基于图形–背景理论分析中国诗歌《雨巷》的两个英译本

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摘要：本文基于图形-背景理论旨在研究两个戴望舒《雨巷》英译本中，图形与背景对意象和意境再创造的作用，并阐释产生偏差的语境原因。认知诗学作为一种认知语言学和心理学相结合的新方法，其本质是从认知心理学的角度考察认知与文学的关系。而图形-背景理论作为认知语言学的重要组成部分之一，以突显原则为基础，被视为文学研究的基本特征，为深入研究语言使用和文学作品的本质提供了新的视角。基于这一理论，本文发现米歇尔·叶创造性的翻译倾向以及对中文与中国文化的不熟悉使得忧郁情绪削弱，画面呈现不够流畅。然而，杨宪益和戴乃迭在传达阴郁、绝望、孤独和沉闷的情感方面却更胜一筹，保留了原始的人物和地面选择。

关键词：图形-背景理论；认知诗学；《雨巷》

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1. Introduction

Sensory experience can be contended as a major way people adopt to understand their surroundings, especially the using of vision. Excited feelings mostly stem from people's visual sense. Nevertheless, the image conveyed by our eyes is not just simply a picture without focal point instead there must be a certain drawing our attention to it. For example, if there is a car parking in front of a building, it is more likely to for us to consider this car as more foregrounded compared with the building. Essentially, this is a simple example explaining the relation between cognition and experience in real world. Noticing that those images do not only consist of entities in the real world but also can be created in literary works. It can be deemed as an abstract world existing in literary which is established by author. Same as the way people experience the real world, the appreciation of literary creation is a cognitive process that readers interpret and dissect the created images in original literary. And this study aims to explore the recreating images structured in *Yu Xiang* written by Dai Wangshu and its two versions of translation into English, respectively as Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidie's lane in the rain, and Michelle Yeh's *Alley in the rain* on the grounds of figure-ground changes in cognitive poetics.

Yu Xiang is created by Dai Wangshu in the summer of 1927 when Dai had just gone through the failure of National Revolution and was trapped in "White Terror". In the period of New Culture Movement, Dai was greatly influenced by the gloomy tone of poems in late Tang Dynasty and French Symbolism. The agony and desperation Dai suffered in national crisis, his dissatisfaction and powerless towards the oppressive leadership, and his personal creative style promote the final accomplishment of *Yu Xiang.* It is fulfilled with hesitation, disappointment and melancholy. And his depiction of a lilac-girl and a lonely lane in the poem implies Dai's contradictory sentiments intertwined with prospect, disillusionment and pursuit. Besides, those vague images in this poem are considered as a microcosm of black and shades-of gray society in which the hope is ethereal, sometimes not, everchanging.

The translation of Chinese poetry has always been a formidable work because

Chinese preference of certain images, which is highly influenced by classic and unique Chinese culture, is considerably distinct from what English poets might hold in their works (Zhao&Mao, 2009). Besides, the divergence between western and Chinese ideology, and great distinctions of linguistic patterns between Chinse and English may also be a barrier in the field of translation.

Cognitive poetics is a new approach aligning itself with cognitive linguistics and psychology, wherein “Cognitive linguistics is an approach to language that is based on our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualize it.” (Ungerer& Schmid, 2001: 36) The thought or conceptual structure embedded in literary works is a reflection of how authors deal with the world. Those embodied interactions are then presented in linguistic structure which are comprehended by readers on basis of our own knowledge of the world. Thus, a close relation among experiences, language and cognition is admitted by cognitive linguists. And the essence of cognitive poetics is to investigate the relationship between cognition and literary from the perspective of cognitive psychology and to further explain the relations among language used in literary works, linguistic patterns and the corresponding effects (Chen Weiwei，2017).

