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The state of translation
Contemporary western literature in Chinese translation

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the translations of seven contemporary western works of literature into Chinese. The translations are analysed using the translation analysis method used by David van der Peet in his analysis of the translation of *The Lord of The Rings* into Chinese applying concepts and criteria formulated by the translation theorists Walter Benjamin, Eugene Nida and Paolo Bartolini. This thesis argues that both the concepts of Walter Benjamin and Eugene Nida are practically applicable. None of the works analysed seem to be untranslatable as this concept is defined by Walter Benjamin. Instead, inferior translations are the result of simple mistakes by the translators or that the translators were unable to understand the original. Some of the translations analysed are of a very high quality. In this study the application of Nida's and Benjamin's criteria leads to identical conclusions regarding the quality of the translations although some of Nida's criteria and statements regarding translation analysis seem questionable.

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Introduction

The popularity of western literature in China is surging (“the west” here defined according to Cold War boundaries). In Mao’s China – only thirty-five years gone – severe restrictions regarding which works could be translated into Chinese existed.¹ Today western fiction in Chinese translation is among the most popular and bestselling genre of books. But popularity of a translated work is not equal to quality in translation. Few studies have been published in the West regarding the quality of these translations.²

In this study I will analyse translations of a small sample of contemporary western works into Chinese. Some of these translations might be considered adequate or even approaching perfection, while others might be regarded as unreadable or inferior. What characterises adequate or near perfect translations? Is an inadequate translation the result of a bad translation or is it because of some property in the work that makes it difficult or impossible to translate?

In order to keep this study practically viable some delimitations have been necessary. The translated titles analysed were all originally written in English, written at around the time of the Second World War or later. Additionally, the translations of the works were carried out within the last decade or so.

There are many ideas about how to analyse the quality of a translation. Two approaches to translation are Eugene Nida’s dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence. Dynamic equivalence means conveying the presumed thought expressed in a source text possibly at the expense of literalness, original word order, the source text’s grammatical voice etc. Formal equivalence attempts to render the text word-for-word possibly at the expense of flow or how things are naturally expressed in the target language. The more the source language differs from the target language the more difficult it may be to understand a literal translation. When reading a novel in a natural rendering of the language, the existence of a natural flow of words is usually more important than preserving the original grammatical structure and language. When the formal equivalence approach has been attempted in the translation of a novel, it has often resulted in an incomprehensible text, such as in the case of translations by Lu Xun into Chinese.³ Because of the great linguistic differences between Chinese and western languages the dynamic equivalence approach is in general the most suitable.⁴⁵

The philosopher Walter Benjamin uses the term translatability to describe a certain quality of certain works. For a work to be translatable, its nature should lend itself to translation and an adequate translator can be found among its readers. Are inferior translations of foreign literature into Chinese caused by the original’s nature not lending itself to translation into Chinese? Benjamin discusses the

¹ Zhang, Rui. *The cinema of Feng Xiaogang: commercialization and censorship in Chinese Cinema after 1989*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008. P. 27

² At the time of writing the only major academic study regarding the quality of an entire work that could be found was Van der Peet, David, *The Lord of the Rings: Critique of the Two Chinese Translations* (Taiwan: Fu Jen Catholic University, The Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies) 2000.

³ Chan, Leo Tak-hung, *What’s Modern in Chinese Translation Theory? Lu Xun and the Debates on Literalism and Foreignization in the May Fourth Period*, published in TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, vol. 14, n° 2, 2001, p. 202

⁴ Chan, Leo Tak-hung. *Twentieth-Century Chinese Translation Theory: Modes, issues and debates*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing co, 2004. P 223.

⁵ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

quality of a translation based on how well it transfers both information and “poetic” content from the original into the translation.

Another perspective is Paolo Bartolini’s idea of cross-cultural fertilization, where the translation is a meeting between different languages and cultures that could potentially enrich each other. Resulting in a translation that perhaps could surpass the original - does such a work of translation indeed exist?

In this study I hope to provide an overview of the state of translation of contemporary western literature into Chinese by analysing several works using the criteria and concepts (explained above) formulated by Nida, Benjamin and Bartolini.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to provide an overview of the quality of translation in present day translating of contemporary western literature into Chinese. Another goal is to evaluate and compare the criteria and concepts of translation theorists Walter Benjamin and Eugene Nida when put into practical use in translation analysis. Some questions I hope to be able to answer are: what is the level of quality of this small sample of translations into Chinese? What are the underlying factors causing inferior or superior translations?

Outline

A historical background of translation in China is first presented, followed by a chapter discussing the theoretical concepts used in the analysis. Both Western and Chinese theoretical concepts are introduced and related to each other. I then describe and explain the method used in my translation analyses. Then follows the analyses themselves, and finally a chapter with my conclusions. In the appendices I provide “back translations” of parts of the books belonging to my sample. These back translations are meant to be used for reference and shouldn’t be necessary reading to be able to understand the rest of this essay.

Delimitations

By contemporary literature, I mean literature that was written from around the time of the Second World War and until the present. I only study literature written (primarily) in prose and works that I believe most people would read because of the pleasure of reading rather than out of professional or academic interest. I focus on works written in English by British and American authors. Since I want this study to address the present situation in China, I have attempted to limit myself to works that have been translated since the 1990s, but it can be difficult to know when a translation was carried out, as this information is rarely available. When I have been unsure of when the translation has taken place, I have chosen the most recently published version.

Method

I will apply what I refer to as the “free approach” method used by David van der Peet in his analysis of *the Lord of the Rings* on several relevant works as the basis for my analysis. The analysis will be carried out using concepts and criteria formulated by the translation theorists Walter Benjamin, Eugene Nida and Paolo Bartolini. A complete description of the method use is found in the chapter “Method”.

Material

Since I hope to give a general overview of the state of translation I have chosen works of different genres, popularity, complexity and styles to be analysed. The works which I have selected for analysis are the following: J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings*, Dan Brown's *the Da Vinci Code*, Stephen King's *Christine*, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity* and Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*.

These works vary greatly in popularity in China with Harry Potter and *the Da Vinci code* both being best sellers while *Christine* is in China a rather unknown book. Regarding complexity *the Lord of the Rings* is among these books by far the most complex while Harry Potter is a children's book (but far from simple). These books also represent different times of origin with *the Lord of the Rings* being written during World War Two, *Christine* in the early 1980s; *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in the 1990s and *the Da Vinci code* in the 2000s. Very different genres are represented ranging from fantasy, mystery-thriller and comedy to military history.

Historical background

This chapter is meant to introduce the reader to translation activities in China as well as to the theoretical concepts used in the translation analyses.

Early translation in China

According to the *Book of Rites*, the earliest translation activities in China occurred during the Zhou dynasty, more than 3000 years ago.⁶ During the Han Dynasty (206 – 220 b.c.) Buddhist scriptures and works about Indian astronomy were translated from Sanskrit.⁷ Buddhist scriptures were translated on a large scale. The translations of Buddhist scriptures enabled Buddhism to become a rival to Daoism.⁸ Two schools of thought surfaced regarding how a translation should be carried out.⁹ One of them was proposed by Dao An (道安 314-385), a famous translator during this period.¹⁰ Dao An insisted on strict literal translation, i.e. that the source text should be translated word by word.¹² The other school of thought was proposed by the Indian Buddhist monk Kumarajiva (鸠摩罗什 350-410), who was invited by Dao An to China.¹³ Kumarajiva proposed what we might today think of as a free translation approach with the transfer of the true essence of the scriptures being the goal of translation.

The first peak of translation in China

Translation and import of knowledge became common practice from the Sui dynasty (581-618) to the Tang Dynasty (618-907) which was a period of grandeur, expansion and a flowering of the arts. It was still mostly Buddhist scriptures that were being translated and mainly by Buddhist monks.¹⁴

The greatest translator of this period was the famous monk Xuan Zang (玄奘 600-664).¹⁵ He became famous for his seventeen year overland trip to India and back, which he recorded in detail in his book “Records on the Western Regions of the Great Tang Empire” (大唐西域记).¹⁶ It is said that he returned to China with hundreds of manuscripts as well as relics and gold statues of Buddha.¹⁷ The emperor gave him a triumphal welcome and had the Great Wild Goose Pagoda built in Xi’an where Xuan Zang spent the remainder of his life with his collaborators translating hundreds of Buddhist manuscripts.¹⁸ Xuan Zang’s trip also inspired the great classic “Journey to the West”.

⁶ Mao Zuyi, ‘History of Translation in China’, in *An Encyclopaedia of Translation*, eds. Chan Sin-wai and David E. Pollard (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2001) p. 373

⁷ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Chan Sin-wai. *A Chronology of Translation in China and the West: From the Legendary period to 2004*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2009. P 37.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Mao Zuyi, ‘History of Translation in China’, p. 374

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 375.

¹⁷ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

¹⁸ Ibid

Xuan Zang was also the first Chinese translator to translate out of Chinese.¹⁹ He translated Lao Zi's works (the father of Daoism) into Sanskrit and sent it to India.²⁰ Xuan Zang formulated the translation criteria that a translation "must be both truthful and intelligible to the populace".²¹ Xuan Zang proposed a combination of free and literal translation where respect of the source text and intelligibility were both goals for the translation.²²

Xuan Zang was the most important translator and theorist during this period, having made significant contributions both to translation practice and theory. The Pagoda built in Xi'an to hold the works he brought back from India still stands today, more than 1300 years later, and a statue of him is standing in front of the temple area.²³

In the history of translation in China, the translation of Buddhist scriptures is considered the first peak of translation. No kind of translation in the world can match it in length of duration, in immensity of scale, in multitude of participants or in influence.²⁴

Yuan and Ming Dynasties 1271-1644

During the Yuan and Ming Dynasties the translation of Buddhist scriptures lost importance. Instead works of science and technology, and - with the arrival of Christian missionaries - Christian texts now dominated. Although the translations were mainly about mathematics, astronomy, medicine etc there were some translations of literature in this period, one example being *Aesop's Fables*, translated in 1625.²⁵ The second peak of translation in China occurred between the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. It centred on translations of scientific and technical works.²⁶

Qing dynasty 1644-1912

In 1723 foreign missionaries in China were expelled and with them the translation into Chinese all but stopped for more than a hundred years.²⁷ It resumed following the Opium War (1839-1842) and the subsequent arrival of Christian missionaries. Foreign missionaries dominated scientific and technical translation initially, but Chinese translators, trained in China or at foreign universities, gradually took over the import of western knowledge.²⁸

During the late Qing Dynasty many western novels were translated into Chinese and this marked the third peak of translation in China.²⁹

Lin Shu

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Mao Zuyi, 'History of Translation in China', p. 375

²¹ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

²² Ibid

²³ Thompson, John M. *Introduction to the world's major religions: Buddhism*. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2006. P 176

²⁴ Mao Zuyi, 'History of Translation in China', p. 377

²⁵ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Mao Zuyi, 'History of Translation in China', p. 380

²⁸ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

²⁹ Ibid

The most well known translator during this period was Lin Shu (林紓1852-1924) who translated about 160 literary works into Chinese and who has been regarded as a pioneer of literary translation in China. He didn't know any foreign languages himself. Instead he achieved his translations with the assistance of interpreters.³⁰

He presented himself like this in his preface to his translation of Dicken's *The Old Curiosity Shop*:³¹

"I have no foreign languages. I cannot pass for a translator without the aid of several gentlemen, who interpret the texts for me. They interpret, and I write down what they interpret. They stop, and I put down my pen. 6,000 words can be produced after a mere four hours' labour. I am most fortunate to have my error-plagued, rough translations kindly accepted by the learned."

There were many mistakes and misinterpretations in his translations, but he was very good at writing classical Chinese and his translations were very popular in his time.³² Lin Shu often made "improvements" to the original as well as abridgments.³³ This made his works controversial. Some claim that the freedoms he took means that his works don't qualify as "translations", instead they should be considered as some kind of "re-telling". Others praised them. The sinologist Arthur Waley said this about Lin Shu's translations of Dickens:³⁴

"To put Dickens into classical Chinese would on the face of it seem to be a grotesque undertaking. But the results are not at all grotesque. Dickens, inevitably, becomes a rather different and to my mind a better writer. All the overelaboration, the overstatement and uncurbed garrulity disappear. The humour is there, but is transmuted by a precise, economical style; every point that Dickens spoils by uncontrolled exuberance, Lin Shu makes quietly and efficiently".

In the 1920s Lin Shu's translations were ridiculed by the group, of which the influential writer Lu Xun (鲁迅1881-1936) was a member, who preferred faithfulness. His translations were then largely forgotten until 1963 when the writer Qian Zhongshu published his essay "Lin Shu's Translations".³⁵ Since then the interest in his translations has been revived and in 1981 ten of Lin Shu's translations were republished.³⁶ Some of his most famous works are *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *David Copperfield* and *Hamlet*³⁷.

Yan Fu

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lin_Shū 2010-06-02

³² Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

³³ Kenan, Lin. *Translation as a Catalyst for Social change in China*. From Tymoczko, Maria and Gentzler, Edwin (eds). *Translation and Power*. USA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. P. 178.

³⁴ Lung, Rachel. *The Oral Translator's "Visibility": The Chinese Translation of David Copperfield by Lin Shu and Wei Yi*. From TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, vol. 17, n° 2, 2004. P. 176

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

Yan Fu (严复1854-1921) was a highly respected translator of non-literary works during this period.³⁸ Some of the works he translated were Adam Smith's *Wealth of nations*, J. S. Mill's *On Liberty* and Herbert Spencer's *Study of Sociology*. He is perhaps most famous for introducing Darwin to Chinese readers through his translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*. He set down three criteria for translation: "Faithfulness, fluency and elegance" (信达雅).³⁹ These criteria influenced the development of translation practice and theory for a long time to come. His interpretation of elegance was controversial even for its time, and for example led to "you're a damn fool" being translated into "you're not a wise person".⁴⁰ The three principles of faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance should be understood not as competing but as additive factors: first, faithful equivalence in meaning, second, expressive clarity of form, and third, attractive elegance that makes a text a pleasure to read. But unfortunately too many Chinese translation theorists and practitioners focused primarily on elegance.⁴¹

Republic of China 1911-1949

Literary translation after the May 4th Movement (1919) and until 1949 made important contributions to the introduction of foreign literature to China and to the development of literature in China. Translators in this period of time, by comparison with those during the late Qing dynasty, were more selective regarding what works would be translated. The quality and quantity of literary translation improved greatly. Many of the greatest works in foreign literature, from nations all over the world, were translated into Chinese.⁴²

The translators, most of whom had learned the source languages and literary theory before carrying out the translations, were aware of the significance of transferring literary styles. Professionalization of literary translation also helped improving translation quality.⁴³

An important improvement in the conditions of translation was a linguistic change. Before the May 4th Movement, the language used in literary creation and translation was classical Chinese (wenyan). But after it, a more simplified and easily-understood vernacular Chinese (Bai Hua) came to be used for literary creation and translation. The use of vernacular Chinese in translation enlarged the readerships.

