

## **Lin Shu's Choice and Response in Translation from a Cultural Perspective**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article investigates Lin Shu's translation in terms of choice and response to the original works in the cultural context of China in the transition from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This may help us to understand the significance and contributions of Lin Shu's translations to the modern Chinese culture in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In translation, Lin Shu chose and responded to the source literary texts with his eyes firmly on the target culture, taking into consideration the similarities between the source and target texts, in subject matter, content and style.

### **KEYWORDS**

Lin Shu, Chinese translation, choice, response, Chinese culture.

### **Introduction**

Lin Shu (1852-1924) is best known for his translations of Western literary works into classical Chinese, including *La Dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils, *Don Quixote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes, *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *Ivanhoe* by Walter Scott, *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, among many others. Yet his translations have been denigrated as 'unfaithful' by subsequent scholars, wedded to a narrow view of faithfulness that focuses exclusively on the original text, not the target culture. Recent Western work on translation theory that conversely focuses on the target culture—in Lin's case, China in transition from feudalism to modernity—allows a recasting of Lin's work and its impact. From this perspective, Lin Shu's work epitomises a translation process that privileges reception, not origin, thus extends the growing field of translation studies. Lin Shu and his translations have been a controversial topic since his first translation appeared in 1899 in China. As soon as his translation was published, it caused a national sensation among the Chinese reading public. For approximately twenty years, namely, from the late Qing period to the May Fourth New Culture Movement in 1919, Lin Shu translated more than 180 foreign literary works into Chinese.

However, Lin Shu completed his translations without any knowledge of foreign languages. He had to collaborate with his friends who had first-hand knowledge of foreign languages and orally relayed the original to him. Therefore, translators and critics after him, both Chinese and foreign, have found his translations faulty, even claiming that he was not really a translator but a storyteller. This is because the majority of Chinese translators today abide by such principles of translation as 'faithfulness'

and 'translation equivalence,' emphasising that the target text (TT) must be faithful to the source text (ST). Critics claim that "Lin adopted an approach of his own, which is widely different from what is practised by translators today" and that "Lin seemed to have been more concerned about spinning his own yarn than acting as a faithful intermediary between the Western writer and his Chinese readers. Retelling the story in his own way, he often took liberties with the original, making changes and adaptations here and there to suit his purpose" (Wong 1998: 208-209). Given modern translation protocols, Lin's translations are barely considered suspiciously by linguistics-oriented or source-oriented translators or critics. We argue that Lin Shu must be acknowledged as a translator due to the role he played in both translational practice and in the development of Chinese translation, and that Lin's works must be accepted as translation, especially given their quantity, reception and ongoing impact. Therefore, translation theory must be extended to accommodate the translational phenomenon of Lin Shu.

What interests me is this contradictory phenomenon. On the one hand, most scholars in China and abroad have acknowledged that Lin Shu, as one of the most important translators in China, occupies a most prominent position in the history of Chinese translation and that his literary translations are the most influential in modern China. It is also widely acknowledged that Lin Shu's literary translations are unsurpassed in terms of output and impact; no other Chinese translator can match him. On the other hand, it is difficult to find a considerable critique that can clarify why Lin Shu's translations enjoy such a prominent position in China's history of translation and why they had such a huge impact on modern Chinese culture and literature. It seems that nearly all critics are merely concerned with linguistic analysis and subjective judgement in Lin's translated texts while they neglect the other side of Lin's translations, i.e., their enormous cultural significance and influence.

As stated, because Lin Shu knew no foreign language, he adopted a rather unique approach to translation. It can be argued that Lin Shu preferred a reader's reception-oriented, target-culture oriented approach to a method that gives priority to the source text and stresses linguistic equivalence between the source and target texts. He preferred free translation to literal translation. Therefore, a narrow linguistic analysis and judgement is insufficient to discern and give adequate recognition to Lin Shu's achievements in translation, or to locate his place in the history of China's translation and of the cultural transformation in China's modernity. For this reason, we will examine Lin's translations from the perspective of the target culture and reception, adopting this relevant approach. First, it contributes to a more appropriate judgement and evaluation of Lin Shu and his translations. Second, it presents a significant translation case study to illustrate contemporary translation theory.

This paper investigates Lin Shu's choice and response to original works in the cultural context of China, and this may help us to understand the significance and contributions of Lin Shu's translations to the modern Chinese culture in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In translation, Lin Shu chose and responded to the source texts with a view to the target culture, taking similarities between the source and target texts in subject matter, content and style into consideration.

### **Lin Shu's role in choosing the original**

One of the most noticeable features in those translations is Lin Shu's choice and response to the originals, which was closely linked to the cultural context of early modern China. Gideon Toury believes that translation is designed to fulfill the needs of the target culture by introducing into that culture a version of something existing in a source culture, which, for one reason or another, is deemed worthy of introduction into the target culture (Toury 1955: 166). Toury's argument may be used partly to explain the reasons for Lin Shu's success and influence in translation. To some extent, the popularity of Lin Shu's translations reveals the need of Chinese culture (as a recipient culture) and the cultural interests and expectations of the Chinese reading public. As a matter of fact, in the process of choosing and responding to the originals, Lin Shu acted as both a reader and a translator/writer. As a reader, his interests and expectations would be the same as most Chinese readers, and as a translator/writer, he intuitively knew what the target culture needed and what interested the public. Therefore, he wrote a lot of prefaces or postscripts for his translations to express his translation intentions and his feelings about the source texts. Through reviewing his writings and inspecting his response to the original, we can detect the relations between Lin Shu's translations and his trans-cultural context.