The relevant studies have claimed that figure-ground theory is a basic feature concerned in literary studies, which provides a new angel to deep out the nature of language and literary works. The notion of figure and ground firstly originates in psychology and is put forward by Psychologist Edgar Rubin in 1915. Then this theory is applied to study sensory and spatial organization by Gestalt psychologist. As the application with figure-ground proliferates, its explanatory power in relevant field is largely acknowledged. In 1970s, Talmy introduced figure-ground into cognitive linguistic field, and later into literary. Furthermore, He also gives a definition of these two notions, and thus makes a distinction between figure and ground. However, the application of figure-ground in linguistic field is mainly involved with the analysis of syntax and linguistic structure. In cognitive poetics, Stockwell (2002:13) contends that this theory not only can function on the analysis of static relation between figure and ground, it also can impose its effects on discourse analysis in which the concept of figure and ground is in a process of constantly shifting, which presents a dynamic relation between figure and ground. According to Stockwell (2002), “attention will be maintained by a constant renewal of the stylistic interest, by a constant process if renewing the figure and ground relationship.” In general, figure-ground will provide a new perspective in exploring the characteristics of language use in translation of literary works.

Though many studies have been conducted to analyze literary works based on figure-ground, studies related to comparison between translation versions and original versions of Chinese poems from the perspective of figure-ground have seldomly been done. Therefore, the analysis on recreating images and artistic conception of *Yu Xiang* and its two English translation versions in support of figure-ground theory may reach more inspired achievements and provide more valuable suggestions for realizing translation equivalence in the field of literary translation.

2. Theoretical Framework

Figure-ground theory derivates from psychology. It is considered as one of the most significant theories of cognitive linguistics and a new approach for linguistic research. This cognitive principle not only functions in spatial organizations but also in linguistic organizations (Liang Lanfang & Yu Shanzhi，2013). With its increasing importance in

linguistic field, it then begins playing its role in the field of literary for illustrating the way people adopt for mental representation for the perspective of cognitive psychology. In the following section, definition and characteristics of figure and ground will be explained in detail so that distinctions between them can be easily made. In the meanwhile, two major relations among figure and ground will also be introduced.

2.1 Static Relations of Figure and Ground

Figure-ground theory is firstly brought forward by psychologist Rubin. These two notions come into being when Rubin gives an explanation for his famous face/vase picture in Figure2.1. The image can either be seen as a black vase on white background or as two human faces facing each other against this dark background. Thus, the various way people adopt to perceive a visual image, correspondingly, diverse outcomes will also be gotten. Specifically, these two different outcomes result from the reversion of the figure and ground. Talmy (2002) who introduces figure-ground theory in cognitive linguistic field defines figure as a conceptually moveable objects whose location and path are variable, and claims that ground is relatively static, providing the place, path and orientation for figure. In general, figure within a scene is perceived as more prominent from the remainder (the ground). Then Stockwell (2002: 15) further differentiates figure and ground on the basis of traits and features:

- It will be regarded as self-contained object or feature in its own right, with well-defined edges separating it from the ground;
- It will be moving in relation to the static ground;
- It will precede the ground in time or space;
- It will be a part of the ground that has broken away, or emerges to become the figure;
- It will be more detailed, better focused, brighter, or more attractive than the rest of the world;
- It will be on the top of, or in front of, or above, or larger than the rest of the field that is then then ground.

Stockwell believes that figure and ground are two basic features of literary stylistic analysis. In the linguistic field of literary texts, for example, characters are more likely to be figures, in other words, the focus of the narrative. Stylistically, they are likely to move through different settings, which is realized by “certain verbs of willful action by contrast with attributives or existential sorts of verbs used descriptively for the background (ibid).” The summarization of characteristics of figure and ground makes it possible to find counterparts in linguistic structure. Thus, it is easier to find and analyze certain images in literary works that fit in figure and ground. But so far, the application of figure-ground theory only presents its static relation without consideration of constant changing of figure and ground in a literary works by using of linguistic and stylistic devices.

