

Interaction Between Translators' Activities and Target Socio-Cultural Context: A Case Study of Translation in Late Qing Dynasty

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Abstract

The target-oriented theories in cultural turn, based on the theoretical foundation that translation is a process subject to differing socio-historical conditions, provide us a wide scope to re-observe translators' activities as well as their interaction with the target socio-cultural context. Aiming to have a deep understanding of this type of interaction, this paper examines the translation activities in late Qing dynasty in China. By presenting a general picture about the translation practice in late Qing dynasty, this paper looks into how the late Qing translators interact with the socio-cultural constraints and how their translation activities counteract to the target culture.

Key words: Interaction; Translation activities; Late Qing dynasty; Target socio-cultural context

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INTRODUCTION

Translation is traditionally regarded as a linguistic action that concentrates on the conversion from one language into another. By focusing on linguistic layer and source texts, traditional translation studies are approached from a series of opposite issues concerning faithfulness and

unfaithfulness, literalness and freedom, loss and gain and so on. Consequently, translation is restricted within the ontological pattern featured by its source-oriented static prescription. It ignores the concrete situations, societies and histories that actual translation happens. Obviously enough, the scope and perspective of such kind of studies are narrow and self-close.

Fortunately, the close relationship between language and culture suggests a shift from a linguistic perspective to a broad cultural perspective in translation studies. As is known to all, language and culture are always interweaving in that a language mirrors a given culture by recoding the cultural objects and events while culture is what language deals with. It can be quite safe to say that culture is the fabric of language and language is the loom of culture. The interdependent relationship between language and culture determines that translation is first intercultural and then interlingual but not vice versa.

Thus the perspective of translation studies is shifted to the approach stressing target-oriented, dynamic description in the context of history, society and culture. This shift of translation studies from language to culture is what theorists call "cultural turn" in translation. The cultural turn is regarded as a revolution in the research of translation in that it expands the horizon of observing the translation activities to a broader cultural scope.

The target-oriented theories in cultural turn are instructive in studying the interaction between translators' activities and the receiving culture. By avoiding a predefinition of what a translation "should" be, and looking at actual translations in a real cultural context, these theories enable us to have a better description of all those norms—linguistic, literary, and sociological—which govern translation. And meanwhile, they give us a lot of enlightenments to detect the counter-active effect of translators' activities to its socio-cultural context.

1. INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN THE TARGET SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

Translation is never an isolated activity in that there is always a context in which translation takes place. Factors involved in target socio-cultural context, such as ideology, culture, history, poetics, and so on, may exert influence on translation activities. At the same time, translation, especially literary translation, as a canon of constructing a specific culture, also has counter-effect on these factors, and further produces counter-action to its socio-cultural context. In this paper, we'd like to resort to Lefevere's translation theory on ideology and poetics to explore the interaction between translators' activities and its socio-cultural context.

Within the target cultural system, there always exists a constituency or a group whose values are more dominant and central than those of others'. These determining values find their best expression in "ideology" and "poetics" in the culture. According to Lefevere, "ideology and poetics particularly shape the translator's strategy in solving problems raised by elements in the Universe of Discourse of the original and the linguistic expression of that original." (Lefevere, 1992, p.48)

Ideology is a very popular and important term in the development of human history. As a big concept, it covers all the aspects of our social life and influences our way of understanding, thinking and behavior. It is not limited to the political field alone, instead, it also includes the network of forms, value-concepts, cultural traditions, conventions, beliefs and assumptions people hold consciously or unconsciously about themselves.

Sure enough, ideological factors are always at work in translation that inevitably involves two literary systems and cultural traditions. Quite often the translator will stand in a paradoxical situation when he confronts conflicting ideological views in the original and the target textual conventions. On this condition, the translator either tends to manipulate the source text somehow or other so as to neutralize them—to domesticate them in consistency with the ideological beliefs in the receiving cultural context, and thus lessens or eliminates features of original texts in the target social milieu, or tries to get rid of the influence of the receiving culture and keeps to his author's ideology as closely as possible, running the risk of his translation being criticized, rejected or even banned by the authority. No matter what attitude the translator takes to negotiate with the target culture, there inevitably exists an interactive relationship between translators' activities and their socio-cultural context.

