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Exploring Human–AI Collaborative Generation Mechanisms from the Perspective of Creative Treason

-- A Comparative Study of ChatGPT and Hawkes's The Story of the Stone

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Abstract: With the rapid development of artificial intelligence, the creative potential of Large Language Models (LLMs) in literary translation has increasingly attracted scholarly attention. The concept of creative treason in translation studies offers a valuable framework for examining the roles and limits of LLMs as emerging translation agents. Using selected chapters from The Story of the Stone as the analytical corpus, this study compares translations generated by ChatGPT with David Hawkes's English version to explore how creative treason manifests in each translation. The discussion further considers possible pathways for human–AI collaboration, providing insights into enhancing the creativity and acceptability of literary translations produced with the assistance of artificial intelligence.

Keywords: Creative Treason; The Story of the Stone; Translation Comparison; Human–AI Collaboration.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology, Large Language Models such as ChatGPT have been increasingly applied to various fields of translation practice and have gradually demonstrated the potential of functioning as "quasi-translators." In particular, in specialized translation, news translation, and other text types with relatively clear structures, Large Language Models have shown considerable practicality and acceptability. However, in the field of literary translation, which places higher demands on linguistic rhythm, cultural implications, and aesthetic representation, the capability of Large Language Models as "quasi-translators" remains controversial. This controversy provides a distinctive entry point for examining their translation behavior.

Translation, as an activity of cross-linguistic, cross-national, and cross-cultural communication, is essentially not a simple process of equivalent conversion, but a process of re-creation involving continuous selection and adjustment. Due to significant differences among linguistic systems and cultural contexts, translators often need to make choices, adjustments, and reconstructions while conveying the meaning of the source text. Therefore, "creative treatment" becomes an unavoidable phenomenon in translation practice. The concept of "creative treason" provides a new explanatory framework for translation studies. It can be argued that "creative treason" profoundly reveals the essence of translation behavior and translation activity. [1] Translators are not faithful carriers of language, but active cultural rewriters. In the process of translation, they realize the creative transformation of the spirit of the source text through "conscious deviation." The translator's "treasonous" behavior in translation is thus a necessary path toward aesthetic equivalence and cultural transmission. Based on the concept of "creative treason," this study regards Large Language Models as "quasi-translators." Taking The Story of the Stone as the corpus, it compares the translations generated by ChatGPT with David Hawkes's translation, analyzes the differences between the two in terms of "creative treason," and further explores the creative potential of AI-generated translations in literary translation as well as the application prospects of human–AI collaboration.

Literary translation, as an activity of cross-linguistic, cross-national, and cross-cultural communication, involves not only the transformation of linguistic forms, but also the reconstruction of cultural information and the reshaping of aesthetic imagery. In "Medio-translatology: Its Innovative Concepts and Academic Prospects," Xie Tianzhen points out that the phenomenon of creative treason in literary translation is particularly worthy of study, because such creative treason vividly and intensively reflects the obstacles, collisions, misunderstandings, and distortions encountered in the process of communication between different cultures. [2] Therefore, creative treason provides an important perspective for understanding the multidimensional features of literary translation and the translator's subjective creativity.

The Story of the Stone is a renowned classical Chinese novel. Owing to its poetic language, profound cultural richness, and complex plot, it is regarded as an ideal touchstone for examining the creativity of translation agents. This study selects The Story of the Stone as the analytical corpus and focuses on a comparison between the English translations generated by the Large Language Model ChatGPT and David Hawkes's classic English version. By comparing their respective performances in individualized translation, mistranslation and omission, abridged translation and edited translation, as well as indirect translation and adaptation, this study explores whether Large Language Model translation, when regarded as the work of "quasi-translators," possesses the capacity for creative treason, and further reconsiders the role boundaries and application value of artificial intelligence in literary translation.

2. Creative Treason

1. The Proposal and Interpretation of "Creative Treason" in Foreign Scholarship

"Creative treason" originates from the view of the French sociologist of literature Robert Escarpit, who proposed that

"translation is always a sort of creative treason."[3]Japanese scholar Otsuka Yukio further interpreted "creative treason" from the perspective of reader reception, arguing that "a translator's rendering of a work is a process of 'creative treason.'"[4][5]American scholar Ulrich Weisstein explained "creative treason" from the perspective of translation practice, pointing out that "creative treason is almost inevitable in translation."[5][6] The interpretations of Robert Escarpit's proposition that "translation is a form of creative treason" by Otsuka Yukio and Ulrich Weisstein marked the beginning of an era in which the translator came to be regarded as the subject of "creative treason." [5]

