

A Comparison between the Two Translated Versions of the *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* from the Perspective of the Translator's Subjectivity

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Abstract. Translation is an activity of communication. The translator acts as the subject. The first English translator and the latest translator of the *Six Chapters of a Floating Life* are Lin Yutang and Graham Sanders respectively. The paper is to analyze the translators' subjectivity and its causes in the two versions through the analysis of the translation strategies, the building of the heroine's images, and the translator's awareness of the history. It can be seen that Lin's version is more readable but has lost some cultural points, while Sander's version is more specific in cultural notes, but sometimes appears to be surplus in language compared with the original concise Chinese. The purpose is to demonstrate how the two authors adopt different strategies to realize their translational aims. The translated versions not only symbolize the author's subjectivity, but also represent different characteristics of the era and historical background.

Keywords: *Fushenliuji*; subjectivity; culture.

1. The Need for Retranslation

Nida (1976: 65) believes that translation is essentially a communicative activity. Communication involves communicative objects and communicative purposes. With the changes of the times, the objects and purposes of communication are constantly changing. Therefore, new requirements are also put forward for the translation of the original works. There are two direct reasons for retranslation: Firstly, from a diachronic point of view, it cannot be denied that the target language is constantly evolving and changing. The translations many years ago may no longer be able to satisfy the target language readers, but this does not mean the so-called "aging" of the translation; Secondly, from a synchronic point of view, the original version itself calls for the existence of multiple translations.

"The Six Chapters of a Floating Life" was written in 1878, late Qing dynasty. The author is Shen Fu, a Suzhou cloth man. In 1936, Mr. Lin Yutang first translated it into English and transmitted Chinese culture to the West. The latest English translation was completed in 2011 and was written by Graham Sanders, an associate professor at the University of Toronto. In terms of time, the two translations are more than seventy years apart. The characteristics of the times are obviously different. The former was in the period of China's economic backwardness and war. The latter was in the period of rapid development of China's economy and had become the second largest economy in the world. The exchange of Chinese and Western cultures became frequent. China's foreign cultural communication has made great achievements. Westerners are trying to learn more about Chinese culture, and the work by Professor Sanders is the product of this period. The re-translation is not only a personal choice, but also a choice of the times.

From the perspective of the translation subject, there are three translation modes: self-translation by Chinese, translation by sinologist, and translation mode by cooperation of both Chinese and foreigners. The ideal translator is proficient in two languages, and endowed with source and target

languages, literary and cultural cultivation, as well as profound education in areas such as language, literature, history, culture or translation. From this perspective, Lin Yutang is proficient in two cultures and is a perfect translator. As a sinologist, who is proficient in Chinese culture, Professor Sanders is also a well-deserved translator. They are different in their understanding of the original text, the personal experience, the cultural background and the purpose of the translation. This paper intends to explore the translator's subjectivity in the two translations, which is reflected in the translation strategy, character image formation and their historical consciousness.

2. Translator's Main Characteristics

Lv Jun & Hou Xiangqun studied the main subject of translation from the main components of the translator, the translator's knowledge, the creativity of translation and the motivation of translation (Lv Jun & Hou Xiangqun, 2013:179-202). The main components include the translator's perception of language and the creativity of language; rich imagination and affection; aesthetic judgment and artistic sensitivity. There are many differences in the works translated by different translators in different periods. Even the same translator, there will be new understandings after repeated reading. This is because language is not a symbolic system composed of purely rational concepts, but has obvious "intentionality". The motivations for translation actions mainly include internal motivation, such as personal interest; external motivation, social needs; self-regulation, which is a highly automated information processing process between external dynamics and internal dynamics.