If some translation strategies are determined by ideological elements, depending on whether the translator brings himself in line with the dominant ideology of their time or not, others are influenced by poetics, another influential factor only secondary to the ideological one in the target culture. As a historically variable factor, "it

is dominant in what literature should be or should be allowed to be in a certain culture and society." (Lefevere, 1992, p.14)

In a given system, the poetics, including both the inventory and functional dimensions, took shape through the process of abstracting certain rules from the existing varieties of practice and prescribing these rules for future writers to follow so that works are composed in the "right" way. Once the formation of a poetics is finished, it will have a governing role on the literary creation and dictate the direction its literature is to follow. Yet, any poetics is temporary and changeable, since it comes into being in a specific area at a particular historical age and holds its position for a certain period of time. The poetics dominant today may differ from, even opposite to what forms tomorrow. Such feature of the poetics, to some degree, may reasonably explain why there are different versions of the same source text in different historical periods.

In order to keep its controlling status as long as possible, whatever is against the leading current is usually altered to adapt to the accepted way. For a translator, if his final goal of translation is to produce a text that will be absorbed into the target literary system, to confront a new audience and still function as a literary work in the target culture, he may adopt a style familiar to the target readers. In this way, the translator realizes his translation purpose and makes his translation activity more significant. However, it is not always the case, and actually the translator possesses his freedom to operate beyond the limit of it. In an attempt to bring fresh air into his culture through the introduction of novel and exotic elements, the translator may follow the style of the original text as closely as possible. This is another way of translators' negotiation with the current poetics, through which the translator aims to influence the current poetics of the target culture.

2. TRANSLATORS' ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Late Qing Dynasty in China is a historical period featured by its specialty and complexity. It is not only a phase of decline ushered in by the Western powers, but also a period of preparation for the modern era and the fall of the old regime in the niches of introductions and translations of Western progressive thoughts and works. Since that is a particular historical period in China in which there is a great number of translators and translating activities, it is easier for us to explore the interactive relationship between the translators' activities and their socio-cultural context in this period.

2.1 Impact on Selection of Translation Material

There is a figure from which we could have a general idea about the text selection in the late Qing Dynasty. As it shows, our modern translation history witnesses the shifts of focus in different periods: from the rise of

natural science in the latter half of the 19th century to the popularity of social science at the turn of the 20th century, and then to the flourishing of fiction in the early 20th century.

	Natural science	Socialscience	Literature
Appxi.1850-1890	29.8	8.1	0.5
Appxi.1902-1904	21.1	25.5	4.8
Appxi.1912-1940	14.6	25.5	27.6

(Wang, 1997, p.181-183)

The rise of natural science was stimulated by the social changes the late Qing witnessed. As we know, before the 1st Opium War (1839-1842), China was a great power in the world. The then Chinese people customarily saw the world in a China-centric viewpoint. However, the complete failure in Opium War forced the Chinese to become aware that the advance in warships and canons of the West was in sharp contrast with the backwardness in China's military forces, science and technology. This consciousness resulted in a domestic motive to defeat the opponents by learning their natural science. Because of the close relation between the manufacturing of military weapons and natural science, large numbers of books in this field were chosen to translate, such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, geology and books on military technology. Take an example, during the Opium War, Lin Zexu, a Chinese official, translated part of *the Cyclopaedia of Geography* by Murray Hugh. Published in 1836, it was the most up-to-date work on world geography at the time.

However, the self-strengthening movement by means of importing advanced natural science through translation and improving military force failed to prevent the disastrous defeat of the Qing government in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. An imminent danger of extinction approaching the Chinese nation made the people realize that China suffered not from the lack of knowledge of natural science but from the weakness of social science. To solve the problems lay in the internal structure of the government, the Chinese people resorted to the advanced civilizations in the West. And translation of the books on social science became the lifeline of strengthening the nation. Then naturally came "a shift in the introduction into China of Western learning from the material culture of apparatus and technology to the spiritual culture of thought and scholarship" (Pollard, 1998, p.33). Among the translators of this period, Yan Fu is the most typical one. He fully realized the socio-political situation and the danger of the nation being subjugated at that time. In order to enlighten the people to save the nation from subjugation and ensure its survival by political reform, Yan Fu consciously chose those books that were closely connected with the need of the receiving system to translate, such as *Evolution and Ethics*, *Study of Sociology*, etc.