What role did Lin Shu play as to the choice of the original? It is an arguable question. How did Lin Shu's preference influence his choice of the originals? It is generally thought that the choice of the originals was entirely dominated by his collaborators, owing to Lin Shu's ignorance of foreign languages. Zheng Zhenduo thought that because Lin Shu did not understand any foreign language, the selection of original works was completely in the hands of the oral collaborators with whom he worked. Zheng described Lin Shu and his collaborators' choice of source texts: "Those oral interpreters just picked a book at random and then read it. They felt it a good story, and orally relayed it to Lin Shu, and then Lin Shu wrote it down" (Zheng 1970: 1225). According to Zheng, a Chinese literary writer and critic, Lin Shu played an entirely passive role in the process of choosing the originals. This may be an unreasonable assumption. Compton's view seems more reasonable. He believed that as far as selection of works to be translated is concerned, "Lin could have had a role in spite of his ignorance of foreign languages." (Compton 1971: 189) His reasons are first that, Lin Shu had the option of translating or not

translating works brought to him; second, that Lin might have been inspired to translate more works by a particular author after his initial introduction to him; finally, in at least one case, Lin was inspired to translate a work after seeing an earlier version of the same novel. It is possible that the collaborators played a dominant role in collecting the originals, but Lin was unlikely to play a passive role in choosing among originals the collaborators had collected for translation. As Compton states, "Lin Shu had the option of translating or not translating works brought to him" (Compton, 1971:189-190). In view of his reputation for obstinacy and of his prestige, Lin probably persisted in his own consideration and judgement in choosing an original to be translated, and his consideration and judgement was perhaps respected by his collaborators, for most of them were Lin Shu's admirers or students. From Lin Shu's prefaces or postscripts, we can see his initiative in choosing the originals. The preface to his translation of *Joan Haste* shows that he was motivated in his choice to translate *Joan Haste* by his dissatisfaction with Pan Xizi's incomplete version (discussed later in this chapter). He would sometimes seek it on his own initiative to translate a foreign work according to his and readers' interests. In the preface to his translation of *Benita* by Haggard (*Gui yi jin ji*), Lin said that, after hearing from Yan Fu that theology was in vogue in the West and there was a book that vividly describes ghosts in detail, he wanted to find the book for translation (Zhu 1923:34). When he saw that his translations of several Dickens's works were well received by the readers, Lin Shu told the readers in his preface to *Xiaonü Naier zhuan* (*The Old Curiosity Shop*) that Dickens's works were too many to be translated. He asked the readers to wait patiently, and promised that he would continue to translate Dickens's works to refresh the readers (Zhu 1923: 6). These prefaces not only indicate that Lin Shu did not passively accept the originals brought to him by his collaborators, but also reveal his motives for choosing the originals.

## 2. In Search of Similarities

Why did Lin Shu's translations have such strong appeal to the Chinese readership? The reasons most probably relate to the subject matter, content and style of his translated works, which were readily identified and accepted by the Chinese readers. It may be seen from his prefaces and postscripts that the above-mentioned aspects, especially the subject matter of foreign works and their relations to the needs of the target culture or the reception by the Chinese audience was one of Lin Shu's main considerations. As Toury writes:

After all, as much as translation entails the retention of aspects of the source text, it also involves certain adjustments to the requirements of the target system, [... and the novelty of a translated work] derives from the target culture itself, and relates to what that culture is willing (or allowed) to accept vs. what it feels obliged to submit to modification or even totally reject (Toury, 1995:166).

Obviously, in Lin Shu's translations, some inherent factors in the source works were truthfully introduced in order to influence or change the Chinese culture while some modifications were also made in order to make the translation acceptable to the target readers. To do so, Lin Shu sought identical aspects between the ST and the TT. For instance, in the preface to *Xiaonü Naier zhuan* (*The Old Curiosity Shop*), Lin Shu identified something in common between Chinese literature and foreign literature in literary expression: despite the differences in subject matter, plot and characters, the various expressions of feeling in the work all belong to human nature, and therefore "it is an eternal truth, no matter who they are, the Chinese or foreigners, cannot overstep it" (Feng 1998: 185). In Lin's eyes, it was impossible to change this common feeling, in China or elsewhere. In the postscript to *Honghan nülang zhua* (*Colonel Quaritch, V.C.*, after comparison between Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* and Haggard's *Colonel Quaritch, V.C.*, Lin Shu stated: "There are foreshadowing lines in Haggard's works. The usage is the same as one in *Records of the Grand Historian*" (A 1960: 252).