2. The Introduction and Construction of "Creative Treason" in Chinese Scholarship

The concept of "creative treason" was introduced into Chinese translation studies by Xie Tianzhen and other scholars of Medio-Translatology. In his book Medio-translatology, Xie Tianzhen points out that, in literary translation, whether a translation surpasses the original or falls short of it, such phenomena are determined by the creativity and treasonous nature of literary translation.[7]He argues that the translation of literary works is inseparable from the translator's "creative treason." While remaining faithful to the original work, the translator inevitably engages in creative expression and thus departs from the source text to some extent. This argument indicates that translation is not merely a process of linguistic transfer, but a process full of selection and creation. In the process of translation, translators are often influenced by factors such as personal experience, cultural accumulation, linguistic competence, and social environment, and they consciously or unconsciously process and reshape the source text at different levels.

3. The Deepening and Expansion of Research on "Creative Treason" in China

In recent years, a number of empirical studies have analyzed the concept of "creative treason" from different dimensions. In "Creative Treason and the Establishment of Translational Subjectivity," Xu Jun points out that the proposition of "creative treason" provides a new perspective for reconsidering translation, especially the nature and task of literary translation. [8] In "The Translator's Treason in Literary Translation: A Kind of Deep Fidelity," Feng Zongyin discusses the inevitability of "creative treason" through the translation of the literary work The Story of the Stone. [9] In "A Study of the Phenomenon of 'Creative Treason' in Chinese-to-English Translation from the Perspective of Medio-Translatology: An Analysis of the Translated Exhibition Texts in the Tan Kah Kee Memorial Museum," Wang Peng takes the translated exhibition texts in the museum as the corpus and points out that, in order to realize the promotional function, translators adopt such strategies as amplification, indirect translation, and rewriting, so that the translation can better conform to the cultural expectations and reading habits of target-language readers. This reflects the operability and necessity of "creative treason" in the context of functional translation.[10]

Overall, current research on "creative treason" mainly focuses on theoretical interpretation of the concept and case studies of translators, but has not yet been extended to emerging "quasi-translators" such as Large Language Models. Therefore, based on Xie Tianzhen's concept of "creative treason," this study attempts to regard Large Language Models as executors and potential subjects of "creative treason." By selecting several passages from The Story of the Stone as the corpus and comparing the English translations generated by ChatGPT with David Hawkes's classic English version, this study explores the creative potential and value boundaries of Large Language Model translations in literary translation.

3. Analysis of Translatorial Creative Treason in Large Language Model Translation

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence, Large Language Model translation has already shown a "quasi-translator" mode. Generative artificial intelligence can extract human language rules and their logical relations from large-scale corpora, and then, according to users' needs, provide multimodal new text outputs that conform to human language conventions.[11]Although Large Language Models do not possess human subjective consciousness, their behaviors in the process of language generation, such as expressive deviation, pragmatic adjustment, and cultural adaptation, have already demonstrated certain features of "creative treason." Xie Tianzhen divides the translator's "creative treason" into conscious and unconscious types. In "On Creative Treason in Literary Translation," he provides a detailed discussion of the translator's "creative treason" from four aspects: personalized translation, mistranslation and omission, abridged translation and trans-editing, and relay translation and adaptation. [12] Drawing on the four typical forms of creative treason proposed by Xie Tianzhen, this study selects The Story of the Stone as the research corpus, compares the English translations generated by ChatGPT with David Hawkes's classic English version, and explores the "creative treason" behavior of Large Language Models represented by ChatGPT as "quasi-translators" in literary translation.

1. Personalized Translation

In literary translation, the recognizability of the translator's style is usually regarded as one of the important manifestations of "creative treason." The translator's creative treason is inevitably related to such factors as the translator's personal preferences, translation principles, poetics, and ideology. [13] Especially in the translation of highly literary classic texts, such stylistic manipulation often becomes an important embodiment of translational subjectivity.

Taking the episode of "Imperial Concubine Yuan's inscription on stone" in Chapter 23 of The Story of the Stone as an example, this part presents family glory and aesthetic order through Imperial Concubine Yuan's evaluation of the poems and the recording of them on stone.

【Source Text】

那元妃却自幸大观园回宫去后，便命将那日所有的题咏，命探春抄录妥协，自己编次优劣，又令在大观园勒石，为千古风流雅事。

【David Hawkes's Translation】

Some time after her return from the Visitation the Imperial Concubine commissioned Tan- chun to make her a copy of all the poems about Prospect Garden that had been written during her visit, and having rearranged them in what she considered to be their order of merit, further instructed that they should be engraved on stone in the Prospect Garden itself —a lasting memorial to the precocious talent of her gifted family.