Finally came the shift from the popularity of social science to the flourishing of fiction. In the early 20th century, a large number of western fictions were introduced to China, including political fiction, historical fiction, social fiction, science fiction, detective fiction, educational fiction, and the fiction of love story. The same as the reason for the popularity of natural and social sciences, the booming of translated fictions also results from translator's intentional choice in that special cultural environment.

Firstly, fictions in China at that time were few in categories and limited in range of subjects. There was a need in Chinese literature to introduce new genres. But to be more exact, fiction gained its new standing largely because the reformist elites in the late Qing period gave priority to the educational and social rather than the literary value of the genre. (Eva Hung, 1998, p.151) To mobilize the whole society to carry out the reform, the reform elites felt an urgent need to educate the common people. Fictions, which were customarily written in a stylized form of the common spoken language and served as the most popular genre among the average people helped the reformists to remove the doubt of how to reach the citizenry who could not read the classical language and would not read political tracts. That is where fiction came in. In addition, translators' choice of fiction was further justified by their conviction that fiction helped greatly the political development of Europe, America and Japan. Therefore, they selected all kinds of fictions to translate to meet the ideological requirements of their period. For example, Liang Qichao translated a political fiction called *Romantic Encounters with Two Fair Ladies*. And Lu Xun translated a book named *The Soul of Spartans*, which was about the Spartans' resistance against the Persians in 480 B.C., for the purpose of arousing the soul of the Chinese people and calling on the people to defend their home bravely and prepare to give up their lives for the country.

In a word, translators' text selection in late Qing Dynasty is closely related to the historical situation of that time in China and it is grounded on the dominant ideology of self-strengthening through reforms and learning from the West.

2.2 Impact on Textual Manipulation

The practice of translation in the late Qing is a loosely defined vocabulary that it necessarily includes paraphrasing, rewriting, truncating and so on. By textual manipulation to adapt to the target culture, the late Qing translators tried to serve emotive and ideological goals inconceivable to the original authors and produced a lot of misinterpreted translations. However, these misinterpreted translations did promote the social progress and bring fresh air into the old stale Chinese literary field to some degree.

2.2.1 Domestication as an Evitable Factor in Translation

Domestication, as one method of translation, is "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-

language cultural values, bringing the author back home” (Venuti, 1995, p.20). In details, it is a reconstitution of the foreign texts in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that preexist in the target language and a forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language reader. By adopting domesticating method, translators can let their translated version be accepted by the receiving culture easily. Therefore, when different cultural values and assumptions prop up in the translating process, it seems that translators tend to naturalize them in terms of the ideological thinking of the receiving culture, and thus in effect block out the particularity of the foreign work in the target culture.

The domesticating method was very popular in late Qing. The reason for it largely lies in the political reality at that time. As we know, in the late Qing Dynasty, the deep crisis of the political and cultural deterioration dominated the whole situation. In this period, the translation mainly served for political purposes rather than fulfill its literary function. Just being aware that no matter how wonderful their translation was, it achieved nothing if it was beyond the reach and capacity of the readership, late Qing translators domesticated the original text to make their versions appropriate to the corresponding socio-cultural milieu.

In this way, under the guidance of the domestication strategy, translating sometimes is a matter of adjusting and manipulating a source text so as to make a translated version conform to a particular model or a particular notion in a target culture, and thus to secure social acceptance of the translated version. This kind of manipulation narrows the gap between the original text and cultural environment, prevents the translator’s translation choices going too far away from the acceptance of the readership. As a result, the translated text bears on the receptive cultural politics, economy, poetics, and so on, in short, the receptive milieu.

On the whole, the prevalence of domesticated translation aims at solidifying the dominant political, economic position by means of excluding heterogeneous cultures.

2.2.2 Impact of the Political Milieu on Translation

The different forces which act on the translator may include the perceived nature of the readership and ultimately the ideological and political framework underpinning receptor language culture. Obviously enough, the consideration of the political milieu carries more weight in affecting the translator’s practice. To secure the successful landing of their translated texts in their own culture and realize their political ambition of helping China out of backwardness and weakness, late Qing translators usually manipulated the original texts to a certain degree.

