

Influence of Translator's Subjectivity in Two Chinese Translated Versions of *The Secret Garden*

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Abstract—After reviewing George Steiner's Four Translation Motion Theory (FTMT), the paper will exploit the connections between FTMT and translator's subjectivity. It reveals that the translator's subjectivities are displayed in each step of the four motions-- "trust", "aggression", "incorporation" and "compensation" within the framework of the FTMT. By analyzing two Chinese translated versions of *The Secret Garden* with abundant illustrations, the paper finds that translator's subjectivities are exerted in the whole process of translation and greatly influences the style and value of two translated versions.

Index Terms—translator's subjectivity, FTMT, *The Secret Garden*, analysis

I. TRANSLATOR'S SUBJECTIVITY AND FOURFOLD TRANSLATION MOTION THEORY

As one of the results of "culture turn", translators do not confine themselves to the study of translation criteria and standards any more, and their attention is also directed paid to the translator's subjectivity in selecting and interpreting the original works, the choice of translation tactics, language style as well as how to bridge cultural discrepancy. Among all the relating studies, the hermeneutic scholars offer a more universal perspective to study the translator's subjectivity because it views translation as an activity of interpretation and understanding. Based on hermeneutics, in *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (George Steiner, 2001), a works praised as a landmark in translation field, Gorge Steiner expounds his Fourfold Translation Motion Theory (Hence Forth, FTMT)--trust, aggression, incorporation and compensation, where translator's subjectivity can be perceived through all the different motions. So, to some extent, he offers a reasonable mode for a cross-sectional research of the embodiment of translator's subjectivity.

According to George Steiner's FTMT, translation has four steps: initiative trust, aggression (or penetration, invasion), incorporation (or appropriation, assimilation) and compensation (or restitution). "All the translation activities are originated from trust" (Steiner, 2001, P.312). Intrusive choice is made initiatively based on the translator's trust in what he will translate. The translator trusts the value of the works and trust in him to make something new with it. Then, the second move goes to aggression. In the stage, the translator will read between the lines and extract some insightful and personal aspect from the original works. The third step is "incorporation". In the stage, the original text is imported into the target text based on his previous aggression, to some extent; the stage is apt to embody the hermeneutic view of "horizon fusion". After the original invasion and absorption, Steiner affirmed that the loss is inevitable. So "compensation" will not be missed in the translation process as a way to regain the balance between the original and target works.

II. TRANSLATORS' SUBJECTIVITY IN THE TWO TRANSLATED VERSIONS OF *THE SECRET GARDEN*

The research is also inspired by a surprising fact that *The Secret Garden* (Burnett, F. H, 1993) has been translated into many languages in the world and adapted for plays and films which also gained much more popularity. Some previous researchers studied it in the hope of exploiting some literary significance; others took it as a case to promote translation study. In order to reveal how translators' subjectivity are penetrated in their translation and how the different versions are produced, the paper will select two influential translated versions of *The Secret Garden* (Li Wenjun, 2012), (Xu Hong & Wang Ying, 2012) and set about a contrastive study with George Steiner's FTMT mode.

A. Translator's Subjectivity in "Trust"

According to Steiner, initial trust is "an investment of belief" (Steiner, 2001, P.312), so translator's first step in the process of translation is to invest his belief in the original works; that is to say, the translator's decision means a trust built between him and his selected text. In this respect, a practical comparison involves choices of the investment of trust. Firstly, the value of the works is notable to all the translators and fans all over the world; and it is also easy to infer that Xu and Li share something in common as translator to concern much more on the works' value literally and practically and trust that they can make something new with it. Secondly, these translators' purposes should be a concerning point. Though Xu and Wang did not declare their translation purpose, the editorial department introduces to the series books as a classic which may influence children all lifetime to learn some basic qualities of human being,

such as love, kindness, integrity, harmony, beauty as well as rich knowledge of the world (Xu, 2012, P.V). So Xu and Wang's translation is selected to meet the assigned target of the series books—to influence children readers with the theme connotated in the original works. As to Li, he said in the preface of *The Secret Garden*, “translating those (children literature) brings him a lot of pleasure and ease” when he “merrily to imagine that the three books he translated are compiled in to a packed gift with beautiful and exquisite illustration for boys and girls” (Li, 2012, Pi). It seems that it was already his great pleasure to translate Mrs Burnett's works for children. They introduced the excellent and classic works to influence children with the value of the classic works.

