Translator’s Subjectivity in the Chinese Translations of Gone with the Wind: A Comparative Analysis of the Translations by Fu Donghua, Chen Liangting and Zhu Youruo

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Abstract. Gone with the Wind is an American novel, that has been popular since its publication. Its related translations and studies in China have been constantly emerging. However, most comparative studies have focused on a small number of Chinese translations and narrow research directions. This paper focuses on the perspective of the translator's subjectivity, in combination with specific historical and cultural contexts, conducting a comparative study of three representative Chinese translations by Fu Donghua, Chen Liangting, and Zhu Youruo. The paper analyzes the three translations from the aspects of creative treason and cultural translation theory. Through the analysis of the translator behavior of Chinese local translators, it is beneficial to demonstrate a more Chinese-characterized translator's subjectivity.

Keywords: Gone with the Wind; Translator's subjectivity; Creative treason; Cultural translation theory.

1. Introduction

Gone with the Wind is a novel written by American author Margaret Mitchell, which depicts scenes from the American Civil War and serves as a microcosm of Southern society at the time. It is considered to have great literary value. So far, there have been about 25 Chinese translations of the book, including four Taiwanese versions. Since Fu Donghua's first Chinese translation of Gone with the Wind was published in 1940, new translations appear every three years, making it a remarkable phenomenon in the history of translation worldwide. As Wolfram Wills (2001) said when discussing the significance of literary translation, "That explains why today, to a greater extent than in previous centuries it is translation which determines how great an audience a book will have and why the success of bestsellers is measured by the number of translations into other languages"[5]. With the advancement of globalization and the increasing frequency and depth of political, economic, and cultural exchanges between countries around the world, translation has never been more important. In terms of literary works, without translations, the original work can only be spread in the author's own language environment. With translations, the original work can extend its vitality in different countries. Moreover, different translations that emerge in different eras allow the work to cross time and become enduring. In terms of the novel Gone with the Wind, the fact that there are so many translations in the same language is itself an important issue worthy of study.

Researches on the existing medio-translatology of Gone with the Wind in China mainly focus on the translation strategies adopted by translators, exploring them from the perspectives of teleology, polysystem theory. However, research comparing multiple translators is relatively lacking. Given the unique translation and cultural phenomena of Gone with the Wind, this article chooses three translations: Fu Donghua's translation, the first Chinese translation of the novel, which was first published in 1940. The era in which it appeared and the role the translator played in the text reflects the characteristics of the time and the personality of the translator, laying the foundation for subsequent translations and making it of great research value. However, due to the ideological issues involved in the novel and the subtle hints of glorification of slavery in its text, Gone with the Wind was not reprinted and retranslated for nearly 50 years after its initial publication. It was not until more than ten years after the reform and opening-up in mainland China that Chen Liangting's translation was published in 1990, which showcases the latest attempts by Chinese translators in translation...
studies. Zhu Youruo's translation is the newest Chinese version, with a history of nearly 80 years since its initial publication, and has unique historical value. The paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of these three representative translations in a specific historical and cultural context, exploring their similarities and differences in many aspects, and conducting a systematic and in-depth study of the translator's subjectivity issue in Chinese translations, so as to initiate a meaningful discussion on related issues.

2. Translator's Subjectivity and Its Connotations

Translation is a necessary means of cross-cultural communication, and the translator is the subject of the translation activity, whose main task is to convert a work from the source language into the target language. In the traditional view of translation, the role of the translator is often limited by the original author, and thus, the translator is often considered as a subordinate of the original author. Those who hold this view usually regard translation as a tool for transmitting information, and translation only involves transforming the original work at the linguistic level. This view of translation has become an invisible shackle for translators. However, in the 1970s, the rise of the concept of cultural turn injected new energy into translation studies. As a result, translation studies gradually freed themselves from the constraints of text and language and transformed towards cultural research, and the status of the translator also continued to rise. At the same time, the concept of translator’s subjectivity entered the field of translation and became one of the hot area of research.

