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An Ideological Analysis of Shelley's Invocation to Misery in Different Chinese Translations

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Abstract. Shelley's Invocation to Misery, as a first-person perspective work early introduced into China, carries the poet's personal narrative and his restlessness of the times, with greatly Romantic aesthetics and Gothic artistic tension. Through the study of existing translations, different translation strategies can be found in various translations, whose translators lived in different periods of social transition in China. Among these translations, an image of the miserable bride summoned in the poem not only reflects the progress of women's consciousness in China, but also demonstrates a microcosm of the translator's background. Therefore, based on Lacan's L-schema to construct a biaxial relationship between the original text and the translated text, this paper regards interpretation research as the main body and psychoanalysis as the methodology, selecting four Chinese translations to analyze their ideology chronologically. In the analysis, this paper focuses on the first stanza of the poem, especially the adjectives and phrases in the variations therein. The results of the analysis indicate that ideology is manifested by "untranslated translation", and the translations at different times reflect the characteristics of these era to a certain extent.

Keywords: Shelley, translation, ideological analysis, psychoanalysis

1. Introduction

In the 1960s, with the rigidity of traditional structuralism and the rising left-wing movement, gender politics, discourse and power, and the efficacy of language were brought to the forefront of the mass public. The power discourse theory proposed by Foucault, the postmodern psychoanalytic doctrines of Lacan and the deconstructionism of Derrida all provided new directions for interpretation research. Based on Saussure's linguistics, Lacan stated that language comes before consciousness; thus, the subject of discourse is born in language, and consequently, language shapes difference and subjectivity, while grammar and rhetoric manifest ideology [1]. In other words, since ideology is constructed in language, the study of ideology in translation should not only focus on the contextual elements, but also examine how meaning is constructed in discourse, i.e., the translator should consider both the external and internal aspects of the text.

Poetry, as an ideal frontier where intellectuals of all times illustrate their ideologies, not only appeals to their ideal beliefs, but also captures their escaped unconscious. Shelley represents one of the Romantic poets in the 19th century, and most of his poems are highly idealistic, sublime and revolutionary. In his works, such as Ode to the West Wind and To a Skylark, have been widely

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known in China, nevertheless, few people pay attention to Invocation to Misery, which was translated into Chinese at the same time. As a work in the Romantic period, this poem presents a unique outlook on life and values that time with a Gothic Romantic aesthetic, and there are many connotations worth exploring. Consequently, the contemporary values and linguistic ideologies in different Chinese translations are precisely a medium for exploring their artistic and connotations.

As an exploratory study, this research attempts to use psychoanalysis for translation criticism and focuses on three core issues: first, the construction of meaning in the original text; second, the different translation strategies in different historical periods; and third, the influence of socio-historical contexts.

2. Research methodology

The interior of a human being is a community of the mirrored self and the others, which resonate with each other [2]. Like psychoanalysis, the activity of translation is also a process of resonance, which stems from the differences and connections between linguistic materials, meanings, cultures, and even different disciplines [3]. For this phenomenon, Lacan depicts it as the L-schema.

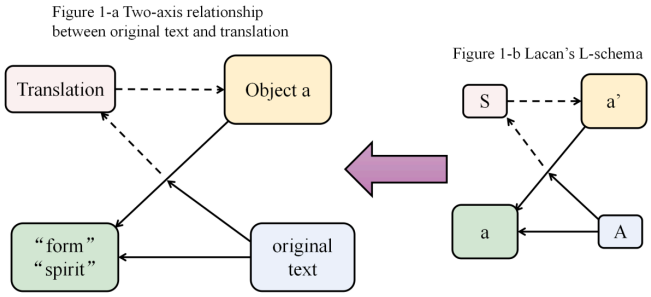


Figure 1. Lacan's L-schema and the biaxial relationship

As shown in Figure 1-a, L-schema is a criss-cross plan view consisting of the S-A axis representing the subject's S connected to the other A and the a'- a axis of the other a' and the self a. The S-A axis is the symbolic axis and the a'- a axis is the imaginary axis. As the linkage in the schema shows, the arrowhead extends from A to S, and becomes a dotted line after touching the imaginary axis, whereupon S, which is supposed to be what A is, is interfered with by the imaginary axis, and is divided by a. A is also incorporated into the mirror image, and is unconsciously drawn upon by a. Therefore, the a'-a axis is a state where the self is in the position of a, and the other is placed in a'. Through this activity, the subject ultimately "knows the self through a [2]."

Translation, as a movement of interpretation, is the transference or reproduction of a sign, and in this process constantly generates new meanings and connotations [4]. Observed from Figure 1-b, in practice, the translation can be regarded as the subject S, and the original text is in the position of the other A. a' then represents the possibility of the translation, whereas a stands for the entire linguistic materials such as grammar, rhetoric, and deixis, reflecting an actual state of the translation.

