

从目的论谈

《飘》

三个中译本的翻译策略

A Study of Translation Strategies
in Three Chinese Versions of *Gone
with the Wind* from a Skopos Perspective

杜晓燕 著



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Preface



In the history of translation studies, traditional translation studies focus on the texts comparison between the source text and the target text, and the corresponding criteria mostly are “faithfulness” and “equivalence”. The positive aspect of traditional theories is that they attach importance to the objectivity of translation. However, as translators are inevitably influenced by various factors during the course of translation, accordingly, it’s unwise to merely use “equivalence” to assess the quality of translation. Skopos theory states that translation is a purposeful intercultural action. The production of any translation is conditioned by many factors. The purpose of the overall translation action determines the choice of translation strategies.

Based on the Skopos theory, this book attempts to make a

comparative study of three Chinese versions of *Gone with the Wind* and probes into the application of Skopos theory in translation criticism. As a break from equivalence-oriented linguistic translation theories, it emphasizes the interaction of the intention of the original author, the translator and target text readers while offers a dynamic and multi-dimensional perspective on translation criticism. This book stresses the contrastive study and the analysis of examples by making a detailed contrastive analysis of the examples chosen from these three books. This book calls attention to factors such as the translators, the target readers and the historical and cultural background in the shaping of the different translations to make a more comprehensive evaluation on the three versions.

Analysis of the three versions shows that the translators give priorities to different translation strategies and the three versions have different styles, achieve different effects, meet the expectations of different readers, and as a result, justify different translation purposes. Therefore, each version has its own rationality of existence and it is of great value to make appropriate adaption to the translations of the masterpieces. Skopos theory accounts for different strategies in different situations. With concrete materials, this book tries to argue that

translation theory has great influence on the practice of translation. Theory comes from practice, and, in turn, also guides practice.

This book is divided into five chapters.

The first chapter is an overview of traditional translation criticism and the latest development.

The second chapter focuses on the Skopos theory, including the definition, the history, basic concepts, basic rules, merits and limitations of Skopos theory. The relation of Skopos theory and assignment in literary translation is also discussed here.

The third chapter is a brief introduction of the novel *Gone with the Wind* and its three Chinese versions and the Skopos of the author and the translators.

The fourth chapter is a comparative study of translating strategies in the three versions through the perspective of Skopos theory.

The last chapter is a conclusion of the whole book, and gives some suggestions about further studies.

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Introduction

In the history of translation studies, for a long time, when people assess the quality of a translation, they are likely to employ “equivalence” or “faithfulness” to the source text as the most authoritative criterion to judge whether the translation is successful or not.

This kind of translation evaluation is stereotyped and over-simplified. Although this trend plays a positive role in guiding translation practice and standardizing the translation field, other factors should not be neglected, because translation is a complex human activity and the study of translation should also be descriptive. Under this situation, the Skopos theory, by viewing translation as an action with purpose, tries to open up a new perspective on such aspects as the status of

the source text and the target text, their relationship, the concept of translation, the role of the translator, translation standards and strategies.

Skopos theory put forward by Hans J. Vermeer is the core of the functionalist translation theory developed in Germany in the 1970s. This is a new perspective of evaluating translation, which is no longer limited by conventional source-text-oriented views. Vermeer finds that, according to action theory, every action has a purpose, and, since translation is an action, it must have a purpose, too. The purpose is assigned to every translation by means of commission.

To some extent, Skopos theory makes up for the deficiency of conventional translation theories. In the framework of Skopos theory, there are no such things as right or wrong, faithful or unfaithful, and the translation Skopos decides the translation process. Skopos theory accounts for different strategies in different situations, in which the source text is not the only factor involved.

With Skopos theory as the theoretical foundation, this book attempts to make a comparative study of three Chinese versions of *Gone with the Wind*. With more concern on the priorities over the translators' choice of translation strategies,

this book aims to examine the various factors that account for the translations and the effects they achieve. In this way, it will try to present a complete evaluation of the three Chinese versions and explore the application of Skopos theory to literary translation criticism.

The study material of the research is *Gone with the Wind*, written by American woman novelist Margaret Mitchell. It is set in Jonesboro and Atlanta, Georgia during the American Civil War and Reconstruction—a unique place and time, America's greatest political and moral conflict—and tells the life of Scarlett O'Hara, the daughter of an Irish immigrant plantation owner. So far, there exist many Chinese versions of *Gone with the Wind*. Of all the versions available, the earliest version is made by Fu Donghua under the title of 《飘》 that was published in 1940. The other two comparative versions in this book are Chen Liangting's 《乱世佳人》(1990) and Li Meihua's 《飘》(2000).

There are three reasons for the choice of these versions as study objects; the first is that these three versions were produced in quite different times; the second is that these versions were produced in different places; and the last is the gender difference of the translators.

Comparative researches of representative versions have been made by others before. However, studies are mainly made from the descriptive perspective, historical and cultural perspective, translators' subjectivity perspective, polysystem theory perspective, rewriting theory perspective, translation and language change perspective, and so on. Unlike those researches, the author of this book finds that Skopos theory is very appropriate to be employed in the comparison because these quite different translations are closely related to the translators' purposes, which will be illustrated in detail later.

Chapter One



Overview of Translation Studies

1.1 What Is Translation and Translation Studies

The term translation itself has several meanings: it can refer to the general subject field, the product (the target text that has been produced) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL). This type corresponds to “interlingual translation” and is one of the three

categories of translation described by the Czech structuralist Roman Jakobson in his seminal paper “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (Jakobson 1959/2000: 114, cited in Munday 2001). Jakobson’s categories are as follows:

- ◆ Intralingual translation, or “rewording”: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
- ◆ Interlingual translation, or “translation proper”: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
- ◆ Intersemiotic translation, or “transmutation”: an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems.

Throughout history, written and spoken translations have played a crucial role in interhuman communication. Yet the study of translation as an academic subject has only begun in the past fifty years. In the English-speaking world, this discipline is now generally known as “translation studies”, thanks to the Dutch-based US scholar James S. Holmes. In his key defining paper delivered in 1972, but not widely available until 1988, Holmes describes the then nascent discipline as being concerned with “the complex of problems clustered round the

phenomenon of translating and translations”. In 1988, Mary Snell-Hornby, in the first edition of her *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, writes that “the demand that translation studies should be viewed as an independent discipline... has come from several quarters in recent years”. In 1995, the time of the second revised edition of her work, Snell-Hornby is able to talk in the preface of “the breathtaking development of translation studies as an independent discipline” and the “prolific international discussion” on this subject. Mona Baker, in her introduction to *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation*, talks effusively of the richness of the “exciting new discipline, perhaps the discipline of the 1990s”, bringing together scholars from a wide variety of often more traditional disciplines. Now, in the twenty-first century, the discipline of translation studies continues to develop from strength to strength across the globe.

1.2 A Brief History of the Translation Studies

Writings on the subject of translating go far back in recorded history. The practice of translation was discussed by, for example, Cicero and Horace (first century BCE) and St. Jerome