For example, in Yan Fu’s translation of *Evolution and Ethics*, there is a most conspicuous manipulation Yan Fu made, that is, he extended natural laws such as “struggle

for existence” “natural selection” and “the survival of fittest” that Huxley intended for the natural world to human society. In the original, Huxley aims to criticize Herbert Spencer’s Social Darwinism by which Darwin’s theory of evolution is applied to human society, whereas in the target text, Yan Fu attempts to publicize Spencer’s Social Darwinism, going against Huxley’s viewpoints on ethics. But at the same time, Yan Fu agrees with Huxley’s idea that human determination will overcome destiny, running counter to Spencer’s idea that man is powerless in the evolution of cosmos and human society. By making so many alterations to the original, Yan Fu intended to voice his view about the political and social issues of human society and call for Chinese people to self-strengthen in order to make China wealthy and powerful. As a result, such a translated book originally intended for the scientific study acquires a strong vocative force and political function in the target cultural context due to the translator’s manipulation.

2.2.3 Impact of the Target Cultural Tradition on Translation

Cultural tradition varies from nation to nation. They are rooted in the hearts of the people and it is difficult to shake the status of them. Cultural tradition, though less explicitly powerful than politics, still plays a very important part in regulating translator’s manipulation of the original text. It involves many aspects in our daily life, and the ethical system is most important.

As we know, every society has an inherited ethical system which guides people’s behavior and shapes their moral standards. Usually, the ethical culture of a specific society is characterized to a certain degree by exclusiveness, and cannot tolerate threats from what it regards as unethical or immoral elements introduced by a foreign culture. The degree of ethical tolerance varies between cultures and even between subcultures and different periods. The more conservative a culture is, the more ethically exclusive it becomes. Therefore, in an ethically conservative society, when confronted with the ethical contradiction, usually some translators are ready to delete some contents of the original works, which they think in conflict with the target cultural traditions or unsuitable for the target readers.

In China, the feudal history lasted more than two thousand years until 1912. The long-term dominance of feudal culture resulted in an ethically conservative and sensitive society in which women, locating in a low status, were bound by a lot of so-called moral principles. Women had no right to make their own decisions and pursue their happiness; they had to be obedient to their husband; they had to keep the female virtues in their mind any time. If a woman violated the female virtues, she must be scolded, looked down upon and even discarded by the whole society. In addition, those deep-rooted ethical values and moral standards cherished by the late Qing people make them feel difficult to tolerate lurid sexual

scenes in literary works. Therefore, when Haggard's *Joan Haste* was translated by Bao Tianxiao and Yang Zilin in the early 1900s, it is found that many descriptions of the love affairs between the heroine and the hero were deleted. And simultaneously Joan's illicit pregnancy that was considered the most unpardonable sin for a woman at that time in China was also deleted completely. These deletions fully reflect the translator's activities constrained by the traditional ethical values.

2.2.4 Impact of the Target Literary Norms on Translation

Target literary tradition is also one of the most eye-catching factors that affect translator's overall strategy to be taken. To cater to the target readers' reading habit and secure its social acceptance, translators usually alter the form of the original text to block out its particularity and make it familiar to the target readers. If we turn our eyes to the translated fictions of late Qing Dynasty, we could find a lot of such cases.

As we know, in the late Qing Dynasty, Chinese readers had read the traditional Chinese fictions for a long time and had formed their reading habit, therefore they could not accept new forms of foreign fictions easily. Although resentment against new forms of fictions was much less than resentment against unacceptable contents, translators still chose to correspond to the target literary norms regardless of the original literary tradition. That's why the late Qing translators usually employed the form of *Zhanghuixiaoshuo*, the traditional form of ancient Chinese novels, in their translated fictions.

What's more, when dealing with the narrative point of view in translated fictions, late Qing translators customarily changed the first person narrator to the third person narrator to preserve the tradition of the narrative voice in the traditional Chinese novels. There is a typical example here that we frequently quote to illustrate this point. It is the beginning part of Yan Fu's translation of *Evolution and Ethics*, in which the original first-person narrator I is substituted by He Xuli (Huxley).