【ChatGPT's Translation】

After returning to the palace from her visit to the Grand

View Garden, Princess Yuan ordered Tanchun to copy down all the poems composed that day, arranged them according to her preferences, and instructed that they be carved into stone in the garden as a tribute to the family's poetic elegance.

In the translation of this sentence, although both David Hawkes and ChatGPT achieve complete semantic transfer, they show significant differences in expressive style, cultural orientation, and stylistic construction. These differences reflect their respective creativity in the dimension of personalized translation, and also reveal the different paths of "creative treason" demonstrated by different translation agents when dealing with the same text.

In this passage, David Hawkes demonstrates a distinctive translatorial style through complex sentence structures and multiple rhetorical devices. He restructures the translation of "命探春抄录妥协，自己编次优劣," and, through the phrase "in what she considered to be," reinforces Imperial Concubine Yuan's role as a subjective evaluator, thereby highlighting the layered quality of the narrative. Particularly noteworthy is his creative transformation of "勒石，为千古风流雅事" into "a lasting memorial to the precocious talent of her gifted family." In doing so, he interprets the act of "engraving on stone" as a narrative of family glory, endowing it with cultural symbolic significance. Through the wording "precocious talent" and "gifted family," he further elevates the aesthetic meaning of "风流雅事." This translation not only conveys the original meaning, but also recreates its cultural implications through stylistic reconstruction, fully embodying the "creative treason" of personalized translation.

From the perspective of current Large Language Model translation, its mode is the logical deduction of formal language, and therefore it lacks profound humanistic qualities. [14] ChatGPT's translation, "ordered Tanchun to copy down all the poems composed that day, arranged them according to her preferences, and instructed that they be carved into stone," adopts a linear literal translation structure. Although its meaning is clear, its style is plain and lacks rhetorical tension and cultural elevation. While "arranged them according to her preferences" is semantically equivalent to "编次优劣," its wording is neutral and fails to convey aesthetic judgment. Although "carved into stone in the garden as a tribute" restores the original meaning, its semantic presentation is relatively flat and lacks symbolic depth. Meanwhile, its sentence structure lacks progressive layering and stylistic rhythm. Overall, it is closer to instrumental expression than to creative reconstruction, and its "creative treason" remains largely at the level of semantic simplification and direct expression.

Overall, David Hawkes achieves the effect of "conveying the spirit through transformation" through linguistic reconstruction, forming a distinctive and stable stylistic feature in his translation. By contrast, ChatGPT more often demonstrates an instrumental literal translation style and lacks strategic "treason." This comparison also suggests that although Large Language Models possess a basic capacity for stylistic imitation, they have not yet developed a mechanism for consistently generating creative style, and therefore still require the translator's aesthetic regulation to compensate for their limitations.

2. Mistranslation and Omission

Xie Tianzhen holds that the vast majority of mistranslation and omission belongs to unconscious "creative treason." Translators do not intentionally deviate from the original meaning; rather, due to insufficient understanding of linguistic structures or cultural connotations, they produce non-strategic misreadings. However, intentional mistranslation also exists. In order to cater to the cultural mentality and reception habits of readers of the target nation, translators may deliberately avoid correct methods of translation, thereby resulting in intentional mistranslation.[7] Although such deviations are errors, they may occasionally produce a reconstructive effect of "gaining something through error," reflecting the tension arising from cultural collision.

Taking the famous lines from "Annotation to the Hao le ge" in Chapter 5 of The Story of the Stone as an example.

【Source Text】

假作真时真亦假，无为有处有还无。

【David Hawkes's Translation】

Truth becomes fiction when the fiction's true;
Real becomes not-real when the unreal's real.

【ChatGPT's Translation】

When falsehood is taken as truth, then truth itself becomes false;

When emptiness is mistaken for substance, even substance dissolves into void.

This sentence integrates Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist philosophical thought and serves as a highly condensed expression of the novel's theme of the mutual reflection of truth and falsehood. It tests the translator's ability to grasp philosophical implications, interpret the cultural core, and transform abstract speculation into clear and perceptible language. David Hawkes's translation belongs to intentional mistranslation and omission. Although David Hawkes deliberately omits the second half of the line, "无为有处有还无," he reconstructs its profound philosophical meaning through semantic paradox. By establishing symmetrical tension between "truth/fiction" and "real/unreal," he presents the Chan Buddhist implication of the mutual generation of truth and falsehood. His omission is therefore a form of conscious reconstruction, which does not weaken the central meaning, but instead adds poetic expression.