In the preface to *Bingxue yinyuan* (*Dombey and Son*), Lin Shu believed that the plots of *Zuo Zhuan* (*Zuo Commentary*) and *Records of the Grand Historian* were conceived as ingeniously as Dickens's works (*Ibid*: 265). More concretely, Lin Shu made a comparative analysis of the literary techniques used in *Feizhou yanshui chou cheng lu* (*Allan Quatermain*) and Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian*, pointing out the similarities, wondering: "How alike is the Westerners' works to Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* in writing style" (*Ibid*: 216)! More important is that Lin Shu identified the themes or ideological content of the originals that concerned the Chinese readers at that time (discussed in the preceding paragraph). Lin Shu's efforts in search of the similarities between the ST and the TT contributed much to the Chinese readers' enthusiastic reception of Western literature.

Without question, there are similarities and differences between target and source cultures. Generally, the similarities are readily accepted by the target culture whereas the reception of the differences mostly depends on target readers' expectations. In China's period of transition from the traditional to the modern, the differences may attract more attention and be more favorably received by some readers, but they may also be rejected and opposed by conservative readers. Therefore, when Lin Shu chose the originals, the receptive conditions of the target culture were certainly taken into his account.

### **3. Literary Subject Matters**

Love is a predominant subject matter in Lin Shu's translated works. As Lin Shu stated, "the first reason why fiction can move readers is to depict the sentiment between men and women" (Zhu 1923: 36). In the West as in

China, love stories abound in literature. A new high tide of love stories sprang up in the early Republican period. It originated from the late Qing, and closely related to the translated novels of that time. This influx was initiated by Lin Shu's translation of *La Dame aux camélias*. In the Chinese readers' eyes, *La Dame aux camélias* was a love story. It fascinated the Chinese readers. Why was this Western love story so well received in China? What is the cultural basis for its reception?

In the Chinese society of the late Ming and the early Qing, Confucian ethical codes were highly emphasised. The conflict between love and a patriarchal society became more intense. However, the stories of 'talent meets beauty' of that period expressed the yearning for a true love rather than the constraints of the patriarchal society. These love stories were thus frequently romanticised, but the conflict between a young couple in free love and their parents was rarely seen. Lin Shu's choice and translation of *La Dame aux camélias* showed his courage and insight. *La Dame aux camélias* conveys the idea centring on individuality, which is antagonistic to a patriarchal clan system. The work speaks of true love, and attributes the reason for the lovers' tragedy to the father, for he interferes in their love to uphold the reputation of the family. At that time, Song Cen, a Chinese critic, made a comparison between *La Dame aux camélias* and *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, calling the former "a foreign *The Dream of the Red Chamber*" (Song 1905: 43). In fact, as for as ideas are concerned, *La Dame aux camélias* goes a step further in comparison to *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. The latter depicts the love between a young man and a young girl who are well-matched in social and economic status, whereas in the former, Armand falls in love with a courtesan. In the eyes of Armand's father, it is a disgrace to the reputation of his family, so he strangles their love while Marguerite displays her noble character through her self-sacrifice, setting off the baseness, imperiousness and cruelty of Armand's father. Lin Shu deleted and changed some dialogues that were contrary to orthodox Chinese ideas, but basically, he truthfully rendered the novel. Therefore, Western humanist spirit of the original attacked the ideas of the patriarchal clan system existing in Chinese society of the time. This attack coincided with the needs of the generation of reformist intellectuals.

Lin Shu's translation of Haggard's *Joan Haste* brought a stronger shock to the traditional Chinese idea of 'filial obedience.' The rulers of the Qing dynasty advocated governing the nation with filial piety. But in *Joan Haste*, the male protagonist Henry openly goes against his father's will, and is not ready to accept an arranged marriage, while Joan also openly reprimands her father for abandoning her. The lovers, who are not in accordance with filial obedience and have an illegitimate child, are commended as positive characters in the novel. They get married for the sake of love instead of fame, wealth and social position, and are more noble-minded, pure and sincere than all the people around them. Joan criticises her father's wrongdoing in abandoning her, exhibiting her moral

integrity through her spirit of self-sacrifice. Lin Shu's version of *Joan Haste* had strong repercussions among the Chinese public at that time. In *Joan Haste*, Joan is pregnant before her marriage. It was due to this episode in his complete version that Lin Shu was criticised by conservative scholars fifty years ago. Prior to Lin Shu's translation, there had been another version of *Joan Haste* by Pan Xizi, but the translator only translated the first half of the novel, omitting the depiction of Joan Haste's passionate love for Henry, her pregnancy and her illegitimate child in order to preserve Joan's virginity. Lin Shu deemed it regrettable, thus producing a complete version of the novel. (Lin 1981: 1) Yin Bansheng, a conservative Chinese scholar, after reading the two versions, believed that Pan Xizi deliberately made omissions in the original in order to convey Joan's moral integrity while Lin Shu truthfully rendered the whole work in order to convey her licentiousness and degradedness. (A 1960: 285-287) Even reformists felt it difficult to accept the ideas in Lin Shu's version. For example, Jin Tianhe, a vigorous advocator of feminism, attacked Lin Shu, "instigates men to visit prostitutes and violate the will of their fathers as Armand does while instigating women to have a premarital pregnancy and break their virginity as Joan Haste does." (Song 1905: 46) He worried that the courtesy of holding and kissing a lady's hand would be in vogue in China. China would rather follow the ancestors' teachings, and strictly enforce autocracy in order to control relations between men and women (*Ibid*). In addition, Zhong Junwen, another reformist, criticised Lin Shu: "Where Pan Xizi tried to cover up for Joan, Lin Shu always tried to make up for to display her ugliness. How disgraceful it is" (Yan 1907)! These attacks came from the reformists who advocated translating and learning from foreign novels rather than the diehards who cherished conservative ideas at that time. It shows how great shock these translated novels of Lin Shu brought to Chinese culture.