Besides narrative point of view, when faced with different traditions of narrative time, narrative mode in foreign fictions, most late Qing translators also used to make changes to fit in line with the traditional Chinese literary system. They probably rearranged the contents of the fiction in a chronological order. Simultaneously, due to the tradition of plot focus in Chinese fictions, translators omitted the scene descriptions and character analysis which were considered irrelevant to the expression of the theme. For example, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, the translator Wei Yi omitted the whole third chapter, "the embodiment of cream of psychology". In *La Dame aux Camelias*, Lin Shu crossed out pages of description on scenes.

In short, most translators in that period adopted the method of new wine in old bottles to adhere to the preexisting target literary norms.

3. TRANSLATORS' ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Translators' activities are subject to their socio-cultural context, however, it doesn't necessarily mean that all the translation activities take place within the constraints of the ideological and poetic factors of the receiving culture. Located in the same cultural context, some translators, to achieve particular purposes, may show their resistance to the target cultural norms and strive to preserve the foreignness of the original texts. This is a different kind of attitude towards the influence of the target cultural constraints and it is the same case with late Qing translators. Although the domesticating method was a kind of vogue in late Qing Dynasty, still there were some translators who were brave enough to innovate the target culture by introducing some exotic cultural elements, especially the fictional translators. In this way, their translation functions in a different way in the target culture.

3.1 Adoption of Foreignization Strategy

According to the German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher, there are only two methods of translation: domestication and foreignization. Different from domestication, a foreignizing method is "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (Venuti, 1995, p.20). It is a kind of source-language-culture-oriented translation which strives to signify the difference of the foreign text and preserve as much as possible the original flavor in order to retain the foreignness of the source language culture.

"Cultural authenticity", as the core of foreignized translation, enables the cultural exchange possible and significant. With the introduction of diversified cultural elements, such as the foreign expressions, syntax, etc., the native culture could be enriched greatly. Therefore, to make the culture of a nation more energetic and influential, an open and receptive attitude towards foreignness is much welcome. However, to get a foreignized translation must disrupt the cultural codes that prevail in the target language. In Venuti's words,

In its effort to do right abroad, this translation method must do wrong at home, deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience – choosing to translate a foreign text excluded by domestic literary canons, for instance, or using a marginal discourse to translate it. (Venuti, 1995, p.20)

It reveals that by signifying the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, the translator is bound to take the risk of running counter to the dominant target cultural values. And the translated text, especially the one that signifies the linguistic difference of the foreign text, usually eschews fluency, seems unintelligible and reads wooden. However, such kind of awkward and unfluent

version may possibly exert far-reaching influence to the target culture in the long run.

3.2 Challenge to the Target Cultural Tradition

Target cultural tradition, though largely regulates the translator's overall strategy to be taken, is not absolute and overwhelming. Translators have their ability to detach themselves from it. Even in the late Qing Dynasty when the domestication was a kind of vogue, it could also be found that some translators were brave enough to challenge the target cultural tradition.

Haggard's *Joan Haste* has been discussed in the second part. Under the pressure of the target cultural constraints, the translator deleted many descriptions which were considered unsuitable for the readers. However, several years later, it is surprising enough that there appeared a completely different version of *Joan Haste* translated by Lin Shu, in which all the contents deleted by the former translators were faithfully translated and the whole fiction was presented before Chinese readers' eyes. Lin Shu's faithful representation of the original content fully shows his initiative in the process of translation. But compared with the first one, what was the result of such an ethically offended version?

Actually for Lin Shu's version, the readers lashed out at the contents that he supplied instead of enjoying the complete story. As we know, in the first ethically adapted version by Bao Tianxiao and Yang Zilin, Joan became a woman who was willing to exchange her feelings and life for her lover's happiness and reputation. Chinese readers liked to accept this image and thought the heroine was really great. However, in the second version, Joan was a beautiful and passionate woman who was brave to pursue her love and happiness. Although the image of this heroine was in fact positive in the western culture, for the different cultural background Chinese readers held an opposite view. They thought the heroine had no sense of shame and violated the feudal ethics, and they would not accept her. In their eyes, Bao Tianxiao was the meritorious supporter of Chinese ethics, while Lin Shu became the offender of Chinese ethics. Of course, the first version was popular and the second one only led to complaint and scolding. Despite its reception failure the version of Lin Shu is still of great significance. By faithfully reproducing the original message, Lin Shu made effort to avoid transmitting the image of the heroine to the target readers in a distorted way and provide a chance for the readers to taste the original flavor of the source text.