The differences in the main characteristics of the two translators of "*Six Chapters of a Floating Life*" are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

2.1 Personal background

2.1.1. Lin Yutang

Lin Yutang was born in 1895 in a poor rural pastor family in Fujian. From primary school to university, he received the free education in church schools. In 1936, he went to the United States and France to start overseas life for nearly 30 years, and returned to Taipei in 1965. Lin Yutang had been abroad for nearly 35 years. He used his skillful English to tell the Westerners about Eastern culture, often using the classical Western metaphor to explain the oriental allusions. He pursues leisure, nature, and advocating truth and affection. He believes that leisure comes from a temperament that has been literated and philosophically recognized. Although he is immersed in Western Christian culture, his works and speeches reflect a strong cultural complex of Chinese literati advocates, the Taoist culture spirit and a way of life. The Chinese literati's character temperament and attitude reflected in the novel "*Six Chapters of a Floating Life*" is in line with Lin Yutang's attitude and disposition (Ge Xiaoqin & Ji Zhengming, 2001).

2.1.2. Professor Graham Sanders

Professor Graham Sanders, an associate professor of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. In 1996, he graduated from Harvard University with a Ph.D. in East Asian Language and Humanities. He then worked in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. He is a representative of the study of ancient Chinese literature at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. His main research direction is poetry and classic translation. Sanders' accomplishments in Chinese poetry and classic translation are attributed to his academic interests and his academic experience. At the undergraduate level, he was directed by Prof. Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova, a narratological expert and introduced into the study of Tang legends, tales and notes. Among them, he was most interested in "*Six Chapters of a Floating Life*". Later, the book was translated into English version. After graduating from the undergraduate course, he went to Harvard University to continue the study of ancient literature. In terms of the translation of "Six chapters", he thinks that although he also writes the introduction and commentary, this translation is not a theoretical one, but basically a translation work; as for the reasons for translating the classics, he hopes that this will bring a new and different understanding, and hopes that his translation works can become a culture bridge between the English readers and Chinese readers, which can make them learn more about Chinese culture through his translations (Hu Qing, 2015). In addition, his personal experience also prompted him to have a strong interest in Sinology. He made a

Chinese girlfriend when he was an undergraduate, which urged him to study Chinese in order to communicate. Out of interest, he began to focus on poetry and ancient Chinese. At the same time, he also went to China to learn more about Chinese culture. As an extrovert visitor, when he was studying in China, he often discussed Chinese culture with Chinese scholars like Dashan.

2.2 Social background

2.2.1 Chinese and Western Cultural Exchanges in the 20th Century

As described by Hilary (2017: 278-279), before the 20th century, countries in Asia heard that Europe had a major discovery, but they did not have much interest in this matter. It was not until the early 20th century that cultures outside Europe truly gained a global perspective. Lin Yutang was encouraged by Pearl S. Buck and determined to convey the true Chinese culture to the West. Huang Xingtao (2000) concluded that the best-selling period of Lin Yutang's works was in the 30s and 50s of the 20th century, and they were most popular among the readers of the United States and Britain. Feng Haiqing (2006) explained the reason that cultural self-consciousness was formed in the 1920s and 1930s in China. On the one hand, the law of cultural development, and the value of Chinese culture were rediscovered and affirmed. Cultural consciousness means that people living in a certain culture have "self-knowledge" about their culture, and also understand the culture of other countries they are exposed to, and learn to deal with cultural contacts (Fei Xiaotong, 2005:216). On the other hand, from the perspective of external factors, the impact of the First World War not only made the Chinese re-recognize the West, but also made European and American scholars disappointed with Western culture and turn their attention to the East as China, forming a "hot oriental culture" search trend. This stems from the world economic crisis in the 1920s and 1930s, which made people realize that personal economic behavior leads to a worldwide depression. Oriental culture, for example, in the book "Eastern Culture and Philosophy" was published by Liang Shuming in 1921, which advocated that only Chinese Confucianism was the basic value orientation. Life can make people get the "taste of life" and assert that Chinese traditional culture has great impact to the world civilization.