By contrast, ChatGPT's translation reflects a typical form of misreading-driven treason. In the first line, it transforms the paradoxical relationship in the original into causal logic—"When falsehood is taken as truth, then truth itself becomes false." Although it is formally faithful to the lexical meaning, it weakens the philosophical tension in which "truth" and "falsehood" are mutually embedded. In the second line, "when emptiness is mistaken for substance, even substance dissolves into void," ChatGPT renders the dialectical relationship between "being" and "non-being" as that between "emptiness" and "substance," thereby overlooking the philosophical implication of the mutual generation of being and non-being contained in the original line. Such deviations are largely related to the technical characteristics of artificial intelligence. The asymmetry of training data concerning Chinese and Western cultural allusions causes it, when dealing with highly abstract or culturally loaded passages, to generate translations that are formally corresponding rather than semantically equivalent.

It can therefore be argued that ChatGPT's translation, as a whole, exhibits a form of erroneous reconstruction driven by unconscious mechanisms, thereby reflecting the characteristics of the unconscious type of "creative treason" proposed by Xie Tianzhen. Such unconscious "creative

treason" is largely attributable to the translator's insufficient understanding of the linguistic implications or cultural background of the source text, as well as to inadvertent negligence. [9] Although ChatGPT's "erroneous treason" is not a subjective strategy, it precisely reveals the limitations of machine translation systems in their capacity for deep semantic reconstruction. While translations produced by Large Language Models may achieve semantic equivalence, when dealing with deep cultural metaphors and speculative structures, they still need to rely on the translator's linguistic intuition and philosophical judgment in order to achieve truly "creative" representation.

3. Abridged Translation and Trans-editing

In literary translation, abridged translation and trans-editing, as concrete manifestations of "creative treason," are often used to deal with textual passages that are culturally dense and highly symbolic. Abridged translation refers to the appropriate reduction of the source text, in which certain parts are omitted without violating the original meaning, so as to improve the clarity and expressive efficiency of the translation. Trans-editing, on the other hand, incorporates the translator's cultural understanding and linguistic expression on the basis of fidelity to the original meaning, making the translation more consistent with the reception habits and aesthetic logic of target-language readers.

Taking the judgment poem in "The Twelve Beauties of Jinling" in Chapter 5 of The Story of the Stone as an example, the translations by David Hawkes and ChatGPT demonstrate different degrees of abridged translation and trans-editing.

【Source Text】

可叹停机德，堪怜咏絮才！玉带林中挂，金簪雪里埋。

【David Hawkes's Translation】

One was a pattern of female virtue,
One a wit who made other wits seem slow.
The jade belt in the greenwood hangs,
The gold pin is buried beneath the snow.

【ChatGPT's Translation】

Alas for her virtue at the loom, and her talent praised in snow poems!

A jade belt hangs deep in the forest, a golden hairpin lies buried in snow.

The translation of such poetic allusions requires the translator to make choices and reconstructions in terms of rhythm, culture, and artistic conception. Therefore, the translation of this passage most clearly reflects the practical application of the translator's strategies of abridged translation and trans-editing. In the first two lines, David Hawkes adopts abridged translation and cultural trans-editing by omitting the original sources of the allusions "停机德" and "咏絮才," and reconstructs the images of the characters through accessible expressions, thus making the translation more acceptable to target-language readers. In addition, "greenwood" and "beneath the snow" rhythmically reorganize and aesthetically recreate the symbolic images of "玉带林中挂" and "金簪雪里埋," presenting an English poetic style rich in rhythm and symbolic depth. In this way, Hawkes achieves a dual transfer of culture and poetic meaning. Such measured use of deletion and addition in abridged translation and trans-editing reflects Hawkes's highly conscious practice of "creative treason."