In the late Qing Dynasty, such kind of translation challenging the target cultural tradition is not very rare. When facing a reproduction of the same south European beauty in *The Naval Treaty*, Cheng Xiaoqing and Zhang Dekun used quite different words in their description. In the version by Cheng Xiaoqing in 1916, the heroine became a typical Chinese beauty with snowy-white skin and slim figure, whereas in the version by Zhang Dekun

in 1896, she was a clumsy woman, "short and stout, with a face like an olive, dark eyes like Italians, and jet black hair" (Eva Hung, 1998, p.165). What results in such prominent differences? To answer this question, we must resort to the translator's perception, which is framed by traditional norms as well as contemporary concerns. In details, the first translator who was concerned about presenting her as an acceptable heroine made her fair, slender and delicate; the second translator who was more concerned about descriptive details had to follow closely the words in the source text. However, for the lack of corresponding aesthetic values in Chinese cultural system, the southern European kind of beauty found so often in English popular fiction became extremely unattractive in Zhang Kunde's version.

Although Zhang Kunde discounted the heroine's beauty altogether in his version, can we simply conclude that Cheng Xiaoqing's version is better? Reading the original text carefully, we find that the translators actually were faced with a double problem here: appearance and personality. In the English cultural system, such kind of physical description actually shows that Ann Harrison is a girl of strong character. However, it is hard for the Chinese readers to learn her personality from the domesticated translation, because the female image in Chinese cultural system is characterized by delicacy and weakness. In this sense, Zhang Kunde's version, in spite of discounting her beauty, kept the flavor of the foreign culture and transmitted the personality of the character more or less.

In short, Zhang Kunde was the only one who tried to break the aesthetic norms of Chinese traditional beauty in late Qing Dynasty. (Kong, 1999, p.45) It suggests that the most important factor that determines the translation choices in cultural level is the cultural tendency and attitude of the translator. In Eva Hung's words, "whether he takes his job seriously enough to try his best to rationalize whatever seems untidy or illogical is a matter of attitude." (Eva Hung, 1998, p.166)

3.3 Challenge to the Target Literary Norms

The translators at the turn of 20th century, though still bound in the shadow of the traditional literary tradition, tried virtually to accept some new literary genres and apply some new literary techniques into their versions. For example, Lin Shu completely discarded the practice of adding couplet headings and the author's transitional comments in *Zhanghuixiaoshuo* when he translated Dumas Fils's *La Dame aux Camelias*. Lin is believed to be the first to break the dogma of the form of *Zhanghuixiaoshuo* through his translation.

What's more, some foreign narrative patterns which were strange to the then Chinese readers were also represented faithfully by the late Qing translators. As we mentioned in the second part, in traditional Chinese literature, a fiction is always arranged in the straight

order or the coherent order, i.e. telling a story from the beginning to the end or according to the sequence of the events. Chinese readers at that time were used to this order and believed a story could be told completely and continuously only in this way. When translating foreign detective fictions, the translator met with a complete different technique—flashback. The author of detective fictions usually puts the result of a crime at the beginning of the fiction in order to create suspense and draw the readers' attention, then narrates slowly the course of clearing up the case and at last reveals the riddle. Though in conflict with the traditional narrative pattern, this special narrative order obtained the appreciation of the Chinese translators. When translated into Chinese, it was usually preserved and a few translators even represented the original form. Zhou Guisheng's translation *The Trap of the Speckled Band* was a typical example. He didn't adopt the form of the traditional Chinese fictions, which always begin with an introduction to the character and corresponding background, then narrate the story thoroughly. Instead, his translation kept the original form and started with a conversation between the father and the daughter. By the way, it was one of the fewest translations that were translated in the pure vernacular.

