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Translators in Social and Cultural Context—A Case Study of the Translation Activities During the Late Qing Dynasty and the Early Republican Period

GE Zhiwei
University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, China

The polysystem theory as outlined by Itamar Even-Zohar has considerably widened the horizon of translation studies and is particularly helpful for the analysis of the influence of extra-literary factors on the poetic decisions of the translator. For one thing, translation is evaluated in the context of both culture and history. For another, all disciplines and phenomena relating to translation have become objects of study. Inspired by the macro-perspective of the polysystem theory, the author intends to investigate the relationship between translation and the social-cultural environment of the late Qing and the early Republican period.

Keywords: polysystem theory, social-cultural context, interference, manipulation

Introduction

The traditional study of translation has mainly been approached from the perspective of comparative literature. At this stage, translation is regarded as a kind of linguistic transcoding. However, due to its self-imposed limitations, it is unable to account for the complexities of translation, especially literary translation. Starting from the 1970s, translation studies have gradually taken a "cultural turn", and a new paradigm for the study of translation has been established. According to Bassnett (Liao et al., 2001), the purpose of the translation theory is to enable people to understand the process of translation, not to produce perfect translations.

The polysystem theory as outlined by Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury has considerably widened the horizon of translation studies and is particularly helpful for the analysis of the influence of extra-literary factors on the poetic decisions of the translator. Inspired by the macro-perspective of the polysystem theory, the author intends to investigate the interference of social-cultural factors with the process of translation during the late Qing and the early Republican period.

The specific period under study in this essay is from 1896 to 1919. A climax of translation activities appeared during this period, but translations of this period are often accused of being inadequate, with deletions, additions and mistranslations. While it is true that a large part of the translations of the late Qing dynasty are not faithful reproductions of the original, we should distinguish between obvious errors from the deliberate manipulations due to the conscious or unconscious cultural intervention. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the reasons why the translator adapts the source text and what mechanism works behind the manipulation of the translator.

GE Zhiwei, Master, lecturer, School of Foreign Languages, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, China.

Theoretical Basis: Polysystem Theory and Translation

According to Even-Zohar's model, the polysystem is conceived as "the entire network of correlated systems—literary and extraliterary—within society" (Gentzler, 1993, p. 114). The polysystem of a given national literature is viewed as one element making up the larger socio-cultural polysystem. Thus, "'literature' is placed in a larger sociocultural context" (Baker, 1998, p. 177).

Even-Zohar incorporates the polysystem theory into the study of translation. Gentzler (1993) maintained that translated literature should be regarded as a system, conceiving of translated literature "not only as an integral system within any literary polysystem, but as a most active system within it" (Even-Zohar, 1978, p. 145). He suggests that the relationship between translated works and the literary polysystem cannot be categorized as either primary or secondary, but as variable, depending upon the specific circumstance operating within the literary system (Gentzler, 1993). Even-Zohar (1978) identified three sets of social circumstances in which translated literature can occupy a more central position:

1. When a literature is "young" or in the process of being established;
2. When a literature is "peripheral" or "weak" or both;
3. When a literature is experiencing a "crisis" or turning point.

Even-Zohar (1978) also pointed out:

> Translated works do correlate in at least two ways: (a) in the way their source texts are selected by the target literature, the principles of selection never being uncorrelatable with the home co-system of the target literature (to put it in the most cautious way); and (b) in the way they adopt specific norms, behaviors, and policies—in short, in their use of the literary repertoire—which results from their relations with the other home co-systems. These are not confined to the linguistic level only, but are manifest on any selection level as well. (p. 146)

The contribution of polysystem theory to our understanding of the nature and the role of translation has been significant. Firstly, it has enabled us to examine translation within a wider context—integrating the study of literature with the study of social and economic forces of history. Extraliterary factors such as patronage, social conditions, economy, and institutional manipulation are being correlated to the way translations are chosen and function in a literary system. Secondly, our conception of the translated text has been altered. Instead of having such a static conception of what a translation should be, Even-Zohar varies his definition of "equivalence" and "adequacy" according to the historical situation. Furthermore, translated texts are no longer viewed as isolated phenomena, but are rather thought of as manifestations of general translation "procedures" which are determined by the conditions currently prevalent in the target polysystem (Baker, 1998, p. 178). Thus, Even-Zohar has expanded the theoretical boundaries of traditional translation theory and made it possible to embed translated literature into a larger cultural context. This present essay mainly focuses on how the social-cultural norms and various constraints of the target system may have influenced the strategies of the translators.