As a young man, Lin Shu was called an unconstrained scholar. He satirised some sanctimonious Chinese scholars: "It looks as if they were superficially refined, courteous and urbane, yet privately harboured beautiful women in mind, and did not dare to take action" (Lin 1906: 2), which perhaps partly explains why Lin Shu could accept and had the courage to translate love stories like *La Dame aux camélias* and *Joan Haste*. In fact, to suit the Chinese readers, Lin Shu often made deletions and changes. For instance, the depiction of the lovers' lovemaking in *Joan Haste* was omitted in his translated work so that the readers more or less feel could deduce that the appearance of Joan's child is too unexpected. This seems to indicate that Lin Shu gave consideration to the acceptability of translation among the target culture and readers. However, these translated works of Lin Shu provided a new cultural idea: as long as it is a true love, in spite of going against the current moral principles, it should be affirmed and commended. The significance of this new idea lies was that it not only carried forward the tradition of yearning for a true love in Chinese literature but also conferred a new meaning to Chinese love

stories. It spurred the Chinese writers of love stories, not only to inherit the tradition of romantic literature, but also to have an eye to reality give weight to the veracity of facts, exposing the conflicts and contradictions between love and reality. Individuality was highlighted. Anyway, In the period of the transition from the traditional to the modern, there existed rivalry between new and old cultures as well as new and old ideas. Undoubtedly, the translations of Lin Shu met the requirements of the modern Chinese culture and modern Chinese reading public, despite the fact that they were resisted by traditional culture. It indicates that Lin Shu's translated works actually changed the Chinese readers' cultural and moral concepts: the readers could accept a woman who falls in love with a married man if she cherishes a true love for him; they could also accept a woman who is pregnant before marriage provided she has a noble mind. In other words, the readers began to be more concerned with a woman's feelings and spirit than with her behaviour, which greatly contributed to the women's emancipation in the May 4<sup>th</sup> New Culture movement.

As far as the reception of the original is concerned, Lin Shu actually assumed two roles simultaneously, as a reader and as a translator. As argued by Andre Lefevere, literary translation is rewriting. As a reader/translator, Lin Shu, in his own way, applied his knowledge and brought his experience of life into play so as to throw himself into the process of the rewriting. According to Lin Shu's *A Brief Autobiography of Leng Hongsheng*, a beautiful and talented prostitute named Zhuang, charmed by his cultured manner and nice character, fell in love with him, and wanted to meet with him, yet Lin Shu declined her request. His neighbours laughed at him and believed that he was an eccentric. Lin Shu sighed:

I am not a man who is hostile to love, but I am a parochial man who is apt to be jealous. In case I love a woman, I will never change my mind until death. If it is really true, people may not understand this then; therefore I would rather refrain early from this relation... I like writing books; my translation of *La Dame aux Camélias* is particularly full of mournfulness and affection. I often laugh and say when reading it. Now that I have such a description in my translation, can it be said that a wooden and stubborn man like me is hostile to love (Feng 1998:171)?

Perhaps, it is with Armand's ardent feeling for Marguerite that Lin Shu identified his own affection, which might be one of the reasons for his acceptance of the original. According to Gao Mengdan, one of Lin Shu's friends, when Lin Shu was 46, his wife Liu Qiong died of an illness. Lin Shu cherished a deep love for her and he grieved. When Wang Shouchang returned from Paris with A. Dumas fils's novel *La Dame aux Camélias*, and invited him to translate this novel, he agreed immediately, as the sentimental tone of the work coincided with his state of mind at that time. In the process of translating this novel, Lin Shu expressed all his feelings. When translating the most sorrowful episodes, he and his collaborator

wailed together face to face. In *A Critical View on Translation*, Zhou Yi and Luo Ping point out, "Among all Lin Shu's translated works, the successful and well-received ones to a certain extent indicate the identification of the sentimental tone of the originals to Lin Shu's life situations and experiences, and that the translator poured his feelings into his translations" (Zhou and Luo, 1999: 127). It seems that Lin Shu's personal experiences of life and feeling influenced his acceptance of the original.

Similarly, Lin Shu's prefaces and postscripts to his translated works also clearly manifest his translation intentions. Among them, the most important is to save the nation from subjugation and ensure its survival. It was imperative for the political, social and national culture of China at that time. In agreement with Liao Qichao's advocacy of political fiction, Lin Shu also paid attention to the social function of fiction, translating several political novels. Emphasising the importance of this function, Joseph Blotner stated:

As an art form and an analytical instrument, the political novel, now as ever before, offers the reader a means for understanding important aspects of the complex society in which he lives, as well as a record of how it evolves (Blotner 1955:1).