Chinese translators such as Lin Yutang, who have a Western cultural background, had become a bridge for Chinese and Western cultural exchanges. This stage also belonged to the beginning stage of modern Chinese and Western cultural exchanges.

2.2.2 Sino-Western Cultural Exchange in the Early 21st Century

In the 21st century, with the development of China's economy and the frequent exchanges between Chinese and foreign scholars, professional Sinology research has gained attention and status in overseas universities and research institutions. In Canada, where Professor Sanders works, in the 19th century, missionaries were sent to China to teach to understand China; in the 21st century, Sinology research became a trend and a need in Canada. Liang Lifang (2013) systematically sorted out Sinologists and Sinology studies in Canada from the eastern Canada to the eastern Canada. There are many Chinese scholars in Western Canada. The sinologists in the eastern Canada are mainly concentrated in three universities, one of which is the University of Toronto. The University of Toronto is a major center in the study of Sinology in Canada. In the early days, there was a missionary, Ming Yishi, then Professor Dusen, Professor Muresa, a teacher who retired in 1996, Professor Wayne Schlepp from the United States and Professor Kate Stevens and so on. There are many Sinology courses at the University of Toronto. As a new generation of Sinology researchers, Professor Sanders currently offers courses for students at the University: Classical Chinese I, Chinese Lit. I: Pre-Qin to Tang, Chinese Lit. II: Song-Qing, Chinese Poetry I, Chinese Poetry II, Approaches to East Asia, Beyond Orientalism. His translation of "Six Chapters" was read as a designated book for students studying Sinology in the school. It can be seen that the spread of Chinese culture has entered a period of prosperity.

3. Translator's Subjectivity

Literary translation is both bound by the original text and creative. It aims to jump out of the linguistic level and convey the meaning and cultural spirit of the original text. Although literary translation is a process of "re-creation", the translator's subjectivity is limited. On the one hand, while the translator is exerting the subjectivity, it is bound to be restricted by certain factors. On the other

hand, although the translator is under the numerous constraints, there is still room for the main body to exercise its subjectivity. The two interact and coexist in translation activities. The subjectivity of the two translators is reflected in the following three aspects:

3.1 Translation Purpose and Translation Strategy

The purpose of Mr. Lin's translation of "Six Life Chapters" is to let Westerners understand the simple and lovely life of a couple in ancient China. Mr. Lin not only tried his best to be faithful to the original text, but also emphasized that the translation should be fluent and accountable to the readers. Hu Xingwen & Shi Zhikang (2006) believe that on the basis of thorough understanding of the original text, Lin strives to express the meaning of the original author in a fresh and clear language, and he is not only limited to the literal meaning of the original author, but strives to reflect the original text in the translation. The deep connotation is conducive to the understanding of the target reader. Ren Dongsheng & Yan Jianhua (2014) believe that Lin Yutang is good at invoking Chinese classics when he argues his own cultural views, and uses Chinese texts and elements to produce Chinese cultural themes and elements, to satisfy Western readers' curiosity about Chinese culture, and to enhance the works with his own writing talents. His style of "translation and writing" is undoubtedly based on the full understanding of the cultural perception of English readers. Therefore, his translation strategy is flexible, but he always focuses on Western readers and spreads Chinese culture as his original intention. For the purpose and translation strategy of Professor Sanders' translation of "Six chapters", it was used as a textbook in a North American university, including his University of Toronto, published by Hackett Publishing Company, an academic publishing house headquartered in Indianapolis, USA. Since 1972, Hackett has focused on the humanities, especially classical and philosophical texts. Publications are used as textbooks and are widely used in colleges and universities in the United States and North America. Their publications are of high quality and readable. Professor Sanders believes that the translation is also suitable for reading of ordinary Western readers who are interested in Chinese culture. Another background is that in addition to some universities, Chinese classic translation is not known to many people in North America. Sanders, as a keen sinologist, wants to change this situation. In the process of translating "The Six Chapters of a Floating Life", he relied on the dictionary and Chinese annotations to understand the original text as clearly and completely as possible, and to show as much as possible the meaning and style of the original text according to his understanding.

