nothing but **h**esitate and **h**urry.(1999:32)

Zhu: What can I do, in this hustling world, with my days flying in their escape? Nothing but to hesitate, to rush.(1994:65)

In the original text, the author uses "徘徊"to describe that when facing the fleeting days, people can do nothing. It expresses a kind of helpless feeling. What's more,"徘 徊"in Chinese is called disyllabic simple words (双音节单 纯词). It has a certain beauty of sound and form and it is quite normal to see it in Chinese. Zhang1 translated this word into "waver and wander", it not only has alliteration but also end rhyme, which makes his translation beauty in sound and rhythm. Zhang2 also notices this characteristic of Chinese, so he also uses alliteration to achieve the same effect in sound and form of the original text. However, in dealing with this word"徘徊", Zhu doesn't notice the beautiful sound in Chinese so he just translates it into"to hesitate, to rush" which loses the sound beauty of the original text.

3.2 Beauty at Lexical level

Lexis is one basic unit which can carry aesthetic information in language because it is a triad of character, morpheme and syllable, so it has a strong capacity to give people a sense of beauty through different aspects. One aspect can be diction which involves word selection, register, collocation and so on. The other aspect is using various rhetorical devices through wording. All of these are effective ways to express aesthetic information.

3.2.1Simile

Simile is a kind of rhetorical device that uses "as" or "like" to connect two kinds of different things. But to some extent, these two different things have some common features. In this way, it can present a vivid and concrete image to the reader, which also leaves a deep impression on readers and gives a sense of beauty.

Eg.3 我何时留着像<u>游丝样</u>的痕迹? (2004:56)

Zhang1: No, nothing, not even gossamer-like traces.(2004:58)

Zhang2: When have I ever left a mark as tiny as a hairspring?(1999:33)

Zhu : Have I left behind any gossamer traces at all? (1994:66)

In the original text, "游丝样的痕迹" is a simile device. Both Zhang1 and zhu translate it into "gossamer". But Zhang1 uses "gossamer-like", it can highlight the simile of the original text. "Gossamer" means the very fine thread made by spiders or any very light delicate material. By comparing "traces" to "gossamer", it vividly and precisely describes that the traces are hardly felt by people. However, Zhang2 translates it into "hairspring" which means a slender spiraled recoil spring that regulates the motion of the balance wheel of a timepiece. This selection of word only considers the literal fidelity but ignores meaning consistency. Besides, in Zhang2's translation, the word "mark" is also improper. "Mark" refers more to stain, spot that spoils the appearance of something. It is different from the word in the original text. So Zhang2 doesn't deal with these two words very well. Zhang1 translates more

accurately than the other two.

3.2.2Personification

Personification refers to the way to personify things and it endows inanimate objects with human actions and emotions. This rhetorical device can not only vividly describe a certain feature of something but also have the specific concrete effect. When the things are given with human behavior characteristics, the reader can feel that the description of the object is more lively.

Eg.4 早上我起来的时候,小屋里<u>射进</u>两三方 斜斜的太阳。(2004:55)

Zhang1: When I get up in the morning, the slanting sun casts two or three squarish patches of light into my small room. (2004:57)

Zhang2: When I get up in the morning, I see two or three ribbons of light streaming into my room.(1999:32)

Zhu: When I get up in the morning, the slanting sun marks its presence in my small room in two or three oblongs.(1994:65)

In this sentence, both Zhng1 and Zhu make "the slanting sun" as subject and respectively use "cast" and "mar" as verbs. By using of these two words, they give life to the sun and make the whole sentence more dynamic and vivid. What's more, the use of personification in this sentence is correspondent to the sentence after it"The sun has feet,...."It also stress that the pass of time is independent of man's will. On the contrary, Zhang2 uses "I" as subject and "see" as verb. It only stresses that the author sees the sun's light. Therefore, this kind of translation relatively is more static, without translating the verve that the sun keeps moving and time keeps flowing. Although both Zhang1 and Zhu notice the personification, Zhang1's selection of word is better than Zhu. The word "cast" is more anthropomorphic than the word "mark". So Zhang1's translation is better than the other two.

3.3 Beauty at Syntactic Level

Sentence is also an important language unit which conveys relatively complete meaning and aesthetic information. It is well-known that the sentence structure of Chinese is quite different from the English. The Chinese is parataxis while English is hypotaxis. Therefore, in the process of translating, the translator should take the differences between these two language into consideration. What's more, the rhetorical devices used are also of great importance.

3.3.1Parallelism

Parallelism is a rhetorical method that arranges words

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or sentences with the same or similar sentence structure, close meaning and consistent tone in a string. Because of its consistent tone, strong rhythm, same meaning categories and enumerating and strengthening nature, it can expand and deepen the meaning and give reader a violent feeling.