2.2 Dynamic Relations of Figure and Ground

Stockwell (2003) emphasizes that the relations between figure and ground is not only static but also dynamic. He states that reading is a dynamic process in which figure and ground are constantly formed and changed. In terms of the attention paid by readers, reading is also a process of “renewing attention to create and follow the relations between figure and ground” (Stockwell, 2002: 18). A literary text will adopt stylistic devices to attract readers’ attention, and those attractive part must bear certain features within the texts, but it differs according to specific circumstances. Those elements

selected for attention are usually regarded as figures, whereas those neglected are characterized as ground. Readers' "attention will only be maintained by a constant renewal of stylistic interest, by a constant process of renewing the figure and ground relationship" (Stockwell, 2002:18). Otherwise, the static or unchanged figure and ground will lose their attention, which means 'newness' is the key to attention.

Attention is also considered as a subjective matter that can be altered and controlled by viewers. Thus, it is reasonable to contend that the different angle people adopt during the process of reading and different thinking patterns may lead to a gap between an original version of literary work and the translation version of it when translators need to judge the counterparts of figure and ground in literary texts. Stockwell (2002) also claims that motion and spatial relationship are important for controlling readers' attention during reading.

3. Analysis of Yu Xiang and Two Translations

Yu Xiang is a Chinese poem written by Dai Wangshu in 1927 when China was in a chaos. Influenced by his profound knowledge of Chinses poetry and his abroad experience, this poem is integrated with classic Chinses culture and Romanticism elements which are presented in his choosing of certain classical images and techniques of creating enchantingly charming artistic conception. The following part will compare the linguistic patterns, organization of images and artistic conceptions that are reacted in the original poem and its two English translation versions in terms of nouns that can be structured as figures from the perspective of figure-ground theory.

3.1 Initial Readings of *Yu Xiang*

Yu Xiang is composed of seven stanzas, thereinto, its first stanza and last stanza are almost the same. In both part, Dai imagines himself wandering in a lonely lane in the rain with an oil-paper umbrella in his hand and hopes an encounter with a lilac-like sorrow girl (Stanza1& Stanza 7). Then the following stanza gives a detail description of this girl who had the color, fragrance and depression that same as lilac (Stanza 2). Subsequent two stanzas present a dynamic picture for readers in which the girl was wandering silently in this solitary lane with an oil-paper umbrella, just like "me", who were also dreary and desperate. "I" noticed that she was closing me with a sigh and soon floated past "me" like a confused dream (Stanza 3 &Stanza 4). As the girl past "me", she walked further and further with the vanishment of her lilac-like color, fragrance and her look until she reached the end of this lane (Stanza 5 & Stanza 6). This poem is about Dai's confusion about personal and nation's future and powerlessness towards the current situation. He is deeply trapped in a contradiction that he is struggling to pursue his hope, but it is too dim and remote.

3.2 Nouns Structured as Figure in *Yu Xiang*

Nouns such as characters and imagery that are chosen in literary texts are more likely to be figure, that is to say, readers will pay more attention to those words. Characters can either be described as static or moveable as the poem progresses. And they are the major roles around whom the whole story unfolds. Imagery can be seen as objects that are embodied with subjective emotions. For creating a poem, it has the equal importance as that of bricks for a building. Without imagery, the poem also loses its support of cognition. In general, imagery can be something that can be touched and seen and bears with poet's sentiments, such as a stone or a flower.