Translation theory, especially literary translation theory, developed during this period of time when large quantities of literary works were translated. Translation issues like the necessity of translation, translatability and untranslatability, the relation between translation and literary creation, the

³⁸ Mao Zuyi, *History of Translation in China*, p. 382

³⁹ Chan, Leo Tak-hung, *Twentieth-Century Chinese Translation Theory: Modes, issues and debates* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing co, 2004) p. 4

⁴⁰ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁴¹ Nida, Eugene. *Contexts in Translating*, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing co, 2001) p. 1

⁴² Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁴³ Ibid

improvement of translation quality etc. were raised and discussed by translators. However, the most debated topic of translation theory was still: literal vs free translation.⁴⁴

Lu Xun

Lu Xun (鲁迅1881-1936), one of the great writers of China, translated more than 200 literary works from 14 countries.⁴⁵ His correspondence on translation with the linguist, politician and at one point leader of the Communist Party Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白1899-1935) contributed significantly to the development of translation theory in China.⁴⁶ Lu Xun fought against the tendencies of extremely liberal translations such as Lin Shu's and attached particular, sometimes extreme, importance to faithfulness.⁴⁷ He compared translation to creative work, but recognized that it differed from literary creation.⁴⁸ The value of a translation lies in its faithfulness to the original text.⁴⁹ He insisted that the main purpose of translation was to introduce the culture and social lives of foreign countries to China.⁵⁰ He advocated that there should be an exotic atmosphere in the translated works which would familiarize the readers with foreign cultures. He wrote in the prelude of one of his translated works: "A translation must have both intelligibility and the style of the original text".⁵¹ He advocated strict literal translation so as to be more faithful to the original text and was against those who liked to borrow words or phrases from the target language in their translations to improve intelligibility and fluency.⁵² His famous dictum was "I'd rather be faithful than smooth" (寧信而不順).

Qu Qiubai

Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白1899-1935) was a linguist, journalist, politician and in the late 1920s leader of the communist party.⁵³ His views on translation were very influential in China and conducive to developing a theory of translation in China.⁵⁴ He was one of the early translators of Russian literature into Chinese. His translations have been highly valued for their faithfulness to the meaning, the syntactic structure and the writing style of the original text. He believed, like Lu Xun, that translators should be faithful to the original text. "A translation should be faithful to the original meaning and

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁴⁶ Chan, Leo Tak-hung, *What's Modern in Chinese Translation Theory? Lu Xun and the Debates on Literalism and Foreignization in the May Fourth Period*, published in TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, vol. 14, n° 2, 2001, p. 205

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 200

⁴⁸ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁴⁹ Chan, Leo Tak-hung, *What's Modern in Chinese Translation Theory? Lu Xun and the Debates on Literalism and Foreignization in the May Fourth Period*, published in TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, vol. 14, n° 2, 2001, p. 203

⁵⁰ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Chan, Leo Tak-hung, *What's Modern in Chinese Translation Theory? Lu Xun and the Debates on Literalism and Foreignization in the May Fourth Period*, published in TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, vol. 14, n° 2, 2001, p. 205

⁵³ Kang, Liu. *Globalization and Cultural Trends in China*. USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2003. P. 89

⁵⁴ Mao Zuyi, 'History of Translation in China', p. 386

enable the target language readers to have the same concept from the translated text as the source language readers get from the original text."⁵⁵

He also advocated absorbing new words and expressions from foreign languages to enrich the Chinese language. He said: "Translation — in addition to introducing the content of the original to Chinese readers — has another important function, that is, helping us create a new modern Chinese language."⁵⁶

Qu Qiubai was one of those who challenged Yan Fu's translation criteria. He pointed out that Yan Fu's choice of language and style for translations, which returned to the Classical, cut him off from the social development of the time. In one of his letters to Lu Xun, he said: "How can we reach Yan Fu's requirement of 'faithfulness' and 'fluency' if we have to make the translation elegant by using the language and style of almost two thousand years ago?"⁵⁷

He also argued against those who advocated that "intelligibility" is more important than "faithfulness". He believed that translators sometimes have to sacrifice part of the "intelligibility" in order to achieve "faithfulness."⁵⁸

Mao's China 1949-1976

The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 led translation to enter a new era focusing on the translation of communist works as well as on technical and scientific works. Literary translations generally only concerned works from the Soviet Union and other communist countries. Some western works that depicted the dark side of capitalist societies such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Oliver Twist* were still allowed.⁵⁹

Unfortunately the number of literary works published in China decreased in the People's Republic, as the authorities imposed severe restrictions on what kind of works could be authored or translated.⁶⁰ Writing about contemporary China was only permitted within the framework of socialist realism.⁶¹ Literature and art should adhere to Mao's 1942 "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art" which described the desired role of literature and art in the new state.⁶² In 1962 the production of literature had fallen to the point that only forty-two novels were published in the entire year.⁶³ The horrors of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) restricted cultural activities even more.

The translation activities that still existed were initiated by the communist government. Large-scale translation of Marx and Lenin's works had started in 1949-1950. The Translation Bureau of Marx-

⁵⁵ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁵⁶ Chan, Leo Tak-hung, *What's Modern in Chinese Translation Theory? Lu Xun and the Debates on Literalism and Foreignization in the May Fourth Period*, published in TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, vol. 14, n° 2, 2001, p. 205

⁵⁷ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Zhang, Rui. *The cinema of Feng Xiaogang: commercialization and censorship in Chinese Cinema after 1989*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008. P. 27

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Yang, Lan. *Chinese fiction of the Cultural Revolution*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988. P. 14.

⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_the_People's_Republic_of_China 2010-05-31

Lenin's Works was founded in 1949. In the 1950s, a large quantity of scientific and technical works was translated into Chinese. In the 1970s, most of the translators in China were involved with the translation of United Nations documents after China was made a member of the United Nations.⁶⁴

Reform era 1978-

In 1978, two years after the end of the disastrous Cultural Revolution, China adopted reform-policies. These not only affected economic policies, but other spheres of society including the cultural sphere were also influenced by increased "openness". With the rapidly growing economy, more and more qualified translators and interpreters were needed by all sorts of institutions, especially in the developed coastal areas, where preferential policies had been granted by the government, greatly spurring the economic development.⁶⁵ Literary translations now focused on works from America and Europe, instead of the Soviet Union whose influence had been shrunk since the so-called Sino-Soviet split and rupture of relations between the communist parties of the two countries in the early 1960s.⁶⁶ There was a special interest in foreign works. Linguists were commissioned to translate recently published foreign literature, often without carefully considering its interest for the Chinese reader. Literary magazines specializing in translations of foreign short stories became very popular, especially among the young.⁶⁷

Jin Di, who lectured on translation theory and practice at Nankai University and the Foreign Languages Institute of Tianjin for many years, co-authored with Eugene Nida the popular *On Translation* (1984) and introduced the theory of "dynamic equivalence" to China.

The main issues of translation discussed continued to be the principles, criteria and methods of translation. In some works Yan Fu and his three-character translation theory are still visibly influential, although his three characters (xin, da, ya 信達雅) are interpreted in new ways.⁶⁸

Present situation

Judging by bestseller lists, western and other foreign literature is very popular in China today, especially in comparison with the popularity of Chinese literature in the west. At the time of writing there were on the best seller list of the Chinese Amazon online bookshop eight western and another five Japanese books among the thirty most popular.⁶⁹ The American Amazon book shop best seller list at the same time included no Chinese books among the top 100 bestsellers.⁷⁰ One reason for this could be that far fewer books are translated from Chinese to English than vice versa. Every year, Chinese publishers translate several thousand foreign books into Chinese, but only very few Chinese

⁶⁴ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ McDougall, Bonnie S. and Kam, Louie. *The literature of China in the twentieth century*. London: C. Hurst & Co, 1997. P. 8.

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Zhong, Weihe, *An Overview of Translation in China: Practice and Theory*, Translation journal Volume 7, No. 2 April 2003

⁶⁹ (30. Sophie's world, 29. The Catcher in the Rye, 22. First Love Last Rites, 15. The Unbearable Lightness of Being, 13. Three cups of tea, 12. The Kite runner, 11. The Lost Symbol, 9. What We Talk about When We Talk about Love) www.amazon.cn 2010-05-29

⁷⁰ www.amazon.com 2010-05-29

books are translated into foreign languages.⁷¹ According to *China Book Review*, the rights to more than 9000 foreign titles were bought by Chinese publishers in 2007 alone.⁷² Foreign copyright purchase is roughly 10 times that of Chinese copyright sales.⁷³ This is partly because there are not enough qualified Chinese to foreign language translators.⁷⁴ Chinese literature is at present largely unknown in the west. Very few of the most interesting or bestselling Chinese authors are translated.

Theoretical perspectives on translation

Dynamic and formal equivalence

Eugene Nida is an American linguist who worked for decades with Bible translations using his approach of dynamic equivalence.

Dynamic and formal equivalence are approaches to translation that are associated with Nida who originally coined these expressions, although the ideas essentially were proposed by others before him. Dynamic equivalence attempts to convey the thought expressed in a source text, if necessary at the expense of literalness, original word order etc while formal equivalence attempts to render the text word-by-word.⁷⁵

Dynamic equivalence is based on what Nida calls “the principle of equivalent effect”. The message should be adapted to the receptor’s grammar, vocabulary and cultural references in order to achieve naturalness. Nida’s key point is that the reader of a translation should feel the same response or reaction as the reader of the original experiences.⁷⁶

Which of these approaches the translator should use should depends on the context of the translation. A novel might be appropriately translated with the use of dynamic equivalence so that it may read naturally, while legal or diplomatic texts might be more properly translated strictly adhering to the original.

According to Nida, it is impossible for a translation to be the exact equivalent of the original. This is because of differences between languages regarding grammatical features, word order, types of dependencies etc. Therefore all translations involve:⁷⁷

1. Loss of information
2. Addition of information
3. Skewing of information

⁷¹ http://www.tac-online.org.cn/en/tran/2009-10/13/content_3182787.htm Translators Association of China’s web site 2010-05-29

⁷² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_literature#Post-Mao_.281976-present.29 2010-06-16

⁷³ http://www.tac-online.org.cn/en/tran/2009-10/13/content_3182787.htm Translators Association of China’s web site 2010-05-29

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing translation studies: theories and applications*. New York: Routledge, 2008. P. 42.

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Nida, Eugene A., ‘Principles of Translation as Exemplified by Bible Translating’. In *On Translation*. Edited by Reuben A. Brower. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1959. P 27

Nida sees translation as involving the transfer of message and style. “Translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closes natural equivalent to the message of the source language, first in meaning and secondly in style.” Meaning is a higher priority than style, so sometimes stylistic forms might have to be sacrificed in order to preserve the meaning.⁷⁸

The key role played by Nida in translation theory is in steering its discourse away from strict word-for-word equivalence. The concept of dynamic equivalence has however also been heavily criticised for a number of reasons: for example how can you measure the effect and who would you measure it on? How can this measure be anything but subjective? Is it at all possible for two versions of a text to achieve equivalent effect on receptors of different times and culture?⁷⁹

These approaches are similar to the different perspectives heavily debated in the early 20th century in China. Formal equivalence is similar to what in China is called “literal translation” (zhiyi直译) while dynamic equivalence is similar to “sense-for-sense translation” (yiyi意译). But yiyi can also refer to the extremely free form of translation during the late Qing practiced by Lin Shu among others, which in China is more specifically referred to as “unrestrained / free translation” (ziyouyi自由译).⁸⁰

直译Zhiyi /literal translation	意译Yiyi / free translation
= Straightforward translation/ Direct translation	=Sense-for-sense translation/ Sense translation
Formal correspondence	Semantic correspondence
~Word-for word translation (zuziyi)	~Free translation (ziyouyi)
~Stiff translation/ Hard translation (yingyi) (Lu Xun)	~Distorted translation (waiyi) (Lin Shu)
~Formal Equivalence	~Dynamic Equivalence

Table 1. Characteristics of the two approaches to translation heavily debated in China in the 1920s⁸¹

Europeanization vs Sinicization

Another great debate in Chinese translation theory in the early twentieth century was that of Europeanization or Sinicization. Europeanization in this context means that translation should be used to import foreign language structures into the Chinese language. Sinicization, on the other hand, means that the translated text should be subordinated to Chinese language structures: the translation process should adapt the text into Chinese and not preserve any foreign language elements. The most famous proponents of Europeanization were perhaps Lu Xun and Qu Qiubai, while Lin Shu’s translations are examples of extreme sinicization.

Lu Xun’s extremely literal translations resulted in sentences that were often incomprehensible. Structurally, as a language, Chinese differs drastically from Western languages. In translating word

⁷⁸ Ibid p.33

⁷⁹ Munday, Jeremy. *Introducing translation studies: theories and applications*. New York: Routledge, 2008. P. 42.

⁸⁰ Chan, Leo Tak-hung, *What’s Modern in Chinese Translation Theory? Lu Xun and the Debates on Literalism and Foreignization in the May Fourth Period*, published in TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction, vol. 14, n° 2, 2001, p. 200

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 201

for word from English, for instance, the Chinese translator invariably produces sentences in which the normal word order is seriously violated. This is just one example; other problems abound in areas such as differences in indicating time, modality, aspect, voice etc. The reasons for Lu Xun to translate in this way was not only because he wanted to be faithful to the original, he wanted to create a new Chinese language:⁸²

“[The Chinese language] is just too imprecise” and that “To cure this ailment, I believe we have to suffer some more pain and embody our thought in wayward syntactical structures — ancient, dialectal, as well as foreign — so that one day these structures can become our own”⁸³

What Lu Xun wanted to do was to import features of western languages in order to enrich the Chinese language and a way to do that was through extremely literal translations. In practice, however, his translations weren’t popular, and European structures have not been imported into Chinese as he wanted to, although many agreed that the Chinese language needed to develop but disagreed on how that should be done.⁸⁴

Even though the Chinese language didn’t develop exactly as Lu Xun had hoped foreign elements were imported into Chinese since the 1920s, for example:⁸⁵

1. the insertion of subjects where none was needed
2. the increased use of conjunctions and other linking devices
3. the proliferation of passive structures
4. the appearance of ax-like morphemes like hua (“ize”) and fei (“non-”)
5. the widespread use of lengthy modifiers.