B. Translator's Subjectivity in “Aggression”

In the phase of aggression, translator's initial trust will “be tested, more or less severely, also in the common run and process of language acquisition and translation” (Steiner, 2001, P.312). Though Li and Xu comprehended the original works invasively and exhaustively with encirclement and ingestion, it is just partial understanding that externalizes the translators' subjectivity and creation because of their different background, experience, linguistic competence and different cultural awareness even different times. So Li and Xu's individual and partial understandings make “the density of hostile or seductive ‘otherness’ is dissipated” (Steiner, 2001, P.314).

To the attractive story, Xu and Li deciphered children's words from quite different religious perspective, so they show readers two different world.

e.g.1. “You are so like her now,” said Mary, “that sometimes I think perhaps you are her ghost made into a boy.” (Burnett, 1993, P.125)

Li: “你现在非常像他。”玛丽说” 有时候我想, 你也许就是由她的精灵变成的一个男孩。” (Li, 2012, P.211)

Xu: “你现在太像她了”, 玛丽说, “有时我觉得, 也许你就是她灵魂托胎生的孩子。” (Xu, 2012, P.221)

In the original, Mary thinks that Colin is “made into a boy” by the “ghost” of the woman in the picture hang on the wall of Colin's room. In English “精灵” is spelled as “elves”, just is a imagined lovely creature who lives in the woods and flowers while “灵魂”, ghost, is used widely in religion referring a person's collective elements attached to a live physics, especially spirits of the dead. Li uses the way of “creative treason” to replace “ghost” with the lovely image “精灵” from fairytales might beloved by children while Xu reproduces the image as “灵魂” which is be loyal to the original works “ghost”. “托胎投生” is another Buddhism thinking which means that the dead may rebirth as another person with something like his previous lives. In the original, Colin's gray eyes are thought like the woman's in the picture hanging on the wall of his room, so Xu uses a more familiar phrase to transform “be made into”.

Just like Li and Xu's different understanding in religious element in the novel, their different understanding also endowing Li's version much more Chinese flavor while Xu's version a bit of British taste.

e.g.2. She was a sweet, pretty thing and he'd have walked the world over to get her a blade o' grass she wanted. (Burnett, 1993, P.7)

Li: 新娘子娇小玲珑, 很讨人喜欢。(Li, 2012, P.12)

Xu: 克雷文夫人是个可爱而又漂亮的女人.....(Xu, 2012, P.14)

e.g.3. The strongest footman in the house carried Colin down stairs and put him in his wheeled chair near which Dickon waited outside. (Burnett, 1993, P. 99)

Li: 府里最壮的一个男仆把科林抱下楼, 将他放进一辆推车, 迪康在门外车子边上等候着。(Li, 2012, P.163)

Xu: 那个体格十分强壮的男仆从屋子里把克林背下楼, 安顿在轮椅中, 迪肯在外面等候着。(Xu, 2012, P.174)

In the above two examples, Li transforms the noun “family” into “府里” here and “宅子” in chapter two, and “She (refers to Mrs. Craven)” into “新娘子”. All of them are really Li's quest of his subjectivity for Chinese symbolic ways. Xu chooses to use her subjectivity within the range of faithful interpretation to reserve it as a translated version.

C. Translator's Subjectivity in “Incorporation”

In the motion, translator's initiatives are conformed by various constraints, specifically, the translator's different semantic field, diction, translation strategies, creativity, personal findings, and other cultural factors related both the original and target texts. It is no wonder that Steiner deems that “No language, no traditional symbolic set or cultural ensemble imports without risk of being transformed” (Steiner, 2001, P.315). So, it is a major stage in translation practice that an interpreter will bring into play of all his subjectivities to decipher the original works and reproduce his own ideal text.