Thus, as the schema shows, some kind of metaphorical substitution that is incorporated into the signifying chain constructs the translated text. Consequently, the untranslatability of this metaphor and the receptivity of the translated text provide two ideas for the analysis of translation: firstly,

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returning to the original text from the linguistic materials of the translated text, so as to explore the symbols as the "hypotaxis" and "parataxis". That is to say, to explore the fundamental function of language materials in the construction of "form" and "spirit". Secondly, "translation without translating" can be adopted to avoid the ideological ambiguity. By using whitespace to introduce a unique expression effect, it can not only retain the possibility, but also develop a discourse, providing new possibilities to interpreting "translation without translating" [5].

3. Textual construction about Shelley

3.1. Creation background

In 1818-1819, British society was in turmoil and class conflicts were intense. On one hand, British workers, citizens and the bourgeoisie jointly launched a revolutionary movement demanding a more open government and democratic rights; on the other hand, the conservative Tory party defended the interests of the upper class by restricting assembly and speech through high-handed policies. Meanwhile, the outbreak of the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 further intensified the people's anger, which became the turning point of the democratic movement in Britain [6]. In 1818, Shelley left England and settled in Italy. During this period, Italian customs, history, as well as art profoundly influenced Shelley, and it is believed that the year 1819 has been referred to as Shelley's Annus Mirabilis.

At that time, Shelley's daughter died of an illness and his wife suffered from depression as a result; then the little girl that Shelley tried to adopt died of an illness, and Shelley's beloved son died as well [6]. This cascade of suffering, coupled with a sense of displacement in a foreign land, the disarray of his homeland, as well as the disillusionment of his revolutionary ideals, all drove Shelley to despair, "he felt as if he will never recover any cheerfulness again... [6]" Invocation to Misery was composed against this backdrop in 1819.

3.2. Overview of Invocation to Misery

Invocation to Misery is a gothic poem, with 13 stanzas in total, one stanza for every five lines. In the poem, Shelley uses anthropomorphic rhetoric to transform the first-person "I" into the "bridegroom", invoking the misery as a bride, and eventually gradually dissolving the subjectivity of the misery in the newlywed atmosphere.

"Come be happy! -sit near me" begins the poem with a call to the miserable bride, a call that gives birth to suffering in the symbolic and prepares for the mourning of the subjectivity of suffering. "We two will love, till in our eyes/ This heart's Hell seem Paradise" is a declaration of love that reflects the poet's determination to fight against suffering, with the artistic tension of Romanticism. The wedding bed is of "Underneath the grave", the dark wedding room is the embodiment of muddy reality; "We may dream, in that long sleep/ That we are not those who weep/ E'ell as Pleasure dreams of thee/ Life-deserting Misery/ Thou mayst dream of her with me". In the newlyweds' night, the newly married couple no longer suffers, and the poet gradually displaces the misery bride in their newlyweds' dream where they could meet "Pleasure", finally terminating with an existential enquiry—— "Where am I-where thou hast been?-where thou hast been?".

The miserable bride in the poem, who reveals herself in a gothic morbidity, cold, speechless and lifeless, is the embodiment of Shelley's co-suffering and melancholic wife, a mix of real traumas, and an object of disillusionment for an idealist. In this poem, Shelley expresses a pre-modern

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leftist's scepticism about the political environment of that time, his hope for an unpredictable future and his determination to face reality.

4. Selection and analysis of translation samples

To further study, four Chinese authors and Chinese translations from different stages of China's social development are selected, which respectively represent different features of the key social transition periods in China's modern history.

The relevant information of the four translations will be presented in a table, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected sample of Chinese translations

Publication Date (year)	1956	1981	1983	2012
Authors	Guo Moruo	Yang Xiling	Jiang Feng	Jiang Jinjin & Zhang Zijian
Publisher	Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House Company Limited	Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House	Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House	Beijing: China Pictorial Publishing House

In addition, in order to facilitate the analysis of translations, this section will sort out the basic information of those translations in chronological order, so as to present a clearer picture of the development and change of ideology in different historical periods.

Invocation to Misery was first published in an issue of the Creation Quarterly, "Shelley's Chronicle" in September 1923. At that time, China was in the period of the New Culture Movement, the awakening advancement in Shelley's poetry, together with the revolutionary consciousness, fell into the soil of China's modern trend, and eventually turned into a fervent revolutionary passion. When translating the poem, Guo Moruo thought that the poem, with its mournful mood and euphonious syllables, was most suitable for translation in the Chinese sao-style [7].