A Survey of the Historical Background

The Boom of Fiction Translation: The Reason

As André Lefevere (2001) argued, "translational practice is one of the strategies a culture devises for dealing with what we have learned to call 'the Other'" (p. 13). The Chinese people had, for 2,000 years, regarded their civilization as entirely satisfactory and superior. Chinese literature, social system and technology

were introduced to the neighboring countries and then to the rest of the world. Just as André Lefevere (2001) pointed out, "cultures that see themselves as central in the world they inhabit, are not likely to deal much with Others, unless they are forced to do so" (p. 13). From 1896 to 1919, the eve of the May Fourth Movement, the late Qing Dynasty was "in a state of rapid decline due to both the internal decay and external attacks by the West and Japan (Paper, 10)". This period is characterized by drastic changes of cultural environment and large-scale translation was called for to facilitate the effective introduction of new ideas.

It was against such a social background that large numbers of Chinese intellectuals began to translate Western works on social science in pursuit of truth for saving their motherland. Realizing that they could not win over the governing elite, they turned their attention to converting the common people (Wang, 1999). To reach this end, they chose fiction as their educational tool. But in traditional Chinese culture, fiction writing was not considered a serious enterprise. People looked down upon fiction as insignificant or trivial writings, read solely for leisure and containing nothing educational and important. Since traditional Chinese fiction did not have the enlightening function, translation, especially fiction translation, gradually acquired a distinct position in literature.

During this period, a large number of foreign literary works were introduced into China. Most of the translated works were various types of fiction, including detective stories, political fiction, romance fiction and science fiction. In 1896, Zhang Kunde's translation of *The Naval Treaty* (英包探勘盗密约案), one of the series of Sherlock Holmes' adventures by Arthur Conan Doyle, appeared in *ShiWu News* (时务报). Liang Qichao's translation of a Japanese novel *The adventure of a Beauty* (佳人奇遇) published in 1898 marked the beginning of translation of political fiction (Chen, 1989). The large-scale introduction of Western and Japanese literary works began around the time when Lin Shu translated the French writer Alexandre Dumas' fils novel *La dame aux Camelias* (巴黎茶花女遗事) in 1899 (Kong, 2000). As for the science fiction, the translated version of the French writer Jules Verne's work *Le Tour du Monde en Quatre-vingt Jours* (八十日环游记) was the first of its kind (Chen, 2003). The number of translated titles was unparalleled in history. According to *A Bibliography of the Late Qing-Early Republican Fiction* (清末民初小说目录) compiled by Japanese scholar Tarumoto, during the period 1840-1920 the titles of translated fiction reached 2504 and for the six years 1902-1907, translated works of fiction even exceeded in number original works of fiction.

Rewriting—Order of the Day

During this period, accuracy was not the primary consideration of the translators. As a matter of fact, they did not even claim to be translating accurately for the most part. They defined their role by such terms as "editing-cum-translating" ("编译"), "translating-narrating" ("译述") or "translating the gist" ("意译"). Some of them did not refrain from putting into the text what was not there. Others screened out things that might have been found offensive or indelicate. Most cut out things they deemed to be of no consequence, for fear of creating tedium. Such a practice was perfectly reasonable under the circumstances. Indeed it was often claimed to be the only proper practice. As Lefevere (2001) pointed out, methods of translation as well as approaches to translational practice are contingent and changeable. However, the important point is that shifts and changes in the strategies of translating did not occur at random. Conditioned by the social-cultural needs of the late Qing and early Republican period, translation of this period mainly served a utilitarian purpose. Kong Huiyi (2000) pointed out that the task of the translators at this time was to educate the populace. What translators deemed most important was the educational function of the novels that would serve as incentives for social reform in

China. Wang Hongzhi (1999) proposed that if translation is initiated to achieve certain ends, especially political ends, it would become "an act of violence" ("暴力的行为"). He said that during the late Qing and early Republican period, the violence of the translation was shown in two aspects: On the one hand, the translator intentionally turned his translation into a subversive force to overthrow the existing social order. By introducing new elements, he deliberately rewrote the original to make it more subversive; on the other hand, in order to cater to the readers' taste and reading habits, he had to delete the parts that were hard for the readers at that time to accept. In either case, little attention was paid to the artistic value of the Western fiction and accuracy was the less important consideration.

Thus, we should realize that the social-cultural conditions of a given time always have great impacts on translation.