Lin's translation of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel against slavery, was widely read in China. Indeed, it won popularity and success in stirring up the public feeling against slavery in the United States and American anxiety for the destiny of the US nation. Stowe wrote this novel during the Civil War in order to liberate the black slaves in the south of USA. In her preface; Stowe declared:

The object of these sketches is to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us; to show their wrongs and sorrows, under a system so necessarily cruel and unjust as to defeat and do away with the good effects of all that can be attempted for them (Stowe 1852).

The book did more than awaken sympathy, arousing anti-slavery sentiment in the north, creating in part the political climate from which the Civil War grew. Thereupon, Blotner believed, "*Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a prime example of the novel as political instrument both in intent and effect" (Blotner 1955: 10). But the effects of the novel were beyond America, and reached China. When Lin Shu translated this novel, Chinese labourers were being abused in USA. The Chinese readers read this novel and associated it with the precarious situation of the Chinese nation, thus causing a sensation throughout China. In the postscript to his translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Lin Shu clearly stated his motives: to contribute to bestirring the Chinese readers and saving the nation from subjugation to ensure its survival.

From French writer G. Bruno's *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, Lin Shu saw the reasons for developing industry to save the nation. He made this clear in the preface:

Alas! Should we defend our country by troops? Yet the picked troops are not auspicious. Should we promote diplomacy by diplomatic language? Yet the national strength is so weak that it would be of no avail even if there were Zichan and Duanmuci's diplomatic language. And the writings related to etiquette, moral integrity and righteousness existing in name only are not enough to empower the country. What can the country be empowered by? In my opinion, by knowledge, by students, by students who have lofty aspirations, especially by all the students who are experts in industry (Feng 1998: 181-182).

It is evident that Lin Shu had the target culture and readers in mind. As a reader he knew what the target culture needed as well as what the target readers needed to know. As a translator, he aimed at introducing new ideas and factors that had not existed or been seldom found in Chinese culture to facilitate modernisation. For example, in Haggard's *Beatrice*, Lin Shu recognised the issue of women's rights. In the novel, without tolerating his wife's arrogance and imperiousness toward him, the male protagonist falls in love with a gifted lady. They deeply love each other, but not in a promiscuous manner until the lady's death. For this reason, in the preface, Lin Shu said:

Alas! Freedom of marriage is a policy of benevolence. If it can be achieved, women will no longer sigh for their withered marriages throughout their life. [...] To promote women's rights we need to initiate girls' schools. The affairs that exceed what is proper happen occasionally, but from the viewpoint of saving the nation, we should have an eye to great events. If someone merely seizes on some trifles, and regards them as malpractices of political reforms, and thus tries to suffocate the principles of being civilized, he is ignorant of political reforms. I am afraid that if this book is published, everyone will censure it because of its licentious Western customs and habits, and thereby will hold back the promotion of girls schools, still standing by the following principle: a woman without ability is really a woman of virtue. This is not my long-cherished wish (Feng 1998: 180-181).

Women's rights were a critical issue in Chinese culture in the transitional period. The reason for Lin Shu's acceptance and translation of the original *Beatrice* was to make readers aware of women's rights. Certainly, Lin Shu's efforts in this respect preceded the May Fourth New Culture Movement. Chinese culture in the transitional period from traditional to modern showed two opposite inclinations: pioneering and conservative. When Lin Shu introduced pioneering ideas into the culture by translation, these ideas were more or less restricted by the conservative factors in the culture so that Lin Shu had to make some alterations of the original in order to make it acceptable to the culture. Yet at the same time, Lin Shu imported new concepts and ideas, which challenged conservative or negative aspects of the Chinese culture, thus bringing changes to society.

Apart from the love story and political fiction, Lin Shu translated other types of fiction such as historical novels, adventure novels, detective novels and others. No matter what type of fiction he worked on, Lin Shu always expected that his translations could play a social role in the target culture, influencing and changing it. As a translator, Lin Shu had a strong

sense of cultural mission: he expected to change the existing culture by translation. His target-culture-oriented translations were decided by the political, social, cultural and personal conditions of that time. As Toury argues:

After all, translations always come into being within a certain cultural environment and are designed to meet certain needs of, and/ or occupy certain 'slots' in it. Consequently, translators may be said to operate first and foremost in the interest of the culture into which they are translating, however they conceive of that interest. In fact the extent to which features of a source text are retained in its translation, which, at first sight, seems to suggest an operation in the interest of the source culture, or even of the source text as such, is also determined on the target side, and according to its own concerns: features are retained, and reconstructed in target-language material, not because they are 'important' in any *inherent* sense, but because they are assigned importance, from the recipient vantage point (Toury 1995: 12).

