

Taxonomy in Translation Studies: A Case Study of Xu Yuanchong's Translation of "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River"

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Abstract: In this article, we present an application of Anton Popović's 1976 *Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation* and its revised versions by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek. We analyze Xu Yuanchong's translation of the poem "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River" with regard to the translator's attitude, the equivalence of translation, the historical and cultural encoding of translation, and the adaptability of translation. We argue that the taxonomy's application in translation studies provides a new research paradigm and analytical framework for the study of literary translation and the translation of classical Chinese literature in particular.

Keywords: "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River," literary translation, comparative cultural studies, Chinese classical poetry, taxonomy, Anton Popović, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek

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Translation studies have long been central to comparative literature, addressing issues like linguistic conversion and cultural exchange. Recently, the focus has shifted from linguistic equivalence to exploring the roles of culture, politics, power, and gender. Translation theories have evolved, with postcolonial and feminist approaches emerging. In this context, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek has examined how literary translation should be understood within comparative literature and comparative cultural studies. He revised Anton Popović's 1976 *Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation* based on related theoretical frameworks, including Itamar Even-Zohar's *Polysystem Studies*, a Special Issue of *Poetics Today*, André Lefevere's *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context*, Siegfried J. Schmidt's *Foundation for the Empirical Study of Literature: The Components of a Basic Theory*, and Gideon Toury's *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Tötösy de Zepetnek's revised and expanded taxonomy of Popović's *Dictionary* offers a structured analytical framework for studying individual or multiple texts and enhancing our understanding of literary translation in its comparative cultural and theoretical dimensions. In the present study we use the last of Tötösy de Zepetnek's revised versions of Popović: "Taxonomy for the Study of Translation in Comparative Cultural Studies."

“A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” is a poem originally part of an ancient *Yuefu* (乐府) repertoire included in the *Yuefu Shiji* (乐府诗集; *Songs of the Music Bureau*) compiled by Guo Maoqian (郭茂倩) in the early 12th century during the Song Dynasty. According to the 10th-century *Music Records in the Old Book of Tang* (旧唐书·音乐志二), Chen Houzhu (陈后主), also known as Chen Shubao (陈叔宝; 553–604), the last ruler of the Southern Chen, composed the first “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River,” now lost, along with “Jade Tree in the Rear Court” (“Yushuhoutinghua”; 玉树后庭花) and “Grand and Majestic” (“Tangtang”; 堂堂). Chen Shubao often collaborated with court female scholars and ministers to compose poetry, while He Xu (何胥), the director of the imperial music bureau, was skilled in literary music and selected the most exquisite works for this piece (Liu and Zhao 1067; our trans.). Subsequently, figures such as Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty (581–618), also composed poems on this theme, with that of Zhang Ruoxu (张若虚; 660–720), “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” (“Chunjianghuayue”; 春江花月夜), the most famous. This poem centers on the five elements—spring, river, flower, moon, and night—with the moon as the central motif that ties the entire poem together. The poet weaves these elements into a harmonious whole creating a vivid, majestic, yet tranquil and mysterious scene. At the same time, the poet infuses these natural landscapes with personal emotions, expressing the feelings of longing and separation. In other words, the first half of the poem presents a natural scene of river, sky, and moon while the latter half focuses on the human emotions of the traveler and the woman in waiting. By using spring, the river, flowers, the moon, and night, the poet integrates beauty, emotion, and philosophy, conveying the sorrow of separation and the deeper reflections on life.

The poem is noted for its graceful and beautiful language, with a smooth and resonant rhythm. Under the moonlight, the imagery of spring, river, flower, and night takes on a unique charm. The Qing scholar Wang Kaiyun (王闳运) commented that

Zhang Ruoxu’s “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” employs the style of the Western Isles, standing alone in its grandeur, truly a masterpiece. Li He and [Li] Shangyin draw upon its freshness; Song lyrics and Yuan poetry flow from it as tributaries, its grandeur unmatched in the imperial court style. (2108; our trans.)