The Interference of Cultural and Social Factors With the Process of Translation

Ideology

Ideology, which is one of the major aspects of culture, is the common worldviews that arise out of the history of a society. It includes beliefs, values and religion (Ron & Suzanne, 2000). Ideology is the dominant concept of what society should (be allowed to) be (Lefevere, 1992b), according to Lefevere (1992b), it "wrestles over interests which are in some way relevant to the maintenance or interrogation of power structures central to a whole form of social and historical life" (p. 65). Ideology dictates what basic strategy the translator is to use and therefore also dictates solutions to problems concerned. Thus, "if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out" (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 39). Undoubtedly, it always exerts great influence on translation.

During the late Qing period, since the translator was eager to state his own ideology, he would add his comment to the translation when he found the original inadequate to show his opinion. In Su Manshu's translation of Hugo's *Les Misérables*, in support of the then prevalent ideology to advocate "science", "democracy" and "overthrow the feudalism", he added many things to publicize his political viewpoint. As Zou Zhenhuan (Wang, 1999) commented, Su Manshu was not content to be a mere translator. In his Chinese version, he not only coined a story but even created a new character named Mingbai (a sensible person) to express his denunciation of such Chinese feudal values as the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. One such comment uttered by this character goes like this: "那支那国孔子的奴隶教训, 只有那班支那贱种奉作金科玉律, 难道我们法兰西贵重的国民也要听他那些狗屁吗?" (Wang, 1999, p. 157).

As a matter of fact, these were what Su Manshu himself wanted to say.

The moral value in the target culture is another factor that exerts great influence on the rewriting of the original text. Influenced by traditional moral values, translators in this period tend to associate them with works of foreign fiction. This is shown in the titles of many Lin Shu's translations, such as *英孝子火山报仇录* translated from Haggard's *Montezuma's Daughter*, *双孝子喋血酬恩记* from David Christie Murray's *The Martyred Fool*, and *孝女耐儿传* from Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Traditional moral standards also decide what kind of Western works might be introduced into China. For example, the French writer G. Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* was too far away from the traditional Chinese moral values. This might be the reason why it was not introduced into China at that time.

Immoral descriptions in the originals were omitted to make sure that public moral standards are not endangered. In the late Qing dynasty, translators were used to "cleaning" texts to cater to people's morality and

ways of reading. A faithful translated version of the original that was against their moral principles might be criticized. A much-cited example is two Chinese versions of Haggard's *Joan Haste* in the early 1900s. One is translated by Pan Xizi and Bao Xiaotian called *迦因小传* published in 1901. Pan and Bao only translated the second part and declared that the first part was missing. This part contained the episodes depicting the love affair between the heroine Joan Haste and the hero Henry, and Joan's premarital pregnancy. Therefore, most people believed then that Pan and Bao deliberately deleted this part. Later, Lin's complete version of *迦茵小传* came out in 1905 and aroused much agitation. In Pan and Bao's translation, since the first part was missing, Joan appeared to be a chaste lady who was willing to sacrifice her love and life for the sake of her boyfriend's happiness. The Chinese readers accepted this image of Joan readily. But Lin's Joan was severely criticized by Chinese readers, for what she had done ran counter to what was supposed to be appropriate behavior of women during that period. Readers would rather that Lin had not translated that part and some critics criticized Lin for his thoughtlessness in bringing immoral behavior into China (Wang, 1999).

Gender Depiction

The depiction of women's looks and characters, according to Kong Huiyi, is also part of a culture (Wang, 1999). In the English culture, a blonde is always considered to be a typical beauty. While a wise woman, who has a strong character and who has original views of her own, is not a blonde in most cases. And her facial features are also not of regular features (Wang, 1999). Traditional Chinese culture has a set of norms—indeed a special vocabulary—for female beauty as well as feminine behavior. Smith published a book in 1914, and according to the data he collected at that time, what constituted a then commonly accepted Chinese beauty was: "柳叶眉, 杏核眼, 樱桃口, 瓜子脸, 杨柳腰, 肌肤胜雪". Thus, a Western woman with a strong character and the image of a typical traditional Chinese woman conflicted with each other. To deal with episodes that would raise problems due to differences in esthetic conceptions between foreign and Chinese cultures, translators of the late Qing and early Republican period usually had to adapt the source text. Differences in esthetic conceptions between foreign and Chinese cultures are not the only reason, according to Kong Huiyi (1999), it is more related to what kind of moral and behavior norms a woman should abide by in the Chinese culture.