The beginning and the end of this poem, Dai describes a same image, thus forms a

closed circle spatial structure. “我”[wo] has always been the focal point since Dai starts narrating his story until the accomplishment of it. This first pronoun is regarded as a figure emphasizing the narrative perspective. In the process of reading, readers are able to be immersed in the story and imagine themselves as the protagonist who was holding an oil-paper umbrella and wandering in a lane in the rain. Soon, the attention is shifted to “雨巷”, which is constructed as a figure from the angle of poet. Readers and the poet seem to be integrated together who was aware of a long and deserted alley. As “I’ gaze at a lilac-like girl, readers again change their attention from “雨巷” to “丁香 [ding xiang]. “丁香” in two stanzas is also used as another figure to highlight particularity of that girl he wanted to encounter. Lilac with purple color implies loneliness and sadness, which are also the features that can be found in this girl. The two figures are both presented against a background of “雨巷” [yu xiang]. “雨巷”as ground used in both part informs readers where the whole story happens. Rainy day is always associated with depression and gloom, and long alley is usually narrow and dim with walls standing at both sides, which is connected with a feeling of oppression. Therefore, using “雨巷” as the main ground sets a melancholy tone for this poem, and what “I” done or saw all happens against this background.

Table 3.1 Characters and Imagery as Figure and Ground

	Dai	
	Figure	**Ground**
Stanza 1	我	寂寥的雨巷
	雨巷	
	一个丁香一样地	寂寥的雨巷
Stanza 7	我	寂寥的雨巷
	雨巷	
	一个丁香一样地	寂寥的雨巷

As “I” has noticed this lilac-like girl, the impression “I” have on this girl is described in following parts. The rest of stanzas all regards “她”[ta] as one of the figures, thus readers with the poets had been gazing at this girl who was walking toward “me”. It seems that “I” had been attracted by her so that “I” kept a watchful eye on her appearance, expressions and every move. The first time when “I” noticed her, she was standing in the rain and looks plaintive. At the ground of solitary alley in the rain, she wandered in the rain and walked towards me silently. In stanza4, “I” was aware that she is closer and “I” was expected to her approach, while she just floated past me until she reached the end of this alley like a plaintive dream that was so unreal and disappointed. Thus, the poet and the readers’ eyes followed this girl all along which implicates the strong aspiration of encountering and getting in touch with her. Noticing that this girl in the poem can either be considered as an adorable lover or a desperate hope. Combined with the historical background with which Dai produced his work, it is more reasonable to treat this girl as the hopeless dream. During his gazing at the girl, readers’ attention was again attarcted by “丁香”[ding xiang], which is repeated for three times in stanza 2 to emphasize lilac-feature possessed by this girl. She was as beautiful as a bouquet of lilac and embodies lilac-like resentment. But the most important is that she was just like “me” who was hesitated and indifferent.

In stanza 3, readers are able to detach themselves from the poet temporarily, then

be engaged in the pictures they feel from this poem, they will witness “me” and the girl come across in the tranquil alley in the rain, unfortunately she just passed me. In stanza 5, “I” was still structured as a figure so that readers can see “I” stand there still, but only this girl was moving through this lonely alley, looking like he was waiting for her arriving, from which readers can feel the poet’s expectation and intension. After the girl’s silently leaving, “I” still cannot remove my sight from her until her silhouette had become ambiguous in the rain, then I noticed the decadent and shabby fence that was built at the end of the alley. The shifted attention from the beautiful girl to this frail fence seems to express the poet’s desperation and frustration his anticipation vanished into thin air.

Table 3.2 Characters and Imagery as Figure and Ground

	Dai	
	Figure	**Ground**
Stanza 2	她	在雨中哀怨
	丁香一样的	颜色
		芬芳
		忧愁
Stanza 3	她	彷徨在寂寥的雨巷
	像我一样默默踟蹰着	
Stanza 4	她默默地走近	寂寥的雨巷
	眼光	
	她飘过	寂寥的雨巷
Stanza 5	一支丁香	雨巷
	我	身旁飘过这女郎
	她	
	颓圮的篱墙	雨巷
Stanza 6	眼光	雨巷

All in all, In Dai’s poem *Yu Xiang*, two major heroes are “我”and“丁香一样的姑娘”accompanied with “雨巷” as the major ground. It is a short story in which “I” was attracted by the charming melancholy girl who are met accidentally in a rainy day when “I” was wandering in a desolate alley. And “I” found that she is so similar with me who are also filled with griefs and depression. Readers’ concentration on events that happened between the girl and “me” in this long and narrow alley in the rain is also a witness about a failed process that “I” was struggling to catch and retain the grim hope while finally “I” can only let it disappear. The poets’ loneliness does not come to an end but all of these are trapped in a circle that he kept wandering in his own desolate space and lost in a dilemma (Xie zeguo，2018).