The term "subjectivity" originated from philosophy, and its original meaning refers to the effect and influence of the essence of the subject on the object. Based on this theory, the interpretation of translator subjectivity in the translation field varies, but they share the same goal. According to Zha Mingjian (2003), translator’s subjectivity refers to the subjective initiative shown by the translator to achieve the translation purpose on the premise of respecting the translation object, including three aspects: "initiative", "passivity" and "self-center" [6]. Tu Guoyuan (2003) believes that the translator's subjectivity refers to "the subjective initiative shown by the translator under the influence of marginal subjects, external environment, and self-perspective, to meet the cultural needs of the target language in the translation activity. It has characteristics such as autonomy, initiative, purpose, creativity, etc., reflecting a conscious artistic personality and cultural and aesthetic creativity" [7]. In summary, translator subjectivity refers to the phenomenon that translators are influenced by their own experience, language ability, values, and cultural background, resulting in their own unique translation choices and preferences during the translation process. This subjectivity is not only reflected in the choice of translation strategies, but also includes the understanding and interpretation of language, culture, history, and other content in the original text. Meanwhile, due to the constraints of the original language style and ideological differences, translators need to respect the original work, fully consider their subjective factors, maintain an objective, accurate, and flexible attitude during the translation process, in order to achieve the best translation expression effect.

3. Subjectivity of Creative Treason Perspective in Translation

The concept of "creative treason" was first proposed by the French literary sociologist Robert Escarpit (1987). He once said: "Translation is always of creative treason" [8]. Based on this, he believed that translation is "by no means the only way to literary treason", and "any conception is betrayed as soon as it is expressed as soon as it is conveyed" [ibid]. The translation is based on the translator's autonomous agency. In the process of translation, the translator will inevitably be influenced by their own national aesthetic factors and cultural characteristics, thus engaging in the autonomous reconstruction of the original work on the levels of aesthetics and literary studies. This rebellious creativity stems from the translator's understanding of the original text, their grasp of the needs of the target audience, and their understanding of the purpose and background of the translation. The translator's creative treason is crucial to the success of translation work since it can make the
translated work more in line with the expectations and reading habits of the target audience, thereby improving the quality of the translation. In the following text, starting from specific sentences in three translations, we will analyze the translator's subjectivity from the perspective of creative treason, focusing on the strategic choices made by the translator.

3.1 Personalized Translation

Personalized translation refers to the process in which translators make appropriate adjustments and customization in text processing, language selection, and expression methods based on the needs and preferences of different audiences during the translation process. This makes the translated version closer to the audience's language habits and cultural background, resulting in better communication and dissemination effects. Personalized translation has two main features: domestication and foreignization. Domestication refers to the adjustment of the source language based on the understanding habits of the target language readers during translation so that the translated text conforms to the habits and norms of the target language and can better convey the meaning of the original text. Domesticated translation emphasizes "semantic balance," which allows target language readers to understand the content of the original text smoothly. Foreignization refers to the preservation of the cultural characteristics and language style of the original text, and the pursuit of "meaning balance" in the translated text, which preserves the language form and cultural connotation of the original text as much as possible, allowing readers to appreciate the unique charm of the original text. Among the three translations, Fu Donghua's version mostly uses the domestication strategy, while Chen Liangting and Zhu Youruo's versions mostly use the foreignization strategy. The following will focus on the different interpretations of the original text by the three translators and analyze the specific application of the translation strategies they have chosen in their respective versions.

Example 1:

Original text: "This Ashley Wilkes in his faded, patched uniform, his blond hair bleached tow by summer suns, was a different man from the easy-going, drowsy-eyed boy she had loved to desperation before the war. And he was a thousand times more thrilling" [4: 161].