“A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” has garnered both domestic acclaim and international translation interest. Numerous English renditions exist, among which those by Xu Yuanchong, Zhang Tingchen, Charles Budd, and W. J. B. Fletcher are particularly influential. Here, using Xu’s translation, “The Moon over the River on a Spring Night” as a case study (300 *Tang Poems* 2–5), we employ the Popović taxonomy as revised by Tötösy de Zepetnek to analyze the translator’s stance, translational equivalence, cultural-historical encoding, expressive mechanisms, and adaptation to reception.

The Attitude of the Translator

The taxonomy of translation studies primarily revolves around the elements of the source text, the target text, and the translator, which collectively drive the transformation from the source text

to the target text. The specific elements and their connotations are as follows:

TT1 = Text to be translated

TT2 = Translated text

TP1 = Producer of the text to be translated

TP2 = Producer of the translated text

PT1 = Processing of the text to be translated

PT2 = Processing of the translated text

RR1 = Reception and/or receivers of the text to be translated

RR2 = Reception and/or receivers of the translated text

PP1 = Post-production processing of the text to be translated

PP2 = Post-production processing of the translated text

While the English translations of "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River" involve the aforementioned elements, the role of the translator (TP2) is paramount. Xu Yuanchong, renowned as the only person who translates classical Chinese poetry into both English and French, serves as a bridge between the source text and the target text, shouldering the dual responsibility of textual translation and cultural exchange. Xu's attitude towards the source and target texts determines the quality of the English translation of "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River." In the taxonomy the translator's (TP2) attitude toward the source text (TT1) is categorized in four types: communicative attitude, confrontation of communicative attitudes, ideological attitude, and stylistic attitude. The stylistic attitude further comprises zero attitude, redundant attitude, and "A new style is developed by TP2 for TT2." Xu's English translation of "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River" primarily adopts a communicative attitude. In other words, the translator strives to achieve literary communication between the original poem and the translated version and manifests this communication in the translated text.

TT1: 春江潮水连海平，海上明月共潮生。

滟滟随波千万里，何处春江无月明。

TT2: In spring the river rises as high as the sea,

And with the river's tide uprises the moon bright.

She follows the rolling waves for ten thousand *li*;

Where the river flows, there overflows her light.

At the beginning of the poem, the author connects five images—spring, river, tide, sea, and moon—together. In the translation, the translator unfolds the imagery with the "moon" as the center. The line "the river rises as high as the sea" not only conforms to English expression but also portrays the spectacle of the spring tide rising. Further, while no personal pronoun appears in the following two lines, the translator uses "she" to refer to the moon, imbuing it with a gendered personification. The bright moonlight shines on the rippling river surface, resembling a gentle and graceful maiden, leaving the translated text's readers with rich room for imagination and profound implications.

TT1: 江流宛转绕芳甸，月照花林皆似霰。

空里流霜不觉飞，汀上白沙看不见。

TT2: The river winds around the fragrant islet where
 The blooming flowers in her light all look like snow.
 You cannot tell her beams from hoar frost in the air,
 Nor from white sand upon the Farewell Beach below.

These four lines of translation vividly reproduce the imagery of the original poem. The word “绕” (*rào*), meaning “to twine” or “to encircle,” is translated as “wind around,” which not only conforms to English expression but also retains and highlights the vigorous vitality of the river flow. “花林” (*huā lín*), meaning “flower forest,” is translated as “blooming flowers,” intending to convey the dynamic sense of flourishing blossoms. The phrase “tell ... from ...” fully illustrates the “invisibility” implied in the original poem, enhancing the sensory effect of moonlight filling the entire field of vision. The addition of “You” further immerses the reader in the scene, thereby providing emotional comfort.

The above eight lines are all descriptive of the scenery, and the translator vividly displays the spring river and bright moon depicted in the original poem. Although the translation of “海上明月共潮生” (*hǎi shàng míng yuè gòng cháo shēng*) does not explicitly include the “sea” element, it does not hinder the presentation of the magnificent scene of the bright moon rising together with the tide. Jiang Qiuxia points out that “successful production in translation does not rise from correspondence finding of individual words or sentences, but is procured by means of a mentally formulated image gestalt, an integrated entity of both linguistic organization and visualized scene” (“Aesthetic Progression” 860). The translator not only emphasizes the unique value of the original poem but also balances the consideration of whether communication and interaction can be carried out between the cultures of the original poem and the translated text, so as to realize cross-cultural communication between literary texts.

