

A Brief Analysis on the Two Chinese Versions of *Pride and Prejudice* from the Perspective of Ideology

Feng Zhang

English Department, Luohe Medical College

No.148 DaXue Road, Luohe 462002, China

E-mail: fancy031484@163.com

Abstract

Pride and Prejudice, owing to its romantic and superb language, enjoys a great audience and has at least five Chinese versions in circulation. Among them are two versions which are translated by the most authoritative translators published in China: the version translated by Wang Keyi and the version translated by Sun Zhili. The former got its first edition in 1956 while the latter was first published in the year of 1994. In terms of the ideology, the different features of the versions are shown. Ideology, the “invisible hand” manipulating translation practice, has certain influence to the two Chinese versions. This thesis tries to analyze the influence of ideology in and out of the text to the versions of *Pride and Prejudice*, which will lead to a new way for the translation criticism in the future.

Keywords: Ideology, Translation criticism, Literary translation

1. Introduction

Translation is not undergone in a vacuum. Translation, as all the humanities, is manipulated by many factors, such as, language, culture and etc. Among these factors, ideology also can not be neglected, which has great influence on the translation, especially the literary translation. It is known that the traditional translation theories only make judgments on the faithfulness and unfaithfulness, considering that translation is like women: those which are beautiful can not be faithful while those faithful can not be beautiful. This kind of understanding has great ideological color because at that time man had the sovereign power. Until in the 1980s, the translators paid more and more attention to the ideology, which has great pressure on the translation practices, especially the literary translation.

Pride and Prejudice written by Jane Austin has great popularity in China. In the 1950s, although the ideology of the time is not suitable for the translation of her works *Pride and Prejudice*, the version translated by Wang Keyi was also published in China and got its fame. Then in the 1990s, Sun Zhili retranslated it, after that many versions have got published. Up to now, the version of high position is the Sun Zhili's.

2. Ideology

As to the ideology, we should first have a general idea of its origins and definition, which is rather important to the study. Then the relation of ideology and translation and the relation of ideology and translation criticism are also needed to make research on. In this part, I will focus on those problems, which is the basis for the later illustration.

2.1 Origin and definition of ideology

Ideology, which was originated from idea and logos, has the meaning of the study of idea. It is a concept proposed by Destutt de Tracy in the late 18th century and was first considered as the principal part of world view and philosophical thoughts, which is the positive usage of ideology. However, there are other scholars who thought that ideology was a kind of false consciousness, was a group of value judgments of the mutual relations, which were used to guide the social and political action, yet, not to get reasonable checkout. This kind of ideology is negative.

From Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, the definition of ideology goes like this: (1) a systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture; (2) a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture (3) the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a sociopolitical program (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ideology>).

In this paper, the usage of the concept of ideology will be in its broad sense, and the author will also be take the pro side and con side of its meaning of ideology into consideration. In other words, the paper not only represents the political connotations of its narrow meaning, but also includes the original meaning of idea.

2.2 Ideology and translation

Ideology is the products of certain society and culture. With the beginning of society and culture, human beings have produced ideology. Translation, as a trans-lingual and trans-cultural communicative action, has got the influence from ideology. We all know that translation involves the communication of two cultures, in other words, translation is a kind of trans-cultural communication. From the surface meaning, the word "communication" is a term that sounds pleasant to us people, for it has seemingly implied meaning of equality and friendliness. However, behind this kind of communication, there definitely exists the conflict of the two ideologies. Besides that translation, in essence, is to input the ideology of the alien culture into the native cultural ideology. When the translator introduces the concept that is embodied in the discourse of alien culture, into the native culture, he/she must make his/her own judgments to the view of value of the foreign culture and then to decide the strategies of the translation. In other words, when the translator is doing his translation, their purpose itself has certain inclination of ideology. After comparing between the readership of the TT and that of the ST, we can get the point that the existence of ideology produces one more agency of ideology, that is, the translator. Maybe there exist the corresponding languages between the SL and the TL, however, there does not absolutely have the corresponding ideology. Therefore, in translation, the conflicts of ideology between the SL and TT are inevitable, which is important for the translator to pay attention to.