However, ChatGPT's capacity for trans-editing is limited. It mainly relies on statistical probabilities and high-frequency associations in corpora to generate texts. When encountering complex passages involving allusions, metaphors, or cultural symbols, it is more likely to select common and stable expression patterns from the corpus, while lacking the ability to reconstruct their cultural depth and symbolic meanings.In this line, ChatGPT adopts a form of literal abridged translation in dealing with the allusions "停机德" and "咏絮才," rendering them as "virtue at the loom" and "talent praised in snow poems." Although these renderings preserve the original cultural meaning, they lack further cultural reconstruction or contextual explanation, making it difficult for readers without relevant cultural background to understand them in depth.The last two lines tend more toward literal translation and image reproduction, as seen in "jade belt hangs deep in the forest." The language is plain and lacks rhythm and aesthetic tension. Overall, the translation is faithful in content but conservative in form. It fails to demonstrate a strong strategy of abridged translation or an active awareness of trans-editing, reflecting that Large Language Models have not yet acquired the capacity for aesthetic intervention and cultural regulation.

It can therefore be seen that abridged translation and trans-editing are not merely technical operations, but also manifestations of aesthetic manipulation and cultural transfer. Translators are able to move with ease between deletion and rewriting, whereas Large Language Models still remain at the stage of mechanical replication at the semantic level. The difference between the two further highlights the irreplaceable value of the translator in "creative treason."

4. Relay Translation and Adaptation

Relay translation refers to the transformation of certain information in the source text by moving beyond the constraints of the original linguistic form, so that the translation can better express the message intended by the source text. [10] Adaptation, by contrast, is a more active and creative mode of translation. On the basis of grasping the intention of the original work, the translator transforms the register, adjusts the style, and may even restructure the plot according to the cultural background and reception habits of the target audience. In literary translation, relay translation and adaptation are extensions of translation techniques and reflect the translator's identity as a "re-creator." Xie Tianzhen classifies them under "creative treason," emphasizing that such translator behavior is not merely a strategic variation of "faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance," but a twofold reconstruction of meaning "from language to culture, and then from culture to function."

Taking the episode of "Wang Xifeng slapping the little Taoist boy" in Chapter 29 as an example, this passage is marked by a sharp and straightforward linguistic style, with strong colloquial features and implications of social hierarchy. It therefore serves as a more effective test of the translator's capacity for aesthetic adjustment in the strategies of relay translation and adaptation.

【Source Text】

凤姐便一扬手，照脸打了个嘴巴，把那小孩子打了一个斤斗，骂道："小野杂种！往那里跑？"

【David Hawkes's Translation】

Out flew Xi-feng's hand and dealt him a resounding smack on the face that sent him flying. Clumsy brat! 'she shouted.' Look where you're going!

【ChatGPT's Translation】

Fengjie slapped the boy on the face and shouted, "You wild brat! Where are you running?"

In his English translation, David Hawkes achieves a rebalance between linguistic tone and cultural context through conscious relay translation and adaptation. The most notable rewriting in his translation does not lie in semantic deviation, but in stylistic reconstruction. He omits the highly insulting expression "小野杂种" in the original and replaces it with "Clumsy brat," thereby preserving Wang Xifeng's sharp and forceful tone while avoiding excessive violence in expression. This adaptation reflects the translator's judgment of "cultural acceptability" and his ability to reshape narrative style, which is precisely a strategic manifestation of his "creative treason."

By contrast, ChatGPT's translation lacks an awareness of relay translation and adaptation in relation to the source text. Its treatment mainly remains at the level of lexical semantic correspondence, as shown in the literal rendering "Fengjie slapped the boy on the face and shouted, 'You wild brat! Where are you running?'" Although the translation is formally complete, its tone is abrupt and its cultural sensibility is rigid, causing it to lose the rhetorical tension in the original, where satire and wit coexist. This treatment represents a superficial imitation produced by the language generation mechanism of Large Language Models, resulting in the flattening of the stylistic features of the original work. It can therefore be seen that the translator's relay translation and adaptation embody an active reconstruction based on cultural and poetic awareness. By contrast, although the linguistic output of Large Language Models can simulate style, it is difficult for them to complete meaning reconstruction at the levels of rhetoric, emotion, and cultural function. This further suggests that Large Language Models, as "quasi-translators," still lack the capacity to rewrite aesthetic imagery and reconstruct cultural narratives in literary translation. This is precisely where the irreplaceable value of human translators lies.

4. Construction of Human–AI Collaborative Generation Mechanisms in Literary Translation

Compared with human translators, the creativity of Large Language Models has not yet developed cultural consciousness or aesthetic judgment. Their "treason" often originates from algorithmic mechanisms of language generation rather than from the translational re-creation of literary texts. Therefore, in the field of literary translation, artificial intelligence is more appropriately regarded as a generative assistant, providing translators with diversified spaces for linguistic imagination and creative reference. Based on the analysis of Large Language Model translation behavior in this study, it is argued that the pathway of human–AI collaboration in literary translation can be improved and constructed from the following perspectives.