E.g:

① 鸿干曰：“但期合意，不论风水。”（鸿干曰：“但期合意，不论風水。”）

Lin' translation: where we are buried (P225)

Sanders' translation: Feng shui, plus note: The Chinese practice of geomancy-or feng shui (wind and water)—is still used today to select appropriate sites for erecting structures and tombs according to how the natural features of the area accord with the auspicious circulation of qi energy. (P93)

What is meant by "feng shui"? There are countless definitions of "风水" ("風水") from ancient times to the present, but Guo Wei, who gave the earliest definition of feng shui in history, has a saying in his famous book *The Funeral Book*: "The burial, should obey the rules of natural circulation". That is to say, the core of the technique for people to live or bury in the environment is the law of the changes of the universe, so as to achieve the goal of avoiding evil. Feng Shui is different between "Yang House" and "Yin House". In the novel, Honggan and Shen Fu went to Shangsha Village to play and search for a place where they could live in seclusion. The villagers thought they were watching Feng Shui. Considering the background of the 1930s, Lin Yutang uses a typical concept translation for this highly characterized Chinese culture, and "Feng Shui" was translated into a typical "buried place", which is concise and clear, easy to understand. Professor Sanders uses transliteration, namely, the pinyin translation. As Lv Jun & Hou Xiangqun (2012: 176) hold, foreign translators believe that transliteration can get rid of cultural interference and reflect the influence of Chinese traditional culture. At the same time, Sanders's notes are more detailed, comprehensive and accurate, highlighting the core concept of how to deal with the law of the changes of the universe, in order to

achieve the purpose of avoiding the evil, and reflect his original intention to introduce Chinese culture to Western readers.

3.2 Chinese female image shaping

The translator does not usually consider how to express emotions as the author does, but he often first evaluates the cognitive value of the work before considering the emotional problem (Lv Jun & Hou Xiangqun, 2012:189). Lin Yutang is the first translator to translate the book. He calls “Yun, the loveliest woman in the world.” Mr. Lin’s understanding of “Chen Chen” is more from his transformation of the traditional Chinese female image, namely: a wife that can accompany the man to read at the lights in the night as a “vanilla beauty”. The female images in the literature of the late Qing Dynasty were reconstructed in detail in the three aspects of body, morality and culture. Firstly, their body image experienced a nationalist mobilization from “sexualization” to “de-sexualization” process. Secondly, their moral image swayed between traditional and Western intellectual resources and experienced complex fusion and reshaping. Thirdly, their cultural image had undergone the most profound subversion and reconstruction. The “vanilla beauty” tradition and the “ideal wife” imagination are typical binary emotion projections existing in Chinese literature. The literati define themselves by ideal kings or ideals, and the “ideal wife” is the second simulation of ideal self (Liu Wei, 2010). The other author, Sanders, describes his understanding of the work in the preface of the book. He believes that Shen Fu has built some of the happiest times: the pastoral life of creating and imagining together, romantic love, and the incompetent hermit. Professor Sanders, as a contemporary Western translator, understands that Chen Yu is a weak, intelligent, and decisive Chinese female image.

The female image in “The Six Chapters of a Floating Life” should be one of the focuses of the original author Shen Fu. There are important descriptions of two women, Chen Yu and Su Yun. In the late Qing Dynasty, “three obediences, four virtues” is still the moral standard of women's observance. According to the principle of “internal and external differences” and “male respect for women”, Confucian ethics teaches women the norms of morality, behavior and cultivation in their lifetime. What makes Chen Yu's difference is that she has the humility and obedience of traditional women, as well as her independent thoughts. She is talented, knows ancient poetry, and can draw books. This is also the reason why Lin Yutang thinks high of her.