3.3 Nouns Structured as Figure in Translation of *Yu Xiang*

It is known that English and Chinese are with different linguistic structures, for example, basic word orders are distinct from each other in terms of the organization of figure and ground. English tends to place figure before ground in a sentence, whereas Chinese might put ground before figure. Thus, this distinction is very important for the quality of translation. Generally, western thinking patterns differs from that of Chinese, which will be a barrier for the success of translating a Chinese poetry. In this section, aimed at comparing the distinctions of recreated images that might exist in translation version with the original version and the possible gap resulting from the differences

embedded in western and Chinese culture, writer selected Yang Xianyi and his wife, Dai Naixian's translation, *A lane in the rain*, and Michelle Yeh's translation of *Yu Xiang, as Alley in the rain*.

Though stanza1 and stanza 7 of Yeh's translation of Yu Xiang also remain the similar structure as what has presented in the original poem, however, Yeh select different imagery as figures. Different from choosing "I" as a first figure in stanza 1, Yeh regarded the oil-paper as the figure. Oil-paper umbrella is with 'Gangnam style', which can add a little poetry to the picture. And then foregrounding the role of 'long lonely alley" against the background "in the rain". Thus, Yeh created a picture in which this long alley was the only location that can be seen in the rain. In original version, the poet has describe this alley by using "悠长" [you chang] for two times to emphasize its tediously length, while it is lost in Yeh's translation. Again, distinct from Dai's description in stanza 1 and stanza 7, Yeh shifted readers' attention from this alley to the "melancholy girl" instead of the selection of "lilac". That is to say, the first image that emerges in readers mind is a depressed girl rather than the image of lilac, reducing the romantic and gloomy effect of lilac.

Table 3.3 Characters and Imagery as Figure and Ground

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2"></th><th colspan="2">Yeh</th><th colspan="2">Yang&Dai</th></tr>
<tr><th>Figure</th><th>Ground</th><th>Figure</th><th>Ground</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Stanza 1</td><td>Oil-paper umbrella</td><td>Alley in the rain</td><td>I</td><td>Wander along a long lane</td></tr>
<tr><td>Long lonely alley</td><td rowspan="3">In the rain</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">A melancholy girl</td><td>Solitary lane</td><td>In the rain</td></tr>
<tr><td>A girl</td><td>Like a bouquet of lilacs</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Stanza 7</td><td>Oil-paper umbrella</td><td>Alley in the rain</td><td>I</td><td>Wander along a long lane</td></tr>
<tr><td>Long lonely alley</td><td rowspan="2">In the rain</td><td>Solitary lane</td><td rowspan="2">In the rain</td></tr>
<tr><td>A melancholy girl</td><td>A girl</td></tr>
</table>

In Yang and Dai's translation of *Yu Xiang*, same as the original version, they constructed "I" as a first figure as the story unfolds. However, similar to the translation of Yeh, Yang and Dai also chose "solitary lane" and "a girl" as the subsequent figures. The only subtle difference is that Yang and Dai stated her anxiety and resentment clearly after her appearance in the rain. Therefore, both of translations weaken the role of lilac in the two stanzas.

In following parts of two versions of translation also presents some disparities either between the two translation versions or between translation versions and original versions of *Yu Xiang*, which can be seen in Table3.4.

