

Analysis on How Jia Pingwa's Literature Get Spread in English-speaking Countries

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Abstract: The overseas spreading of Jia Pingwa's literature started in 1970s with a limited number of translated works and low degree of recognition in English-speaking countries. The research on Jia's literature in English-speaking countries mainly consists of three aspects: periodicals, theses and dissertations of master and Ph.D students, and teaching materials applied in Courses on Chinese literature and the contents of literary history. Hence, the research is relatively monotonous and limited in scale. As a whole, Jia Pingwa lacks of attention and attractiveness. Therefore, the overseas community of readers should be built; the model of cooperative translation with western translators as the core should be adopted; the professional literature translation criticism should be carried out to enhance the popularity of Jia's popularity at abroad; multiple efforts should be taken at the same time to make the best of overseas publishing platforms; and the power and resources of literary creation, translation, translation criticism and publishing should be integrated. By taking the above methods can realize the effective and proficient spreading of Jia's literature in English-speaking countries.

1. Introduction

The "Shaanxi Army" of literature, represented by Jia Pingwa, Lu Yao, Chen Zhongshi, is a major part of Chinese Contemporary Literature. They have repeatedly won domestic literature awards including the Mao Dun Prize for Literature, but have not won international literature awarded yet. It has been an issue of how to make Shaanxi Literature "go global" that the government, writers' association, translation association pay high attention to. In 2017, Shaanxi Writers' Association and Shaanxi Translation Association officially initiated "Shaanxi Literature Overseas Translation (SLOT)", which brought new hopes to the overseas spreading of Shaanxi literature. Though overseas spreading of Shaanxi literature started early, with the slow development and the limited amount of English translations, Shaanxi writers have not quite been quite well-known in English-speaking countries by now.

2. The Current State of the Overseas Spreading of Jia Pingwa's Literature

In 1980s, Jia Pingwa's literature came into the view of international readers by being translated into different languages, thus having a certain influence. There are three significant aspects for Shaanxi writers to conduct research at abroad: periodicals, mater and Ph.D students' dissertations and research works, teaching materials applied to the courses on Chinese Literature and the contents of the history of Chinese literature.

The English translations of Jia Pingwa's literature published reached 33 in total, including 12 essays and 21 novels. The novels consist of one full-length novel, medium-length novels and short stories. The Turbulence translated by Howard Goldblatt is the most influential version among Jia Pingwa's works, which has been collected by more than 500 libraries in the world and ranked first among his works. In 1970s and 1980s, Chinese Literature, Panda Books began to publish the foreign translations of Jia Pingwa's literature. The translated versions of his literature encompass Tian Gou (1991), Heavenly Rain(1996), Tiao Gou:Selected Readings of Jia Pingwa, Turbulence, The Castle, Ruined City. Compared with his important position and influence in Chinese literature arena, his literature didn't obtain due attention and spreading in the world. Even his long novel Qin

Qiang which won the Mao Dun Prize for Literature, and his magnum opus *Missing the Wolf* still didn't have influential English translations, let alone other works such as *White Night* and *Gao Lao Zhuang* that have not been translated in foreign languages to be published. As for the doctoral dissertation in English-speaking countries, there are four using Jia Pingwa's literature as monographs from 1998 to 2004, including Dr. Wang Yiyan's dissertation which has been rewritten as *Narrating China*. By now, it is the only English monograph that foreign scholars can depend on to study Jia Pingwa's literature. The international studies are centered upon *Ruined City*, *The Castle*, *How Much Can a Man Bear* and *Turbulence*. When the English translation of *Turbulence* was published in 1991, five book reviews of it came out at the same year. *The Castle* and *How Much Can a Man Bear* also drew attention from overseas scholars, and were commented with corresponding book reviews.

As for publishing agencies, China's Literature Publishing House and its subordinate magazine *Chinese Literature* are the earliest ones that devoted to publishing the English translations of Jia Pingwa's literature, accounting for about 60% of its English translated versions in total. Internationally, there were eight publishing houses that once published his translated works, including Ballantine Books, Stanford University Press, Louisiana State University Press, New Letters and so on.

Due to linguistic and cultural problems, foreign studies on Jia Pingwa and his literature are exclusive and small-scale as well. Most scholars put their research focus on the two novels, i.e. *Turbulence* and *The Abandoned Capital*, mainly making the discussion about cultural differences reflected by source language and target language. On the whole, Jia Pingwa does not gain much attention in English-speaking countries; Shaanxi literature takes a heavy burden and embarks on a long way as for the overseas spreading.