For example, there are differences in the image building of Chen Yu in the two translations. Chen Yun described in the source language text has both academic and academic skills. She becomes a talented woman and relies entirely on her own efforts and talents. Chen Yu has independent economic ability, and she can support her mother and younger brother with a pair of skillful hands, and even pay for the education expenses of her younger brother. Hard work she shoulders is not something that ordinary people can imagine and bear. Although Shen Fu is just an ordinary lower-level literato, and Chen Yu is only an ordinary woman, but they have established a special kind of love for us as the model of husband and wife (Huang Yuzhu, 2002). The image of Chen Yu in the original work is called the loveliest woman in Chinese history by Lin Yutang.

E.g.:

素云笑捶余肩曰：“汝骂我耶？”芸出令曰：“只许动口，不许动手！违者罚大觥。”

素云量豪，满斟一觥。(素雲笑捶餘肩曰：“汝罵我耶？”芸出令曰：“只許動口，不許動手！違者罰大觥。”素雲量豪，滿斟一觥。)

Lin translation: Suyün pummeled my shoulder playfully, saying, “you are speaking of me as a buffalo, aren't you?” Then Yün said, “Hereafter let's make a rule: let's have it out with our mouths, but no hands! One who breaks the rule will have to drink a big cup.” As Suyun was a great drinker, she filled a cup full and drank it up at a draught. (P67)

Sanders' translation: Suyun laughed and punched me on the shoulder, saying, “You're making fun of me!” “You may move your lips, but not your hands!” commanded Yun. “Anyone caught breaking this rule must drink a flagon Suyun had a heroic capacity for drink, so she simply poured out a flagon of wine and polished it off in one gulp. (P28)

Su Yun is a ship girl. Chen Yu is the wife of Shen Fu. Three people are drinking and having fun together on the boat. Chen Yu is kind and has a good personality. After Shen Fu laughing at Suyun for never hearing of this drinking order, Su Yun responded and conveyed a girlish shyness in words. At this moment, although Chen Yu's words have several words with strong tone, such as "only, no, penalty", but from the overall context of the full text, Chen Yun is not jealous and angry, but supports her husband's requirements, hopes that her husband is happy, and continue the happy conversation.

Lin Yutang translates "笑捶余肩" ("笑捶餘肩") into "pummel my shoulder playfully". Consulting the Oxford Dictionary, "pummel" means "to keep hitting somebody hard, especially with your fists (tightly closed hands)". Su Yun's "捶" ("捶") action is like flirting. Lin Yutang translated the "出令曰" ("出令曰") into "Yün said", and "said" is a neutral word, relatively euphemistic, which outlines a gentle and elegant image of Chen Yu. In Sanders' version, the tone of "command" is relatively strong. In the current context, Sanders sketches a decisive and capable image of Chen Yu. At the same time, Lin translated: "Let's have it out with our mouths, but no hands!", "Let's" introduces an imperative sentence, which can include yourself and the other party, indicating solicitation of opinions or suggestions and tone of euphemism and politeness, with the meaning of leading by example, and the word "said" also echoes. Sanders translation: "You may move your lips, but not your hands!" also corresponds to the word "command", which is in line with Western aesthetics, but also the translator's understanding and evaluation of this kind of emotion across time and space. Secondly, Su Yun's drink volume also has some differences in the two translations. Lin translates it as: "great drinker", while Sanders translates it as: "a heroic capacity for drink". Lin's translation is simple and easy to understand, and it is shaped by ancient Chinese women. The unique image is also more easily accepted by Western readers at the time. Sanders fully exerts his imagination and adds the word "heroic" to highlight a "豪" ("豪") character, reminiscent of the heroic spirit of Chinese traditional wine culture. He translates "大觥" ("大觥") into "flagon", and Here, in the Oxford Dictionary: a flagon is a large leather, metal, glass or ceramic vessel, used for drink. With a sip of "in one gulp", Saunders's creation of Suyun is more powerful. This has a lot to do with Sanders' understanding of the Chinese woman. He had a Chinese girlfriend at that time. He thinks Su Yun and Chen Yun are capable and independent oriental women.