Table 3.4 Characters and Imagery as Figure and Ground

	Yeh		Yang&Dai	
	Figure	**Ground**	**Figure**	**Ground**
Stanza 2	She	In the rain	A girl	Lane in the rain
	A lilac		lilacs	Lane in the rain
Stanza 3	She	Wanders in the lonely alley in the rain	she	Wanders along the solitary lane
	Oil-paper umbrella	Lonely alley in the rain	Oil-paper umbrella	Lone lane in the rain
	me		me	
Stanza 4	She	In the rain	She comes	Lane in the rain
	A look		A glance	
	Shen drifts		She floats	
Stanza 5	She	Lane in the rain	Like a lilac	In a dream
	The girl	me	The girl	Lane in the rain
	She	Lane in the rain	The crumbling wall	In the rain
	she	Reaches the broken fence	Out of the lane	
	The end of the alley	In the rain		
Stanza 6	Her gaze	In the rain	Her glance	In the rain

In stanza 3 of Yeh's translation and Yang's translation, the attention was changed from "she" to "oil-paper umbrella" but not a shift from "她"to"像我一样默默踟蹰着".In Yeh's translation, readers pay attention to the girl's oil-paper umbrella for the second time, which deviates from the original focal point here. As what has been described in Dai's poem, when "I" just noticed the girl's lilac-traits, and that she was wandering in this lonely alley with an oil-paper umbrella, a strong perception quickly arisen in my mind that she is just like "me". The shift from "she" to "me" suggests the poet's delight and excitement when he was aware of the similarity between them, he was eager to get along with her. However, Yeh's recreation of the figure "oil-paper" and its placement after the girl's emergence seems inhibits the fluency of the changing of picture and mental movement. Besides, it is possible lead to a misleading that the poet thought the girl is like him just due to the oil-paper umbrella. Thus, this disparity might result in the failure of the accurate transmission of the poet's emotions.

In stanza 4, though Yeh continued to consider "she" as the figure, the same as Dai's intention showed in his poem. The modification of this figure in Yeh's translation is different from that of Dai's poem. In Dai's poem, the poet has always been concerned about this lilac-like girl, and thus kept watchful eyes on her every move. And the poet foregrounded this figure's movement with the repetition of "走近"[zou jin], creating a picture in which the girl is moving towards "me", which enables readers to realize that the girl set the poet's heart racing when she come closer to him. However, when Yeh translated this part, he obviously caught the wrong point. His construction of this figure "she" with a motion as "comes alone". Thus, this description totally alters the focal point

that is related to the figure. What Yeh's translation told us is that the poet noticed that the girl walks in the alley without companion but ignored the poet's real psychological activity. Thus, the lack of the portray of the girl's closing to the poet reduces a feeling of crush and impendency to be familiar with this girl and makes this part flatter.

However, Yang and Dai' translation of this part kept the original connotation. Following with the poet, readers' attention was then attracted by the girl's eye and the sentiments that were told by her eyes when the poet was aware that the girl was approach to him. Nevertheless, Yeh' translation amplified the image that was focused on by the poet. He replaced the figure "eyes" with the figure "her look". People usually believes that an individual's eyes are the windows to the soul, even though the gloomy feeling is hidden deep inside. Thus, when the poet gazed at the girl's eyes, he found that she might be overwhelmed with sadness, But Yeh changed the poet's attention to the girl's look from which the poet found the girl's frustration. That is to say, the girl's emotions were manifested on her face, which was seemed to be expressed more directly. In a word, it diminishes the implied beauty of this poem.

In Yang and Dai's translation, they translated as "a glance" that was seen as another figure followed behind the figure "she". As what Dai had described for readers, it was the poet himself who noticed this girl's eyes, but it did not convey any information that the girl also had a look at the poet. Thus, obviously, it was a monotonic motion brought by the poet without any attention paid by this girl. This depiction then highlights the poet's loneliness and distress. However, if the original figure was changed as "a glance", a distinct connotation will be interpreted by readers. Here, a glance meant that this girl also had attention on the poet when she was walking towards him in the rain. A sudden and temporary eye contact is caught by them, which may arouse an anticipation that she was possible to stopped there for the poet. But this contradicts with the following plots in this poem.