1. Linguistic Incorporation

Learned the fact that the original language is quietly transformed into Chinese in form, the translated versions are obviously diverse in the basic ways of expression. Sentence structure is the representative one. Here are some examples:

e.g.4. One of his darkest miseries in the unhealthy morbid past days had been his hatred of being a sickly weak-backed boy whose father was afraid to look at him. (Burnett, 1993, P.115)

Li: 过去他缠绵病榻时使他最最感到痛苦的一件事就是, 他恨自己怎么如此病弱, 如此佝偻, 连自己的父亲都不愿意正眼瞧他。(Li, 2012, P.192)

Xu: 他痛恨当一个弱不禁风、瘦骨嶙峋、连生身父亲都不愿意见到的男孩, 这是他以往那些可怕的生病的日子里最最痛苦的事情。(Xu, 2012, P.203)

English and Chinese are different in the syntax: English is a language requiring both external and internal logical relationship between words and phrases, while Chinese calls an internal logical relationship which need acceptant to reconstruct. As to the prolonged sentence, the two translators both destruct it into more than 2 clauses. In Xu's version, the clause is trunked by “当一个……的男孩”, then followed with a subject clause “这是……的事情” which is stressed the degree of Colin's hatred with an English sentence notion to antecede the important information of a sentence. Li just follows the main structure of the original text to decipher the sentence. One of what he noticed is to bring forward of the adverbial part “过去”.

Li, with his integral competence in manipulating language and culture, changes the narration into an exclamatory sentence. He is good at integrating the original long sentence into several with a parallel structure, which strengthens Colin's painful regret while Xu still try to be true to the original sentence structure with “这” to stand the long subject of the sentence.

2. Rhymed Song

Simple but rhymed sentences can be incoherent in meaning and expressive in practice. In the original works, the rhymed song is one of its features. Li and Xu find their subjectivities to answer such challenge which requires both linguistic skill and literature accomplishments. When they incarnate what they understood and extract from the original works, they have a lot in common: to select the appropriate rhyme, rhythm and diction to reproduce them a more Chinese children rhymed song.

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Li and Xu convert the song into prose-like sentences while displaying differently in the appropriation. Li keeps rhyme of the song with the /ai/, is consistently in basic from of the original ones /eu/; Xu extends four-line jingle into 5 lines and rhymed /ang/ and /iu/, which is quieter different in form, while they are still readable in Chinese.

e.g. 5. “Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells, and cockle shells,
And marigolds all in a row.” (Burnett, 1993, P. 4, 5)

Li: 玛丽小姐乖乖乖,
花园真能造出来?
银铃铛, 花贝壳,
金盏花儿插起来。(Li, 2012, P.7)

Xu: 玛丽小姐你太犟,
你的花园能怎样?
银的铃铛, 鸟蛤壳,
再加几朵万寿菊,
排成一行可真没趣。(Xu, 2012, P.8)

Basil, the priest's son, ever teased Mary with the rhymed song when she was playing a gardening game. In the original text, Basil's song closed with “Mary” and “contrary”, “grow” and “row”, “silver bells”, “cockle shells” “marigolds”, which help to create a fluent and neat rhythm. When translating these rhymed words, the translators use rhymed Chinese words in order to create the same effect with the original version. Both of the Li and Xu clearly expressed the original meaning. But Li is faithful to the original text both in the form and rhythm, which is clear to be penetrated from the latter two lines. Li adopts /ai/ as the rhythm in the line one, three and four, which is widely used in Chinese classical quatrain and is easy to arouse target reader's familiarity. It is also can be traced deeply to Li's competence of mother tongue. In diction, Li and Xu decipher “quite contrary” a “乖乖乖” and “犟” respectively instead of dictionary explanation “相反的, 对立的” or the idiomatic meaning “与众不同的, 不合群的”, it is their initiative choice for the sake of Basil's dialect, children reader's comprehension and rhyme of the song.

Xu realizes the original author's intention of creating beautiful nursery rhyme and provides the target children readers with corresponding Chinese version, either. Xu breaks the original four-line sentences into five with his freedom as a translator which to some extent betrays the original's form, and rhymes line one and line two with /ang/ and /ju/ to end the line four and line five. Though being different from Li (assured to be different from anyone) in rhyme, she still does not fail to recreate some fluent and smooth lines from the angle of children. What's more, Concerning the meaning of the two version, Xu meets Basil's mischievous expectation with some additional words “可真没趣” which have ever provoked Mary to fight back latter in her secret garden.

3. Cultural Incorporation

In *After Bible*, Steiner finds that, assimilation may produce “innumerable shadings”, just as he puts “There are innumerable shadings of assimilation and placement of newly-acquired, ranging from a complete domestication, an at-homeness at the core of the kind which cultural history ascribe to...” (Steiner, 2001, P.315), simultaneously, his statement indicates that it is translator and culture that cause the different reproduction after incorporation motion.