Equivalence in the Translation of “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River”

In the taxonomy, various types of equivalence in the translation process are listed, namely how to achieve relative equivalence between the source text and the target text in terms of Linguistic, Paradigmatic, Stylistic, and Textual (syntagmatic) aspects. Among them, linguistic equivalence is specifically manifested in the approximation and convergence of the source text and the target text in lexical, phonetic, and syntactic aspects.

The original poem of “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” features reduplicative words, alliterative words, assonant words, and culturally loaded words. Reduplicative words are words with identical syllables. Alliterative words are words with the same initial consonant. Assonant words are words with the same vowel sound. Culturally loaded words are words imbued with classical Chinese cultural significance. Reduplicative, alliterative, and assonant words are highly musical and have long been favored by literati and scholars. The poem “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” employs six reduplicative words, five alliterative words, and three assonant words, which pose a challenge in achieving equivalence between the source text and the target text during translation. In addition, Zhang Ruoxu also places the character “江” (*jiāng*; river) at the beginning of the sentence seven times, creating an effect of head rhyme (alliteration).

TT1: 滟滟随波千万里，何处春江无月明。

TT2: She follows the rolling waves for ten thousand li;
Where the river flows, there overflows her light.

TT1: 人生代代无穷已，江月年年只相似。

TT2: Many generations have come and passed away;
From year to year the moons look alike, old and new.

TT1: 可怜楼上月徘徊，应照离人妆镜台。

TT2: Alas! The moon is lingering over the tower;
It should have seen her dressing table all alone.

TT1: 斜月沉沉藏海雾，碣石潇湘无限路。

TT2: In the mist on the sea the slanting moon will hide;
It is a long way from northern hills to southern streams.

“滟滟” (*yàn yàn*), as a reduplicative word with identical pronunciation and characters, cannot be replicated in its reduplicative form in the translation, and is even rendered as “she.” The same applies to “代代” (*dài dài*); only “年年” (*nián nián*) appears in reduplicative form in the translation, but with the conjunction “and” added in between. “徘徊” (*pái huái*), as an assonant word with the same vowel, cannot have this feature represented in the translation. “潇湘” (*xiāo xiāng*), as an alliterative word, loses its identical initial consonant feature after translation. Meanwhile, “碣石” (*jié shí*) and *xiāo xiāng*, as ancient names for places, carry certain cultural significance. It is rather difficult to translate this cultural meaning directly; the translator chooses to interpret their meanings before translating them, thereby reconstructing the connection between the original poem and the translated text. *Jié shí* located in the mountains of Hebei, is thus translated as “northern hills”; *xiāo xiāng* located in the waters of the south, is thus translated as “southern streams.” The poet uses a river and a mountain, one in the north and the other in the south, to further demonstrate the long journey home for the traveler, which also corresponds to “a long way.”

“A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” has a very regular rhyme scheme in that

the entire poem consists of 36 lines, with a rhyme change every four lines, totaling nine rhyme changes. . . . With the transformation and change of rhyme feet, the alternating use of level and oblique tones, the poem has a rhythmic flow with variations, echoing from beginning to end, both cyclical and repetitive, yet emerging with novelty, creating a strong and beautiful sense of musical rhythm. This change in sounds and charm is also in line with the ups and downs of the poetic sentiment, which can be described as the perfect integration of sound and emotion with the literary expression, gentle and harmonious. (Xiao 59; our trans.)

The overall rhythm and harmonious regularity of the original poem cannot be fully reflected in the translation using iambic hexameter. With 8 to 11 syllables per line, “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” has a well-structured antithesis with a smooth flow of introduction, development, transition, and conclusion. Xu’s translation relatively well preserves the “interrogative sentences” and “parallel”

structures in the original poem, keeping the translated text close to the style of the poem.