Yeh's translation of stanza 5 still distinct from Dai' poem. In the description of the girl's leaving, the first image that come int being in the poet's mind is "a lilac" that wafted in the rain. Lilac served as figure here not only made the picture look more romantic but also let readers believe that this girl just like an embodiment of a lilac that was with natural melancholy disposition. As she come closer to the poet, the attention began to transfer to the poet himself for his strong emotions. Thus, the poet regarded himself as the figure, while the girl who floated past him was treated as the ground. This is an image in which "I", the poet is clearly presented and stands still, but the girl is more ambiguous, just like a blur that pass the poet. And it exactly suggests that this girl's emergence is like a dream that is so unreal and untouchable.

Contrarily, Yeh set this "lilac girl" as the figure who "drifts by like a lilac in a dream" without mention of the poet, while "the alley in the rain" treated as the ground, and it is followed by "me", the poet as the next ground. The pictures readers saw was still created from the perspective of the poet. Thus, the poet himself will be wiped out from this image, and readers and the poet's focus will be this girl who floated passed the poet. This clear presentation of this girl and her movement but vague depiction of the poet may give readers a misconception that it was possible to catch her. In other words, the poet's wishful hope is not so unrealistic and out of reach. At the beginning of stanza 5 of the translation of Yang and Dai, they adhered to the organization of figure and ground in the poem. But they made the same mistake as Yeh had done that they all ignored the role of

"I" in this stanza.

After this girl's leaving, the only image showed in the poet's sight is a wretched fence set in this alley. The focal point of this shabby fence in Dai's poem seems suggests that the illusion of his hope deepened his loneliness and depression again. Besides, the focalization of it with the ground "alley in the rain" adds more melancholy tone for this poem. However, Yeh put the "broken fence" only as the ground based on which the girl was maintained as the figure. When the girl was almost out of the poet's sight, he found that where she had been was at the end of the alley. Here, Yeh's figuration of "the end of the alley" implies that this encounter was close to an end and no more hope can be found any more. And his neglection of the function of fence in this poem weakened the poet's somber and dejected feelings. In Yang and Dai' translation, both of "crumbling wall" and "out of the lane" were regarded as the figure in the poem, which did not lead to much distinction of meaning compared with Dai's original poem.

Despite both of Yeh's, and Yang and Dai's translations of *Yu Xiang* present some deviations from the original poem, whereas Yang and Dai's translation version of this poem is more accurate either in the description of the image or in the expressions of sentiments in support of figure-ground theory. In Yeh's translation, his non-compliance with the organization and selection of figure and ground with that of Dai's poem brings on some unfaithful images for the readers and lead to certain misconception and lack of a sense of subtly soft. In Yang and Dai's translation, they basically follow the combination of figure and ground. The unrealistic and ambiguous hope which may be vanished soon, the dreary and gloomy surroundings represented by the alley in the rain, the poet's desire of catching the hope and the final illusion of this dream are all portrayed in a relatively appropriate way.

4. Contextual Consideration

In the process of translation, it is often the case that translator is affected by his own dominant ideology and poenology which is an important part of the translator's cultural system (Zhang Qiaoping, 2017). Besides, their different translation strategies they insist in the field of translation will also result in great distinction of their translation works. All in all, it is unavoidable for the existing of disparities between translation and its original version, especially when it is involved with the translation of literary works. In this study, after the comparison of two English versions of translation and Dai' original version of Yu Xiang, the writer finds that Yang and Dai's translation is more consistent with the Dai's poem in terms of the interpretation of images, sentiments and artistic conception based on figure-ground theory.