Walter Benjamin’s concepts

Walter Benjamin was a German philosopher, sociologist, literary critic, translator and essayist. In 1923 his translation of Baudelaire’s *Tableaux Parisiens* was published which included a preface headlined “The Task of the Translator”, a text which has highly influenced the theory of translation.⁸⁶

Hallmarks of inferior translations

Benjamin’s text was originally written in German, the version I am quoting here was translated by Harry Zohn in 1968. According to Benjamin a literary work contains both information and something else which is harder to define. This something else is the essential substance of a literary work: the mysterious, the unfathomable, the meaning behind the words, the “poetic” (I will from now on refer to this as “poetic” content). Of these two things, it is the “poetic” that is essential for the reader while the information is secondary in importance. Therefore a translator should not focus on just transmitting information because it is then impossible for him to translate the poetic content, or as

⁸² Ibid, p. 202

⁸³ Ibid p. 206

⁸⁴ Ibid p. 216

⁸⁵ Chan, Tak-Hung Leo. *Twentieth Century Chinese Translation Theory : Modes, Issues and Debates*, (Philadelphia, PA, USA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), p. 31

⁸⁶ Sas, Miryam. *Fault lines: cultural memory and Japanese surrealism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. P 212.

Benjamin puts it “any translation which intends to perform a transmitting function cannot transmit anything but information—hence, something inessential. This is the hallmark of bad translations.”⁸⁷

But if the translator tries to be a poet Benjamin sees a risk: “But do we not generally regard as the essential substance of a literary work what it contains in addition to information— as even a poor translator will admit— the unfathomable, the mysterious, the ‘poetic’, something that a translator can reproduce only if he is also a poet? This, actually, is the cause of another characteristic of inferior translation, which consequently we may define as the inaccurate transmission of an inessential content. This will be true whenever a translation undertakes to serve the reader”.⁸⁸ Here Benjamin warns of what could happen if a translator tries to be “poetic” but fails. The translator might translate the information – the inessential content – incorrectly.

So Walter Benjamin identifies two “hallmarks” of inferior translations:

1. “Poetic” content lost in translation.
2. Inaccurate transmission of inessential content.

A simple example of a single sentence that is translated preserving its information while losing the “poetic” content could be:

“The girl was chewing a wad of Bubblicious gum big enough to choke a Missouri mule.”

Into:

“The girl was chewing a very large piece of chewing gum”.

Loss of “poetic” content is often linked to translating and preserving information but losing the style, the way the author has expressed himself.

Translatability

According to most encyclopaedias untranslatability means a text, utterance or word which has no equivalent in another language.⁸⁹ But Walter Benjamin means some kind of quality, something about the nature of a work. He describes it as “an essential feature of certain works”, that “the work’s nature lends itself to translation”, and the possibility that an adequate translator could be at some point found.⁹⁰

On the whole Walter Benjamin’s theory is not without ambiguities. He starts his essay with proclaiming that the translator should show no consideration for the reader: “In the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful. [...] No poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener”.⁹¹ Thereby seemingly giving the translator great freedom, but at the same time claims that the inaccurate

⁸⁷ Benjamin, Walter “The task of the translator”, translated by Harry Zohn. From Venuti, Lawrence (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000.

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Untranslatability> 2010-05-31

⁹⁰ Benjamin, Walter “The task of the translator”, translated by Harry Zohn. From Venuti, Lawrence (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000.

⁹¹ Ibid

transmission of the information – the inessential content – is a hallmark of an inferior translation. Nevertheless I believe his concept of translatability as part of the nature of a work and his criteria for discovering inferior translations are interesting and meaningful to explore. One might say that Walter Benjamin believes that some works are impossible to translate, for Nida this is not so much of an issue although he believes that an exact equivalence is impossible.

Eugene Nida’s criteria

According to Nida, three factors should be used to test a translation:⁹²

1. The correctness with which the receptors understand the message of the original (that is to say, its “faithfulness to the original” as determined by the extent to which people really comprehend the meaning).
2. The ease of comprehension
3. The involvement a person experiences as the result of the adequacy of the form of the translation.

Nida identifies three outcomes of translation:⁹³

Bad	Good	Bad
Formal correspondence: the form (syntax and classes of words) is preserved; the meaning is lost or distorted	Dynamic equivalence: the form is restructured (different syntax and lexicon) to preserve the same meaning	Paraphrase by addition, deletion or skewing of the message

Dynamic equivalence should lead to the reader having the same response when reading the translated text as that of the readers of the original.⁹⁴ Nida is target language oriented and focuses on the reader.

Paolo Bartolini

Paolo Bartolini is an Italian researcher of literature, cultural studies and translation theory. He is still active today, presently working at the University of Sydney.⁹⁵

He concerns himself with the area in-between the original and the translation “that zone where two languages and cultures come together and fuse in a kind of cross-fertilization”. This concept was inspired by the French writer, philosopher and literary theorist Maurice Blanchot (1907-2003) who once wrote:⁹⁶

⁹² Nida, Eugene A. and Taber, Charles R., *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982. P. 173

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ P.28

⁹⁵ http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/italian/staff/paolo_bartoloni.shtml 2010-06-01

⁹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Blanchot 2010-06-01

“The translator is the secret master of the difference of languages, a difference he is not out to abolish, but rather one he puts to use as he brings violent or subtle changes to bear on his own language, thus awakening within it the presence of that which is at origin different in the original.”⁹⁷

Bartolini is not concerned with concepts such as equivalence or faithfulness, instead a translation can be “beautiful and unfaithful”.⁹⁸ The story of the Italian writer Italo Svevo (1861-1928) can illustrate what Bartolini means.⁹⁹ In 1923 Svevo self-published the book *La Coscienza di Zeno* (Confession’s of Zeno). This book is written in the form of memoirs of one Zeno Cosini who writes them at the insistence of his psychoanalyst. The work is about the author’s interest in the theories of Sigmund Freud. The novel received almost no attention from Italian readers and critics at the time of its publication.¹⁰⁰

This novel might have been buried in oblivion if it hadn’t been for James Joyce who had met Svevo while working as an English tutor in Trieste. Joyce championed *Confessions of Zeno*, helping to have it translated into French and then published in Paris, where critics praised it extravagantly. This led Italian critics to discover it.¹⁰¹

Another example is Joseph Conrad whose Polish origins affected his English, which was his third language after Polish and French, so that it had an exotic style.¹⁰² Other examples are Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett and Lin Shu.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ Blanchot, Maurice, *Translating*, quoted in “Translation Translation” Edited by Susan Petrilli. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2003. P 467

⁹⁸ Bartolini, Paolo, *Translating from the interstices*, in “Translation Translation” Edited by Susan Petrilli. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2003. P 467

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svevo> 2010-06-01

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_conrad 2010-06-01

¹⁰³ Bartolini, Paolo, *Translating from the interstices*, in “Translation Translation” Edited by Susan Petrilli. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2003. P 471

Method

Nida, Benjamin and Bartolini have provided criteria and concepts that can be used to analyse a translation. But how do you practically carry out such an analysis?

Nida's proposed methods

Nida has many ideas about how to test a translation. This test is meant to be carried out by the translator himself as a way to ensure that his work is of an acceptable quality.

“The test should cover the entire range of possible problems: accuracy of rendering, intelligibility, stylistic equivalence etc. But to do this one must focus attention on the amount of dynamic equivalence. This means that testing the translation does not consist in merely comparing texts to see the extent of verbal consistency or conformity, but in determining how the potential receptors of a translation react to it? Of course this does not mean that a translation should be judged only by to what extent people like the contents. Some might object to the themes and contents of that which is communicated, but there should not be anything in the translation itself which is stylistically awkward, structurally burdensome, linguistically unnatural and semantically misleading or incomprehensible, unless, of course, the message in the source language has these characteristics.”

¹⁰⁴

One way of measuring the amount of dynamic equivalence is by measuring text length. According to Nida “there is a tendency for all good translations to be somewhat longer than the originals”. The reason for this is that with a dynamic equivalence approach information is added to bring into the target text meanings that might be implicit in the original language. For linguistic reasons this measurement is very difficult to apply to a target text in Chinese. Besides, as Nida himself points out, how do you know if the translation is good or just long? ¹⁰⁵

To measure the ease of comprehension Nida suggests using a Cloze-test which is an exercise, test, or assessment consisting of a portion of text with certain words removed (cloze text), where the participant is asked to replace the missing words. The Cloze-test should then be applied to readers of both the original and the target text. If there are significant differences in the results this could indicate that the target text needs further work. But this method also has a few drawbacks. One is that you need to apply the test on people who are equally unfamiliar with the theme or language of the target text- how can you ensure that? Another problem is that the Cloze test is often difficult to administer and the results are sometimes cumbersome to analyze. ¹⁰⁶

Another statistical way of testing a translation is checking the frequency of certain grammatical and lexical features and to employ these to test a translation. “For example, it might be found that in the receptor language, one normally employs the passive construction only 5 percent of the time and the active 95 percent. If, however, in any passage in a translation the passive is used as much as 20 percent of the time, it is obvious that the translation is unnatural in this particular feature. “As Nida himself points out there are also “dangers” by using this kind of test. If you apply the test and find out that the target text is within its natural parameters, does it really mean the text is easy to

¹⁰⁴ Nida, Eugene A. and Taber, Charles R., *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), p. 163-170

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid* p. 170

understand? The choice of wording could still mean that the text is more difficult to understand than the original. Another problem is that within different kinds of themes or discourses different parameters could be found.¹⁰⁷

Another idea proposed by Nida is “to determine the extent to which people buy copies of such translations in order to share them with friends”.¹⁰⁸ To me this idea seems completely unreasonable as the assumption that high sales equals high quality seems very brittle indeed. Italo Svevo’s original publication is but one example. The sales figure of a book is dependent on so many other factors than the quality of the work such as marketing, timing, availability etc.

My conclusion when evaluating Nida’s methods is that none of them are practically applicable or reliable when it comes to analysing the subject of this study. Neither Walter Benjamin nor Paolo Bartolini provide any suggestions on how to analyse translations.

Free approach

In the year 2000 a thesis written by David van der Peet was submitted at the The Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies belonging to the Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan.¹⁰⁹ This thesis is a critique of the two translations of the Lord of the Rings into Chinese that existed at that time. The thesis received some attention; it was for example the subject of a positive review in the Translation journal.¹¹⁰ Among its conclusions the thesis stated that both versions failed to convey the meaning of the original and contained countless mistakes. The reason for this was because the translators didn’t understand the original work correctly or because they lacked knowledge of the “complicated and cultural backdrop” which Tolkien’s writing is set. The method used was that van der Peet thoroughly read both the original and the translated versions. He then selected passages from the work (seventeen prose passages and three poems) which he thought were representative of the problems in the translations and discussed them in greater detail.¹¹¹

“My general procedure in examining the two Chinese translations of *The Lord of the Rings* was to do a thorough reading of Part One of the English original (i.e. *The Fellowship of the Ring*) in the Mandarin renderings published by 萬象 and 聯經; and a faster reading focussing on passages likely to prove problematic in the case of Parts Two and Three of the trilogy.”¹¹²

This method allowed him to identify aspects of the work that should be further analysed as well as evaluate the work in its totality. He could evaluate the transfer of meaning, which is an assessment of the amount of dynamic equivalence. His identifying of “countless sloppy mistake” is a way of assessing Benjamin’s transmission of essential content and perhaps this could also be correlated to Nida’s criterion of ease of understanding. Van der Peet didn’t decide in advance what aspects his analysis would focus on. Instead he used what might I in this study refer to as “the free approach”. He read without having in advance decided any particular aspect to focus on. As he read he noted

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Ibid p. 173

¹⁰⁹ Van der Peet, David, *The Lord of the Rings: Critique of the Two Chinese Translations* (Taiwan: Fu Jen Catholic University, The Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies) 2000

¹¹⁰ <http://accurapid.com/journal/29tolkien.htm> the Translation Journal’s website, 2010-06-02

¹¹¹ Van der Peet, David, *The Lord of the Rings: Critique of the Two Chinese Translations* (Taiwan: Fu Jen Catholic University, The Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies) 2000

¹¹² Ibid

the things he reacted on – whatever they might be –and then discussed and analysed them in further detail. He also got a general impression of the state of the translation and then presented passages representative of the overall state. In his study he found that translation of names, inconsistencies, minor mistakes and mistranslations due to insufficient sensitivity to the source language were aspects that he after reading the translation found to be suitable for further analysis. But they could have been any number of other things such as sentence structure, loss of style, punctuation etc. I think this approach is suitable also for my study, fulfilling the need to evaluate the criteria I have presented before. It is also practically conceivable in relation to the concepts and criteria I want to measure. I think the “free approach” is in line with Walter Benjamin’s theories. In his mind, no consideration should be taken to the reader and therefore the reader surveys proposed by Nida would be meaningless. Benjamin’s “poetic” quality is something intangible, it isn’t something that could be discovered by a statistical analysis, measuring book sales or interviewing readers.

The concepts of untranslatability and Bartolini’s cross-fertilization are concepts to be discussed upon the discovery of either a superior or inferior translation. In order to enable readers of this study who are interested in the translation process or perhaps want to build their own opinion I have provided back translations of parts of those works which I have analysed. It is of course not possible to provide back translations of more than parts of the works, as back translating entire books would be an overwhelming project.

Applying the free approach

In this study I have applied the approach described above by reading both the translated text (which I refer to as the target) and the original, and thereby checking if the information – the story and the content of it is the same and identifying aspects for further analysis. I thereby evaluate the amount of dynamic equivalence and if there’s any – or what amount – of inaccurate transmission of inessential content.

Evaluating if “Poetic” content is lost in translation is something I do by comparing the general impression or feeling after reading the entirety of both versions. But this can of course also be done on the basis of individual sentences. While dynamic equivalence and inaccurate transmission of inessential content to some extent is possible to measure objectively, “poetic” content is more of a personal and subjective opinion. The conclusions regarding “poetic” content can only be those of my own - *de gustibus non est disputandum* – but I try to exemplify and explain how I arrived at my conclusion thereby giving the reader the possibility of deciding for him- or herself. If I find a translation to be inferior, I will then discuss the reasons for this, and in relation to Benjamin’s concept of translatability. If, on the other hand, a translation is perfect or ideal I will discuss it from the perspective of cross cultural fertilization.

I will pick out sentences, passages, names or other parts of the text that I think are representative of problems in the translations and analyse them. I will present the original text and next to it a back translation, so that readers unfamiliar with Chinese can follow this thesis.