TT1: 江畔何人初见月？江月何年初照人？

TT2: Who by the riverside did first see the moon rise?

When did the moon first see a man by riverside?

The translated sentences have a parallel structure, which is neat and harmonious. “Who” and “When” are placed together at the beginning of the sentences to raise questions. This not only preserves the formal beauty of the original poem but also emphasizes the original poet’s arduous pursuit and eager exploration of the philosophical principles of life and the mysteries of the universe.

TT1: 江水流春去欲尽，江潭落月复西斜。

TT2: The water bearing spring will run away in flight;

The moon over the pool will in the west sink low.

These two lines also employ a parallel structure, with the subjects “The water” and “The moon” both having post-modifiers, namely “bearing spring” and “over the pool,” and both are in the future tense, making the overall form beautiful. Meanwhile, the last line vividly reproduces the trajectory of the moon, from hanging high in the sky to gradually sinking, through “over” and “low,” but the meaning of “复西斜” (*fù xī xié*; again inclining to the west) is lost. To sum up, due to the unique syllabic and lexical structure of classical Chinese poetry, it is difficult for translators to represent the original text’s syllables and rhythmic features in the translated text. They can only try their best to retain the parallel structure and cultural meaning of the lines, achieving equivalence between the original text and the translated text in terms of sentence structure and cultural connotation.

Cultural/Historical Codes in “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River”

Culture and language are closely related and inseparable. The diversity of languages promotes literary translation and literary translation in turn undertakes the important task of disseminating its own culture. Therefore, translation is both a literary activity and a cultural phenomenon, since “In short, translation is a cross-cultural conversion. Translators should be proficient in two or more cultures, and since language is an inseparable part of culture, translators should correspondingly be proficient in two or more languages” (Liao 364; our trans.).

The translation of “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” from ancient Chinese to modern English is both a process of language transformation and a cross-cultural exchange and interaction between the past and the present, between China and the West. In this process, translators inevitably exert their own initiative and creativity so that the English translation of the Chinese poem can be better accepted and understood by English readers. This also confirms Popović’s argument that there are differences in the cultural and historical backgrounds between TT1 (the original poem) and TT2 (the translated version), which leads to the possibility that the cultural/historical codes in TT1 (the original poem) may or may not be consistent with TT2 (the translated

version). The poem's inherent themes, language, and style may not necessarily be fully and accurately presented in TT2 (the translated version). If they can be fully and accurately presented, they will appear as "'Domestic' cultural/historical codes." If not, they will appear as "'Foreign' cultural/historical codes."

"Domestic" cultural/historical codes refers to the appropriate encoding of TT1 (the original poem) by TP2 (translator Xu) based on his own cultural literacy and the preferences of RR2 (readers of the translated "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River"), so that its cultural and historical connotations can be well presented in TT2 (the translated text "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River") and accepted by RR2 (readers of the translated text). "Foreign" cultural/historical codes refers to the possibility that the themes, language, and other elements carrying its cultural/historical codes in TT1 may or may not serve as informative references for the evolution of "Domestic" cultural/historical codes.

TT1: 白云一片去悠悠，青枫浦上不胜愁。

TT2: Away, away is sailing a single cloud white;

On Farewell Beach are pining away maples green.

The words and phrases shift the focus of the poem from the scenery of the spring night and the river moon to the sorrow of parting. The translator first adopts an inverted sentence structure, bringing "away, away" forward and repeating it, thus better displaying the sorrowful scene of "a lone cloud, drifting leisurely." At the same time, the form and sound of "sailing" and "single" are very similar, highlighting the rhythmic beauty of classical poetry, which is a dual aesthetic enjoyment of vision and hearing. In classical poetry, "浦" (*pǔ*; bank) and "汀" (*tīng*; shore) often symbolize places of parting and sad emotions. The translator uses "Farewell Beach" to hide the sorrow of parting in the scenery, which not only retains the beautiful cultural imagery of "a place of sad parting" but also echoes the previous translation of *tīng*. Translating "青枫" (*qīng fēng*; green maple) as "maples green," although not a perfect match with the original poem, is also a relatively mature translation strategy. In addition, "白云" (*bái yún*; white clouds) and *qīng fēng* have the same structure, forming a neat antithesis, and the color contrast is strong. It can be said that in the translation of these two lines of poetry, the translator, through translation strategies such as word repetition and retaining specific cultural images, has better achieved the transmission and interpretation of cultural symbols.