Eg.5 燕子去了,有再来的时候;杨柳枯了, 有再青的时候;桃花谢了,有再开的时候。 (2004:55)

Zhang1: If swallows go away, they will come back again. If willows wither, they will turn green again. If peaches shed their blossoms, they will flower again. (2004:57)

Zhang2: When the swallows have gone, there is still time to return; when the polar and willow trees have become withered, there is still time to see green; when the peach flowers have already faded, there is still time to blossom.(1999:32)

Zhu: Swallows may have gone, but there is a time of return; willow trees may have died back, but there is a time of regreening; peach blossoms may have fallen, but they will bloom again.(1994:65)

The original text contains three parallel sentences to form the parallelism which describe three natural phenomena that go on year in and year out. Zhang1 transforms them into three compound sentences to reach the structural equivalence and unity. The conditional adverbial clause is used in the present tense and the main clause is used in future tense, which is consistent with the natural phenomena described in the source language. Besides, the repetition of the words "if", "they", "again" not only strengthens the natural laws described in the original text but also forms a sharp contrast with the theme that time has gone forever, highlighting the preciousness of time and the author's regret about time passing in a hurry.Zhang2 transforms these three sentences into three compound complex sentences. The sentence structure is "When..., there is time to+V". It also achieves a high degree of unity with the original text, but the present perfect tense in the adverbial clause of time stresses the result, the natural phenomena depicted in the text are objective facts, so the present tense is better. Zhu uses three parallel sentences connected by "but" and the structure of the simple sentence is "may have+PP." It is united in form. However, this structure represents a conjecture, but the natural phenomena depicted in the text are objective facts, so it is not appropriate.

3.3.2Rhetorical Question

Rhetorical question is different from interrogative question. Rhetorical question dose not aim at getting answers, but take questions as means to achieve rhetorical effects. It is characterized by that affirmative question which means strong negation, while negative question means strong affirmation.

Eg.6 我留着些什么痕迹呢?我何曾留着像游丝样的痕迹呢?(2004:56)

Zhang1: What traces have I left behind? No, nothing, not even gossamer-like traces. (2004:58)

Zhang2: And what mark have I left in the world? When have I ever left a mark as tiny as a hairspring?(1999:32)

Zhu: What traces have I left behind me? Have I left behind any gossamer traces all?(1994:65)

From the original text, it is evident that the answers are known to the author and reader though they are two questions. Obviously, the author did not leave behind any traces which were like gossamer. Therefore, Zhang2 and Zhu use rhetorical question to be achieve the same effect with the original text. They are not only uniform in form but also in meaning. However, Zhang1 translates the second sentence into affirmative sentence. The form is not well unified with the original. But it is worth mentioning that he uses three negative words "no", "nothing", "not even" to emphasize that the author has no achievements with time passing by.

IV. A CONSTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF AESTHETIC REPRESENTATIONS OF NON-FORMAL SYSTEM

Non-form system is another important system of translation aesthetic object. Liu Miqing divided non-formal system into "emotion", "idea", "image" and "style". In this part, this research will give some detailed examples from the aspect of emotion, image and style to analysis the aesthetic representations of non-formal system.

4.1 Beauty in Emotion

Emotion is an essential part of the prose. Any prose must convey a certain emotion of the author. A great number of excellent proses are full of sincere emotions which touch people a lot. So only when the trans lator grasps the emotion expressed in the original text can he represent the aesthetic information precisely. Eg.7 但不能平的,为什么要白白走这一遭 啊? (2004, p.56)

Zhang1: However, I am taking it very much to heart: why should I be made to pass through this world for nothing at all? (2004, p58)

Zhang2: But it's unfair to me...why did I came to this world for nothing?(1999, p32)

Zhu: It is not fair though: why should I have made such a trip for nothing!(1994, p66)

In the original text,"不能平的"expresses the author's emotions of being unable to accept it and annoyed by it. Therefore, Zhang1 translated it into "I am taking it very much to heart", he grasps accurately the emotion expressed by the author. What's more, in the translation of the latter part of the sentence, he also expresses intensively the emotion that the author is unwilling to live a whole life for nothing by using "pass through this world", "nothing at all". However, Zhang2 and Zhu translate "不能平的"into "unfair". "Unfair" means something is not right or fair according to a set of rules or principles . It does not accord with the emotions in the original text. They pay more attention to the literal meaning but do not get the emotions expressed in the original.

4.2 Beauty in Image

Image is reckoned with the key point of the prose writing as the author conveys his emotions, attitudes and ideas by using image. Image (意) is often linked with symbol (象).Image is produced by the artistic selection of image objects. Elaborate selection of image objects can sublimate the ordinary article into a fantastic one full of images.