Analyses

Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

The Lord of the Rings is an epic fantasy novel written by Oxford University Professor J. R. R. Tolkien. It was largely written during the Second World War. The main story is about a magic ring of power, created by the evil dark lord Sauron to rule the other Rings of Power in order to eventually conquer and rule all of Middle-earth. Initially receiving mixed reviews, recent reviews are on the whole highly favourable. In recent years the work has won awards such as “Nation’s best-loved book” in Britain, Germany and Australia.¹¹³ In a poll of Amazon-customers in 1999, *the Lord of the Rings* was chosen as “the book of the century”.¹¹⁴ The work is among the best selling in the history of literature with about 150 million copies sold.¹¹⁵

Chinese translations

Two translations were published in 1998 in Taiwan by the Wanxiang (萬象) and Lianjing (聯經) publishing companies.¹¹⁶ These are the translations that were analysed by Van der Peet. In 2001 a translation was published in simplified Chinese by Yilin(译林出版社) and another in traditional Chinese was published in Taiwan. The most recent translation in simplified Chinese was also published by Yilin in 2009 and this version is the target of this analysis.¹¹⁷

Year/Location	Publisher	Translator	Cover picture
1998 Taiwan	Wanxiang (萬象)	Hai Zhou (海舟)	
1998 Taiwan	Lianjing (聯經)	Team of five ¹¹⁸	
2001 Taiwan	Lianjing (聯經)	Lucifer Chu (朱學恆) ¹¹⁹	

¹¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_of_the_rings#Reception 2010-06-02

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_best-selling_books

¹¹⁶ Van der Peet, David, *The Lord of the Rings: Critique of the Two Chinese Translations* (Taiwan: Fu Jen Catholic University, The Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies) 2000

¹¹⁷

http://www.amazon.cn/mn/detailApp/ref=sr_1_13?_encoding=UTF8&s=books&qid=1275479608&asin=B002TOJWJO&sr=8-13# 2010-06-02

¹¹⁸ Van der Peet, David, *The Lord of the Rings: Critique of the Two Chinese Translations* (Taiwan: Fu Jen Catholic University, The Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies) 2000

¹¹⁹ http://www.linkingbooks.com.tw/basic/basic_cart_default.asp?ProductID=87013-01&companyname=%C1p%B8g%A5X%AA%A9%A4%BD%A5q 2010-07-25

2001 Nanjing	Yilin (译林)	Three different, one for each book.	
2009	Yilin (译林)	Different for each book.	

Table 2. Translations of the Lord of the Rings

General impressions and identification of aspects for further analysis

My general impression of this translation is that while the information of the story, at least the information necessary to follow the main story, exists in the target the way that Tolkien expresses himself, his humour, his style of writing is not in the target. Instead the target text is more like reading pure information than a work of literature. There are also some serious mistakes regarding the transfer of information which I will describe more below. It seems that the translators have taken great freedoms or perhaps made unintentional mistakes. In many places it is evident that the translators haven't understood the original text. Sometimes the meaning of sentences have been altered, some things mentioned in the original are left out of the target text although never things that are crucial to the understanding of the main plot. In some cases the translation ends up with a meaning that is the opposite of the intention of the author. There are also many minor problems and mistakes. The maps from the original are not included in the target.

I have selected a poem, a prose passage and a number of sentences as well as some titles for further analysis because they are representative of the state of this translation as a whole.

Book and chapter titles

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
The Lord of the Rings part one: The fellowship of the ring	Magic ring part one: the reappearance of the magic ring	魔戒再现	(魔戒再现)
The Lord of the Rings part two: The two towers	Magic ring part two: the extraordinary soldiers of the two towers	双塔奇兵	(双塔奇兵) 奇兵, which is the part of the name that doesn't mean "the two towers", can mean many things such

			as: raiders, commandos, extraordinary soldiers, an ingenious military move etc.
The Lord of the Rings part three: The return of the king	Magic ring part three: the invincible king	王者无敌	
A Long-Expected Party	the birthday celebration	生日庆典	
The Siege of Gondor	Massive forces pressure the walls	重兵压城	
The Ride of the Rohirrim	Rush to the rescue by night	星夜驰援	
Mount Doom	The mountain pass of misfortune	厄运山口	

Obviously the translators have taken great freedoms with the translations of these names but why they have been translated so freely is for me not clear. The titles are absolutely not difficult to translate into Chinese, with the possible exception of “The Fellowship of the Ring”. The movies and the other translations use other titles. The movies use the title 指环王 which can mean the “King of the ring(s)” or “the ruler of the ring(s)”. The word lord is usually translated with zhu (主).

The translation of the chapter titles, though they convey most of the original’s meaning are not in the style or spirit of the original. Nor can they be considered to be of any improved style.

Poem preceding the main text

Before the main text of the book starts there is a poem describing the rings of power. This poem is important because it describes the awesome powers of the one ring as well as introduces some of the most important races and creatures in the story. I will therefore also analyse it in greater detail here.

In the original three books the poem is printed ahead of the main texts in all three volumes while in the target it only appears in the first book.

In the original this poem reads:

Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne,
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
One Ring to rule them, One Ring to find them,

One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

In the target this becomes:

Three great rings belong to the “small elf”-rulers in the land under heaven
Seven great rings belong to the Dwarf-kings in their stone halls
Nine rings belong to mortals with a predestined lifespan
Furthermore one belong to the dark leader who rules from his imperial throne
In the territories of Modou where dark shadows dance
One ring commands the many rings, returns them to the net
One ring confines the many rings, in the dusk without light
In the territories of Modou where dark shadows dance

(三大戒指归属天下小精灵诸君，
七大戒指归属石厅小矮人列王，
九大戒指归属阳寿可数的凡人，
还有一枚属于高居御座的黑魁首。

莫都大地黑影幢幢。

一枚戒指统领众戒，尽归罗网，

一枚戒指禁锢众戒，昏暗无光。

莫都大地黑影幢幢)

The first thing to notice is the translation of Elf, which is problematic as Elf doesn't have a direct Chinese translation. The use of the word small (小) before jingling (精灵) will make the reader think of the elves as small creatures. This term (小精灵) is in other situations used to describe gremlins, Casper the friendly ghost etc. So this translation will not bring the associations that a western reader has with Tolkien's elves who are noble, dignified and with almost superhuman abilities.

The second creature mentioned in the poem is dwarfs, which are translated into 小矮人 meaning “small dwarfs”. It was translated in the same way in the translation published by 聯經.Van der Peet

was not satisfied with this instead wanting them to be just dwarfs without “small” in front of it (矮人). But in for example Snow white the dwarfs in that story are translated into 小矮人 so I am not so sure if it’s correct to criticise this.

The next three sentences of the poem are translated fairly well. But the changes of “furthermore”, “imperial throne” and using “territories of Mordor” instead of “Land of Mordor” seems hard to find reason for doing, although they don’t alter the meaning or style of the poem in any significant way.

The next two sentences about the one ring that rules, finds and bring the other rings together seems to have been translated in an overly complicated way. It could be a misunderstanding on the translators’ part of interpreting “them” as meaning the rings. It is very possible that what Tolkien meant by “them” are those creatures and races in Middle earth that are opposed to Sauron, and it is them that he wants to control rather than the rings. Perhaps this is what is meant by “in the darkness bind them”, making the free peoples slaves in Mordor. Or perhaps the author’s intention is to be ambiguous – either way the Chinese readers are not permitted to interpret this part of the poem for themselves.

In the second to last sentence the translation of “bring them all in” (一枚戒指禁锢众戒) doesn’t quite work, it comes out more of as a sentence that’s hard to make sense of.

The rhyme of the original (sky-stone-die-throne) is also missing in the target.

While the overall meaning of the poem is fairly well preserved it includes a serious mistake in the translation of elf, a possible misunderstanding of who the ring commands, and some loss of the style and spirit of the original.

Description of the Shire

In the original the Shire is described as follows:

“Forty leagues it [the Shire] stretched from the Fox Downs to the Brandywine Bridge, and fifty from the northern moors to the marshes in the south. The Hobbits named it the Shire, as the region of authority of their Thain, and a district of well-ordered business; and there in that pleasant corner of the world they plied their well-ordered business of living, and they heeded less and less the outside world where dark things moved, until they came to think that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk. They forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and the labors of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it.”(24)

In target becomes this:

“This land stretched to hills far from the bridge over Bailandouyin, continuously for 400 miles, and for 500 miles from the northern wilderness to the southern marshes. The hobbits named this land Xiaer, it is their great leader’s area of jurisdiction. This is a district where many businesses flourished in an orderly fashion. In this haven of peace outside the world they abided by their station in life and worked. They drifted further and further apart from the never-ending chaos of war of the world outside, to such an extent that they thought peace and richness would forever stay in Middle Earth, and any rational people had the right to enjoy these. They forgot or neglected one point: their

knowledge of their own guardian deities was very poor, and their knowledge about their ancestors who had thrown all their energy for a long period of peace and order in the Shire. In fact, they enjoyed protection but they didn't know where their good fortune came from.”(7-8)

(这片土地从白兰都因河桥伸展到远丘，连绵四百里，从北部荒原到南部沼泽则有五百里。霍比特人将这片土地称之霞尔，是他们的大首领的辖地。这是个百业兴旺井然有序的地区。

比特人在这个世外桃源里安分守己地生活和劳作。对战乱不断的外部世界越来越疏远，以至于认为和平与富庶会永驻中洲大地，任何理性族类都有享受它们的

权利。他们忘却或者忽略了一点：他们对自己的保护神知之甚少，对为霞尔的长治久安呕心沥血的祖先知之甚少。实际上，他们享受着祖上的荫庇，却不知道福从何来。) (7-8)

First of all this paragraph describes the dimensions of the Shire using the measurement of leagues which is obsolete and gives a kind of old-fashioned flavour. In the target the current Chinese word for mile is used (li), a modern measurement. A Chinese mile is about 0.5 kms while an old fashioned English league is about 5 kms, so the actual distances described are correct in the target.

Some things are not mentioned in the target such as the place called Fox Downs and the title Thain. Another old fashioned word that Tolkien used “moors” has become “marsh” in the target. Some changes in the target are that the long period of peace was caused by their predecessors while this is not specified in the original. “The outside world where dark things moved” became “the never-ending chaos of war of the world outside”. The Guardians in the original are no deities, in all likelihood they belonged to those races or creatures that are opposed to Sauron.

The gist of the paragraph in the original is that the hobbits didn't realize how lucky they were but in the target it seems they know this but not the cause of it. Overall both the meaning and style of the original is to a large extent missing or altered in the target.

Examples representative of the state of this translation as a whole

Original	My back translation	Translation	Translation
“Yet that hour, maybe, is not now far away. The Nameless Enemy has arisen again. Smoke rises again from Orodruin that we call Mount Doom.” (295)	“But that moment is not at all far away. The enemies are rising again from the mountain due east, and we don't even know their name. Smoke signals are coming again from the mountain Aoludeluyin that we call The mountain of misfortune.” (282)	而这一刻离我们并不远。敌人正东山再起，而我们连它们的名字都不知道。我们称之为厄运的奥罗德鲁因山上狼烟又起	Saying that someone is sending smoke signals (狼烟) from Mount Doom is an almost comic misunderstanding. Mount Doom responds to Sauron's commands and presence. When he is present the volcano becomes active. So what this sentence is supposed to mean is that Sauron has returned and is active again.

			<p>The “Enemy” should be singularis because it refers to Sauron while in the target it is pluralis (它们). “The Nameless Enemy” means Sauron, this is how those who don’t want to mention his name refer to him. It doesn’t mean that they don’t know his name.</p> <p>One also wonders where “the mountain due east” comes from and if Mount Doom couldn’t have been translated into something more equivalent than “the mountain of misfortune”.</p>
<p>“I have heard of the Great Ring of him that we do not name; but we believed that it perished from the world in the ruin of his first realm. Isildur took it! That is tidings indeed.” (293)</p>	<p>“I have heard of Suolong’s huge ring, but we didn’t know its name. We thought that following the fall of his first kingdom the ring disappeared from this world. So it was Yisierde that took it! This is an important point.”(280)</p>	<p>“我听说过索隆的巨戒,但我们不知道它的名字.我们以为随着他第一王国的覆亡,戒指也从这个世界消失了.原来是伊西尔德拿了它!这一点很重要.”</p>	<p>The translators haven’t understood that Boromir doesn’t want to mention Sauron’s name and have him mentioning it – the opposite of Tolkien’s intention. Again they haven’t understood who “him that we do not name” is. “That is tidings indeed” becomes “This is an important point” which fail to capture the spirit and style of the original sentence. Another serious mistake is translating “great” with “huge” (巨). The ring is of course not large in size.</p>
<p>Both father and son were on very friendly terms with Bilbo and Frodo. (42)</p>	<p>Both father and son were really close friends with Bilbo and Frodo.(24)</p>	<p>父子俩与比尔博,弗拉多十分投缘。</p>	<p>Loss of style, in the target 十分投缘 is used to characterise the relationship. 十分 – literally meaning “ten</p>

			points"- is an expression which is difficult to imagine that Tolkien would use.
"A very nice well-spoken gentlehobbit is Mr. Bilbo" (42)	"mr Bilbo is a refined gentleman"(24)	比尔博先生是个斯斯文文的绅士	Gentlehobbit not translated. The hobbits' word order is not preserved.
"So Mr. Frodo is his first <i>and</i> second cousin, once removed either way, as the saying is, if you follow me. (43)	Therefore no matter which way you look at it, Frodo and he have ties cemented by marriage. This is how it happened, do you understand?	因此无论从哪方面说, 弗拉多和他都是亲上加亲. 就是这么回事, 听明白没有?	Humour of the original lost in target.
As he often did after his marriage (him being partial to his vittles, and old Gorbadooc keeping a mighty generous table) (43)	He often stayed there after his marriage, he loved to eat his father in law's food, and old Gebaduke was willing to spend especially much on a feast.	他婚后经常住在那里, 特爱吃老丈人家的菜肴, 而老戈巴多克摆起宴席来格外舍得花钱。	The style of the original almost completely lost. "His father in law's food" could be perceived as meaning that the father in law had actually cooked the food himself.
"There's a tidy bit of money tucked away up there, I hear tell,' said a stranger, a visitor on business from Michel Delving in the Westfarthing. 'All top of your hill is full of tunnels packed with chests of gold and silver, <i>and</i> jools, by what I've heard.'" (44)	"I have heard that much riches are hidden inside" A stranger said this, he had come from Mixiedaierwen on the west side for business, "I have heard that there's nothing but tunnels in your hill, full to the brim of chests with gold, silver, treasures, jewels."(26)	"我听说里面藏着许多钱财." 说这话的是个陌生人, 他从西边的米歇尔黛尔文来办事的," 我听说,你们这座山上净是地道,里面满满登登的都是装金银钱财宝的大箱子."	The person speaking has limited education as indicated by his formulations, choice of words, especially "jools". This is not conveyed in the target.
"Elves and dragons!"(44)	"What spirits and evil dragons!"	什么精灵啊,恶龙啊!	Elf is problematic to translate into Chinese. Here 精灵 is used, which according to dictionaries can mean spirit or demon. It can also be a smurf, Pacman or a small troll. Pokemon monsters are also 精灵.
That very month was September, and as fine as you could ask. (45)	That very month was September, with clear and crisp autumn weather. (27)	本月就是九月, 秋高气爽。	Meaning preserved but loss of style.