2.3 Ideology and translation criticism

Translation criticism is the overall evaluation of translating process as well as the translated work itself in terms of quality and value assessment based on certain translation criteria.

According to Peter Newmark, translation criticism includes the following five parts: (1) a brief analysis of the SL text stressing its intention and its functional aspects; (2) the translator's interpretation of the SL text's purpose, his translation method and the translation's likely readership; (3) a selective but representative detailed comparison of the translation with the original; (4) an evaluation of the translation- (a) in the translator's terms, (b) in the critic's terms; (5) where appropriate, an assessment of the likely place of the translation in the target language culture or discipline (Newmark: 186). It is known that the literary creation has closely related to ideology. For the translator, the task is very arduous: on one hand, the translator must have a higher discretion and on the other hand have a higher judgment on the taste. The way the translator chooses the text and the artistic manner he/she reproduce the conflicts of the ideology in the text is the test to the translator. Besides that, the every word the translator chooses, every expression he/she uses and every proposition he/she translates all have great influence to the expressing of the connotation of ideology.

In this thesis, the criticism of ideology is a kind of internal criticism as well as external criticism. There are kinds of ideological factors in the text and all these ideological factors are hidden in the texts in the form of language. Hence, as for the critic, he/she must make full use of interpretation method to explore all the kinds of ideology hidden in the texts and also make judgments on the version. This thesis tries to analyze the expression of the ideology in and out of the text and value on the versions to show whether these versions reflect the ideology or not.

3. Analysis of the two Chinese versions of *Pride and Prejudice* from the perspective of ideology

3.1 Background of *Austen and Pride and Prejudice*

For most of Austin's adult life, Britain was at war with France and experiencing casualties on an unprecedented scale. Her brothers, Frank and Charles, served in the Royal Navy, in careers that brought not only wealth and honor, but also constant danger. It is evident from comments in Austen's surviving letters that she was far from ignorant of the international conflict; many readers have therefore pondered over the relative absence of reference to current affairs in her fiction. The question is particularly acute in *Pride and Prejudice*. The Industrial Revolution broke out first in England in the 18th century, which brought great changes to the material production and material living style. The social constructions thereby were rebuilt. The political and economic concepts of the modern bourgeoisie have begun to come into being. Beside that, the social and cultural forms have got significant changes, which not only reflect in the level of material and political ideology and all these social psychology has penetrated into the life of Royal people in the rural, which can be better illustrated in the dialogues between Mr. Darcy and Miss Elizabeth. All these social backgrounds in this novel is important for the translator to explore.

3.2 Background of the two translators

The time Wang Keyi translated *Pride and Prejudice* was after the establishment of the New China: the era full of conflicts between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Hence Wang's version took domestication as the dominant

strategy. And Sun Zhili retranslated it in the 1990s and therefore used foreignization as the main strategy. However, whether the ideology in the source text was translated well or not is the main task to deal with in the following part.

3.3 Examples of the ideology in *Pride and Prejudice*

(1) I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry. (Austin 2003: 144)

我还没有认识你一个月，就觉得像你这样一个人，哪怕天下男人都死光了，我也不愿意嫁给你。(王科一 2008 : 222)

我认识你还不到一个月的时候，就觉得哪怕我一辈子找不到男人，也休想让我嫁给你。(孙致礼 2007 : 179)

In this example, in Sun Zhili's point of view, the vulgar expression “天下男人都死光了”, uttered by Elizabeth in Wang Keyi's version not accord with the identity of the educated lady in the source text. Sun Zhili thought that this translation focuses more on its artistic features and pays less attention on the scientific feature.