Fu's translation: "希礼回家时, 身上穿着褪色补缀的军服, 头发已被烈日灼晒成了漂过的麻屑一般, 跟战前她所痴恋的那个潇洒风流的男子完全不同了。从前他是风度翩翩的" [1: 311].

Chen's translation: "回得家来的阿希礼·韦尔克斯, 身上褪色的军装打着补丁, 一头金发被炎热的烈日晒得好似漂白了的亚麻丝, 这跟她战前喜煞爱煞的那个随和懒散的小伙子完全不同的两个人了。如今的他, 更比以前动人心魄了" [2: 316].

Zhu's translation: "眼前的艾希礼·威尔克斯穿着打补丁、褪了色的军服, 满头金发被太阳晒得像是褪了色的短亚麻, 跟战前她苦恋过的那个从容不迫、目光困倦的男孩子判若两人。然而他却一千倍地令她心神荡漾" [3: 304].

In the above three translations, the three translators have their own strengths in describing Ashley. Fu Donghua translated "tow" as "麻屑" which is quite different from its original meaning of "flax", and failed to convey the original meaning that Ashley's blonde hair faded to light yellow. In addition, Fu Donghua translated "easy-going" and "drowsy-eyed" as "风流倜傥", which is far from the original intention. In these two aspects, the translations of Chen Liangting and Zhu Youruo chose to respect the original text, retaining the original word order and meaning. "麻屑" is more easily understood than "亚麻" for Chinese readers, and "风流倜傥" is more in line with Chinese aesthetic views than "随和懒散". To cater to the reading preferences and language habits of Chinese readers, Fu Donghua tended to use a domestication strategy. The translations of Chen Liangting and Zhu Youruo retained the original meaning of the sentences, and both belonged to the foreignization strategy. Adopting different strategies also changed the connotation of the translations: Fu's translation mainly described Ashley's appearance changes after joining the army, while Chen's and Zhu's translations remained
consistent with the original meaning, both focusing on Scarlett's lingering feelings for Ashley. Therefore, both domestication and foreignization have their advantages and disadvantages, and both are forms of creative treason by translators.

Example 2:

Original text: "She was as forthright and simple as the winds that blew over Tara and the yellow river that wound about it, and to the end of her days she would never be able to understand a complexity. And now, for the first time in her life, she was facing a complex nature" [4: 18].

Fu's translation: “她是一条肚肠通到底的，头脑非常简单的，简单到像陶乐场上吹过的风，陶乐场边环流的水，因而直到她的末日，她也不会懂得一件机构复杂的东西。现在呢，她是生平第一遭儿遇到一个复杂的性格” [1: 30].

Chen's translation: “她就像吹过塔拉庄园的风那样直来直去，像蜿蜒流过塔拉庄园的黄浊河流那样纯朴自然，她到死也理解不了事情的复杂性。如今，她生平第一次碰到一个具有复杂性格的人了” [2: 32].

Zhu's translation: “她直率，单纯，单纯得像塔拉上空吹过的风，像环绕着塔拉的浑浊的河水一样。她哪怕到了生命的尽头，也无法理解较为复杂的东西。而此刻，她是生平第一遭面对着一个复杂的性格” [3: 29].

In the above three translations, the three translators describe Scarlett's character. For "forthright and simple," Fu Donghua translated it as "肚肠通到底的,头脑非常简单的," while Chen Liangting translated it as "直率直去," and Zhu Youruo translated it as "直率单纯." Fu used a proverb to describe her frankness, with a local Chinese rural girl image vividly portrayed. However, this is quite different from the original meaning. Scarlett in the original work is a wealthy young lady, and her childhood environment has shaped her simple and frank character. Using "simple-minded" to describe her is a bit heavy-handed. In comparison, Chen and Zhu's translations directly translate the original text, which is slightly different from Chinese expression habits, but their portrayal of the character is identical to the original text. Therefore, it can be seen that both domestication and foreignization are just translation strategies adopted by translators from different perspectives, whether to conform to the author's writing intention or to meet the requirements of the target language readers, they each have their own merits. Due to the opposition of their starting points, their true integration is the most difficult to achieve.