Now that Li relocates the story back to the publication time, also Chinese Qing Dynasty, he incorporates the story in the context of Chinese Culture, so his version even creates a Chinese illusion because of most Chinese Cultural Symbol;

Contrary to Li, Xu would like to repay the original works its native flavor without outstand cultural identity of target language. The appellations and self-appellation in two versions reflect their subjectivity in the cultural angles.

e.g.6. "Sit thee down on th' rug a bit young Mester an' give me thy orders." (Burnett, 1993, P.107)

Xu: "现在, 我的小主人, 坐到那毯子上歇一会吧, 我听你的吩咐。" (Xu, 2012, P.190)

Li: ".....你就像少东家那样坐到毯子上去给我下命令吧。" (Li, 2012, P.178)

e.g.7. "Anythin' I'm told to do," answered old Ben. "I'm kep' on by favor -- because she liked me." (Burnett, 1993, P.107)

Xu: "凡吩咐我干的活我都干。" 老本回答道, "我留在这儿是一种特别的优待——因为她喜欢我。" (Xu, 2012, P.190)

Li: "差什么就干什么呗。" 老本回答道, "我能留下来是主子的恩典——因为她喜欢我。" (Li, 2012, P. 178)

e.g.8. The Rajah condescended to seat himself on a rug under the tree. (Burnett, 1993, P.107)

Xu: 酋长在树下一块毯子上屈尊就坐了。 (Xu, 2012, P.190)

Li: 小王爷俯允了, 在树荫里的毯子上坐了下来。 (Li, 2012, P. 178)

When Ben recognized that Colin was the only son of the Mistress, he was happy to address Colin "the young Mester". In Li's versions, Li asks Colin "少东家" to sit down; accordingly, "she", his "the young Mester", is rendered as "主子" by Li Wenjun; When Colin was arrogant to order his servant, "The Rajah" becomes "小王爷", and his condescendence is translated into "俯允". With context created by "主子" and "恩典", "小王爷" and "俯允", etc, these typical Chinese cultural symbols help to incorporate the readers' horizon to the story happened in the old mansion of China in the early of 20 century in Li's version.

Xu addresses "young Mester" as "我的小主人", an English dialect for Master; also, "The Rajah" is restored to its Indian way as "酋长", and Colin's mother mentioned with a simple third personal pronoun "她". So her version is more conservative and faithful to the original culture background. Compared with Li, Xu's subjectivities are restrained to some degree.

Many more examples can be recognized in the two versions. "Servant, Mr. Craven, Mrs. Craven, ayah, and Mester Colin," are interpreted as "仆人, 克雷文先生, 克雷文夫人, 保姆, 克雷文少爷" with an alienation attitude by Xu; while Li would like "用人, 克雷文老爷, 克雷文太太, 阿妈, 克雷文少爷" to serve his Chinese version. So the addressing ways has a direct influence on the style of translated version.

The story happened in Yorkshire, so Dickon, Martha and Ben. Weatherstaff, they all speak with Yorkshire dialect, Li choose Chinese dialect to labeled them with "俺" and "俺们" through his whole works which conveys the original flavor to his target readers, his translation is a bit more vivid accordingly.

4. The Choice of "Domestication" and "Foreignization"

In the two selected translated versions, Li and Xu use to fullest their subjectivities to decide the ways and skills for their translation. All in all, first of all, Li applies domestication much more to develop his Chinese atmosphere and incorporate the original information into Chinese; while Xu gives priority to foreignization and shows respect of the cultural diversity and discrepancy. With the overall view foreignization and domestication, their concrete translation strategies are embodied via transliteration & free translation and free translation & literal translation.

The following discussion will illustrate their choice of translation strategy.

e.g.9. There was so much to talk about. It seemed as if Colin could never hear enough of Dickon and Captain and Soot and Nut and Shell and the pony whose name was Jump. (Burnett, 1993, P.88)

Li: 要说的事情有多少呀! 科林像是永远都听不够, 迪康怎么样了, "船长"、"煤烟"、"坚果"、"贝壳" 还有名阿跳的的小马驹又怎么了。 (Li, 2012, P. 144)

Xu: 可谈的事太多了。科林对有关迪肯和船长、索特、纳特、谢尔以及那匹叫江浦的的小马的故事真是百听不厌。 (Xu, 2012, P.156)

What most attractive are Dickon's lovely animals' name. Xu transliterates these lovely creature's name "soot", "nut", "shell" and "Jump" literally as "索特、纳特、谢尔, and 江浦", which informs a English context to the target readers; Li renders them to "船长", "煤烟", "坚果", "贝壳" and "阿跳" with free translation to create an intimate feeling for target readers with some normal names heard everywhere on the domestic land. Thus, transliteration endows their versions different flavor generally. So, it is translators who use their subjectivities to select a corresponding strategy for the purpose of "injection or infection", that is to say, the introduction of the exterior culture thoroughly or partly.