3.3 Translator's Sense of the Times

Lefevere believes that translation practice is a practice linked to a certain historical reality. It is a practice of reinterpreting the original text in accordance with the interests of a certain social group in a new historical environment. It is essentially the practice of cultural politics (cited from: Yan Xiaomei, 2010). The translator's sense of the times is mainly reflected in the following two points:

3.3.1 The era of the translated language

From the 1930s to the 1950s, it was China's turbulent period of change that left an indelible mark on Mr. Lin's creation. For example, he translated the Qing Dynasty into "Manchu Dynasty", and Chinese ethnic minorities into "foreign blood, foreign race". It seems that these translations are not appropriate today, at that time, and Mr. Lin tried to clarify these relationships, but for various reasons, there was no explanation. However that does not affect the literary value of the entire translation. He successfully translates cultural phenomena with Chinese characteristics, for example, "酒" ("酒") is translated as "liquor", "枸杞" ("枸杞") is translated as "a few berries of Chinese matrimony vine", and "幕支" ("幕支") is translated into "a yamen clerk". Sanders translated them as "wine", "wolfberry", and "private secretary in the local government" respectively, which reflects the characteristics of the times and the translator's consideration for the readers to understand the source language in the target language context. In his translation, Sanders also converts the lunar calendar expression used in traditional China into the Gregorian Calendar used in most countries of the world today, which is an international calendar. It was opened on October 15, 1582 by the Roman Catholic Emperor Gregory XIII, for example, the rule of the Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) or the Emperor Jiaqing (1796-1820) is a calendar of the Gregorian calendar. Sanders also converts the ancient unit of measurement in China into the measurement system of the United States in the translation. The smallest unit of currency mentioned in the text is a copper plate called "cash". One or two silver is equivalent to 1.2

ounces of silver ingots. In the era of Shen Fu's life, you can buy about 1.4 bushels of rice, enough for one person to eat for nearly three months. By converting the measurement unit and applying the American measurement method, Sanders can make the readers of North America and even the West understand the meaning and artistic conception of these source texts, and it also reflects Sanders' rethinking of the translation in the new historical environment, in order to achieve his purpose of better spreading Chinese traditional culture.

4. Conclusion

The two translations of “*Six Chapters of a Floating Life*” are published in different periods and in different contexts, and the translations are marked with the symbols of the times and the translators. The translation of this work is difficult, and it also reflects the translator's language and cultural skills. This work involves many ancient cultural phenomena. According to our modern readers, it is far away and strange, and it is difficult for foreign readers to understand. This also puts high demands on translators. Lin Yutang's first translation causes great impact among the Western readers, and has a high literary value. As a Sinologist, Sanders presents a vivid picture of Chinese culture to Western readers, and also complies with the curiosity of Western readers' deep understanding of Chinese culture in the new era. The translators in the translation are obviously branded, and they all incorporate their own understanding of the text itself, the understanding of the target language readers, and the elements of their respective subjective wishes. The translations of the two translators have localized the translations in their respective eras and achieved their respective translation goals. Yang Shuhua (2016:86) concludes that it is because of the localization transformation that it is possible for the translation to successfully enter the target language culture system. Through the comparison of the two translations, it can be seen that the translator's subjectivity transforms the translation in many aspects, the background of the times, personal cognition and historical mission. By comparison, Mr. Lin's translation is more readable, but some cultural phenomena are too much simplified, which is related to the special era background. Professor Sanders's translation is deeper in culture explanation, detailed in content, which is suitable for the contemporary foreign readers of Chinese culture, but still some too many notes may reduce the readability and fluency of the text. The translation not only reflects the translator's subjective characteristics, but also reflects the characteristics of the times and historical background.

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