According to Wen Jun (2002), "As loyalty requires translation activities, the purpose of translation and the author's purpose should be consistent, which also makes the translation and original text have the same function" [9]. Domestication and foreignization are two translation strategies, either conforming to the author's writing intention or adapting to the requirements of the target language readers, each has its own characteristics. Due to the opposition of their starting points, their true integration is the most difficult to achieve.

3.2 Abridged Translation and Adaptation

Abridged translation and adaptation both belong to the category of conscious creative treason. In some aspects, adaptation and abridged translation are closely related, both aiming to convey the source language culture. The biggest distinction between the two lies in the extent of the changes made to the original work. This section mainly uses the translation of Gone with the Wind by Fu Donghua as an example to illustrate the specific application of abridged translation and adaptation in translation and analyze the reasons behind them.

In the preface to his translation, Fu Donghua (1979) stated that his goal was "to be faithful to the spirit of the whole book, rather than to be faithful to every detail" [1: 4]. His translation of Gone with the Wind reads like a simple love story, devoid of its epic historical background. "I felt that some of the lengthy descriptions and psychological analyses were not closely related to the development of the plot and could make readers bored, so I honestly deleted them in their entirety" [Ibid]. In fact, Gone with the Wind is a masterpiece that combines a romantic love story with real-life events, using Scarlett's growth and transformation as the main plotline, set against the backdrop of the American
Civil War and the huge changes that occurred in Georgia during the Reconstruction Era. However, Fu Donghua's translation turned it into a love triangle during the war period, in order to cater to the tastes of the general public, but lost the true essence of the original work. Many strong and profound descriptions of characters in the original work were deleted, reducing their three-dimensional nature to some extent. In addition, specific descriptions of Scarlett's hometown and parents were also deleted, which can be seen as a condensation of Fu Donghua's emphasis on the entertainment value of his translation.

Furthermore, the historical facts about the American Civil War were deliberately weakened. For example, in chapter 25, Scarlett expressed her thoughts on the war from the perspective of an elderly southern woman. The corresponding chapter in the original book was about 500 words long, but the translation was only about 150 words. In fact, this can be attributed to the "manipulation" of the translator by the social ideology of the time: the film version of Gone with the Wind. It was released in Shanghai in 1940 and was very popular. At that time, China was in the midst of the Anti-Japanese War, and people were suffering from the war. The war-themed film Gone with the Wind struck a chord with the public, bringing them spiritual support and strength. The publication of the book was a response to the people's earnest expectations. Moreover, at that time, the publishing industry was under tight surveillance, and any literary works that were suspected of anti-Japanese and anti-war sentiment would be banned. Therefore, publishers demanded that the translation of Gone with the Wind should weaken the war connotation and highlight the theme of love. It can be said that the purpose of the publication of Fu Donghua's translation of Gone with the Wind was to bring a ray of hope to the general public in the darkness. It was Fu Donghua and the times that co-shaped Gone with the Wind.

4. Subjectivity from the Perspective of Cultural Translation Theory

Since the 1980s, Western translation studies have developed and improved, and the cultural translation school has emerged. British scholar Susan Bassnett (2004) proposed the new concept of "cultural translation". She advocates that "the basic unit of translation is not discourse but culture; translation is not a simple decoding and encoding process but a cultural exchange between both parties; translation is a dynamic conversion process, and translators should not be limited to the language level to describe the source language but should pursue the functional equivalence of the text in the target language culture; translators should pay attention to the historical and cultural background of different periods on the requirements of translation" [10]. Language is rooted in culture, and their relationship is inseparable. Bassnett requires translators to break free from the constraints of pure language conversion and focus on the culture that the discourse wants to convey. Peng Xiaobo (2011) also holds that "translation is a communication activity in a specific social and cultural context" [11]. The cultural translation perspective points out the importance of cultural factors in translation activities. Translators should try to restore the unique cultural significance and cultural connotation of the source text as much as possible during translation.

