

A Translation Study of “Saxon’s Heroes After the Calamity” From the Perspective of Brazilian Cannibalism

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Abstract

Brazilian scholars have proposed cannibalism to get rid of the cultural and spiritual colonization of strong cultural nations, which becomes an important branch of the post-colonial theory. In 1963, De Campos linked cannibalism with the translation theory in *On Translation as Creation and Criticism*. This thesis will study “Saxon’s Heroes after the Calamity” based on the translation theory of Brazilian cannibalism to provide the research of Lin Shu’s translations with a new perspective.

Key words: Cannibalism; “Saxon’s Heroes after the Calamity”; Lin Shu; The post-colonial theory

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INTRODUCTION

Lin Shu’s translation of *Sa Ke Xun Jie Hou Ying Xiong Lue* (The biography of post-war Saxon Hero) (hereinafter referred to as “Sa”) is called “one of the forty most perfect translations” (Zheng, 1983, p.128). Moreover, the study of the book mainly focuses on its influence on the creation of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, and ignores some of the translator’s translation claims and his/her translation techniques which have a significant impact on the dissemination of the book. (Ni, 2019)

In Lin Shu’s time, China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. Lin Shu awakened the Chinese people with his translations by drawing nutrition from the

source culture and the target culture on the principle of taking the essences and discarding the dregs, which is of a great significance for the Chinese people, culture and modern society. Given the social background, the purpose of translation and the translation strategies, Lin Shu’s translation philosophy of “Sa” is amazingly consistent with the concept of cannibalism translation. Therefore, through the comparison of the original and the translation, this paper explores the embodiment of the Brazilian cannibalism translation in “Sa”.

1. POST-COLONIALISM AND CANNIBALISM IN TRANSLATION

Post-colonialism is a multiculturalism theory, which belongs to the interdisciplinary field of cultural theory and research. It focuses on power and discourse relations between the suzerainty and the colonies, as well as related issues of race, identity, cultural hegemony, national identity and gender. The translation theories of post-colonialism rise and then evolve cannibalism translation theories.

In 1963, the de Campos brothers formally introduced cannibalism into translation studies in “*On Translation as Creation and Criticism*”, and carried out a great deal of practice to think about pioneering innovation in the cultures of underdeveloped countries (Vieira, 1999). The theory of cannibalism has become a vivid metaphor for cultural translation in Brazil. Cannibalism is actually an act of respect and special significance for the purpose of gaining power mentally or physically. There are only three kinds of cannibals: the strong, the potent or the worthy and the psychic. (Jiang, 2003, pp.63-67). Accordingly, the translation of cannibalism does not mean directly devouring the original text, but rather an expression of a respect from the translator to the author, the original text, the original culture, on the basis of digesting the original text to absorb nutrients.

According to cannibalism translation, translation is an "empowering act" (Gentzler, 1993, pp.12-20), that is, the translator "eats" the original to gain power of creation; translation is a "nourishing act", that is, the translator's creative translation is nourished from the accumulation of the original, the original culture, the translation literature and the cultural accumulation before translation and enrich the target language; translation is an "act of affirmative play", that is, the translation of the original "afterlife"; translation is an "act of blood transfusion". In a word, the cannibalism in translation conforms to "bring-in doctrine", and the process of translation is to take its essence and discard its dregs (Liu, 2009).

2. LIN SHU AND "SA"

Lin Shu (1852~1924) is an ancient writer of Tongcheng school who has no knowledge of foreign language. He has translated 183 foreign novels. (Wen, 2016)

A translation of "Sa" (*Ivanhoe*) by Lin and Wei Yi was published through the commercial press in 1905. This is the first Chinese translation of *Ivanhoe* in China. (Sun, 2007)

"Sa" is an early work as well as one of the best creations of Lin Shu. "Sa", except for a few minor mistakes, quite represents the original mood and figures of the original text, with almost nothing changed," Mao Dun once said. (Zheng, Qian, and A Ying, 1981, p.14) Ling Changyan pointed out: "Scott is the first step in our understanding of Western literature; and the introduction of his book is of great significance to the culture of the modern world, which is not inferior to the "Evolution and Ethics" and "The Wealth of Nations". (Ling, 1932)

3. EMBODIMENT OF CANNIBALISM IN "SA"

3.1 The Empowering Act

The view of cannibalism requires the translator to devour the original text to show his admiration for the strong and gain creative energy from it. Lin chose to translate "Sa" in line with the model of "devouring" "the strong in the heart", and introduced western ideas and literary skills after "eating" the original text to acquire the power of creation.

3.1.1 Digestion and Absorption of Western Thought

Lin Shu's time was a special period when the imperial powers invaded China. In order to enlighten Chinese people and arouse their patriotic enthusiasm, Lin digested and introduced the western chivalry of "Sa" so as to strengthen and empower the heroism he advocated.

"...thou knowest not what...Chivalry!...the stay of the oppressed, the redresser of grievances, the curb of the power of the tyrant...liberty finds the best protection in her

lance and her sword." (Scott, 1998, p.241)

"...汝何知英雄行状? ...国仇在胸, 不报岂复男子...凡人畜有此心, 则报国仇, 诛暴君, 复自由, 均恃此耳。" (Lin and Wei, 1981, p.149)

After digesting the original text, Lin reinterprets "chivalry". The original text praises a chivalrous spirit of vindication, overthrowing despotism, and defending freedom, while the translation eulogizes a heroic act with a grudge against the hegemony. The translator draws strength from the chivalrous spirit of the West and transforms knight's gallantry into heroic patriotism in order to strengthen the respect of the people to heroes who defend the motherland to the death. Through the repeated translation of "national enmity", the version arouses the hatred and dissatisfaction of the people to the imperial aggression, and increases their resolution of defending sovereignty.