<p>“Ever since Bilbo left I have been deeply concerned about you and about all these charming, absurd, helpless hobbits. (73)</p>	<p>“Ever since Bilbo left home I have been worrying about you, worrying about all these lovable, ignorant and helpless hobbits. (56)</p>	<p>“自从离家出走后，我一直深深地挂念着你，挂念着所有这些可爱，无知而又无助的霍比特人。”</p>	<p>Absurd has been changed into ignorant.</p>
<p>“But for the moment, since most of all you need to know how this thing came to you, and that will be tale enough, this is all I will say.” (77)</p>	<p>“But now, what you want to know the most is how this thing came into your hands. This is itself a long story. Let me tell you slowly.”</p>	<p>“但眼下，你最想知道的是这东西是怎么到你手里了。这本身就是一个很长的故事。让我慢慢道来。”</p>	<p>Need has become want. “This is all I will say” not quite correctly translated.</p>
<p>“But the Ring was lost. It fell into the Great River, Anduin, and vanished.” (77)</p>	<p>“But the ring was lost, it fell into the Andayin river.”(61)</p>	<p>但戒指却遗失了，掉进了安达因河里。</p>	<p>The Anduin river is not just any river, it’s the Great River with capital G and R, perhaps the mightiest river in Middle Earth.</p>
<p>“And there in the dark pools amid the Gladden Fields,” he said, “the Ring passed out of knowledge and legend” (77)</p>	<p>“In this way the ring landed in the dark pools in the Gelaidun wilderness, forgotten by man, not mentioned again by any man”(61)</p>	<p>那魔戒就这样躺在了格莱顿荒原的黑潭里，被人忘却，再没人提起。</p>	<p>Loss of style.</p>
<p>“and even so much of its history is known now only to a few, and the Council of the Wise could discover no more. But at last I can carry on the story, I think.”(77)</p>	<p>“Nowadays, those who know its ins and outs may be called unique. The Council of the white path also haven’t discovered anything. Nowadays, only I can describe its ins and outs clearly.”</p>	<p>如今，知道他的来龙去脉的人可谓绝无仅有。连白道会也没有什么发现。如今只有我才能把来龙去脉说清楚。</p>	<p>The Council of the Wise is also called the White Council in the original but here a different name is used than in the original. Meaning of sentence has been altered, in the original Gandalf is not the only one who knows the history of the Ring.</p>
<p>“When Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Bag End announced that he would shortly be celebrating his eleventy-first birthday with a party of special magnificence there was much talk and excitement in Hobbiton.” (41)</p>	<p>“When Mr. Bilbo Baggins at Beigeen stated that within the next few days there will be held an especially magnificent banquet celebrating his one hundred and eleventh birthday. When the information spread, the people of Houbidun were</p>	<p>比尔博·巴金斯先生在贝格恩庄严宣布，将于近日举办特别盛大的宴会庆祝自己一百一十一岁的诞辰。消息传出，霍比顿群情激动，议论纷纷。</p>	<p>We can observe from this passage that these names have been transcribed, not preserving their meaning. Also the translators haven’t translated eleventy into Chinese –although that would require some creativity. Eleventy is not a word invented by</p>

	excited about it and there was much discussion.” (23)		Tolkien but derived from Old English. The translators have wisely divided the original sentence into two, making for more natural Chinese.
No one had a more attentive audience than old Ham Gamgee, commonly known as the Gaffer. (42)	Most fascinating were the stories of old Hanmu Ganmuqi. Hanmu’s nickname was the yokel. (24)	最引人入胜的当数老汉姆 甘姆齐讲的故事。 汉姆人称乡佬,	In the target the nickname has become derogatory.

Conclusion

This book includes a translators’ note. It says that it is common knowledge that Tolkien is difficult to translate because of his use of archaic words, neologisms, invented languages (such as elfish), old English, using several names or expressions for the same thing or person etc. Further they say that the book is full of traps for the translators and that it was impossible for them to escape all the traps. They call the original a “labyrinth-like writing” and say that English readers can understand it because of them sharing culture and knowledge of history with Tolkien. Further they say that they were not sure whether to pursue a direct or free translation. In the end they have leaned towards more of a direct translation. They recommend readers with a more “refined taste” and researchers to instead read the original version, or wait until a more ideal translation arrives.

It seems to me odd that they consider their translation as being direct as my impression is that they have sometimes taken great freedoms. Perhaps one has to conclude that the differences in the target are largely unintentional, caused by mistake.

My general impression of this translation is that while the basic plot is present in the target, the beauty of Tolkien’s writing: his humorous style, neologisms, archaic expressions etc are almost always missing in the target. Neologisms such as “tween”, “eleventy”, “gentlehobbit” etc are simply not present in the target - the translators haven’t even tried to translate them. Some things are left out such as some names of places, meanings are altered or incorrectly translated etc.

Besides this, some very serious mistakes were made in the translation. One of the greatest of them is the translation of elf into some small, childish perhaps mischievous creature like a smurf or a gremlin. Some of these mistakes are so serious one can’t help but wonder to what extent the translators understood the original.

In relation to Nida’s and Benjamin’s criteria one has to conclude that they are only to a very limited extent fulfilled. Because of the almost complete loss of the author’s original style and spirit one has to conclude that the “poetic content” is largely missing in the target. Also the transfer of information is not satisfactory, and sometimes even suffers from serious mistakes.

In comparison to the versions analysed by Van der Peet this latest translation is probably of roughly the same low level of quality and I can echo some of the conclusions he made. It seems unlikely that the translators completely understood the main characters and the world of Tolkien not only described in the *Lord of the Rings* but also in his other works such as *the Silmarillion*. Without a thorough understanding and knowledge of Tolkien's works it is probably impossible to successfully translate this work. Another requisite seems to be able to write creatively, not just presenting information, if there's to be any chance of giving a Chinese reader the chance to enjoy Tolkien's style of writing and humour. Sadly, the translators of this version lacked this, and the target text usually completely fails to include the spirit and style of the original. One might say that this translation is a faint copy of the original. It is not something I would recommend to any Chinese readers.

In comparison to translations of *the Lord of the Rings* into other languages, this translation is very poor. One of the first translations of *the Lord of the Rings* was into Swedish by Åke Ohlmark in the 1950s. This translation was in recent years heavily criticised for being too much of a free translation and for making mistakes in the transfer of information. One serious example is that in his version it was Meriadoc that killed the witch-king of Angmar instead of Eowyn. But that mistake is less severe than many of those made by the Chinese translators of this version.

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (哈利·波特与魔法石)

Harry Potter is a series of seven fantasy novels written by the British author J. K. Rowling. The books describe the adventures of the adolescent wizard Harry Potter and his best friends Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, all of whom are students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The main story concerns Harry's quandary involving the evil wizard Lord Voldemort, who killed Harry's parents in his quest to conquer the wizarding world and dominate non-magical people.

I will not analyse the entire series here, just the first book in the series which is called *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Initially, the Harry Potter series received positive reviews, but by the publication of the fifth book the critics became more divided.¹²⁰ But in terms of book sales the series has become more successful for every new book. As of June 2008, the book series has sold more than 400 million copies and has been translated into 67 languages, and the last four books have consecutively set records as the fastest-selling books in history.¹²¹

Translations

Harry Potter has been translated into 67 languages so far.¹²² Because of the high profile and demand for Harry Potter great care is often taken to select a competent translator. Several of the translations have been carried out by people who were well known in literary circles before they translated Harry Potter, such as Golyshev who translated into Russian or Okayay who translated some of the Turkish versions¹²³.

There are two official Chinese translations, one for mainland China and one in Taiwan. My analysis concerns the one released in the mainland. This translation was carried out by a team of five: one translator (Su Nong) who was helped by two proofreaders and two editors. It was published in the mainland by the People's Literature Publishing House (人民文学出版社).

General impressions and identification of aspects for further analysis

When reading *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in Chinese translation it seems impossible to find something missing or distorted. When there are western names or other occurrences that are not immediately understandable they are explained in footnotes added by the translators, for example Isle of Wight, boaters (which is a kind of hat) and Cornflakes. While loud sounds are indicated by capital letters in the original, this is solved by using a larger font in the target, a solution I hadn't yet seen in a Chinese translation until I read this one. The translation is very faithful to the original. The approach to the translation is dynamic equivalence and it is successful: the meaning is preserved and when needed small changes are made to preserve both meaning and – for the most part - flow of reading. Let's look at a few examples of how it has been translated:

“Nearly ten years had passed since the Dursleys had woken up to find their nephew on the front step, but Privet Drive had hardly changed at all.” (19)

In my back translation:

¹²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_potter#Literary_criticism 2010-06-05

¹²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_potter 2010-06-05

¹²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_in_translation

¹²³ Ibid

“Since the Desilis had woken up and discovered their nephew on the front steps, ten years had almost passed, but Privet road had almost not changed at all” (11).

(自从德思礼夫妇一觉醒来在大门口台阶上发现他们的外甥以来，快十年过去了，女贞路却几乎没有变化)

Another example is this:

“Ten years ago, there had been lots of pictures of what looked like a large pink beach ball wearing different-coloured bobble hats – but Dudley Dursley was no longer a baby, and now the photographs showed a large, blond boy riding his first bicycle, on a roundabout at the fair, playing a computer game with his father, being hugged and kissed by his mother.” (19)

In Chinese translation:

“Ten years ago, many photos had been placed here, that looked like a big pink beach ball wearing baby hats in many colours – it’s just that Dali wasn’t a baby anymore, on the photos were now a big boy riding his first bicycle, at the exhibition riding a carousel, playing computer games with his father, being kissed by his mother.” (11)

(十年前，这里摆放着许多照片，看上去像戴着五颜六色婴儿帽的一只粉红色的大海滩气球----只是达力已不再是婴儿了，照片上是一个大头男孩骑着他的第一辆自行车，在博览会上乘坐旋转木马，跟父亲玩电脑游戏，被母亲拥着亲吻。)

It’s important to note that “different-coloured” has been translated using an idiomatic expression (五颜六色) and another minor thing is that “hugged and kissed” is just “kissed” in the target. If there weren’t these kinds of changes the translation would almost have to be categorised as literal. It is structurally almost literal, the information provided per sentence is often identical. Even within sentences the structure is almost literally preserved. For example in the sentence above even the dash is in the same place in the translation. However, as a reader, I am unsure if preserving the sentence structure is suitable. Because of linguistic differences some sentence constructions that are unproblematic in English can be perceived as unnatural, cumbersome and perhaps difficult to understand in Chinese, I will therefore analyse this in greater detail. This is an aspect of the translation that I will discuss in greater detail below.

There are also a few differences in the translation that I will present and discuss in greater detail below. Almost all of them are both minor in themselves and in importance so perhaps they could more be seen as examples of how meticulous this translation has been carried out. Another point of interest is the translation of names, so this is also discussed more thoroughly below.

Minor differences

Original	My back translation	Translation	Translation
Mr Dursley hummed	Mr Desili hummed a	德思礼先生哼着小曲，	“Boring” became

as he picked out his most boring tie for work	song and picked out his least liked tie for work	挑出一条最不喜欢的领带戴着上班	"least liked".
when Mr. Dursley had seen that fateful news report about the owls.	as that year when mr Desili watched important news on the TV about owls	和德思礼先生当年收看关于猫头鹰的重大新闻	"Important" instead of "fateful".
Harry didn't look it, but he was very fast.	Hali appeared thin, but he was agile.	哈利看起来很单薄,但他动作机敏。	Hardly any difference.
but Harry had always been small and skinny for his age	he seemed to be thinner and smaller than others his age	他显得比他的同龄人瘦小	Hardly any difference.
At school, Harry had no one.(27)	At school, Harry had no friends.(18)	在学校里,哈利没有一个朋友。	
The Letters from No One (28)	The owls send messages	猫头鹰传书	Chapter title
They ate stale cornflakes and cold tinned tomatoes on toast for breakfast next day.	The next morning for breakfast they ate cornflakes and tinned cold potatoes on toast.	第二天早餐,他们吃的是走味的玉米片和罐头冷土豆加烤面包。	Mixed up potatoes and tomatoes.
"Scuse me, but is one of you Mr H. Potter? Only I got about an 'undred of these at the front desk."	"Excuse me, is one of you mr Harry Potter? There are about a hundred of these on the front desk."(26)	"对不起,你们当中有叫哈利波特先生的吗?前边服务台大概收到了一百封像这样的信"	Dialect missing in target.
"Where's the cannon?" he said stupidly.	"Where's the cannon?" Dudley said semi-consciously.	"什么地方打炮?"达力迷迷糊糊地说。(28)	"stupidly" became "semi-consciously".
"Couldn't make us a cup o'tea could yeh? It's not been an easy journey..."	"Can you give us some hot tea? This trip really wasn't easy."	"能给咱来被热茶吗?走这么一趟可真不容易"(28)	Dialect missing in target.
"Yeh look alot like yer dad, but yeh've got yer mum's eyes"	"You look like your dad. But your eyes look like your mother's."	"你很像你爸爸。眼睛可像你妈妈。"(29)	Dialect missing in target.
(Order of Merlin, First Class, Grand Sorc., Chf Warlock, Supreme Mugwump, Internation Confed. Of Wizards)	(President of the International federation of wizards, President of the Wizards' association, First class member of the Knights of Merlin)	(国际魔法联合会会长,巫师协会会长,梅林爵士团一级魔法师)	"Supreme Mugwump" missing in target.
Goblin	Evil spirit	妖精	Translated into yaojing (妖精) which can mean many different kinds of imaginary

			beings. More correct would have been Gebulin (哥布林) which is more precise.
"thanks for the fudge and the jumper" (223)	"thank you for giving me the toffee and woollen sweater"(191)	"谢谢您送给我的奶糖和毛衣"	

Overall these examples illustrate how carefully this book has been translated. Searching for missing passages, which is the case of Christine (more on this below), is an impossible task in this case.

Translation of names

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
Harry Potter	Hali Bote	哈利·波特	Hali is the standard translation of Harry, f.ex. Harry Truman is translated in the same way. Potter – the profession- is lost in the translation. Potter can also mean "to move about aimlessly", especially in the phrases "potter around" and "potter about". But if it was changed to the Chinese for potter (陶器者?) he would have gotten a very strange name: a western first name and an unnatural Chinese last name.
Dursley	Desili	德思禮	Okay as Dursley has no meaning in the original
Dudley	Dali	达力	
Petunia	Peini	佩妮	Petunia is also a kind of flower, this meaning is lost in this semi-transcription.
Vernon	Funong	弗农	
Privet Drive	Nuzhen road	女贞路	Nuzhen (女贞) is Chinese for the plant privet
Dumbledore	Dengbuliduo	邓布利多	Dumbledore is an Early Modern English word which means "bumblebee". It was chosen by Rowling

			because she “imagined him walking around humming to himself” ¹²⁴
Hogwarts	Huogewoci	霍格沃茨	Meaning lost, 肥猪癩子 would have preserved the meaning.
Hagrid	Haige	海格	“Hagrid”, according to Rowling comes from the word “hagridden”, meaning to have a nightmarish night, particularly when hung over. ¹²⁵

Translation of names is an issue in almost all translations of this work. This is because many names in the book are invented by the author and they aren’t just meaningless names but carry meaning. Their translation has been approached in different ways in different countries. In the Swedish translation the author didn’t translate the names and was criticised for that. In the Norwegian translation the translator did translate the names and was criticised for doing it.¹²⁶

Almost all names seem to have been transcribed with the exception of the name of the street where the Dursleys live. Let’s imagine the consequences if the translator’s had translated the names more dynamically. If the main characters had been given Chinese names, it would have been more difficult to imagine that the story is set in England. It must have led to confusion if English people were given Chinese names unless the translators took it one step further and moved the entire setting to China. But that would have led to countless consequential problems. Preservation of the names as foreign preserves the foreign feel of the book. But some of the names could probably have been dynamically translated without encountering this problem, such as Hogwarts.