Eg.8 像针尖上一滴水滴在大海里,我的日子 滴在时间的流里,没有声音,也没有影子。 (2004, p.55)

Zhang1: Like a drop of water falling off a needle point into the ocean, my days are quietly dripping into the stream of time without leaving a trace. (2004, p58)

Zhang2: Just like water drops a pinpoint dripping slowly into the vast ocean, my days have been dripping into the river of time, quietly and invisibly.(1999, p32)

Zhu: Like a drop of water from the point of a needle disappearing into the ocean, my days are dripping into the stream of time, soundless, traceless.(1994, p66)

The author gives readers a vivid description by using

the image of "针尖上的一滴水","大海","时间的流". These images stressed that the author's own days are much more negligible compared to the river of time just as a drop of water is so tiny facing with the vast ocean. Zhang1 translates them into "a drop water of falling off a needle", "ocean" and "the stream of time". He present the images described in the original in a correct way and the use of "falling off" gives the reader a sense of movement. Zhang2 translates "针尖上的一滴水" into "water drops a pinpoint" and uses the adverb "slowly". It is not as succinct and precise as time is passing quickly. These images just express every individual's time is limited and numbered. "Vast ocean" and "the river of time" is the shining point of these sentence. "Vast ocean" emphasizes the ocean is boundless an "Vast ocean" and "the river of time" gives people a image that the time is passing like the river flowing. Besides, "the river of time" is better than "the stream of time" because "river" is a natural flow of water that continues in a long line while "stream" is just a small narrow river. However, "Vast ocean" and "the river of time" can contrast their size and immensity with the tininess of a drop of water and the author's own days. Zhu's translation is similar to Zhang1's. However the verb "disappearing" just tells the reader the result that the water drops go into the ocean. It is less vivid than the verb "falling off" in Zhang1's translation.

4.3 Beauty in Style

It is well known that different writer has different writing style. One reason some of their works are so popular lies in their unique personal style. Some writers prefer to use gorgeous language while others like to use plain and simple ones. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator must have a deep understanding of the author's writing style and the translator also need try his best to represent the original style.

Eg.9 于是—洗手的时候,日子从水盆里过去;吃饭的时候,日子从饭碗里过去;默默时,便从凝然的双眼前过去了。(2004, p.55)

Zhang1: Thus the day flows away through the sink when I wash my hands; vanishes in the rice bowl when I have my meal; passes away quietly before the fixed gaze of my eyes when I am lost in reverie.(2004, p57)

Zhang2: When I wash my hands, my days wash off into my basin; when I am eating, the days vanish from my bowl; and when I am sitting silently, my days pass by my gazing eyes.(1999, p32)

Zhu: Thus-the days flows away through the

sink when I wash my hands, wears off in the bowl when I eat my meal, passes away before my day-dreaming gaze as I reflect in silence.(1994, p65)

Zhu Ziqing wrote this prose in colloquial language. For example,"洗手","吃饭","水盆","饭碗".All of the three translators translates them into simple and easy-understanding words. It is in accordance with the author's simple writing style. However, the translation of "默默" of Zhang1's version is easier for people to understand. Because when a person is in reverie, he will be silent and still. Zhang2 and Zhu translated it into "sitting silently" and "reflect in silence". Their translation may confuse the reader.

V. CONCLUSION

The three translation versions of the transient days all have advantages and disadvantages. However, by contrast, Zhang Peiji's version is much better than the other two. From the formal system level, the three translators attach great importance to the rhyme and rhythm of the language. By copying the parallelism of the original text, they make the whole prose more beautiful. Especially Zhu Chunshen, he does better in terms of the beauty of sound. He is specialized in using alliteration and vowels to create sound beauty. In terms of the beauty of lexical, Zhang Peiji's translation is the best. He uses proper words and grasps the meaning expressed in the original text most accurately, while Zhu Chunshen and Zhang Mengjing only considers the literal meaning and ignores the real meaning and emotions behind the words. In terms of syntactic beauty, Zhang Peiji's translation is more uniform, more compact and better conveys the charm of the original text. From the perspective of non-formal system, Zhang Peiji also does better. Through Zhang Peiji's choice of words and sentences and the proper use of tenses, he expresses the author's regret for the passing time in a natural way. By contrast, Zhang Mengjing and Zhu Chunshen do not handle the tenses of some sentences properly, so they can not better express the author's feelings and emotions. In terms of the style, Zhu Ziqing adopts colloquial language throughout the prose, which makes the prose closer to life and easier for readers to understand and accept. Zhang Peiji more reasonably reproduced the style of prose in his translation by using simple and easy words, while Zhang Mengjing and Zhu Chunshen use more wordy words.

This research discovers that on the whole, Zhang Peiji's translation is the best in terms of representing the beauty of the original text with proper words, fluent translation, accurate grasp of the author's emotions and a *ISSN*: 2456-7620

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good transmission of the original text's charm.

This research is just an attempt for this subject. There are more issues waiting for further studies. For example, from this research, it's evident that different translators have different translations of the same prose, therefore, it's a good idea to study the translation of Chinese prose from the translator's subjectivity. What's more, due to the limitation of the ability of the author, the research only raises some strategies in reproducing the beauties of the SL. Hence it is suggested to study *Transient Days* with other strategies.

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