The exact date of Yang Xiling's translation activities for Invocation to Misery has not been found, but the translator's note of his 1981 edition of Shelley's Lyrical Poems mentioned that the selection and translation of this collection of poems began in 1958, and all the translations were made in 1962, and Yang said at that time when its publishing, "there had not been much change in Shelley's understanding", so almost no changes were made, "leaving it(the translated text) as it was more than ten years ago". Therefore, it is reasonable to date Yang's translation from 1958 to 1962, which was in the period of the Seventeen-year Literature (i.e., 1949-1966), and with the establishment of the status of Marxism in China, mostly translation activities arose in the context of "Two Combinations (i.e., the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism)" replacing "socialist realism", and Shelley's works reflected the unique form of revolutionary romanticism in Chinese literature [8]. In order to provide some foreign literature for the new poetry at that time, and meanwhile to practice the translator's own new poetic expression through translation, Yang Xiling was faithful to the original poem in terms of poetic style, with every five stanzas as a stanza.

The first draft of Jiang Feng's translation was published in 1956, and received the publisher's comments the following year. However, the translation was not revised in time, and was also shelved under the influence of his friends. It was not until 1976, when the Gang of Four was crushed and China's literature was revived, that Jiang was given the opportunity to engage in literary activities once again, and he rearranged his translations, and in October 1980, he published The

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Selected Poems of Shelley. In order to ensure Jiang's revision of the translation and the final version, the 1983 reprint edition of The Selected Poems of Shelley is used here. For the translation of Invocation to Misery, Jiang Feng adopts the theory of "both form and spirit" that he put forward when translating Shelley's works, and maintains the language order and style of the original text through direct translation [9].

The translation by Jiang Jinjin and Zhang Zijian, published in 2012, is a classic new translation in recent years. The content of the specific translations is amended on the basis of the predecessors, adding more modern expressions and symbols.

In conclusion, through the analysis of Invocation to Misery by different translators in different periods, it can be found that the translation strategies and translation texts under different social development present various patterns and changes. Focused on this point, this paper will concentrate on the first stanza of the poem, further seeking the influence of the ideologies.

5. Ideological analysis of the Invocation to Misery translation in the psychoanalysis

"Come, be happy!
Shadow-vested Misery.
Coy, unwilling, silent bride.
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation - deified!" [10]

The quotation is from the first stanza of the original poem. Shelley mainly used iambic pentameter and innovatively integrated syllable variants at the beginning of "Come", which reflected the urgency and heaviness of the invocation; the rhyme in the stanzas is AABBB, with the first two lines rhyming in pairs, and the last three lines rhyming consecutively, which created a sense of the oppression, and progressively depicts a hesitant and shy ("coy") posture of the misery bride. Through anthropomorphism and rhyming superimposition, Shelley portrayed the misery as a depressing and dignified classical bride, which ultimately became sanctified through oxymoron, achieving a dramatic effect. This suffering bride both embodied Shelley's personal narrative and the pain of an era.

This section will then focus on the variants of adjective translation, and on the image of the miserable bride portrayed by the four Chinese translators at four different stages of social development. In order to present the translators' translations more intuitively, the variants of adjective translation will be presented in Table 2.

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Table 2. Comparison of adjective translation variants

Date	1924	1958-1962	1983	2012
Original Words	Guo Moruo Version (hereinafter referred to as the "Guo version")	Yang Xiling Version (hereinafter referred to as the "Yang version")	Jiang Feng Version (hereinafter referred to as the "Jiang version")	Chiang Jinjin & Zhang Zijian Version (hereinafter referred to as the "C&Z version")
Coy	含羞	腼腆	羞怯	娇羞
Unwilling	强就兮	躲闪	不情愿	矜持
Silent	untranslated	沉默	无语	沉默

5.1. Guo version: a metaphorical "silent" through "translation without translating"

"欣欣而来兮坐我身旁，
汝以影为衣兮'不幸'姑娘：
汝含羞而强就兮容何窈窕，
汝华饰而悲伤兮虽孤寂而崇高！" [11]

In the Chinese translation, the sentence "Coy, unwilling, silent bride", Guo Ruomo did not choose direct translation, but employed metaphorical treatment, combined with the last two sentences translated as "汝华饰而悲伤兮虽孤寂而崇高", using "华饰", "孤寂" and "崇高" such words to convey a silent oppression, reflecting the awakening consciousness of the new women of that time, which is a mixture of shouting and resilience, and also echoes the collective psychology of the intellectuals during the May Fourth Period [12]. Through "translation without translating", Shelley's personal narrative is sublimated into a more universal sense of resistance.