3. Literature Review about Domestic Studies on the English Translations of Jia Pingwa's Literature

In the period of 11 years from 1999 to 2009, with no more than 30 published articles of the translation studies on Jia's literature in China, the study remained less active. Since 2010, the number of articles published in journals increased gradually as it gained more attention. In particular, there was a slow rise in the number of the articles published in core journals and CSSCI source journals. Between 2010 and 2015, there was an obvious growing trend of the articles published in journal in CNKI(China National Knowledge Infrastructure). However, a drop of the published articles occurred in 2016. As the number of published articles soared in 2017, studies on Jia's literature reached the peak in past two decades or so. Nevertheless, research achievements decreased in 2018. Additionally, other translation studies on Jia's literature originate from the master and Ph.D students' dissertations.

Chinese domestic scholars mainly pay attention to the English translation strategy applied to Jia's literature, overseas spreading and influence. Qiao Yan (2014) in *Analysis of Overseas Translation and Spread of Jia Pingwa's Literature and Status Quo and Problems of Shaanxi Literature's "Going Globally"* pointed out that the development of translation of Shaanxi literature is slow in other countries; translations have a limited amount of influence. Wang Rui (2014) in *English Translation and Study on Jia Pingwa's Literature: Status Quo and Solution* argued that the promotion of English translations of Jia Pingwa's literature can be approached from two perspectives: The first one is to make the comparative analysis of internal factors of the source text, including languages, narration and translators' perspectives, etc. The second one is to make the studies on external factors, such as sponsors, translation modes, target-language readers' expectation and acceptability of translations. Sun Li'ang (2016) in *The Overseas Spread and Influence of Shaanxi Literature: A Case Study of Jia Pingwa's Literature* demonstrated that Shaanxi literature has very little influence at abroad. The main cause is that Shaanxi literature is not translated as well as possible. The solution to this problem deserves the updating of translation philosophy, the emphasis on the cooperation with the overseas book market players, and more

government support. Shao Xia (2017) in *Study on Translation Strategy Applied in Abandoned City* by Howard Goldblatt concluded that, with Faithfulness as the major translation principle, Howard Goldblatt applied the translation techniques, including amplification, omission, transliteration and literal translation.

4. The Difficulties in Spreading Jia Pingwa's Literature in English-speaking Countries

The overseas readers of Jia's literature are mainly Sinologists or scholars who are interested in Chinese society and culture. To date, Jia's literature at abroad has only been acceptable at the academic level. Even so, the translations of his literature are marginalized, less-favoured and unsystematic. Consequently, his literature is difficult to be read and studied by mainstream society in western discourse, leaving a limited propagation effect and a narrow range of reader group.

From the perspective of writers, Jia's literature is centered upon the history and culture in Shaanxi province in specific periods. Common readers in English-speaking countries do not have enough touch of Shaanxi culture. So they are not interested in such literature. Contemporary literature in Shaanxi province has a profound tradition of Realism. Such writers of older generations as Liu Qing, Lu Yao and Jia Pingwa are all famous for their realistic novels. However, their creation has encountered a paradox as follows: the novels have been highly acclaimed by foreign readers because of their description of the great changes taken place in contemporary Chinese society, but impeded foreign readers' further reading and acceptance.

In terms of the path and method of the spreading of literature, translation is the foundation of the cross-cultural propagation of literature, and also the starting point of Shaanxi literature to enhance its international influence. In the translation of Jia Pingwa's works, on the one hand, the extensive use of Shaanxi dialects makes the translation more difficult and raises higher requirements for translators. On the other hand, as the translated works eventually need to be accepted by readers of English-speaking countries, objectively speaking, translators are required to understand the aesthetic habits and reading interests of those readers. At present, there is a shortage of such translators who persevere in translating Shaanxi literature. The systematic overseas propagation of translations is not enough at all. Even so, there exist lots of inconsistencies in literary styles, languages and even titles in the existing translations. All these disadvantages seriously impact the effective spread of Shaanxi literature.

As readers in English-speaking countries neither have a holistic learning of Shaanxi culture and the literature, nor enough understandings the historical and cultural connotations of Jia Pingwa's literature, thus damaging their reading and acceptance of the works. In addition, common readers in the countries, like the United States, are less interested in translated works, which lowers the publishing intention of commercial publishers. Although university presses are less impacted by commercial interests directly, the circulation of their publications is not that large, as they are mainly aimed at scholars in related fields for academic research. Many classic works by writers such as Jia Pingwa haven't been translated into English, let alone their personal collections. As a result, It is difficult for writers to further expand their international influence evidently.

5. The Overseas Propagation of Jia Pingwa's Literature

With the assistance of newspapers, publishing houses and other mass media, as well as elite education such as university teachers and students, the introduction and research based on translation has realized "spreading among common readers and professional readers". The outbound spreading of works relies on translations which help these works "go global" beyond their original culture and circulation scope.

