Rhyme: blows and meadows; river and wonder

Allusion:

In the original poem, du fu used the word “spring wind”. Which directly means the wind of spring from the wording. In the Chinese culture, spring wind represents warmth, and is used in this poem to create an imagery of the scent of warm nature. Kenneth replaced this word with the term “south wind”, which comes from the native American Iroquois, representing the warm air, smell of flowers and songs from birds.(Native American Myths and Beliefs) Since Kenneth is an American poet, the term “south wind” would fit better in this case, as this phrase would be more easily recognized and understood by his American audience

Symbolism

Du Fu used mandarin ducks on warm sand to create a romantic atmosphere in the imagery he created. This is because mandarin ducks are commonly used as a symbol of loving couples in the Chinese culture, and it is used in the original poem to add a romantic aura to the imagery. However, this reference does not exist in the western culture, so Kenneth chose the diction “pairs” to describes the ducks, in order to achieve the same loving atmosphere.

mood:

In the beginning of the second poem, Du Fu created an imagery of birds fading into the river, and flaming colored flowers on mountains to create a sad atmosphere. The original poem describes the river of processing a turquoise color. However, the river is described as “grey” in Kenneth’s translation. This is because in the English culture, turquoise is often associated with livelihood and positive emotions, which instead create a positive mood. Grey blends in with white, which preserve the fading effect in the original poem. Since water are usually colored in a shade of blue, making it grey also makes the frame less colorful, thus adding successfully preserving and improving the atmosphere.

Rhyme

The original Chinese poem takes form of a five-word quatrain verse: it consists of five lines each with five syllables, and the first, second and fourth line rhymes with each other. However, Kenneth’s translation only includes minimal rhyme with a few lines, such as “The south wind blows” rhyming with “over blossoming meadows”, paying little attention on the rhyme. The two versions of this poem value rhyme very differently. This is because in ancient china, poems are performed with music, and are more similar to song lyrics than conventional English poems. This is why Kenneth paid less attention to the rhyme when translating the poem.

Settings

In the original Chinese poem, the second and third verse displays the setting of the scene: pepper in cups of wine on a table (an ancient Chinese New Year tradition), people gathering around, with noises from horses in the stable. While this may make sense to a Chinese audience, western audience may not understand the references and atmosphere of these verses. Kenneth approaches this problem by directly changing the setting to “Green wine bottles and red lobster shells” on the table. In North American culture, lobsters are seen as a sumptuous meal. The Green empty wine bottles help preserve the lively atmosphere of the party, and the lobster shells being a luxurious food demonstrates the importance of this party. Further more, Kenneth translated the sound of horses into “sound of cats starting”, making the imagery more relatable to modern people, since cars are far more popular than horses now

Imagery

Du Fu also used placed mandarin ducks in the imagery he created to create a romantic atmosphere, as mandarin ducks are commonly used as a symbol of loyal love. However, the western audience do not have context of this reference, and thus would not be able to understand the meaning of this symbol. Kenneth sued the diction “pairs” to describe the ducks to add a romantic element mood to the scenery.