Sun Zhili's criticism sounds reasonable, however, Sun Zhili seemingly not touch the core of the problem. The interpretation of Elizabeth by Wang Keyi is suitable for the dominant ideology of that time; we can find the evidence in the preface of the version made by Wang Keyi: Miss Elizabeth's challenge to Mr. Darcy absolutely shows the women's strong protest to the marital system, to the idea of status, etc of that time. It is also the cry of the women to call for the independence for their own personality and to struggle for the equal rights with the men. Here, Wang Keyi considered Elizabeth as the represent of the oppressed people. Hence it is natural for Wang Keyi to raise the tone of Elizabeth's condemnation to Mr. Darcy, the oppressor and to let Elizabeth be more like the incarnation of the justice. The whole version of Wang Keyi's is the result of the strategy of domestication: not only naturalize the Chinese literary tradition and language habits, but also naturalize the view of class struggle.

In the following two examples, although Sun Zhili avoids the “mistake” made by Wang Keyi, Sun also scolds Elizabeth as ruthlessly as possible and even worse.

(2) I have every reason in the world to think ill of you. No motive can excuse the unjust and ungenerous part you acted there. (Austin 2003: 142)

我有足够的理由对你怀着恶感。你对待那件事完全无情无义，不论你是出于什么动机，都叫人无可原谅。(王科一 2008 : 220)

我有充分的理由鄙视你。你在那件事上扮演了很不正当、很不光彩的角色，不管你动机如何，都是无可宽容的。(孙致礼 2007 : 177)

(3) Under what misinterpretation, can you here impose upon others? (Austin 2003: 143)

你又将怎样来颠倒是非、盗世欺名？(王科一 2008 : 221)

你又将如何颠倒黑白、欺骗世人？(孙致礼 2007 : 178)

In the expressions of “鄙视”、“很不正当、很不光彩”、and “颠倒黑白、欺骗世人” used by Sun Zhili, the tone of condemnation seems more severe than the tone in the source text, which we can explain that even the translator who is considered as the honest and “faithful” can also more or less get the influence from the ideology.

One of the translation critics in Hong Kong called Lin Yiliang made comments on the translator Wang Keyi like this: because of the restrictions on the thoughts of the local place, the translator made some modifications to his version and also produced some funny theories. Then Lin Yiliang made his own interpretation: any person who is careful enough can find that Mr. Darcy represents pride while Miss Elizabeth represents prejudice. The conflicts between the two persons are no more than the conflicts between their characteristics and these conflicts have nothing to do with the class and the feminism. However, the interpretations on the literary translation have always had some close relationships with the dominant ideology in the society of that time. Besides that, we can not decide which is true or which is false: the interpretation made by Lin Yiliang can not be said as not being correct while the interpretation made by Wang Keyi can not said to be wrong. In the literary criticism, there are many different interpretations and all these interpretations may influence its versions. Therefore, when we do research on the literary translation, we should not neglect the ideology behind the interpretation. In the literary criticism, we should also make consideration on the ideology in the internal and external scope.

4. Conclusion

The object of literary translation is an intangible word text as well as an artistic integrity with profound and uncertain meanings. Translated version of the literary work must be the same with the original in terms of literary functions and properties. Ideology, which also exists in the source text, should not also be neglected. Besides that, in the process of translation criticism, the task of the critic is to explore all the ideology hidden in the source text and to make judgments on the versions.

References

- Newmark, P. (2001). *A textbook of Translation*, Shang Hai: Shang Hai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Li, Wenge. (2004). *Researches on Western Translation Theories*. Bei Jing: China Social Sciences Press.
- Lv Jun, (2004). Ideology and Translation Criticism. *Foreign Language and Their Teaching*, 43-46.
- Sun, Yifeng. (2004). *Perspective Interpretation Culture—Literary Translation and Translation Theories*. Bei Jing: Tsinghua University Press.
- Wang Dongfeng, (2003). An Invisible Hand: Ideologica Manipulation in the Practice of Translation. *China Translation*, 24(5), 16-23.
- Wang, Hongyin, (2005). *On the Criticism of Literary Translation*. Shang Hai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Yang, Xiaorong. (2005). *Introduction to Translation Criticism*. Bei Jing: China Translation & Publishing Corporation.
- Zhang, Nanfeng. (2004). *Criticism on Chinese and Western Translation Studies*. Bei Jing: Tsinghua University Press.