TT1: 鸿雁长飞光不度，鱼龙潜跃水成文。

TT2: But message-bearing swans can't fly out of moonlight,

Nor letter-sending fish can leap out of their place.

"Fish and geese conveying messages" has always been an important medium and beautiful image in ancient China for men and women to express their love. With Wang Sengru (465–522) for instance, we find the following line: "Letters are in the fish's intestines, and heartfelt feelings rely on the goose's feet" (尺素在鱼肠，寸心凭雁足). "Fish intestines" shows the secrecy of the communication method, and "heartfelt feelings" symbolizes the depth of the affection. Due to historical and cultural differences, native English speakers find it difficult to understand "fish and geese conveying messages" in classical culture, and the cultural imagery and aesthetic feelings

contained in the poem are also difficult to display. In other words, “Aesthetic beauty is sometimes caused by historical reasons or associations. When translated into another language, without the same historical reasons, it does not evoke the same associations, and it is not easy to convey the aesthetic beauty of the original poem” (Xu, *Art* 53; our trans.).

Therefore, when translating these two lines, the translator creatively used the two parallel structures of “message-bearing swans” and “letter-sending fish,” which not only enabled the readers of the translated text to more accurately understand the connotation of “fish and geese conveying messages” in classical Chinese culture, but also reflected the homesickness of the traveler, which is thought-provoking. “It is in this sense that the translator is both a reader and a writer. When he as a reader realizes an aesthetic experience and formulates a mental image, he will act as an author to represent or recreate the aesthetic image he acquires in another language” (Jiang, *Aesthetic Process* 30; our trans.). Wild geese fly but cannot cross the boundless moonlight; moonlight shines on the river surface, and fish and dragons leap in the water, stirring up ripples. It is undeniable that the translator conveyed the culturally loaded meaning of “fish and geese conveying messages” well, realizing the localization of cultural/historical codes. However, the meaning of “water forming patterns” seems to be missed by the translator and is not shown in the translated text. Therefore, it can be said that “fish and geese conveying messages” is presented in the translated text in the form of “Domestic” cultural/historical codes, while “water forming patterns” cannot be used as a reference for “Domestic” cultural/historical codes and can only be “Foreign” cultural/historical codes.

In the taxonomy, there is an emphasis on the fact that translators often need to sort out and domesticate the cultural and historical information of the source text during the translation process so that their translations can be better understood and accepted. The poem “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” contains rich historical information and cultural imagery. Xu’s translation of “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” not only realizes the transformation of the poem between different languages but also relatively accurately conveys and expresses the cultural connotations and well achieves the decoding and encoding of cultural elements.

The Expressive Mechanisms of “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River”

In literary translation, the translator aiming to be faithful to the original text needs to understand and take into account the language rules and expression habits of the target text readers, so as to make appropriate adjustments to promote the acceptance and comprehension of the translated text by the readers. In the taxonomy, there is a division between the expressive mechanisms in translation into various types, specifically including expressive inversion, expressive loss, expressive individualization, and expressive substitution. When translating “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River,” the translator adopted corresponding expressive mechanisms to better convey the emotions and intentions of the original poem.

TT1: 江天一色无纤尘，皎皎空中孤月轮。
江畔何人初见月？江月何年初照人？
人生代代无穷已，江月年年只相似。
不知江月待何人，但见长江送流水。

TT2: No dust has stained the water blending with the skies;
 A lonely wheel-like moon shines brilliant far and wide.
 Who by the riverside did first see the moon rise?
 When did the moon first see a man by riverside?
 Many generations have come and passed away;
 From year to year the moons look alike, old and new.
 We do not know tonight for whom she sheds her ray,
 But hear the river say to its water adieu.