Among the realistic novels translated by Lin Shu, the most conspicuous are Charles Dickens's. In a humorous and satirical style, Dickens depicted the characters living in the lower strata of English society, thus turning people's attention to social reform. Lin Shu reproduced Dickens's narrative style. The orphan David's ups and downs in life (*David Copperfield*), the corrupt orphan asylum, which actually became a place for training thieves (*Oliver Twist*), the Dombey's family matters reflecting the change of England after the railways were built (*Dombey and Son*), the scene in which Nell dies in a desolate house (*The Old Curiosity Shop*), the conditions of village schools (*Nicholas Nickeby*) and so on were presented before the Chinese readers through Lin Shu's writings. In Lin Shu's time, there appeared several works of 'Reprimanding Fiction' with a realistic style, such as Li Boyuan's *The Bureaucrats: a revelation*, Wu Jianren's *Strange Events Witnessed in the Last Twenty Years*, and Zeng Pu's *Flowers in the Sinful Sea (Nie hai hua)*, but none of them gave so lively a portrayal of the real life of ordinary people as Dickens did in his novels. Lin Shu endorsed Liang Qichao's views on the political and social functions of fiction. He thought that "Dickens took pains to select some long-standing defects of society present among the lower classes and dramatize them in novels, so that his government would find out them and put them right" (Denton 1996: 82). He regretted that there were no writers like Dickens in China. Therefore, one of his motives for translating this novel was to let the Chinese readers/writers follow the example of Dickens to reflect the abuses of the society, and attract the rulers' attention to them. In his preface to *Kuairou yusheng shu (David Copperfield)*, he clearly stated his motive for translating Dickens's novels:

Dickens's *David Copperfield* depicts lower-class society in various ways. [...] The malpractices among the common folk during the time when England was half-civilized are clearly exposed to the readers' eyes. When reading this novel, we Chinese should realize that society could be improved if a system of education is rigorously instituted. There is no need for us to be so enamoured with the West as to assume that all Europeans seem to be endowed with a sense of propriety and a

potential for talent, and are superior to Asians. If readers of my translate on reach a similar conclusion, I will not have translated this novel in vain (Denton, 1996:86).

The introduction to Western realism through Dickens and Tolstoy's works in China inspired more modern Chinese writers to be engaged in realistic writing. Lin Shu's translations such as *She nüshi zhuan* (*Beyond the City* by Conan Doyle) in 1908, *Huixing duoxu an* (*Gambling the Son-in-law in Comet*) in 1909, *Zhenfen yiyuan* (*A MP Manipulated by His Wife*) in 1909, *Tian qiu chanhui lu* (*God's Prisoner* by John Oxenham) in 1908, *Yu yan jue wei* (*Lettres persanes* by Montesquieu) in 1915 and *Xianshen shuofa* (*Childhood, Boyhood and Youth* by L.N.Tolstoy) in 1918 also drew on social reality. *Huixing Duoxu Lu* (*Gambling the Son-in-law in Comet*) exposed an ugly social phenomenon in London. In the preface to the translated novel, Lin Shu stated, "Why has someone called it a filthy novel? We may take this book as a warning" (Zhu 1923: 12). Dickens's *Oliver Twist* is also a realistic novel. It exposes the ugliness in the lower society. In the preface, Lin Shu believed that the reason for the power of Britain was that it could reform and mend its ways by referring to the social maladies exposed in the works of the novelists such as Dickens. If there were such novelists like Dickens in China, it would be of much help in improving the Chinese social reality (Zhu 1923: 12).

#### 4. Literary Genres

To meet the requirements of the development of Chinese fiction and the Chinese reading public, as well as to expand the influence and function of fiction in Chinese society, Lin Shu also translated other types of fiction, including both popular genres such as adventure stories, detective stories and ghost stories, and serious fiction such as the historical novel and the military novel. Snyder said that "novels can be read in two ways: for pleasure and for profit" (Snyder 1955: v). In fact, Lin Shu's translations of foreign fiction of all types, popular fiction in particular, all combined pleasure with awareness that the content may reveal aspects of political and social life.

Lin Shu's translations of detective fiction include A. Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, M.M.Dodkin's *The Quest of Paul Beck*, E.P. Oppenheim's *The Secret*, and Arthur Morrison's *Martin Hewitt*. Along with other translators, Lin Shu brought about the popularity of detective fiction in China. In "On the Chinese Translations of English Detective Novels during the Period of the Late Qing and the Early Republic," Kong Huiyi analyses the reasons for the popularity of detective fiction. She points out that on the one hand, the popularity of detective fiction in China was actually inseparable from the fact that detective fiction was very popular in all parts of the world, and for the intellectuals in the West, detective fiction was a literature of amusement; on the other hand, detective fiction, in both content and form, struck the Chinese readers as new, 'the new science and technology frequently mentioned in the detective novels—train, underground,

telegram and so on—all were the things the Chinese people of the 19<sup>th</sup> century admired” (Wang 2000: 93). Therefore, if the objective of translating foreign novels is to fill gaps in the target culture, this type of fiction naturally attracted the Chinese readers who were assimilating foreign knowledge with great eagerness. Moreover, the logical ways in the Western detective works are similar to the Chinese ‘Fiction of Detection’ (Gong’an xiaoshuo). Yet in general, the Western detective novel is more subtle and meticulous, and the case is more complex, and so more attractive to the Chinese readers.