Politics

The translation process is "deeply inscribed with the politics, the strategies of power" (Cortes, 1998, p. 63). According to Alvarez and Vidal (1996), translating is a political act since it is "culture bound" (p. 2). It "has to do with the production and ostentation of power and with the strategies used by this power in order to represent the other culture" (Alvarez & Vidal, 1996, p. 2). To the translators, translation activities are always done under the "pressure" (Alvarez & Vidal, 1996, p. 5) of the target culture, ideologically, poetically, and economically. This suggests that all the translator's choices—from what to translate to how to translate—are determined by the political agenda of the target culture (Zhang, 2002).

In the late Qing dynasty, facing the encroachment of the imperial powers, the Chinese literati began to realize the crisis of the nation. In literary works, the prevailing theme was to lift the nation out of crisis and edify the people. Therefore, many foreign works that accorded with this aim were selected and rendered into Chinese. Let's take Yan Fu for example. Yan's major was engineering and he was once sent to England by the Qing government to study military. After he returned to China, he worked as a professor in North Sea Naval College. It would have been reasonable for him to translate some Western scientific works. Yet, most of Yan's

translations were of social sciences instead of natural science or technology. This might be beyond people's expectation. His selection of these books can be attributed to the political background of his time, when all the world powers began to carve up China's territory. Yan realized that new and insightful thoughts were more useful than advanced technology to save his endangered country and he felt the need to introduce the Western thoughts and ideas to awake the Chinese who were still unaware of the critical situations.

Another important literary figure in the late Qing dynasty was Liang Qichao. He introduced the notion of "political novel" and pointed out the importance of introducing such novels into China in his "Preface to the Translation and Publication of Political Novels" ("译印政治小说序") in 1898. The intention of political novels was to raise the nation out of the crisis. BaiJia, in the preface to 十五小豪杰 (*Deux Ans de Bacances*) translated by Liang Qichao, wrote "The purposes of Liang in translating this novel are to absorb the essence of Western civilization and help foster the character of Chinese people" (Guo, 1998, p. 209).

Politics influences not only translators' choice of topics, but also their translation strategies. During the late Qing and early Republican period, so many translators, influenced by the politics of their times, had to manipulate their translations with a view to expressing their own ideas. Yan Fu, in spite of his insistence on the principle of faithfulness, did not translate Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* in entirety, but only the first part, i.e., *Evolution*. That can also be attributed to the political background of his time, and he felt the need to introduce the Western thoughts and ideas to awake Chinese who were still unaware of the critical situations. Venuti (1998), when commenting on his translations, says, "His translation of *Evolution and Ethics* was justified for his clear-cut political aim", that is, "self-strengthening and the preservation of the race" (p. 181).

Expectations of the Readership

The author of the original usually must have envisaged a particular audience, and was confident that his work could be accepted and understood by them. However, when his work enters into the TL context, it will confront a different readership, which has not been anticipated by the SL author. After all, it has won increasing acknowledgement that translation is not merely linguistic transcoding but cultural transfer (Snell-Hornby, 1990). The audience of a translation is normally neither in the same cultural context nor, often, in the same time as the SL author. Due to the absence of a shared socio-cultural context, what is acceptable to the SL audience might turn out to be unacceptable to or even rejected by the TL audience. When the translator makes choices in the process of translation, the prospective readership is another factor that he has to take into consideration. Nida (1993) once said, "The target audience for which a translation is made almost always constitutes a major factor in determining the translation procedures and the level of language to be employed" (p. 139).

Bassnett and Lefevere (1998/2001) once pointed out, "Chinese translators translate with a certain audience in mind so they will rhetorically adapt their translations to that audience" (p. 19). We can find the best example in Yan Fu, who was criticized for his unfaithfulness in translating *Evolution and Ethics* (天演论). In the preface of this translation, he put forward his three-character principle for translation, but his opinion about elegance has been severely criticized for his stress on the "elegance" of traditional Chinese language, particularly that before the Han Dynasty, which is out of fashion and difficult to understand (Chen, 2000, pp. 119-123). But Yan Fu had his reason to do so. He once wrote in a letter, "my translations are not intended for school children, but for scholars who had read a lot of ancient books" (Liu, 1998, p. 21). His expected readers were influential old-fashioned intellectuals, many of whom occupied important positions in the country, but were conservative

and skeptical about foreign cultures. In order to attract their attention, he catered to their taste by using classical Chinese instead of the "vulgar modern language". He achieved his purpose. The elegant language together with the amazingly modern ideas attracted the whole generation. If he had translated the book as faithfully as he did other books later, his readers would not have accepted it so readily.