3.2 The Nurturing Act

Cannibalism in translation emphasizes feeding nutrients from source text, source culture, target text and target culture to transfuse fresh blood into the translation, thus nourishing the target language.

Because of the complex plots and cultural differences, the target readers often do not understand the main points well. Lin found some similarities between the composition of "Sa" and that of the ancient Chinese prose, "I don't know the western language, but I find this book very similar to the works of ancient Chinese writers in plot setting and transformation." (Lin, 1981, p.1) In terms of the layout of the novel, Lin utilizes the traditional novel writing techniques to connect plots, which is conducive to have a better acceptance of Western literature and culture.

"Haply they think me old...alone and childless as I am, ...Wilfred!...couldst thou have ruled thine unreasonable passion, thy father had not been left in his age like the solitary oak that throws out its shattered and unprotected branches..." (Scott, 1998, p.37)

"虽吾子已逃, 然彼须知凯特立克...惠而弗烈 (其子名也), 汝若稍闻吾训, 尔父何至立同孤树..." (Lin and Wei, 1981, p.19)

The protagonist's father (Cedric) disowns him because of their different political positions. In chapter 3, Lin replaced Cedric's confusing claim of "childless" with "my son has fled away", which clearly signifies the identity of his son (Alfred) and his reason of leaving home, and helps readers understand why Cedric family's mood was so volatile when monks mentioned Alfred in chapter 5, also serving as a "foreshadowing" for the eighth chapter of Alfred's masked appearance.

3.3 The Act of Affirmative Play

From cannibalism in translation, it is an act of affirmative play for Lin Shu to transform the original text and give it a new life after obtaining its nutrition. With ancient

Chinese writing style and traditional culture psychology, Lin makes the original text consistent Chinese people's aesthetics and reading expectation through deletion, addition and revision to localize the western spirit and culture.”(Chen and Xia, 1997, p.29).

3.3.1 Deletion

Chinese novels attach importance to plot description while ignores the description of psychology and scene, Lin Shu cut the redundant environmental and psychological descriptions as well as subjective comments in the original text, so as to highlight the main plot.

Meanwhile, the lord...was still a state of mind preferable to the agonies of awakened remorse...where there are complaints without hope, remorse without repentance, a dreadful sense of present agony...! (Scott, 1998, p.245)

而雷极那德被创后，痛彻心腑，自审生平所为，至此必无善果，然尚强勇，弗降其气，亦微思用教士忏悔。顾念引教士，恒需钱，悔吝之心一萌，而忏悔之心复止。前此尚忍痛，迫渐弥留，复念死后殊无颜以覩上帝，因之悸恐不已... (Lin and Wei, 1981, p.156)

The original portrays a character's post-inflicted psychological activities in two long paragraphs. Lin, however, compressed the detailed description into three sentences and connected the psychological activities with the verbs of “自审self-examine”, “微思conjure”, “顾念consider” and “复念reconsider” to promote the flow of the plot, which was in line with the aesthetic expectations of Chinese readers.

3.3.2 Addition

Ivanhoe reproduced the English medieval customs and lifestyles, reflecting the sharp contradictions of society at that time. Lin takes advantage of confrontation between the Saxons and the Normans as a metaphor of which between the Chinese and the Western powers in order to arouse the empathy of the Chinese readers.

...when his return from his long captivity had become an event rather wished than hoped for by his despairing subjects, who were in the meantime subjected to every species of subordinate oppression. (Scott, 1998, p.56)

李却王为人囚于奥京，桎陷何地，国人漫不之知。平民失王后，贵族凌蹙，至于不聊其生。(Lin and Wei, 1981, p.36)

Lin tolls the bell of national crisis of Chinese own by adding words such as “贵族凌蹙aristocrats' suppression” and “不聊其生destitute people” to deliberately exaggerate the misfortune and predicament of the oppressed nation.

3.3.3 Revision

The title of the book *Ivanhoe* was revised into “*Sa Ke Xun Jie Hou Ying Xiong Lue*” (The biography of post-war Saxon Heroism). Although the importance of Alfred as the central character and plot clue is weakened, the revised title further specifies the time, theme, and the core problems —ethnic contradictions. In addition, the refer of “heroism” is broader, not only exclusive to *Ivanhoe*, from

the individual heroism worship to the praise of all heroes in the book, to encourage everyone to take example of them.

CONCLUSION

The translation view of Brazilian cannibalism has great reference and maneuverability for the study of “Sa”: firstly, from the social background of Lin and the translation purpose, the translation philosophy accords with the translation view of Brazilian cannibalism, by swallowing the original text and taking the nutrition from the source culture, including the chivalrous spirit to arouse the patriotic enthusiasm of Chinese people. Secondly, a large number of Chinese elements, including the style of ancient prose, are adopted with translation strategies of deletion, addition and revision to achieve the goal of “taking its essence and eliminating its dregs”. Cannibalism not only helps us to understand translation better, but also provides us with a useful reference in absorbing foreign culture.

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