5.2. Yang version: conveying a sublime reticence of the imprisoned through euphemism

"来吧，请高兴地坐在我身边，
身穿阴影之衣的不幸女仙！
靦觍、躲闪而沉默的新娘，
穿一袭矜持的锦衣，深心忧伤，
你就是神化了的悲怆！" [13]

Yang version basically retains the structure and imagery of the original poem. The imagery of the miserable bride is constrained by the social context of the 1950s and 1960s in New China, where collectivism was emphasized, marriage and love tended to be conservative, so that the expression of personal emotions was often suppressed. The new China of 1950-1965, in order to meet the needs of national construction, demanded that personal feelings be subordinated to the overall situation of national construction, and focused on portraying the Five-Virtues Women who were actively engaged in labor and the pursuit of progress [14]. Under the influence of this atmosphere, most of the newspapers after 1957 intentionally avoided the issue of marriage and love, believing that this issue was narrow and insignificant in the purpose of socialist construction [15]. As a result, "robe of pride" in the original poem was translated as "骄矜的锦衣", which weakened the connotation of

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“pride”, This reflects the fact that individualism in romantic at that time was diluted, and “腼腆” and “躲闪”, which are in line with socialist ethics, became the potential standard of the translation that time. In addition, Yang’s translation strategies of the bride’s emotions are more passive than that of the original poem, which is highly consistent with the way women portrayed in Chinese literature in the 1950s. The “silence” of the translation is not a loss of voice, but a kind of castration, and a dedication to the purpose of the times.

5.3. Jiang version: a proclamation of speechlessness after nirvana through direct translation

“来吧，高兴点！坐在我身边，
披裹着黑影的苦难：
羞怯，无语、不情愿的新娘，
衣着华丽，情态哀伤，
被神化了的凄凉！”[16]

At the formal level, Jiang’s version basically continues the direct translation of the former, but at the rhythmic level, through subtle adjustments in wording, it reflects the liberation of the early period in reform and opening up. For example, the word “unwilling” in the original poem was directly translated as “不情愿”, while Yang version had avoided the direct expression of this emotion; another example is “silent”, which was translated as “无语”, compared to the metaphorical translation in Guo version, emphasizing the silence of the bride’s subjectivity rather than the symbolism of the times.

The reform and opening up of 1978 injected new possibilities into people’s ways of thinking, living and values. Women’s consciousness in the 1980s resisted social prejudice externally and pursued self-worth internally, looking after themselves in search and prudence, and calling for a more independent and freer female image [17]. Therefore, this translation reflects a pursuit of “restoring the nature of humanity” in Chinese literature in the 1980s— translators began to present the complex psychology of the characters, rather than simply appealing to political correctness [18]. It is remarkable that in the Jiang version, “robe of pride” deviates from the original poem’s connotation of "pride" and focuses on superficial splendour instead, thereby ignoring the spiritual dimension. This deviation may be related to the social trend of the 1980s, when the commodity economy was in its infancy and the cult of materialism emerged. By this time, silence was neither a means of resistance nor a scar of alienation, but a conscious right.

5.4. C&Z version: modern “silence”

“来吧！高兴点！坐到我身边，
被阴影紧裹着的“苦难”
娇羞、矜持、沉默的新娘，
穿着高贵的婚纱，暗自神伤，
简直将凄凉神化！”[19]

C&Z version still maintains basically the original text, but is more modern and progressive in its Chinese translation. This can be exemplified by “robe of pride”, which is translated as “高贵的婚纱”, not only retaining the positive connotation of “pride”, but also strengthening a sense of ceremony of the misery bride’s image through the modern wedding symbol of “wedding dress (高贵的婚纱)”.

After the reform and opening up, the Chinese government has actively promoted equal educational opportunities for both sexes and gender equality, laying a solid foundation for women to

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obtain more educational opportunities [20]. The trend of women's social status showing more and more equality with men, which makes SILENT not only a right, but also declares the emergence of modernity. Therefore, the prominent feature of this version is the explicitness of female consciousness. While the misery bride, as the embodiment of "suffering" in the original poem, is often portrayed as a passive object in former translations, the C&Z version suggests her dignity and initiative through Chinese words like "矜持" and "高贵". This strategy reflects the rise of feminism in China and the re-examination of the status of women in marital relationships.

6. Conclusion

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the discourse of the Other, as a pre-existing symbol, gives birth to speech. In other words, ideological writing can directly reflect the epitome of an era. In the case of Shelley's Invocation to Misery, from the metaphorical silence of Guo version, to the sublime silence of Yang version, to the nirvana-type speechlessness of Jiang version, finally to the noble silence of C&Z version, a gothic bride of the Romantic period is given a new life by the combination of different translation strategies and linguistic materials. Under the translations of different translators at different stages of social development, the misery bride is not only Shelley's struggle against the reality of suffering, but also a symbol of the trauma and syndrome of the times.

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