During the translation process, the translator will be in two different languages and cultural environments. They not only have to contact the language of the original text but also have to communicate deeply with the cultural information and ideological emotions that the original text wants to convey. Therefore, translators play an important role in the translation process. In addition, since the translator's personal views will be influenced by factors such as education, social environment, etc., they have unique insights into their language system and cultural literacy. Their thoughts will inevitably have a certain impact on their translation. Translators with different translation styles and cultural backgrounds will have differences in the handling of the source text's words, phrases, and artistic conception. Therefore, the translator's translation process is their understanding of the source text, their choice of translation strategies, and their understanding of the cultural connotation of the text. This is the prominent manifestation of the translator's subjectivity in the cultural translation perspective.
When translating foreign classics, translators face the difficulties of Chinese and Western cultural differences, whether the translation can be accepted by readers, and the selection of original language cultural elements, etc. Translators will exert their subjective initiative and adopt corresponding translation methods based on their knowledge accumulation and cultural accumulation. The translator's subjectivity is mainly manifested in solving translation problems and choosing translation strategies. Fu Donghua is the earliest translator of "Gone with the Wind" in China. His foreign language foundation is solid, and considering the cultural differences between China and the West, some Chinese readers at that time did not understand Western culture, so he did not strictly follow the format of the original work but focused on authentic expressions and used a lot of domestication translation methods. Chen Liangting then polished the Fu's version slightly, and the expression style was more Westernized than Fu's but also retained some Chinese characteristics. Zhu Youruo's translation appeared the latest and was timely. Chinese audiences had already had a certain understanding of Western culture and were more willing to further understand their customs. Therefore, he made some adaptations to the translation to better convey the cultural connotations of the text.

Example 3:
Original text: Scarlett O'Hara [4]
Fu's translation: 郝思嘉 (Hao Sijia) [1]
Chen's translation: 斯佳丽·奥哈拉 (Sijiali Aohala) [2]
Zhu's translation: 思嘉·奥哈拉 (Sijia Aohala) [3]
The three translations differ in their treatment of the name. Fu Donghua used a transliteration method and gave full play to his subjectivity, making foreign names have distinctive Chinese characteristics. "Jia" means "good," so the name "Sijia" undoubtedly reflects the protagonist's longing and pursuit of good things. When Scarlett loved Ashley, she willingly gave everything to him. Later, when Rhett left her, she did not give up because "tomorrow is another day" for her. To revive Tara plantation, she took on everything, doing chores even the black slaves refused to do. The war destroyed everything, but it did not destroy Scarlett. She was still full of hope and fervently pursued everything she wanted, bursting with vitality. Although she was capricious, proud, selfish, and vain, Fu still gave her the beautiful name "Sijia," which was enough to reflect his affirmation of her resilient and tenacious side. Similarly, Chen Liangting's translation, published in 1990, translated Scarlett O'Hara as "Sijiali Aohala," a name with distinct Western characteristics, which greatly retained the cultural characteristics of the source language. "Jiali" means "beautiful woman," affirming the protagonist's beautiful appearance and good qualities. This not only highlights the translator's subjectivity but also reflects Chen's pursuit of cultural equivalence. Zhu Youruo, on the other hand, used "Sijia" as her name based on Fu's translation and restored the Chinese surname "Hao" to "O'Hara," which undoubtedly further polishing and alienating Fu's translation.