Such kind of conversation would never appear at the beginning of the traditional Chinese fictions. It was rare that the late Qing translators preserved the foreign form in the version. However, showing appreciation for the entirely new literary techniques and in order to enrich the native literary system, some fictional translators of late Qing, by employing the foreignization strategy consciously, broke the dogma of the traditional literary norms in the aspects of the narrative time, point of view, narrative mode, etc. This foreignization translation had a great impact on modern Chinese literature.

4. THE COUNTER-ACTION OF TRANSLATORS' ACTIVITIES TO THE TARGET CULTURE

Translation and translators play an important part in the course of the target cultural development, just as Toury says, "translation activities and their products not only can, but do cause changes in the *target* culture." (Toury, 1995, p.27) Also, Susan Bassnett points out, "translation could be documented as having been at various moments subversive, innovatory or radical." (Bassnett, 1996, p.15) Whether translators undertake their activities within or beyond the constraints of the target culture, they will make great contributions to the social development as well as the evolution of the literary system. But in a common sense a translator, who takes his initiative to import the foreign cultural elements without paying attention to the target cultural codes, will contribute more

to the innovation of the target culture, especially to its literary evolution. Consequently, it is certain that in the long run a positive attitude towards the source culture is more beneficial to the target cultural constructions and development.

4.1 Acceleration to the Social Development

The most important function embodied in translation is its social function. And the great role of translation in the aspect of compelling social progress can be reflected from the past 2000 years of Chinese history, especially the turn of 20th century.

In that turbulent period, most translators usually acted as interferers in translating activities. For the purpose of enhancing social progress, the translators were given more freedom to rewrite the original text. Their job was first and foremost to interfere the original literary texts and to adjust them to be utilized for social teachings. In this sense, translators shared the role as both a translator and a latent social propeller. Beyond all doubt, without the involvement of translation, China is not today's China.

Firstly, with the aid of many translators, western socio-political ideas are introduced to China. Preoccupied with the national crisis, translators, with Yan Fu as a representative, were willing to translate western social science. Many works that they chose in this period were exclusively on politics and philosophy, which inseeded the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity cherished by democratic bourgeoisie but never heard of by the Chinese intellectuals of Yan's day. These western political and economic theories set a theoretical foundation for social progress.

Secondly, translation provides a channel for the Chinese people to get in touch with the western science and technology, and then directly absorb the scientific and technological achievements of the West. It helps to save a large amount of time in the development of our technology, shorten the distance with the western developed countries to a certain extent and promote our national progress. In a word, it has established a foundation for the development of China's modern industry and scientific research, and produced profound, prevalent and enormous influence on the development of China.

4.2 Contribution to the Literary Evolution

Translation, especially the literary translation, always acts as an active agent in forming, innovating or subverting the old cultural system. Just as Susan Bassnett puts that, translation can serve as a shaping as well as subversive force in the receiving culture. In this respect, the Chinese translations of western learning at the turn of the 20th century may serve as a better example than those in other countries in terms of the large scale of the translating activities and the great diversity of the subjects of translations.

In late Qing Dynasty, under the influence of the translation, there occurred radical changes in Chinese literary system. Traditional classic literature was severely challenged and harshly criticized in aspects ranging from language style, literary techniques to themes. Hence, modern Western literary elements began to be widely introduced and applied to Chinese literary creation. Of particular importance of literary translation of the time was fiction translation. Here, our analysis will intensively put on the role of fiction translation as well as the contributions of the fictional translator.

4.2.1 Introduction of New Literary Genres and Themes

Literary genre is not universal among the distinct literary systems, which poses great trouble for translators when their native literary systems lack the one in question or when the one in question is outdated. This situation, however, offers a golden chance for translation to exert its influence as a gap-filler. In China, the birth of new poetry, modern drama and prose all takes benefit from the translation. Here, our analysis will focus on fiction translation.

The increase of fiction types mainly took place at the turn of 20th century. At the beginning the production and evaluation of fictional works were closely linked with the political movement of that time. Therefore, the fiction at that time was treated primarily as a tool for social enlightenment not for personal entertainment or artistic values. However, fiction translation objectively has a great impact on the literary evolution of China.