In the first two lines, the translator, through expressive inversion, moves "slender dust" and "lonely moon" to the subject position, clearly displaying the moon's loneliness and outline, and presenting the translated text in a more fluent form. "皎皎" (*jiǎo jiǎo*), as a reduplicative word, is difficult to properly represent in the translation, and this expression is almost lost. Although the original poem seemingly describes the "lonely moon," it actually uses the "lonely moon" to highlight the "loneliness of people." The rendering of the "loneliness of people" is somewhat weakened in the translation. Both "见" (*jiàn*; see) and "照" (*zhào*; shine) are expressed by "see," which also makes the translation less delicate and beautiful than the original text. In the following two lines, the translator adopts a parallel and symmetrical question form, directly posing philosophical questions. Although "come and passed away" expresses the arrival and demise of generations of human beings, it does not highlight the original meaning of "endless." "Old and new" is an addition by the translator, which not only enhances the rhythm but also echoes "come and passed away." In the following two lines, both the river and the moon have anthropomorphic characteristics. The river moon "waits" for someone, and the Yangtze River "bids farewell" to the flowing water. The scenes of "waiting" and "bidding farewell" are vividly presented in the translation.

These lines of poetry first depict the scenery of the river and the moon, and then use this scenery to express the poet's own life insights. Facing the long flowing river, the bright and lonely moon, and thinking of the birth and death of generations of human beings, and the eternal existence of the changing river and moon, thoughts about life and the universe arise spontaneously. It can be said that

The philosophical thinking in the poem is not something external and forcibly added, but an internal spirit that permeates the entire poem, a crystalline and clear realm sublimated from the author's life emotions and from the feeling of all the beauty of the spring river, the flower, and the moonlit night. This philosophical thinking is melted into the picture, making the thought and the scenery description blend harmoniously, making the theme of the whole poem originate from emotion, purify in aesthetics, and ascend in philosophical thinking—this is the immortal artistic value of "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River." (Zhang 73; our trans.)

"Generations of human life" emphasizes the vastness of time, while "the river moon year after year" emphasizes the vastness of space. Superficially, both man and the river moon are eternal, but individual life is short, fleeting, while the river moon is eternally there. In the eternally unchanging scenery of the river moon, how insignificant oneself is, how vast the universe is, how short life is, how eternal time is. This strong contrast makes the author's deep feelings and astonished sighs naturally flow forth:

TT1: 可怜楼上月徘徊，应照离人妆镜台。

玉户帘中卷不去，搗衣砧上拂还来。

TT2: Alas! The moon is lingering over the tower;

It should have seen her dressing table all alone.

She may roll curtains up, but light is in her bower;

She may wash, but moonbeams still remain on the stone.

The translator retains the personification of the moon in the original poem, using “lingering over” to show the moon’s “wandering” state, displaying the swaying and hazy moonlight. “It,” as an expression in the translation, is added by the translator, who replaces the “separated person” in the original poem with “her.” The sorrowful feeling of the woman missing her husband, represented by the “separated person,” is also weakened by “her.” As a common image in poetry, “卷帘” (*juǎn lián*; rolling up the curtain) often refers to a woman in her boudoir missing her husband. “Roll curtains up” not only refers to the action of rolling up the curtain but also portrays the woman in the moonlight, full of the sorrow of parting. The woman hopes to use “搗衣” (*dǎo yī*; washing clothes) to divert her thoughts of her husband, but the effect is not obvious. With the bright moon in the sky, whether “she” rolls the curtain up and down or is busy washing clothes, the moonlight always wanders and lingers, unwilling to leave, just like the longing and sorrow, which are difficult to dispel. In these few lines, the addition of the subjects “it” and “she” also deviates from the original poem’s expression feature of not using personal pronouns as subjects.

Adaptation of the Translation of “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River”

In the translation process, translators inevitably have to carry out adaptive translation. This translation strategy not only involves changes in linguistic form but also includes the influence of historical, cultural, and other backgrounds. When translating “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River,” Xu adjusted the original poem according to English characteristics and cultural connotations, making the translated text conform to the aesthetic needs of the readers while also better preserving the artistic conception of the original poem. The adaptive translation of Xu’s “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” is manifested in the transformation of sentence patterns, the use of personal pronouns, and the translation of historical and cultural images.