Example 4:
Original text:"Oh! How she regretted it at all. She had often heard of people cutting off their noses to spite their faces but heretofore it had been only a figure of speech" [4: 83].
Fu's translation: “啊，这种事情她如今是多么懊悔！她常常听见人说吞了毒药去药老虎的话，总以为这不过是一个譬喻” [1: 153].
The phrase "cutting off their noses to spite their faces" comes from the proverb "cut off (one's) nose to spite (one's) face," which means "to seek revenge on others in a way that ultimately harms or disadvantages oneself." Fu Donghua used a popular metaphor "taking poison to cure a tiger" to explain this sentence in a way that is widely accepted and easy to understand among Chinese people, without changing the original meaning. This made Chinese readers feel very close to the translation.
Regarding metaphors and idioms, Fu Donghua (1979) himself once said, "Translating such books is different from translating classics. If you insist on translating words and sentences accurately, I'm afraid it will be dull to read. For example, names and place names, I now Chinesize them, just to save some energy for readers. In terms of dialogue, I try to translate it like Chinese, and many humorous, sharp, and vulgar idioms are replaced with our own idioms to achieve the effect of hearing it" [1: 3, 4]. Similarly, Chen Liangting also used Chinese proverbs to complete localization in the form of Chinese proverbs. However, compared with Fu Donghua's metaphor, Chen Liangting's proverb is more neat and symmetrical in form, and easier to read and understand for Chinese people. This resonates with Chen Liangting's translation philosophy of "translating for Chinese people to understand." However, Zhu Youruo chose to translate directly according to the literal meaning, without conveying the implicit meaning and essence of this English proverb, which may make some Chinese readers confused.

Example 5:

Original text: "But Atlanta was of her own generation, crude with the crudities of youth and as headstrong and impetuous as herself" [4: 87].

Fu's translation: “至于饿狼陀, 是跟她自己同时代的, 粗糙得如同气盛的青年一般, 也像她自己那么固执而强硬” [1: 161].

Chen's translation: “而亚特兰大跟她是同一年代, 像毛毛躁躁的年轻人那样粗野, 像她本人那样轻率、任性” [2: 165].


After becoming a widow, Scarlett felt depressed and constrained by various old traditions, so she went north to Atlanta to relax. This description implies that Scarlett was destined to belong to the new era, and she didn't want to be suppressed, demanding freedom of personality. The youthful vitality and firm and cold-heartedness embodied in her resonated with the vibrant emerging city of Atlanta.

In the translations, the translators have different ways of handling "crude with the crudities". "Crude" originally means "rough, offensive". Fu translated it as "rough", meaning "poor, rough", which can be extended to "reckless", reflecting Scarlett's impetuous behavior and rashness, and combined with the preceding adjective "full of vigor" to suggest that she was young and inexperienced, didn't understand etiquette, and enhanced the negative connotations implied by "crude". Chen and Zhu translated it as "rough", using this word to describe Scarlett's unrefined behavior and rude personality, which aims to show that her behavior was obviously different from that of the ladies of the time. Chen also added "restless" to modify and highlight her impatience. Although the translators used different words, they all implied a derogatory view of Scarlett's character and tried to restore the original meaning of "crude". "Headstrong" means "stubborn, obstinate", and "impetuous" means "impulsive, rash". Fu translated it as "stubborn and strong-willed", emphasizing "headstrong" while weakening the meaning of "impetuous".

5. Conclusion

Translators from different times represent different values and have representative significance for "importing" and "exporting". Fu Donghua, Chen Liangting, and Zhu Youruo have all made great contributions to the translation industry in China. In the translation of "Gone with the Wind", the three translators fully exerted their subjective initiative and engaged in a certain degree of "creative treason" against the text. Among them, Fu Donghua's translation was controversial due to his excessive domestication. However, when considering relevant historical backgrounds, social environments, and personal experiences, it can be discovered that his use of domestication techniques and deletion of the original text was not arbitrary, but stemmed from his own translation motivation and his translation view that the source text should be closer to the target language. Chen Liangting and Zhu Youruo based their cultural translation view and fully considered the cultural context and connotations of the source text, using foreignization as the primary translation technique, striving to
be faithful to the original text in the translation process, approaching the expression of the source text, mining the cultural factors behind the text, and striving to convey the cultural background to readers.

References