Sentence structure

In Chinese all phrases or clauses that describe or modify the main noun should precede the main noun. In English the modifier occurs after the main noun as a relative clause introduced by a relative pronoun (‘who,’ ‘whom,’ ‘which’) or a complementizer (‘that’). This often makes sentences with many modifiers after the main noun difficult to translate or grammatically incorrect if translated while preserving word order. One example of this from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* is this sentence:

“Mrs Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbours.”(7)

¹²⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dumbledore> 2010-06-05

¹²⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagrid> 2010-06-06

¹²⁶ Sundqvist, Karin, *Potter eller Krukmakare? Konsten att översätta fantasy – ur ett skoposperspektiv*, Institutionen för språk och litteraturer, Humanistiska fakulteten, Göteborgs Universitet, 2009, p. 18

If we try to translate this into Chinese grammatically correct and preserve it as one sentence we might end up with something like this:

“Mrs Dursley was thin, blond and had because of her spending so much time spying on the neighbors by craning over garden fences a very useful and twice-the-usual-size neck”.

(德思礼太太是一个瘦削的金发女人。她的脖子几乎比正常人长一倍。这样每当她花许多时间隔着篱墙引颈而望、窥探左邻右舍时，她的长脖子可就派上了大用场。)

This sentence is equally unnatural in English and Chinese. Fortunately it was divided into three sentences in the target. But it seems to me that in many cases, most of them not as obvious as this one, too much of the English sentence structure has been preserved. And therefore the ease of reading, the language “naturalness” is inferior to that of the original. A rough estimate would be that two or three sentences per page suffer from this.

Conclusion

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone in Chinese translation is overall very good but at the same time somewhat far from ideal. This translation is meticulous; there are no misinterpretations or anything missing. Unknown concepts are explained through footnotes, main characters made easy to keep track of by the introduction of a list with descriptions of the main characters. What makes it not fulfil the criteria of high dynamic equivalence and preservation of “poetic” content is that the language is a bit unnatural in too many places caused by preservation of the original sentence structure. The original is more fluent and natural.

Other than that the only things that one could possibly remark on are that a few names could have been more dynamically translated and some characters who in the original speak dialect all speak the Queen's English in the translation. But overall my impression is nonetheless that this is a translation of high quality.

Christine (克里斯汀)

Christine is a horror novel by Stephen King published in 1983. The story is about a car named Christine controlled by supernatural forces that will control its owner and murder any real or perceived threats to herself or her owner. The main character is Arnie Cunningham, a high school student who buys and becomes obsessed with Christine. Dennis is Arnie's best friend since childhood who always tries to help him. Leigh Cabot is a newly transferred student who is both popular and beautiful. To everyone's surprise she starts dating Arnie, perhaps in part because he owns a beautiful car. Besides the horror story the book is also about issues such as friendship, friendship lost, obsession and the American high school social system.

The translation of *Christine* was published in 2005 by the Zhuhai publishing company. It was produced by a team of three translators.

General impressions and identification of aspects for further analysis

The first thing I notice is that in the target the author's note and dedication preceding the story are missing. Overall - while the basic plot is intact, many sentences that are not necessary to follow the main plot are mistranslated. The humour that exists in the book is in many places lost in the translation. The relationships between some of the characters seem to be misrepresented in some places, largely because of inadequate translation of dialog. In the epilogue that is supposed to be about what happens after the main events is confusing because the translators have confused high school and university in the main story. Some serious mistakes also exist such as entire paragraphs missing.

Examples of mistranslations and loss of style

In this category I have placed various problems in the translation which can be things that semantically have been translated incorrectly, information preserved but the style of the original expression is lost, distortions in meaning etc. These are very unevenly spread out in the book, some chapters abound with these kind of mistranslations while in other chapters much fewer are found.

Here are some examples that I hope illustrate the many mistranslations in this book:

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
Five years later you can't even cadge a free beer on having been captain of the football team	But five years after graduation, there are still people who will buy me a beer for that	可毕业五年后,还有人为这请我喝酒呢	Meaning of the sentence is reversed.
Had an argument with your folks and got grounded for the weekend?	Had an argument with your family or had nothing to do during the weekend?	跟家里人吵了嘴,或是周末闲来无事	Distortion. Perhaps the translators didn't understand the meaning of "grounded".
Arnie was a natural out. He was out with the jocks.	Arnie was destined to be an outsider. At university, he wasn't an athlete	阿尼注定是个局外人。在大学,他不是运动员,	The original takes place during high school, not university.

When it came to cars, the kid was some kind of a goofy born natural	He was simply a genius regarding cars.	说道汽车， 他简直是个天才	Meaning preserved but the somewhat humorous expression of the original is lost.
He was out with the macho pegged-jeans-and-Lucky-Strikes group because he didn't do booze.	He also didn't hang out with the alcoholics because he had never been an excessive drinker.	他也不会跟酒鬼来往， 因为他从不酗酒	This group was hardly alcoholics.
Lately I hadn't even been assaulting the ramparts of my cheerleader girlfriend's body in the style to which she had become accustomed.(kap 1, sista sidan)	I hadn't even bumped into my cheerleader girlfriend.(10)	甚至都没碰过我那个 当拉拉队队长的女友	Meaning of the sentence is distorted.
I'd like to have kids myself someday, and if I do, I hope I can leave that particular expression out of my repertoire.	In the future I will have children of my own and I hope I will not treat them with that kind of attitude (28)	将来我也会有自己的孩子， 到那时，我希望自己不会用 这样的态度对待我的孩子	Loss of precision and style.
We went together for two years, slept together (very satisfactorily)	We were inseparable for two years, lived together (very sweetly)	我们形影不离地 相处了两年，在一起同居 (非常甜蜜)	Distortion.
Her father shut up about our crazy story after my father talked with him, although he always regarded me after that as something of a dubious person. I think that both he and Mrs. Cabot were relieved when Leigh and I went our separate ways.		missing	
If any milk of human kindness had ever run in his veins, it had curdled to sour cream long ago (kap 1, sista sidan)	If there had ever been any human goodness in his veins, it had gone bad long ago.(9)	如果他的血管中曾 有过些许人性的善良， 也早就变质了。	Loss of style.

Humour

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
He was a loser, you know. Every high school has to have at least two; it's like a national law.	He was born unlucky. Every high school have at least two of them,	他天生倒霉。哪所中学都有至少两个这样的人	it's like a national law" missing
"anyone ever asks you what's wrong with the world, boys, you tell em it's three things: Doctors, commies, and nigger radicals. Of the three, commies is the worst, closely followed by doctors. And if they want to know who told you, tell em Roland D. LeBay. Yessir".		missing	One can understand a literal translation of this perhaps wouldn't be too popular, but why not even try to substitute commies?
97432. And six-tenths. Jesus wept.	156797 km. Good lord!	156797公里。天啊	
"I sat there behind the wheel of my car, not sure what I should do, wishing I was someplace else, anyplace else, trying on shoes at Thom McAn's, filling out a credit application in a discount store, standing in front of a pay toilet with diarrhea and no dime. Any place, man. It didn't have to be Monte Carlo."	"I was at a loss. Just hoping to escape to another place, anywhere would be okay ---- trying on shoes in Donald McAhan's shop; go shopping in a discount store, having diarrhoea running to the pay toilet and then discover you don't have any change. Anywhere is okay."	不知所措。只希望能躲到别的地方，那儿都行----在汤姆麦克安店里试鞋子,在一家折扣店购物，因为拉肚子跑到收费厕所前排队，却发现自己身上没有零钱。哪儿都行。	Instead of "filling in a credit application form", it is "shopping in a discount store". Instead of having an example of something that in most people's minds is utterly boring, we have something many people enjoy doing in their spare time. Monte Carlo could perhaps have been changed into something equivalent but more well-known in China. It is important because it provides a contrast to his examples of utterly boring activities, being an important part of the amusing story. The result of these two errors is that part of the humorous effect is lost.
It seemed to me that he'd been dismissed from school a couple of	It seemed to me that he'd already been expelled from school a	我觉得他好像已经被开除过好几次。	Humorous part of the sentence not translated.

times, too, and when that happened it was usually a pretty good sign that the guy wasn't in the Young Christian League.	couple of times.		
Getting Arnie's tire should have been lickety-split, but the first two stations I came to were those self-service jobbies that don't even sell oil; there's just gas and a marginally retarded girl in a booth made of bullet-proof glass who sits in front of a computer console reading a National Enquirer and chewing a wad of Bubblicious gum big enough to choke a Missouri mule. (44)	It shouldn't have to take much time to buy the tire Arnie wanted but the first two were self-help stations where they didn't sell gasoline at all, they only sold natural gas. (40)	本应该很快就能买到阿尼要的那种轮胎，但是头两家是自助式加油站，那里根本不卖汽油，只卖天然气。	Distorted and humorous part gone.

Dialog

"Brand-new, she was. Had the smell of a brand-new car, and that's about the finest smell in the world." He considered "Except maybe for pussy".	"Brand new. The smell of a new car. That's the most fantastic smell in the world". He pondered deeply.	"崭新的。新车的味道。那可是世界上最美妙的味道。" 他陷入了深思。	Lebay's last outrageous comment is very funny to Arnie and Dennis so they must control themselves as not to laugh out loud. Since the comment is missing in the target the following paragraph becomes incomprehensible.
"What did you say?"	"What did you say?"	你说什么?"	The italics indicate emphasis which is lost in the target.
I'll get those fucking sons of bitches I'll get them Dennis I'll make them sorry I'll make those fuckers eat it...EAT IT...EAT IT!!!"	I risked my life with those sons of bitches. I will kill them, Dennis, I will make them regret it, I will let those bastards take it and swallow it, swallow it down....swallow it!	"我跟那些狗娘养的拼了。我要杀了他们，丹尼斯，我要让他们后悔，我要让那些混蛋把它吞下去，吞下去.....吞下去!"	The original feels more furious and violent. The lack of capital letters in Chinese to indicate screaming is a problem. Extra exclamation points needed?

<p>“This shit you don’t need”</p>	<p>“you don’t want to see us fight again”</p>	<p>“你不想再看我们吵架。”</p>	<p>The very informal wording of the original indicates that the conversation takes place between two very close friends, this is somewhat lost in the translation.</p>
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Translation of names

In this book names are translated by way of transcription. This leads to two problems: some names don’t lend themselves to being translated this way, in Chinese they become unnatural and disrupts the flow of reading. Another problem is the translator’s mistakes when well-known persons are simply incompetently transcribed. A few examples:

- Most chapters begin with quotes from rock songs. One chapter begins with a quote from a Glenn Frey-song. The quote itself is competently translated. But the name “Glenn Frey” is transliterated incorrectly into 格林弗雷 instead of 格伦·弗雷 which is how he is listed in Chinese music catalogues and other articles.
- Bob Seger is just “Bob” in the translation, but just “Bob” usually refers to Bob Dylan in Chinese texts.
- Duster is Dasite, making it very difficult to imagine what car it was.
- The Monroeville mall is the Monroville shopping center , Thom McAn is Donald McAn etc.

I think the names of famous persons and the car brand could easily have been avoided had the translator done some more research. Those and perhaps some of the other names that are not very necessary for following the plot could perhaps had been handled by the translator differently. Perhaps it wasn’t important that it was Donald McAn’s shoe shop, perhaps it would have been better just to skip the name and keep “trying on shoes”.

Conclusion

There are many problems in this translation such as simple mistakes, misrepresentations, paragraphs missing, etc but despite all this the main story comes through to the reader somewhat alive and the book is overall fairly readable in this translation. The biggest difference between the two versions is that the humour that can be found in the original is either missing or mistranslated. In this way the book becomes different, more of a pure horror story. Among western readers, one could read Stephen King for the humour and style of his stories rather than for the horror. This option is not available for the Chinese readers.

As is easily concluded by just reading a few of the examples above, the potential for a better translation is enormous. In relation to Benjamin’s criteria this translation fails both. There are serious

mistakes regarding the inessential content, for example if the characters attend university or high school. Much of the “poetic” content is lost because of the inability of the translator to transfer humorous passages, misrepresenting relationships, mistranslations and many of Stephen King’s expressions are not even close to being adequately translated. Of course many of them are very difficult to translate, for example “the macho pegged-jeans-and-Lucky-Strikes group”, “nigger radicals” and “genitals of fury”. The translator of this book should ideally be someone with a deep knowledge of the time, place and culture the story takes place: USA in the 1980s. Another essential quality of the translator is a need to be very skilled with idiomatic expressions and preserving the writing style, these are probably the most difficult things to fulfil. I wouldn’t consider the book untranslatable as so much of it survives the translation despite it being inadequate. In relation to Nida’s criteria this translation fails them in large part. It is not equivalent to the original, as too many things are left out, mistranslated etc. Parts of the book are hard or even impossible to understand as a result of the mistranslations. With regards to the involvement the reader feels, I think it suffers because of all the problems, but it is still there in a somewhat significant degree.

The Da Vinci code (达·芬奇密码)

The Da Vinci code is a mystery-detective fiction novel written by the American author Dan Brown published in 2003. It follows the symbologist Robert Landon and Sophie Neveu as they investigate a murder in the Louvre museum and discover a battle between the priory of Sion and Opus Dei over the possibility of Jesus having been married to Mary Magdalene.

The book became a phenomenal commercial success. It is the best selling English language novel of the 21st century.¹²⁷ It has been heavily criticised by many Christian groups as an attack on the Catholic Church.¹²⁸ It has also been criticised for containing many historical and scientific inaccuracies. Literary critics have been divided, either loving or hating it. It has for example been called “arse gravy of the worst kind”, “a novel so bad it gives bas novels a bad name” by Salman Rushdie and Stephen Fry respectively.¹²⁹ Regarding Brown’s writing style it has been characterised as “not just bad; it is staggeringly, clumsily, thoughtlessly, almost ingeniously bad”. Favourable reviews commonly mention that it is “fast-paced”, “thought-provoking”, “fun”, “full of mystery” and “scary”.¹³⁰

Chinese translations

The first translation appeared in early 2004, published by The People of Shanghai’s Publishing (上海人民出版社). This translation was produced by a team of three translators. Another translation appeared in 2009 published by the Tianjin Technical Translation Publishing Company (天津科技翻译出版公司). This translation was also produced by a team of three translators. This analysis concerns the translation published in 2004 by The People of Shanghai’s Publishing.¹³¹

General impression and identification of aspects for further analysis

The first thing I notice is that the acknowledgements preceding the story is missing in the target. In this acknowledgement Dan Brown thanks people and organisations with helping him with what he calls his research in writing this book. This is perhaps meant to reinforce the books supposed factual basis.