First, the transformation of sentence patterns. The original poem “A Moonlit Night on the Spring River” mainly has two types of sentence patterns, namely declarative sentences and interrogative sentences. In the translated text, the translator changed seven declarative sentences into inverted sentences. By changing the form of the sentence patterns, the translator maintained the rhythm of the original poem, highlighted the important images, and enhanced the sense of imagery, thus bringing the translated text more in line with the reading habits of English readers and arousing empathy among the readers of the translated text.

TT1: 斜月沉沉藏海雾，碣石潇湘无限路。

TT2: In the mist on the sea the slanting moon will hide;

It’s a long way from northern hills to southern streams.

The translation "the slanting moon will hide" adopts an inverted structure. "Slanting moon" strengthens the dynamic image of the moon about to disappear, and "will hide" indicates the action that the moon is about to perform, allowing readers to feel the silent passage of time, as well as the chaos and mystery produced by the moon being shrouded in sea fog.

Second, the use of personal pronouns. There are no personal pronouns in the original poem "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River," but personal pronouns appear 13 times in the translated text. The use of personal pronouns not only achieves cohesion between sentences in the translation but also better conveys emotions.

TT1: 此时相望不相闻，愿逐月华流照君。

TT2: She sees the moon, but her husband is out of sight;
She would follow the moonbeams to shine on his face.

Although the "separated woman" does not appear directly in this line, the translator uses the personal pronoun "she" to present the "separated woman" in the translated text. The moon, as an important symbol for the poet to convey and express "separation," "sadness," and "longing," is very consistent with the emotional state of the "separated woman." The "looking" and "hearing" in the original poem are both represented by "see" and "sight" in the translation. The "separated woman" can see the moon, but she cannot see or touch her husband who is far away. The use of "she" more directly expresses the "separated woman's" desire to approach her husband through the continuous moonlight, which has a strong idealistic and emotional color.

Finally, the translation of historical and cultural imagery: classical Chinese poetry has profound cultural connotations and when translating, translators often adaptively translate, otherwise it is easy to cause difficulties in understanding for the readers of the translated text.

TT1: 谁家今夜扁舟子？何处相思明月楼？

TT2: Where is the wanderer sailing his boat tonight?
Who, pining away, on the moonlit rails would lean?

The translator did not translate "谁家" (*shuí jiā*; whose home) directly but used "where" to paraphrase where the lonely traveler is going, realistically reproducing the loneliness and desolation of a traveler wandering away from home. In addition, the translator grasped the "凭栏相思" (*píng lán xiāng sī*; leaning on the railing, longing) and translated "楼" (*lóu*; building) by capturing the essence of the image. Furthermore, the translator used "pine away," which describes the physical emaciation and haggard look caused by longing, to emphasize the traveler's sorrow and loneliness, which also enhanced the imagery of the translated text. It can be said to be very clever.

Chinese classical poetry, as a special literary form, has always been known for its distant artistic conception, rich emotions, and harmonious rhythm. It not only carries profound historical implications and cultural connotations but also has unique aesthetic value. Classical poetry translation is difficult. Only when translators have a deep understanding of traditional Chinese culture and carefully consider the cognitive environment and cultural background of the readers of the translated text can they best represent the artistic conception, thoughts, and themes presented by classical poetry. Xu's English translation of "A Moonlit Night on the Spring River" is elegant

and smooth, and overall reproduces the artistic conception and imagery of the original poem, successfully conveying the profound connotations of traditional Chinese poetry to Western readers and promoting cultural exchange and understanding. At the same time, Xu also retained the corresponding philosophy of life in the translated text, attracting Western readers to slowly comprehend. Although the translated version cannot achieve complete equivalence with the original poem, and inevitably causes the loss of some cultural images, Xu, through the transformation of expressive mechanisms and creative translation, provides an excellent translated version for Western readers.

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