Lin Shu’s consideration for translating Western detective stories might differ a little from other genres. In the preface to his translation of Arthur Morrison’s *Chronicles of Martin Hewitt* (*Shen shu gui cang lu*), Lin Shu mentioned the importance of detectives to the Western judicial process and emphasised the necessity of introducing Western detectives into China. He argued that “China’s judicial system was far inferior to the West” (Zhu 1923: 47). The main problem was that “no lawyers pleaded for the accused and no detectives looked into the case of the accused,” which led to a number of wrong cases. In his view, “if Western detective stories could be popular in China, it would force the courts to improve the judicial systems and give lawyers and detectives power of decision over a case.” (Zhu, 1923: 47). In addition, he argued that setting up “law schools to train men as qualified lawyers and detectives” would gradually establish a fairer judicial system. If this were true, “the detective stories would have a great achievement to their credit” (Zhu, 1923: 47). This seems to show that Lin Shu had interests beyond the detective story itself in Conan Doyle’s works. He translated Doyle’s seven works of fiction, but only one among them is really a detective story. The others barely relate to detective activities. For instance, *Beyond the City* focuses on women’s emancipation, *Uncle Bernac* is seen as an unauthorised biography of Napoleon, and *The White Company* is a historical novel. In fact, if we carefully examine Lin Shu’s choice of subject matters, it is not hard to see his likings: it is commonly acknowledged that, as far as the process of detecting a case is concerned, Conan Doyle’s short stories are far better than his novels. But Lin Shu translated his novel *A Study in Scarlet*, and half of the story is irrelevant to the process of detecting the case. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Conan Doyle incorporates a detective story with an adventure story. It is the latter that attracted Lin Shu. Lin Shu’s other translations of Conan Doyle’s works are adventure fiction or historical fiction. It explains that Lin Shu had definite social purposes in choosing or accepting the original.

Lin Shu’s introduction of Western adventure fiction filled in the gaps in available Chinese fiction. Among Lin Shu’s translated works of adventure, *Lubinxun piaoliu ji* (*Robinson Crusoe* by Defoe) was the most popular. Defoe, employing a first-person narrator, created a realistic frame for this novel, the story of a man shipwrecked alone on an island. The account of a shipwrecked sailor conveys both the human need for society and the

equally powerful impulse for solitude. But it also offered a dream of building a private kingdom, a completely self-made, self-sufficient Utopia. This theme with large mythical implications has fascinated generations of Western readers. Similarly, after rendered by Lin Shu into Chinese, this story has also fascinated generations of the Chinese readers. What in the hero of the novel held such an appeal to Lin Shu that he decided to translate the work? In his preface to *Lubinxun piaoliu ji (Robinson Crusoe)*, he gave a clear explanation: traditional Chinese culture emphasises the doctrine of the golden mean of Confucianism, and sets it up as a doctrine that a man should adhere to in his whole life. This might have made the Chinese people lack a pioneering and adventurous spirit. Lin Shu attempted to change this by introducing Robinson Crusoe, a hero of adventure. In the preface, he argued:

The English man Robinson, because he is not willing to accept the golden mean as a doctrine for his conduct, travels overseas alone by boat. As a result, he is wrecked in a storm, and was caught in a hopeless situation on a desert island. There he walks and sits alone, lives like a primitive man. He does not go back to his native country until twenty years later. From ancient times to the present, no book has recorded this incident. His father originally wished for him to behave according to the doctrine of the golden mean, but Robinson goes against his will, and in consequence, becomes an outstanding pioneers. Thereupon, adventurous people in the world, who are nearly devoured by sharks and crocodiles, are all inspired by Robinson (Lin, 1934:1).

Apparently, Lin Shu hoped that his compatriots could, through reading his translation, be inspired by the pioneering and adventurous spirit from the hero Robinson to revitalise the Chinese nation. In addition, Lin Shu also translated other adventure fictions such as J.D. Wyss's *Der schweizerische Robinson*, Haggard's *Allan Quatermain*, *The People of the Mist* and *King Solomon's Mines*.

## 5. Literary Style and Technique

Andre Lefevere asserts that translation is rewriting of an original text, and that rewriting can influence a target culture (Lefevere 1992: xi). In his choice and acceptance of the source text, proceeding from his consideration for the needs of the target culture, while importing new ideas thanks to translation, Lin Shu introduced new literary concepts, styles, forms and techniques, which gave rise to a great change in the Chinese readers' understanding of foreign literature. He therefore promoted the development of Chinese literary writing and the transition of Chinese literature from traditional to modern.

In the prefaces and postscripts, Lin Shu frequently made comparative comments on similarities and differences between the originals and classical Chinese literary works. He sought similarities between both in order that readers would not reject his translated works on the basis of differences. He also demonstrated differences between both in order that

the readers could realise the significance of these differences in terms of the development of Chinese culture or literature.

Charles Dickens is the novelist whom he had the greatest esteem for. In his preface to *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Lin Shu made a comparison between *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *The Dream of the Red Chamber*:

Among Chinese novels, the best is *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. The author narrates the riches and honours on earth, sighing with emotion on the ups and downs of human feelings, and the description is deliberate and gorgeous and the composition is well-knitted, all of which are acclaimed as the acme of perfection. Moreover, the work is spiced with idlers, countrywomen, villains, and ends with wastrels; therefore the author is regarded to be good at description. There is more refined taste than popular taste in this novel after all, yet not all the readers are interested in refined taste. Dickens's works dismissed the pattern of celebrities and beautiful ladies, especially describing evil, deceit and cruelty in the lower classes of society. The ending, unexpectedly, like castles in the air, makes the audiences laugh or cry, as they become too excited to control themselves, from which it can be clearly seen that the author's conception of the novel is circumspect and farsighted (Feng 1998: 186).