Traditional Chinese fiction is always narrated chronologically, while the foreign novels often have a quite a different way of narration. To cater to the reader's reading habit, it was a common practice for the translators to reorganize the story. For example, when Lin Shu translated *David Copperfield* (块肉余生述), he reversed the order of the story. He added a note in the fifth chapter: "In Western fiction, what should happen later is often described first, which is abrupt to the Chinese readers. This is just because foreigners and we have different narrative techniques. While I was translating the story, I made some minor shifts in the narrative just for convenience of the readers" (Qian, 1981, p. 28). The effort involved in narrative restructuring was immense. A translator unconcerned about quality would not have taken the trouble (extensive deletion, for example, would have been a much simpler task); neither would a translator who did not care about reader response.

Influence of the Patronage

The influence of patronage on the shaping of translations should not be underestimated. By "patronage" Lefevere means "any kind of force that can be influential in encouraging and propagating, but also in discouraging, censoring and destroying works of literature" (Gentzler, 1993, p. 141). Patrons try to regulate the relationship between the literary system and the other systems in order that "the literary system does not fall too far out of step with the other subsystems society consists of" (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 14). Lefevere (1992b) said,

> The patron is the link between the translator's text and the audience the translator wants to reach. If translators do not stay within the perimeters of the acceptable as defined by the patron (an absolute monarch, for instance, but also a publisher's editor), the chances are that their translation will either not reach the audience they want it to reach or that it will, at best, reach that audience in a circuitous manner. (p. 7)

In the late Qing period, publishers and editors did play a significant role in the production and reception of translated works. Editors had the right to decide what books could be published and what could not. In 1913, Zhou Zuoren's translated work entitled *炭书* was rejected by the Commercial Press. The accompanying letter read: "although we have not seen the original texts, we understand that your translation is faithful to the original for the exoticness is quite obvious. However, it is a pity that it reads like a book written in ancient times and will pose a difficulty for the readers" (Chen, 1989, p. 237).

Publishers' ideology is an important force that exerts influence on the rendition of foreign works and publication of translations. Editors had the right to decide what translations should be like and they usually rewrote literary works to meet their requirements. For instance, in the ninth chapter of *毒蛇圈* translated by Zhou Guisheng, there appeared a long paragraph describing the heroine's concern over her father at late night (Xie, 1999, p. 171). As a matter of fact, there was no such description in the original novel. It was the publisher Wu Jianren, after having a discussion with the translator, who added the whole paragraph to the translated version. One reason held by Wu Jianren was that, with the preceding text depicting sincere parental love, the novel might sound imperfect here without the part dealing with the daughter's filial piety.

> Although there is no such description in the original novel, I believe she must have had such thoughts. Therefore, this part should not be sheer fabrication. The other reason is that there are many people advocating domestic revolution nowadays. We should make effort to redress these deviant attitudes. (Chen, 1989, p. 95)

The Constraints of the Target Poetics

According to Lefevere (1985), poetics is the dominant concept of "what literature should (be allowed to) be" at a certain period of time (p. 226). It consists of two components:

> one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations and symbols; the other a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole certain community at a certain period of time. (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 26)

During the late Qing period, it was pretty hard for people to accept foreign ideas and even harder had the works been written in a way not familiar to them. Therefore, to achieve the aim to convert the masses, Liang Qichao advocated the use of the forms the masses were accustomed to and he proposed to "bring new concepts in an old framework" ("以旧风格含新意境") (Guo, 2000, p. 184). To make a foreign work of literature acceptable to the receiving culture, translators will often adapt it to its poetics.

Chinese literature has well-established patterns and models of composing literary works. The classical Chinese literature, having developed in the feudal society, bore the impacts of the society's formal restrictions. Facing the conspicuous gap between foreign and indigenous works, translators, more often than not, chose to adapt the source text to cater to the prevalent poetics of the target culture. This influence of the target poetics can especially be found in the translation of fictions.