Yang Xianyi is a famous and outstanding translator in China. He is considered as the literary translation master who had reached great achievements in contemporary China. In his whole life, he and his wife, Dai Naidie, who is a British, accomplished great numbers of translation works. The academic world has claimed that Yang and Dai had translated all of the Chinese works. And their translation is involved with plentiful genre including love, politics and history. They not only introduces the western works into China but also are devoted to propagandizing the Chinese literary, such as the translation of *A Dream in Red Mensions*, *The Scholars* and other abundant classical Chinese poetry. Yang was born in a family of scholars, which exerts profound influence of classic Chinese literary. And his own intense interest in classic literary provides a solid foundation for his translation, which is beneficial for his translation career. Furthermore, most of Yang's

translation were completed with the assistance of his wife, Dai. As what have mentioned above, Dai is a British. Her proficiency at using English can also be seen as an advantage compared with those who work alone and use a foreign language in his translation.

Yang regards translation as an activity with a purpose of transmitting culture rather than simply a linguistic activity. In other words, translation is a process in which there are exchanges and communications between two diverse cultures (Yang Xianyi & Zheng Lunan, 2008) As for the translation tactics, Yang sticks to his own principle that "translation is equal to the copy of the translated text," stressing the significance of being loyal to original text. What's more, he underlines that recreation is unallowable for translation because it means betray of the original text. Thus, similarity in forms is considered as more vital than similarity in connotation and spirit. The most basic and critical duty for a translator is to convey the information that is embedded in the original texts as intact as possible (Liu Yang, 2019). Thus, Yang and Dai' advantage of language usage and more thorough comprehension of Chinese culture help their translation become more successful than Michelle Yeh's.

5. Conclusion

This paper aims to explore the deviations of images, sentiments and artistic conceptions that are created in the original text of *Yu Xiang* and its two English translation version. The comparison reveals that Michelle Yeh, who was a western scholar majoring in East Asian Languages and cultures translated this poem in a more flexible way without strict consideration of the organization order of images. Her neglection of the poem's form and structure induces a creation of less melancholy and romantic atmosphere. Besides, her overemphasize on meaning resulted in the obstruction of flow of presented pictures. Those relative inconsistencies and unsatisfactory may reside in fact that she does not have chance to immersed inn Chinses culture personally. Yang Xianyi is a very excellent translator specialized in the translation of classic Chinese literary works. His knowledgeable grasping of Chinese culture and the cooperation with his wife help him bring a more satisfied work. In his translation, readers can go through the same experience that is depicted in the poem. They will suffer from solitude, depression and helpless after the losing hope and be trapped in a dilemma for the poet's confusion about whether he should try to grasp the uncertain and desperate hope.

Generally speaking, figure-ground theory is served as a tool with which a conceivable description of the poet's experience in an alley in the rain presented in three versions of Yu Xiang is given. It proves that the application of figure-ground theory indeed can be a factor in the field of translation and literary analysis. And it also provides a new perspective and some suggestions for the translation of literary works. Due to the lack of related studies, more research is expected to be conducted in the future to offer more valuable information.

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Analysis of Two Translations of Chinese Poem *Yu Xiang* from the Perspective of Figure-Ground Theory

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Abstract: This article aims at investigating the role of figure and ground in recreation of images and artistic conceptions in two translations of *Yu Xiang* written by Dai Wangshu from the perspective of figure-ground theory and illustrating the contextual reasons leading to deviations. Cognitive poetics is a new approach which aligns itself with cognitive linguistics and psychology. The essence of it is to investigate the relationship between cognition and literary from the perspective of cognitive psychology. And figure-ground theory, as one of the most important parts of cognitive linguistics, is based on the prominence principle and treated as a basic feature concerned in literary studies, provideing a new angel to deep out the nature of language usage and literary works. With the application of this theory to the research, this article finds that Yeh's inclination of creative translation and her unfamiliarity with Chinese and Chinese culture results in the weakening of melancholy mood and less fluid picture. Yet Yang and Dai are superior at conveying those gloomy, desperate, solitary and dreary affections by reserving the original selection of figure and ground.

Keywords: figure-ground theory; cognitive poetics; ***"Yu Xiang"***

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