5.1 Cultivating the Potential Overseas Readership

Through the selective courses such as Chinese Literature and Chinese Culture at overseas Confucius Institutes and universities, efforts can be made to offer the young overseas readers enlightenment education on Chinese literature, cultivate their interest in Chinese literature, and

guide them to read Chinese literature. Prefaces and postscripts should play a more important role in the translated literature, not only showing the writers' vivid images to overseas readers, but also making a concise and lively introduction to the background, characters, plots and themes. Moreover, the prefaces and postscripts can be viewed as an important carrier of the interpretation and acceptance among authors, translators, readers and commentators. The prefaces and postscripts, as the portal—"leaving primary impressions", should function as well as possible to make the literature easier accepted and recognized by overseas readers. The research and interpretation of the translated works will help them to take root in foreign countries and become part of other countries' literary system, truly realizing the cross-cultural spreading of literature.

5.2 Taking the Cooperative Translation Model: Translation Led by Western Translators

As the major way of Shaanxi writers to spread their works overseas, translation brings these works to readers and researchers of other countries. Translation is the most pertinent processing of the original works and the precondition of acceptance by foreign readers. Introduction and research articles can promote and deepen the understanding of the translations.

Overseas readers' acceptance and recognition of translations are constrained by "language differences", "time lag", target-language readers' ideology and expectations, reading ability and individual literacy, and publishing channels and so forth; While Chinese literature is "going global", the mainstream is that overseas translators translate Chinese literature independently or together with Chinese translators. However, Chinese translators or translations done mainly by Chinese translators have not yet captured the public attention in foreign countries. It is due to the fact that target-language readers are likely to put more focus on the plots and diction of the translations in terms of the contents of Chinese literature, rather than the profound culture and exoticism that the original Chinese literature bears. The majority of the overseas Sinologists have cross-cultural experiences in China, the aptitude of Chinese language, a solid foundation of Sinology, and the Chinese complex, which enable them to acquire the history and status quo of Chinese literature, and translate Chinese literature in English proficiently. What's more, they tend to know more about target-language readers' reading needs and habits, and excel at communicating with international publishing houses, news media, and western Sinologists of the academic field. All these advantages realize the the best cooperation between overseas Sinologists and Chinese scholars for the "Going Global" of Chinese literature.

5.3 Starting Overseas Professional Literature Translation Criticism to Enhance the Influence of Chinese Literature

What matters most after Chinese literature is translated successfully is whether it can capture the eyeballs of the general public readers in western countries, and whether it can win the positive comments from authoritative book review institutions. Because it leads the public opinion of Chinese literature translations in the European and American countries, and shapes overseas readers' reading choices, strategies of interpretation, and judgement of value. Therefore, other countries' successful experience and practices should be drawn, which are as follows: (1) It's necessary to pay attention to the binding of English translations. The design of covers and titles should satisfy the aesthetic needs of overseas readers, and the world-known scholars should be invited to write the book reviews in order to elevate the position of English translations in the minds of Western readers. (2) It's of significance to publish all kinds of reviews on the translations for common readers through various channels, such as journals, TV, Internet and salon, etc. Another feasible method is to reply to the literature translation criticism issued on the authoritative international presses by virtue of the letters from readers or follow-ups on social media applications. (3) It is bound to promote the cooperation in the literature research community both at home and abroad. Seminars on translations and Chinese writers can be held at overseas prestigious universities and research institutes. The dialogue can set up between Chinese translation scholars and British and American translators, and positive attitudes and perspectives should be taken on those who think differently. Moreover, efforts should be made to attract more and more foreign

readers to focus on Chinese literature, fostering a certain number of readers to read the translation of Chinese literature. It's pivotal to strengthen China's academic leadership. Chinese scholars can step out to change the negative and passive academic position, and better the international opinions towards China step by step to make the reviews on Chinese literature translations better and better, thus improving the overseas propagation of the English translations of Chinese literature.

5.4 Taking Multiple Efforts to Make the Best of Overseas Publishing Platforms

The publishing houses in Europe and America publishing Chinese literature consist of two kinds: university presses and commercial publishers. University presses are research-oriented. The major research personnel are China experts (who make researches on China) and foreign scholars of Chinese descent. The readers are the experts who enjoy reading Chinese literature. On the contrary, commercial publishers mainly attach importance to profiting from the translations of Chinese literature. Their major target consumers are the general public of western countries. Only winning the favour from foreign readers can Chinese literature enter the mainstream of world literature, and become popular among the general public in Europe and America. As the extremely important agents during Chinese literature being translated, publishing houses directly determine how fast Chinese literature will "go global". Publishing houses know clear what reader like and how the translations can be published and issued. As a result, they tend to choose the model of publishing and issuing the translations given the commercial interests, social influence and popularity. Therefore, to a certain degree, publishing houses, rather than translators themselves, are the decision-makers of what are supposed to be translated.

Literature images can become vivid and multidimensional only by integrating the power and resources of literary creation, translation, translation criticism and publishing. To harvest the recognition of overseas readers, Shaanxi literature should depend on successful outbound spreading of its translations, and carry out effective and positive interactions between China and other countries, state agencies and non-governmental organizations, translators and sponsors, translations and their comments, thereby integrating the Self-spreading and Other-spreading.

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