Viewing the differences between the two famous works, Lin Shu affirmed the great artistry of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and the profound realistic spirit of Dickens's novels. He concludes that this realistic spirit is insufficient in traditional Chinese literature. In the preface to his translation of *David Copperfield* (*Kuai rou yusheng shu*), Lin Shu also compared Dickens's *David Copperfield* with *Water Margin*, another classical Chinese novel. He discussed the similarities and differences between these two novels in the depiction of characters and structure. They both "briefly depicting several dozen men, each of them appearing in an orderly fashion with individual characteristics." The differences are: in *David Copperfield*, "searching backward section by section for it, they will find that there has indeed been an account of this character or a source for the episode," but in *Water Margin*, "when the author finally reaches the latter part of his novel, the characters pour out into the scene like a pack of coyotes, no longer distinguishable from one another," "his spirit has failed to endure long enough to penetrate the entire novel" (Denton, 1966:85). Lin Shu's comments are not without reason. Traditional Chinese novels have their own developmental context and course. Most traditional Chinese novels have an interesting plot, but pay little attention to the compactness of structure, as originally the story is not written on paper for reading but told to an audience. It does mean that the Chinese novel has a different structure, and actually reflects the features of oral literature. Therefore, Lin Shu came to a conclusion: literature must pay attention to structure, one of the main differences between Chinese and Western literature. It is Lin Shu's intention to introduce the strong points of the source literature to counteract the weaknesses of Chinese literature.

Lin Shu also translated historical novels, among which Scott and A. Dumas pre's works were especially well known. Scott's works drew their materials from the Crusades. Scott's *Ivanhoe* is Lin Shu's favourite work. It is one of the first to attempt to deal with the Middle Ages in a historically accurate manner. The author's artistic talent in this novel made a strong impression on Lin Shu. As a reader and a translator, Lin Shu readily admired this work. Wolfgang Iser says that "the study of a literary work should concern not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to the text" (Iser 1978: 20-21). Lin Shu's translation of *Ivanhoe* is an appropriate case in this respect. The process of Lin Shu's translation is actually also one of reading and interpretation according to his personal experience and feeling. His translated work is the outcome of his responding to the original text as well as the extension of his reading of the source text. Lin Shu's reading and interpretation were clearly reflected in his preface to *Ivanhoe*. In this preface, Lin Shu first placed Scott and the great Chinese writers Sima Qian and Ban Gu on a par, drawing an analogy between Scott and classical Chinese writers in the composition of a novel. In fact, Lin Shu brought the reading of *Ivanhoe* into the context of the target culture. In the preface, in comparison with Chinese literature, Lin Shu summarises eight strong points of the novel in literary expressions such as structure, characterisation, language, theme and style, which actually embody Lin Shu's own cultural reading and interpretation of the original text. Lin Shu made a brief comparison between Ban Gu's *History of the Former Han Dynasty: A Story of the Oriental Manqian* (*Han shu: dongfang manqian zhuan*) and *Ivanhoe*, believing that Scott's literary descriptions were as brilliant as Ban Gu's. As Lin Shu notes:

In the eyes of a conservative person like me, there is certainly no humour in Western literature; but when describing the clown Wamba, Scott could fully express humour with just a few words, which consequently sets the reader roaring with laughter. His literary talent is not inferior to Ban's (Lin 1914: 2).

Lin Shu also remarked in the preface that

Europeans had discriminated against the Jews for a long time, and tried to make them lose their family fortune; even dogs and lackeys also insulted them. Europeans were not sympathetic towards their suffering; on the contrary, they held that it was a self-evident truth and the will of Heaven. But whenever the country needed, money was often borrowed from them. The Jews living in Europe were always alert to the insecurity (Lin 1914: 2).

He added:

The Jew only knew his own home, but didn't know his country, taking his life with gold, and until his death he did not know what the country was. If the people of yellow race really read this novel, it must be sufficient to cause their alertness (Lin 1914: 2).

Here Lin Shu related the fate of the Jew to the possible fate of the Chinese as a warning. This may have been his feeling after reading the novel. Lin Shu's translation of *Ivanhoe* won the acclaim of Mao Dun and other famous Chinese scholars. His preface seemed to demonstrate his belief that his translated books did not only attract the Chinese readers but also arouse their patriotic feeling.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I argue that Lin Shu's choice and acceptance of the originals are far from being passive and to some extent reflect his own preference and judgement. The prefaces and postscripts of his translated works evidently convey both his translation intention and orientation to the target culture. The subject matters, genres and styles of the originals were taken into consideration in his translations. More significantly, Lin Shu's comments in his prefaces and postscripts also involve cross-cultural and comparative literary criticism. He also recognised the source culture in a perspective of target culture, attempting to put the source culture in the garb of the target culture. He exposed similarities between both to make them readily accepted by the target readers as well as highlighted differences to import new ideological and artistic factors into the target culture and make the target culture evolve. If seen in this new light, Lin Shu can be regarded as a most unique and successful translator, and the impact of his translations on Chinese intellectuals and on China in transition from feudalism to modernity cannot be underestimated.

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