It’s clear that the translators have used the dynamic equivalence approach. For example the beginning of the book is in the original:

“Renowned curator Jacques Saunière staggered through the vaulted archway of the museum’s Grand Gallery. He lunged for the nearest painting he could see, a Caravaggio. Grabbing the gilded frame, the seventy-six-year-old man heaved the masterpiece towards himself until it tore from the wall and Saunière collapsed backward in a heap beneath the canvas.”

In the target the same passage has become this:

¹²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Da_vinci_code 2010-06-06

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ <http://www.danbrown.com/> 2010-06-06

¹³¹

http://www.amazon.cn/mn/detailApp/ref=sr_1_2?_encoding=UTF8&s=books&qid=1275893446&asin=B00116U1WO&sr=8-2 2010-06-07

“Inside the archway of the Louvre’s great gallery, esteemed museum director Yake Suoniya staggered towards the nearest painting he could see – a Kalawaqiao. This seventy-five year old man suddenly grabbed the gilded frame, and pulled it towards himself forcefully. Finally the picture frame came off, Suoniya fell backwards in a heap and he was covered by the oil painting’s canvas.”

(卢浮宫拱形艺术大画廊内，德高望重的博物馆馆长雅克·索尼埃跌跌撞撞地扑向他所见到的离他最近的一幅画——

幅卡拉瓦乔的画作。这位七十五岁的老人猛地抓住镀金的画框，用力把它拉向自己。画框终于从墙上扯了下来，索尼埃向后摔作一团，被盖在帆布油画的下面。)

This is a prime example of using the dynamic equivalence approach. The word order and composition of sentences does have slight differences. While the passage is two sentences in the original it is three in the target. But the meaning is preserved. In this work the dynamic equivalence is commonly not preserved per sentence but per two or three sentences or per paragraph. It is possible to note minor differences in meaning for example in the target the painting was “suddenly” pulled down.

In places in the book Dan Brown has used Latin, when this has happened the translators have translated from Latin into Chinese. This seems to be a good solution, it very much allows the reader to simply go on reading while most English readers would either have to skip or investigate the meaning of the Latin.

The translators have paid attention to detail. For example the English name Jack is in Chinese Jieke (杰克) while the French Jacques is Yake (雅克). The French curator of the Louvre is correctly translated into Yake (雅克).

The translation is faithful to the original, it’s not possible to find any simple mistakes, missing sentences, distortions or similar. It is however possible to find some subtle differences and I will investigate their impact in greater detail.

Examples

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
Squinting at his surroundings he saw a plush Renaissance bedroom with Louis XVI furniture, hand-frescoed walls, and a colossal mahogany four-poster bed.(7)	He squinted and observed his surroundings, discovering a luxurious Renaissance bedroom with furniture from the time of Louis XVI, walls with wall sides decorated by hand and a spacious four pillar	他眯着眼打量了一下环境，发现这是一间文艺复兴风格的豪华卧室，路易十六世的家具，装饰有手工壁面的墙面，还有一张宽大的四柱红木床	Mahogany and fresco not in target although there are direct Chinese equivalents(桃花心木, 湿壁画)

	bed.		
Where the hell am I?	Where am I at?	我到底是在什么地方？	“the hell” missing in target.
“And when I say he wrote the book on <i>Religious iconology</i> , I mean that quite literally. Many of you use his textbooks in class.”	“When I say that he wrote the book <i>Religious symbology</i> , in fact I only know the title of the book, many of you use his books in class.”	我说他写了《宗教符号学》一书，其实我也只是知道书名，你们许多人上课都用他的书	Some distortion of meaning
Outside, the city was just winding down - street vendors wheeling carts of candied <i>amandes</i> , waiters carrying bags of garbage to the curb, a pair of late night lovers cuddling to stay warm in a breeze scented with jasmine bloom. (16)	The street vendors were pushing their carts selling candied peaches, servers were carrying garbage bags to the side of the road, a pair of night late lovers hugging each other to stay warm in the air that was overflowing with the sweet scent of jasmine. (12)	街头小贩推着车沿街叫卖桃脯,服务生正抱垃圾袋要把他们放在路边,一对深夜恋人在溢满茉莉花香的微风里拥抱着一起取暖.	Almonds became peaches.
Symbologists often remarked that France – a country renowned for machismo, womanizing, and diminutive insecure leaders like Napoleon and Pepin the Short – could not have chosen a more apt national emblem than a thousand-foot phallus.(17)	Symbologists often said that France is famous because of having macho-spirited, indulging in womanizing, this kind of dangerous, little chaps for leaders, like Napoleon and Pepin the Short. It having selected a thousand-foot male reproductive organ as its national symbol couldn't have been more appropriate.	符号学家常说,法国是一个因那些有男子汉气概、沉溺于女色的,像拿破仑和矮子丕平那样危险的小个子领袖的出名的国家.它选择一个一千英尺高的男性生殖器作为国家的象征再合适不过了.	Slight difference in meaning. Note that the original sentence has been divided into two.
“Monsieur Langdon est arrivé. Deux minutes.”(19)	“Mister, Langdon is arriving. Two minutes.”	”先生，兰登到了。两分钟。”	Sentences from languages other than English have been translated into Chinese or in the case of Latin sometimes been left out. Note that there's a slight

			mistranslation.
He wondered if Fache had any idea that this pyramid, at President Mitterand's explicit demand, had been constructed of 666 panes of glass – a bizarre request that had always been a hot topic among conspiracy buffs who claimed 666 was the number of Satan.(23)	He didn't know if Fache knew that at President Mitterand's explicit request, this pyramid was composed out of 666 pieces of glass. This strange request had always been a hot topic among those who liked to research conspiracies. They say that 666 coincidentally is Satan's number.	他不明白法希是否知道,在密特朗总统明确要求下,这个金字塔正好由666块玻璃构成.这种奇怪的要求一直是喜欢研究阴谋事件的人们的一个热点话题.他们说666恰好是撒旦的代码。	Split into three sentences, which allows the target to be read more naturally.
Spiked cilice belt	belt for practicing asceticism with barbs pricking his thighs	紧紧束扎在大腿上的带刺的苦修带	The word cilice is not common and does not have a direct Chinese translation.The effect is that the Chinese reader can just read this sentence and continue, while a western reader unaware of the meaning of cilice - which is probably a large part of the readership - needs to find an encyclopaedia before they can continue.
Castigo corpus meum	This is called the flogging of the flesh	这叫鞭笞肉体。	More of an explanation than a translation. Again the effect is perhaps a target text that's easier to understand and quicker to read.
sénéchaux	Deacon	执事	"sénéchaux" is old french for guardian or protector.

Dialog

Here's a comparison of some of the dialog:

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
"Inside a House of the Lord," the Teacher exclaimed. "How they	"In God's own holy place", master exclaimed with	"就在上帝的圣所内, "大师惊叹道。"他们真	High equivalence.

mock us!"	admiration. "They really know how to mock us!"	会嘲弄我们！”	
"So, my pupil, tell me what I must know."	"So, pupil, quickly tell me the things I need to know."	“那么,弟子,快把我该知道的情况告诉我。”	High equivalence.
"had feared the brotherhood's reputation for secrecy might prevail"	"At first I was even worried that they would protect the Xiutu society's secret and not speak of it"	我原来还担心他们会保守修士会的秘密而不讲的	The brotherhood is given the Chinese name "xiutu", it is unnamed in the original. The Chinese name is just a name, it doesn't meaning anything, so it is still unknown what group this is.

In conclusion I think the translation of the dialog maintains the style, content and ease of comprehension of the original.

Conclusion

Both Nida's and Benjamin's criteria are easily fulfilled in this translation. Especially the ease of comprehension, which I think perhaps even is an improvement on the original. There are no simple mistakes, missing paragraphs or distortions (except a few very minor) in this translation. Is this translation so successful because of good translating or because of the original being highly translatable? Dan Brown's writing is, at least in comparison to other works in this study, probably relatively easy to translate. He doesn't invent new words or names and hardly uses any humour. Perhaps one could say that his works are not about the writing, focus is on the story. With the exception of the main characters, names and places in the book are real places and real persons that already have a Chinese translation. A pitfall for translating this into Chinese is the use of the long sentence structure that does not lend itself well for translating into Chinese, just like in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. But in this case the translators have much more frequently divided up one sentence into several and thereby increased the naturalness of the language.

The Catcher in the Rye

The Catcher in the Rye is a novel by J. D. Salinger first published as a book in 1951, after it had originally been published as a serial 1945-46¹³². It was originally published for adults but has since become popular with adolescent readers for its themes of teenage confusion, angst, sexuality, alienation and rebellion.¹³³

The story is about a teenager, Holden Caulfield, who has been expelled from his boarding school. He is supposed to stay at the school until the end of the semester but instead he travels to New York where he spends three lonely days, meeting various persons including his baby sister, a former teacher, two nuns and encounters a prostitute his own age. Most of all this book is perhaps about portraying what it's like being a teenager. It is written from the point of view of the main character, Holden Caulfield, following his thought process which is a writing style known as "stream of consciousness". Most critics agree that the novel reflects the teenage colloquial speech of the time.

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The book has been the subject of some controversy. It was censored in the USA in the 70s and 80s on account of its vulgar language, blasphemy, undermining of family values, encouragement of rebellion, promotion of drinking, lying and promiscuity. The shootings of John Lennon, Ronald Reagan and Rebecca Schaeffer have been associated with the novel.¹³⁵

Chinese translations

Several translations have been made into Chinese, the first in 1963.¹³⁶ Recently, interest in the work has been revived. A new Chinese translation appeared in 2009.¹³⁷ It was translated by Li Xiaoxia and published by the Tianjin technical translations publishing company (天津科技翻译出版公司).¹³⁸ It was a "study guide" edition which included the English and Chinese versions as well as explanations, key facts, study questions etc.¹³⁹ Another version was published in 2010 by Phoenix and Yilin jointly.¹⁴⁰ It was translated by Shi Xianrong.¹⁴¹ My analysis concerns the version most recently published.

General impression and identification of aspects for further analysis

When I read this novel in English the biggest impression it made on me was how believably it portrays a teenager who is lost somewhere between being a child and an adult. Another thing that made a lasting impression was the raw, direct language in which the story was told. The language

¹³² Salinger, J.D. *The Catcher in the Rye*. London: Penguin Books, 1994.

¹³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catcher_in_the_rye 2010-06-10

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ http://book.sina.com.cn/longbook/ele/1109139285_youguangpinzhi/61.shtml 2010-07-25

¹³⁷

http://www.amazon.cn/mn/detailApp/ref=sr_1_8?_encoding=UTF8&s=books&qid=1276198197&asin=B002W5Q5JG&sr=8-8# 2010-06-10

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰

http://www.amazon.cn/mn/detailApp/ref=sr_1_7?_encoding=UTF8&s=books&qid=1276198906&asin=B003J6NAPE&sr=8-7 2010-06-10

¹⁴¹ Ibid

used is possibly a correct representation of the way a teenager spoke in the 1940s using slang, many different curses of different severity etc.

When reading the Chinese version it quickly becomes clear that the teenage expressions and perhaps most of all the curses have been problematic to translate. A mild “good lord” in the original becomes “fuck” in the target and vice versa. Many other sentences, while having preserved the information, the style or mood of speaking is lost. I will further analyse some general examples that show how the original expression and their mood and style have been translated. I will also make a deeper analysis of a dialogue that can exemplify the translation of cursing.

The story is faithfully reproduced in the Chinese version. It seems that meaning is translated on a sentence-per-sentence basis and all the information is there. There are no mistranslations or missing parts regarding the information about the story.

General examples

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
“all that David Copperfield kind of crap” (1)	“and such David Copperfield nonsense”	以及诸如此类的 大卫科波菲尔式废话	Nonsense less severe than crap
“my parents would have two haemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them” (1)	“if I discussed my parents personal affairs in detail they would both get very angry”	我要是细谈我父母的 个人私事，他们俩 准会大发脾气	Loss of style and severity
“they’re also touchy as hell” (1)	“they’re very easily offended”	他们最容易生气	Loss of style
“I was standing way the hell up on top of Thomsen hill” (2)	“I had climbed up on the tall Thomsen hill”	我爬到高高的 汤姆孙山顶上	Loss of style
“you couldn’t see the grandstand too hot” (2)	“but you couldn’t see the situation on the platform very clearly”	看台里的情况虽然看不很清楚	Loss of style
“she wasn’t exactly the type that drove you mad with desire” (2)	“but girls like her really didn’t make you very interested”	实在引不起你多大兴趣	Loss of style
Out of Africa (16)	非洲见闻	非洲见闻	Out of Africa’s correct Chinese title is “走出非洲” ¹⁴²

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http://www.amazon.cn/mn/detailApp/ref=sr_1_3?_encoding=UTF8&s=books&qid=1276247239&asin=B0011CP484&sr=1-3 2010-06-11

What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him whenever you felt like it (16)	Really interesting are those kind of books, when after you read them, you really hope that the author who wrote it could be your friend, and you could call him whenever you wanted to.	真正有意思的是那样一种书，你读完后，很希望写这书的作家是你极要好的朋友，你只要高兴，随时都可以打电话给他	"Knocks me out" is more believable teenage expression than "Really interesting"
About eighty-five times a day old Ackley barged in on me (16)	Every day old Ackley burst in looking for me 85 times.	老阿克莱一天总要闯进来找我那么八十五回	
He hardly ever went <i>anywhere</i> . (16)	He almost never went anywhere.	他几乎哪里都不去	Loss of emphasis.
With a guy like Ackley, if you looked up from your book you were a goner.	If you meet a guy like Ackley, if you stop reading and raise your head, then you are done for.	遇到家阿克莱这样的家伙，你要是停止看书把头指起来，那你就玩儿完了	Goner should have been translated, perhaps into 已死者?
I didn't have anything special to do, so I went down to the can and chewed the rag with him while he was shaving.(23)	I didn't have anything to do, so I went to the washroom and chatted with him while he was shaving	我闲着没事，也就到盥洗室里，在他刮脸时候跟他聊天	Loss of style.
"Yeah, I know. The thing is, though, I'll be up the creek if I don't get it in. Be a buddy. Be a buddyroo. Okay?"(24)	"Right, I know. The problem is, if I don't hand it in, I will be in serious trouble. Be a friend. Okay?"	"不错，我知道。问题是，我要是再不交，就要吃不了兜着走啦。作个朋友吧。成吗?"	Loss of style.
"So I mean don't stick all the commas and stuff in the right place." (24)	"Therefore what I mean is don't put the punctuation and such things in the correct places."	因此我意思是你别把标点之类的玩艺儿放对位置	Loss of style.
"Yeah? Give her to me, boy. No kidding. She's my	"Really? Then pass her on to me. Not kidding."	"真的吗？把她转让给我吧，嘿。	"She's my type" missing in target.