As we know, the subject matter of traditional Chinese fictions generally falls into five broad types: love between a talented but poor man and a beautiful as well as sympathetic lady with a happy end; chivalrous acts by a man or men having a strong sense of justice and ready to help the weak; the committing of crimes and subsequent legal handling by a clever judge; historical anecdotes; tales about gods and spirits. It shows that the fiction type was quite limited in late Qing Dynasty. In that period, political fictions, detective stories, science fictions, adventure stories and education novels were purely foreign to Chinese readers. However, with the development of fiction translation, they began to be introduced to China. For example, the political fiction was first introduced by Liang Qichao from Japan. Liang himself translated such Japanese political fictions as *Romantic Encounters with Two Fair Ladies* and *Plum in Snow*, and later he even wrote one entitled *Future of New China*. And Lu Xun translated a science fiction named *The Journey from the Moon to the Earth*.

4.2.2 Contribution to the Innovation of the Literary Genre

Translators play an important role in changing the people's viewpoint on the fiction and improving the status of the fiction in Chinese literature.

Fictions for a long time had not been treated equally with poetry and prose though Chinese literature saw great achievements in fictional development since long ago. They were regarded as something inferior only to be read by the ragtag and bobtail. It was till the late Qing Dynasty that bourgeois reformists, with Liang Qichao as the representative, broke old traditional clichés of fictions and pushed the status of fictions to the highest position in the literary world. With the revolutionary foresight to recognize the potential political and social impact foreign literature could have on an isolated feudal Chinese society, translators took active in the fiction translation. A vigorous revolution thus took place and the modern literary structure with the fiction centering as the main literary style took its initial shape. "The fiction was the best among all forms of literature." (Wang, 2000, p.4) The status of the fiction was raised to a much higher level.

Also, there is a conspicuous change in the narrative time, voice and narrative structure of the fiction creation. Firstly, through fiction translation, Chinese literati have been quite familiar and skilled with the various kinds of narrative time—to use flashback and interweaving narration to strive for economy of words, to underline suspense, or to tighten the structure, for example. Simultaneously, readers came to realize that it was not safe to assume that a story could only be told in the coherent order. The marginalization of chronological narration opened the door for concepts like "association", "dream", "illusion", "subconscious" and so on.

What's more, Chinese narrative traditions have seen the shift from the unitary use of the third person point of view to a more comprehensive application of various voices. The most striking change translators and Chinese writers underwent was the process of accepting and adopting the first person point of view in translations.

Finally, thanks to the introduction of foreign fictions, Chinese readers learned that fictions did not necessarily focus upon plots, and that plots could serve as merely a background for other elements. The dethronement of the plot focus paved the way for other elements to gain prominence, such as scene description and character analysis, thus revolutionizing the old narrative structure of Chinese fictions as well as old literary norms. As a result, many fictions with a weak plot appeared in the May 4th period. Fictionist of this period deliberately underscored the status of the plot and "took the marginalization of plots as an important hinge to improve the artistic level of the Chinese fictions and the aesthetic tastes of the Chinese readers." (Chen, 1997, p. 337)

CONCLUSION

Translation is the product of translator's conscious manipulation on the linguistic, literary, cultural and ideological levels, which are determined by the interplay

of a large number of factors besides the source text: the social, political and ideological conditions of the target culture, the position in the source culture, the translator's poetics and ideology, etc. Obvious enough, the target culture wields great influence on the translator's translation practice, and the translator actively intervenes in the production of the translated texts and counteracts to the target culture through their translation activities.

The rich and complex translation phenomena in late Qing provide us a golden chance to explore the interaction between translators' activities and the target culture. On one hand, by manipulating the source text for the conformity with the target cultural constraints, late Qing translators, viewed their translation as a weapon to achieve their particular translation purposes and did their shares to enhance the process of the whole society. This is one reflection of the interaction between translators' activities and the target socio-cultural context.

On the other hand, due to different translation motivations and attitudes, the translator may try to do more than a mere faithful reproduction of the original text and maintain foreign cultural traits in the domestic culture. A nonethnocentric translator will not be entirely alienated by the domestic culture and he should stick to his ultimate goal to enrich his traditional culture. Similarly, they still make great contributions to the development of the target culture through their translation activities. This is another reflection of the interaction between translators' activities and the target socio-cultural context.

In a word, just because of the harmonious interaction between translators' activities and the target socio-cultural context, translation performs its function and plays its role in the development of a society.

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