1. Role Positioning and Responsibility Division in Human–AI Collaboration

Translation, in essence, is a communicative activity that is both humanistic and social, in which human beings play an absolutely dominant role. Only by fully exerting human agency and creativity can various tools and technologies be reasonably applied and controlled, so as to achieve the goal of transmitting knowledge and values, rather than becoming enslaved by tools or technologies. In "Technology-Driven Translation Mode in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: Transmutation, Motivation and Enlightenment," Wang Junsong, Xiao Weiqing, and Cui Qiliang discuss this issue.

The participation of Large Language Models does not change the subject structure of translation activities. Rather, they mainly undertake the function of "auxiliary generation." By understanding translators' instructions and retrieving linguistic resources, they can quickly provide multiple versions of preliminary translations, thereby offering translators a set of translations for selection and comparison. However, how to understand the details of the source text, judge the appropriateness of characters' language, deal with cultural differences, and maintain the coherence of the overall style of the translation must still rely on the translator's own judgment and experience. Through such a clear responsibility division, machines can truly serve translators, and artificial intelligence technology can become an effective aid in the translation process.

2. Pathway Construction and Process Design in Human–AI Collaboration

One of the notable strengths of artificial intelligence lies in pretrained models based on deep learning natural language processing technology, which are able to conduct self-supervised learning through large-scale textual data, enabling the model to learn the latent structures, grammatical rules, and semantic relations of language. [16] [17] With the development of technology, the subject of "creative treason" is expanding and is no longer exclusive to human translators. Although Large Language Models do not possess subjective consciousness, their advantages in knowledge retrieval, language generation, and information association enable them to demonstrate a certain degree of creativity. In future translation practice, we should explore a collaborative pathway of "preliminary translation by Large Language Models + human optimization": Large Language Models provide multiple versions of translations to inspire translators' linguistic reconstruction, while translators supplement and adjust expressions that are inaccurate or culturally insufficient, and further polish sentence structures, rhythm, and rhetoric. Through continuous revision, the translation can move closer to the aesthetic atmosphere of the original work, thereby achieving aesthetic elevation and cultural adaptation, and ultimately realizing "creative treason" in literary translation.

3. Complementary Advantages and Collaborative Improvement in Human–AI Collaboration

Large Language Models possess efficient generation capabilities and extensive linguistic resources. However, their symbolized virtual process cannot fully accommodate the contextuality, interpretability, and authenticity of linguistic meaning-making. Especially in literary translation, Large Language Models often fail to deeply understand the complex emotions and implicit meanings of the source text, which makes their translations prone to rigidity and a lack of cultural depth.

By contrast, the advantages of human translators lie in their deep understanding of cultural backgrounds and their sensitive grasp of context. Through their own cultural accumulation and emotional resonance, translators are able to interpret and adjust the text appropriately, making the translation more expressive and literary. However, when faced with a large amount of translation work, translators often need more time and energy, and they may also be affected by fatigue and other factors, which can influence translation efficiency.

In human–AI collaboration, the advantages of models and translators can complement each other. As collaboration

deepens, translators can gradually optimize the prompts and feedback given to Large Language Models, so that the generated texts can better meet their expectations, thereby forming an efficient and flexible collaborative model.

5. Conclusion

By comparing David Hawkes's translation of The Story of the Stone with the translation generated by the Large Language Model ChatGPT, this study analyzes the behaviors of "creative treason" presented by Large Language Models in literary translation. The study finds that Large Language Models possess a certain capacity for linguistic reconstruction, but the "treason" in their translations is mostly driven by unconscious mechanisms. Lacking clear aesthetic goals and cultural orientations, such "treason" often appears as "technical deviation" or as a form of "gaining something through error." By contrast, David Hawkes's translation demonstrates a strong sense of individual translator consciousness. His "creative treason" is strategic, culturally conscious, and artistic; it can realize contextual transfer and aesthetic recreation, and therefore constitutes a form of "conscious creation."

This study takes ChatGPT 5.0 as the main object of analysis. In the future, with the continuous updating and development of the training scale, corpus structure, and algorithms of Large Language Models, their ability to understand the complex imagery, tonal layers, and stylistic details of literary works may reach a higher level, and the translations they generate may also present more mature and stable literary features. Therefore, future research needs to conduct longitudinal comparisons of the translation capabilities of Large Language Models at different stages, so as to more comprehensively evaluate their potential development directions and capability boundaries in literary translation.

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