Also, their subjectivities are embodied in the choice of free translation & literal translation. Here are some selected illustrations.

D. Subjectivity in "Compensation"

The last step of the translation motion put forward by Steiner is restitution, in other word, to compensate what lost in source works to balance the information of the target works. In the first step, "trust puts us off balance"; during invasion; "we come home laden, thus again off balance"; in appropriation, "the system is now off-tilt" by taking way and adding" (Steiner, 2001, P.316). So, compensation becomes a necessity for restoring the balance. So the step requires translator's

subjectivity nothing less than the previous steps.

Compensation (supplement) can be recognized easily in the target works as a way of complementary annotations, which usually clarifies what puzzled target readers caused by the cultural, historical or geographical barriers.

Following is another example from chapter 23. It is also related to the custom.

e.g.10. "Aye, aye, sir!" answered Ben Weatherstaff, touching his forehead. (One of the long concealed charms of Ben Weatherstaff was that in his boyhood he had once run away to sea and had made voyages. So he could reply like a sailor.) (Burnett, 1993, P.111)

Xu. "是，是，先生！"本·维斯塔夫一边回答，一边向柯林触额致意 δ 。本·维斯塔夫有一段长久以来秘而不宣的有趣经历。在少年时代，他曾离家出走来到海边，曾数次出海远航。所以，他可以像水手那样应答。(Xu, 2012, P.198)

δ 水手行礼的一种方式。

Li: "是的，是的，少爷！"本·维斯塔夫答道，还举起手来触了触额角。(本·维斯塔夫身上有种长期让人捉摸不透的吸引人之处，那就是他少年时代曾偷偷上船，出海做去作过多次航行。因此他应答时总有几分水手的气派。)(Li, 2012, P.186)

"Touching his forehead" is just a routine body gesture, so it might a behavior unconsciously of the old gardener. But Xu supplements what is unknown to domestic readers. In daily life, though salute is a common savoir vivre, it is still crucial for understanding the whole works. With the help of Xu's annotation, reader can picture a lovely scene: the old man was touched by three innocent children and deeply engaged in the magic game.

Li annotates differently from Xu. In chapter 27, Burnett states the power of positive thought "as good for one as sunlight" and sad thought "as bad for one as poison" —could change a person and the world thoroughly. Li notes the time mentioned in the original works which might puzzles the target readers.

III. SUMMARY

Within the theoretical framework of translator's subjectivity and George Steiner's hermeneutic motion for translation -- trust, aggression, incorporation and compensation, the investigation focuses on the embodiment of translator's subjectivity in the two Chinese translated versions of *The Secret Garden* from Li Wenjun, Xuhong and Wang Ying. The close probe reveals that in each motion, Li and Xu have their own subjectivities exerted fully to approach their ideal target works. From "trust" to "compensation", translators overcome all passive constraints internally and externally to incarnate his subjectivity actively, and the paper finds its existence in their estimation of the original works, translation purpose and personal preference. In aggression motion, translator decodes the original works from his own perspectives and his subjectivity is also shown as the result of his attack of culture and religion information. Incorporation is the key motion of the generation of the target works, where translator's subjectivities are pivoted on linguistic competence, culture awareness; in compensation, translator is accessible to all compensation methods. He has the initiatives to either compensate what he thinks puzzling to readers, or neglect it if he believes it already familiar to readers.

On the other hand, translator's subjectivity contributes to the versions' diversity directly. According to the previous discussion and above summary, translator is privileged more freedom in three aspects in turn: culture, linguistic and the choice of translation strategies, which are all key factors to influence the translated works.

In a word, George Steiner's FTMT connotes translator's subjectivity and offers a systematic approach to study translator's subjectivity. In Steiner's theory, though he neither pointed to the term of translator's subjectivity nor discussed the role of translator, he analyzed translator's task and translator's responses to each motion, which can be penetrated as an emphasis of translator's role in translation. So Gorge Steiner's FTMT offers not only a systematical but theoretical motion to accomplish the close study of translator's subjectivity dynamically.

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