LANDSCAPE REPRESENTATION IN WANG WEI’S POETRY AND ITS TRANSLATION: WITH REFERENCE TO POETRY-PAINTING AFFINITY

JIANG CHENGZHI

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
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CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
香港城市大學

Landscape Representation in Wang Wei’s Poetry and its Translation: With Reference to Poetry-painting Affinity
王維詩中的山水呈現及英譯: 基於詩畫相似性的研究

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Jiang Chengzhi
江承志

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Abstract

The present thesis is aimed at providing through a cognitive stylistic approach a new interpretation about the issue of poetry-painting affinity, with reference to the interpretation and translation of the verbal landscape representation in Wang Wei’s poetry.

In Asian and Anglo-American scholarship, Wang Wei’s (701-761, or 698-759) poetry has been repetitively translated and widely discussed. Some scholarly discussions have touched upon the affinity between poetry and the visual arts (i.e. Chinese landscape painting), a central issue in Wang Wei studies. However, previous studies do not cover how the verbal elements in a poem, or in a collection of poems, reveal the speaker’s mental-spiritual self through activating (an) imaginary landscape painting(s). A scholarly effort to fill this gap, therefore, can offer a special perspective to further explore the phenomenon of poetry-painting affinity.

This thesis will mainly draw on Heidegger’s theory, and also consult theories of Bachlard, Arnheim, Benjamin, and Berman, to outline a conceptual framework through explicating several epistemological issues. Then, it will present an image-based cognitive stylistic investigation of mountain images in Wang’s poetry, with special reference to the imagery networks in which the images encounter each other as Daseins (beings-in-the-world). After the prototypical patterns of how the mountain-image induces the perception of landscape in Wang’s poetry are investigated, the research will propose a cognitive stylistic operational model for analyzing the cognitive and stylistic features of individual poems. Finally, a case study will be provided to show how the conceptual framework and the cognitive stylistic methodology can shed light on the poetry-painting affinity.

As this research observes the issue of poetry-painting affinity from a perspective of inter-semiotic or multi-modal translation, it will, hopefully, bring about insights in three aspects: poetry-painting affinity, poetry interpretation and translation, and interpretation of individual poems by Wang Wei. So its major
arguments include: (1) In line of my conceptual framework, the concept of “representation” in translation studies implies a speaking-and-listening-to relationship, which unconceals the truth hidden behind the text of the original artwork; (2) The two-level methodology upgrades the existing word-based cognitive stylistic investigation/analysis into an image-based one; (3) The poetry-painting affinity in Chinese poetry as a frequent phenomenon implies the conceptual distinction between you 有“being/presence” (or shi 實“fullness”) and wu 無“non-being/absence” (or xu 空/虛“emptiness”), the distinction that may lead to the revelation of the speaker’s spiritual pursuit, i.e. self-transcendence.
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