The traditional pattern for Chinese novel was *Zhanghui* novel (chapter novel), which was developed from the script for story telling in Song and Yuan folk literature (Guo, 2000, p. 28). It has a relatively fixed pattern: a traditional *Zhanghui* novel was usually divided into chapters, each of which was headed by a couplet giving the gist of its content. The writer of the traditional Chinese novel was more like a storyteller, whose target was listeners rather than readers (Chen, 2003, p. 20). Thus, the traditional way of narration is usually through the omniscient third person, and at the beginning and the end of each chapter, there were such introducing words as "话说, 却说, 各位看官, 欲知后事如何, 且听下回分解".

In the late Qing dynasty, translators always rendered Western novels into the traditional Chinese pattern of *Zhanghui* novel (chapter novel). In this way, it erased the strangeness of Western novels. According to Guo Yanli (2000), in the late Qing period, the four major fiction magazines, namely *Xin Xiaoshuo* (新小说), *Xiuxiang Xiaoshuo* (绣像小说), *Yueyue Xiaoshuo* (月月小说),and *Xiaoshuo Lin* (小说林) altogether published about 24 translated novels, of which more than 12 rendered the Western novels into the traditional Chinese pattern of *Zhanghui* novel (chapter novel). The omniscient third person narrator in traditional Chinese novels is influenced by the Chinese traditional way of narration in the script for story telling in Song and Yuan folk literature. Thus, writers, like storytellers, frequently chipped in with their own comments in the translation. Influenced by this role of storyteller, when foreign novels were first translated into Chinese, the first-person narrator was also normally changed to the third-person. For example, the first-person narrators in Timothy Moore's *百年一觉*, Zhang Kunde's *华生笔记案* and Lin Shu's *巴黎茶花女遗事* were all changed into the third person.

In traditional Chinese novel, language and action were used to indicate the characters' psychology. Detailed character description was seldom employed to describe a character. Thus, when the translators came cross such descriptions in the Western novels, they chose to conform to the established poetics of that time. A case in point can be found in Lin Shu's translation of *David Copperfield.* In the first chapter of this novel, Dickens gave a description of the doctor with a vividness bordering on exaggeration (Dickens, 1849/1994). In

Lin's translation *块肉余生述*, we find only one sentence: "医生平婉不忤人, 亦不叱狗, (名曰赤力迫)" (Ma Zuyi, 1984, p. 308). The original 127-word description was reduced to only 11 characters that sum up the main idea of the original.

The influence of Chinese traditional way of storytelling on translation is also shown in the translation of detective stories. In Chinese traditional *gongan* fiction (*court cases*), the question "whodunit" is far less important than the question "how does the judge solve it". In the majority of *gongan* fiction, the identity of the culprit is known from the beginning; in English detective stories, this is far from the case. Influenced by this narrative tradition, many translated versions of the detective stories revealed the mystery of the story at the very beginning. According to Eva Hung (1998), in 15 of the translations of Holmes stories, the answer to the mystery is given away even before the story begins—through the Chinese titles. Take for example "The adventure of the Blue Carbuncle": of the three late Qing and early Republican translations, two are entitled respectively *鹅腹蓝宝石案* and *鹅嗉宝石*, in which a suspense in the original, the place where the blue carbuncle was hidden, was revealed. It was not that these translators deliberately gave the plot away, but that influenced by the traditional narration style, they did not know that they should have guarded the element of suspense until the last moment (Kong, 2000).

Conclusion

In this essay, a macro-level research has been conducted on how social-cultural factors influenced the process of translating during the late Qing and early Republican period in the light of Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. From the above analysis, we can come to the following conclusions. Firstly, the translator is first and foremost a social being. He neither works in ideal and abstract situations, nor desires to be innocent, but has vested literary and cultural interests of his own, and wants his work to be accepted in another culture. The process of translating is actually a decision-making process, which is not random but context-bound. Translation is viewed as a process by which subjects of a given culture communicate in translated messages primarily determined by local cultural constraints. Social and cultural factors force the translator to resort to deliberate manipulation. He has to try to overcome the linguistic and cultural barriers in order to transmit the messages of the source language text. Therefore, from the point of view of the target culture, equivalence is only a hypothetical ideal, total equivalence is only an allusion.

Secondly, translations themselves have no "fixed" identities; because they are always subject to different socio-literary contextual factors. They thus must be viewed as having multiple identities, dependent upon the forces that govern the decision process at a particular time.

Thirdly, the evaluation of a translation should go along with adequate consideration of its social and historical context as well as a comprehensive comparison with other versions. Moreover, reevaluation is often more necessary in different times. Only in this way can we grant objective criticisms to the translated works in history.

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