type" (25)		不开玩笑”	
“And for dessert you got Brown Betty, which nobody ate, except maybe the little kids that didn’t know any better – and guys like Ackley that ate everything.”(31)	“The dessert after the meal was pudding made of apples and breadcrumbs, except for the little rascals in lower classes who knew nothing and guys like Ackley who ate everything, nobody ate it”	“饭后点心也是苹果面包屑做的布丁，除了不懂事的低班小鬼和象阿克莱这类什么都吃的家伙以外，谁都不吃。”	High equivalence, a Brown Betty is actually a pudding usually made of apples and sweetened crumbs.
I didn’t have a date or anything, so I and this friend of mine, Mal Brossard, that was on the wrestling team, decided we’d take a bus into Agerstown and have a hamburger and maybe see a lousy movie. (31)	I didn’t have a date, so I and my friend Maer Buluosade – the one in the wrestling team – decided to take the bus to Aijiesitown to eat a hamburger beefsteak and perhaps also watch a fucking bastard movie.	我没有约会,就跟我的朋友马尔.勃罗萨德——那个参加摔跤队的——商量定,打算搭公共汽车到埃杰斯镇去吃一客汉堡牛排,或者再看一场他妈的混帐电影。	To translate “a lousy movie” into “a fucking bastard movie” seems to be going a bit too far. (一场他妈的混帐电影)
Anyway, we both went to our rooms to get ready and all, and while I was putting on my galoshes and crap, I yelled over and asked old Ackley if he wanted to go to the movies. (31)	Anyway we both went back to our rooms to put our things in order, I was putting on high galoshes and so on, and hollered to old Ackley if he wanted to go watch a movie.	不管怎样,我们俩都各自回房收拾东西,我一边穿高统橡皮套鞋什么的,一边大声嚷嚷着问老阿克莱去不去看电影	“Crap” should have been translated into something more equivalent than “and so on”.
I <i>told</i> him I wasn’t going to chuck it at anybody.(32)	I told him I wasn’t going to throw it at anybody.	我告诉他说我不会拿它扔任何人	Emphasis missing.
Booze hound (71)	Alcoholic	酒鬼	
Benedict Arnold (146)		纳迪克特.阿诺德	Should have been translated into 贝内迪克特.阿诺德. Benedict Arnold was an American traitor during the American

			revolutionary war. It seems the translator was unaware of this.
About all I could think of were those two nuns that went around collecting dough in those beatup old straw baskets. (153)	I could only think of those two nuns with torn baskets collecting donations everywhere.	我能想起的只是那两个拿着破篮子到处募捐的修女	Loss of style: "dough" became "donations", "beatup old" became "torn".
After you neck them for a while(84)	You just have to cuddle and embrace them for a while	你只要跟她们搂搂抱抱一会儿	Loss of style.
Some guy next to me was snowing hell out of the babe he was with (128)	The guy next to me was persistently using honeyed words to dupe the girl he was with.	我旁边的一个家伙正在用甜言蜜语一个劲儿哄骗跟他在一起的姑娘	Loss of style.
That killed me. (129)	I almost laughed to death.	笑死我了	"That killed me" is an expression Holden often uses and is very characteristic for him. Unfortunately, it hasn't been translated in a way that preserves its spirit.
The other end of the bar was full of flits (129)	Those sitting at the other end of the bar were all homosexual perverts.	酒柜的另一头坐的全是些搞同性恋的性变态者	By western standards an outrageous translation.

Dialog and curses

Holden has a fight with his roommate about a paper he wrote. This passage can serve to illustrate much of the differences concerning the way they talk in the two versions. The original (36):

'For Chrissake, Holden. This is about a goddam *baseball glove*.'

'So what?' I said. Cold as hell.

'Wuddaya mean *so what*? I told ya it had to be about a goddam *room* or a house or something.'

'You said it had to be descriptive. What the hell's the difference if it's about a baseball glove?'

'God damn it.' He was sore as hell. He was really furious. 'You always do everything backwards.' He looked at me. 'No wonder you're flunking the hell out of here,' He said. 'You don't do one damn thing the way you're supposed to. I mean it. Not one damn thing.'

In the target the passage becomes this:

"Good lord, Holden. It's about a bastard baseball glove."

"What's wrong?" I said. Cold as a block of ice.

"What do you mean what's wrong? Didn't I tell you, it must be about a fucking room, a house or something like that!"

"You said it must be a descriptive essay. What's the difference if it's about a fucking baseball glove?"

"Damn it. "He was mad as a hornet. He was really angry this time. "You don't do things the way you are supposed to. " He looked at me. "No wonder you are getting fucking expelled," He said. "You never do things the way you are fucking supposed to. I'm speaking my mind. Never like it's fucking supposed to be."

(“天哪，霍尔顿。这写的是一只混帐的垒球手套呢。”

“怎么啦？”我说。冷得象块冰。

“你说怎么啦是什么意思？我不是跟你说过，要写他妈的一个房间、一所房子什么的！”

“你说要写篇描写文章。要是写了篇谈垒球手套购，他妈的有什么不一样？”

“真他妈的。”他气得要命。他这次是真生气了。“你干的事情没一样对头。”他看着我。“怪不得要把你他妈的开除出去，”他说。“要你干的事他妈的没一样是好好照着干的。我说的是心里话。他妈的一样也没有。”)

It seems to be different for the translator to find the right severity of a curse. In the first sentence the translator chose “Good lord” (天哪) which is rather harmless, if even a curse at all. It is not as severe as “Chrissake” with emphasis on “sake” is. While in the last sentence “hell” and two “damn” all become “fuck” (他妈的), making it more severe in the target. This is significant because the curses are used to transmit the mood and intensity of feelings that the characters in the book feel. In the

original the word “fuck” is only used 6 times in the entire book.¹⁴³ But in the target it is used 19 times only in chapter six. Of course this doesn’t mean that the translator consistently uses curses of higher severity, as using “good lord” for “chrissake” is one example of.

The emphasis as indicated by italics as well as the dialect is also missing in the target.

Conclusion

Although all the information about the story is in the target and only in few places are there anything that could possibly be considered as mistranslations I still have to conclude that there is a great loss of “poetic” content. Similarly, the dynamic equivalence is in too many places either not high or missing. One by one perhaps the differences don’t seem to be too big. But when you consistently have “nonsense” instead of “crap”, “throw” instead of “chuck”, “cuddle them” instead of “necking them” etc it all becomes a significant issue because in this book these expressions play a vital part. In the original Holden speaks a language, using many colloquial terms that reflect that he is an angry, bitter teenager verging on madness. But in the target these expressions are replaced with expressions that are in common use, thereby making Holden more of a “regular guy”. He is no longer quite the same angry, bitter, teenager on the verge of a breakdown.

Nida’s second criterion- ease of comprehension – is perhaps greater than in the original, as many of the colloquial terms are translated into an explanation. But his third criterion – involvement- is something that suffers from Holden “losing his voice”.

I don’t think that one can argue that it’s impossible to translate this work into curses of correct severity and more proper colloquial terms. The Chinese language flora of curses is just as “rich” as any other language, so this aspect should be something that could be corrected in a future translation. The colloquial expressions are of higher difficulty but I think some of them could perhaps be translated literally, such as “that killed me”. Others perhaps need more creativity from the translator or a translator with a very good knowledge of Chinese colloquial terms.

¹⁴³ <http://www.wahlbrinck.de/catcherintheye/int.htm> 2010-06-13

High Fidelity

High Fidelity was the first novel written by English author Nick Hornby, published in 1995.¹⁴⁴

The story is about a London vinyl record store owner, Rob Fleming, who is in his 30s and who has just lost his girlfriend. At the record store, he spends his free moments discussing mix-tapes with his colleagues and constructing top five lists of music, movies etc. In the book, Rob recalls his five most memorable breakups and gets in touch with the former girlfriends. The book received very favourable reviews praising most of all its humour and wit. The book is difficult to categorise. It is a love story both between a man and a woman and between man and music. But it is also serious when dealing with issues such as maturing, relationships and discovering yourself.

Chinese translation

A Chinese translation was published in the summer of 2009 by the International Culture Publishing Company (国际文化出版公司). It was titled “the list of lost loves” (失恋排行榜). One translator produced the translation, Lu Ciyang.

General impression and identification of aspects for further analysis

It immediately becomes clear that this translation is meticulous. It follows the original very closely and is translated using the dynamic equivalence approach. *High Fidelity* is full of names of musicians, actors, fictional characters from tv-shows and movies that in large part are unknown to Chinese readers. These names are often explained through footnotes or written in both Chinese and English. Hornby’s language contains many unusual expressions and slang such as “scrubber”, “knob”, “lager-squaddy”, “mock-adult” and “Corker”. These are translated into Chinese equivalent expressions, rather than explained, and I think this is the correct strategy as it preserves the feeling or intention of the original, and seems not to distort the original meaning.

The translation is faithful to the original, it’s not possible to find any simple mistakes, missing sentences, distortions or similar. It is however possible to find some subtle differences and I will investigate their impact in greater detail. These examples could more be seen as indicative of the quality of this translation rather than as examples of problems as they only include a few very minor differences.

I can’t help but wonder about how many Chinese readers can follow the discussions in the record shop and Rob’s sudden listing of music groups, movies etc which to a high degree depends on the reader knowing something about the music or movie they are discussing. For example on pages 35-37 they are fighting about playing or not playing Katrina and the Waves “Walking on sunshine” on a cold February Monday. In one episode a customer comes in wanting to buy Stevie Wonder’s “I just called to say I love you” but Rob’s colleague refuse to sell it on account of it being “sentimental, tacky crap”. One female character is described as “a slightly plumper, post-*Partridge Family*, pre-*LA Law* Susan Dey”.

Examples

¹⁴⁴ Hornby, Nick, *High Fidelity*. London: Penguin Books, 1995.

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
“You never got so much as a bit of tit in three months, and I shagged her first week!”(10)	“In three months you didn’t even touch *, and I fucked her in the first week” (1973 (2)	“三个月来你连*都没碰到，我第一个星期就干了她。”	While “shag” is just slang for “have sex”, in the target an offensive term is used (我干了她)
I’m not too sure why I wanted to fuck it all up for them (11)	I don’t know why I had to smash them	我搞不清我干嘛要搞砸他们俩	Here a higher severity is present in the original
It’s hard to imagine him skidding into his place of work, his bank or his insurance office or car show room, chucking hid briefcase down and informing a colleague that he has ‘knobbed’ said colleague’s wife. (It is easy enough to imagine him knobbing the wife, however. He looked like a wife-knobber, even then) (10)	I can’t imagine him sneaking into his workplace, his bank, insurance company or car showroom, throwing down his briefcase and then happily telling his workmate that he just “mounted” – for example – the workmate’s wife (but, I can actually easily imagine him mounting someone else’s wife. It seems like he is the kind of person who can mount someone else’s wife, he has seemed like this even from when he was a child)	我无法想像他会溜进他上班的地方、他的银行、他的保险公司或他的汽车展示间，扔下他的公事包，然后得意洋洋地告诉他的同事他刚刚“上了”——譬如说——他同事的老婆(不过，我倒是可以很轻易地想见他上别人的老婆。他看起来就像那种会上别人老婆的人，从小就像)。	In this example the translator finds the right level of severity in the target.
“Fuck off out of it”. (14)	“Scram” (滚出去)	我滚了出去	Less severity in target.
She had been born with enormous earrings, drainpipe jeans and an incredibly sophisticated enthusiasm for the works of some guy who used to splodge orange paint around (17)	She was born wearing super-big earrings, dressed in tight-fitting jeans, and had a kind of sophisticated fanaticism beyond what you would imagine for the works of some guy who used to splash orange paint everywhere.	她天生就带着超大耳环，穿着紧身牛仔裤，对某个随处泼洒橘色油漆的家伙的作品有着超乎想像的那种世故的狂热。	“Drainpipe jeans” became “tight-fitting jeans”.
We went out for two years, and for every single minute I felt as though I was standing on a dangerously narrow ledge. (17)	We were together for two years and every minute and every second I felt as if I was standing on top of a dangerous cliff.	我们在一起两年，每分每秒我都觉得仿佛站在危险的悬崖上	Very slight change: “every single minute” became “every minute and every second”.

Here's how not to plan a career: a) split up with girlfriend; b) junk college; c) go to work in record shop; d) stay in record shops for rest of life. (18)	Here's a plan for how not to do a career: a, break up with girlfriend; b, diploma mill; c,work in record shop; d, henceforth remain in record shop rest of your life	以下是不做生涯规划的方法：A、跟女朋友分手；B、野鸡大学；C、到唱片行工作；D、此后一辈子都留在唱片行	I think junk is meant as a verb here meaning "throw away". In the target it seems as if Rob Fleming bought a college degree.
Madness, Eurythmics, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Bob Marley. (22)	"Madman" song group, "舞韵" song group, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Bob Marley.	疯子"演唱组、"舞韵"演唱组、鲍勃·迪伦、琼妮·米切尔、巴布·马利	Only Madness doesn't have a Chinese translation already, the others follow the standard Chinese translation. Eurythmics full Chinese name is 舞韵合唱团 ¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

In relation to both Nida's and Benjamins criteria this is an excellent translation which preserves the "poetic" content and is dynamically equivalent to a very high degree. There are a few very minor mistakes in the translation, for example curses are not always translated into a curse of equivalent severity in the target. In a few places perhaps sentences could have been split up into shorter sentences that would have been more natural Chinese. But these are very minor complaints.

Despite this being an excellent translation I think this book must be very challenging for most Chinese readers as it requires knowledge about western pop culture during the 1960s-1980s period. The book contains many references to songs, artists, actors, movies and TV-series etc from this period. Only a few pages lack these references while other pages such as page 21 contains the names of seven books, three magazines, ten movies, one actor and one singer (*The Unbearable lightness of being*, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, *The Big sleep*, *Red Dragon*, *Sweet Soul music*, *The Hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy*, the Guardian, the Observer, NME, Betty Blue, Subway, Tie me up! Tie me down!, The Vanishing, Diva, The Godfather, Godfather part 2, Taxi Driver, Godfellas, Reservoir Dogs, Mel Gibson and Peter Gabriel). It's not necessary to know every single one of these but they are often used to describe characters. For example the book's main person describes himself as "Not the brightest bloke in the world, but certainly not the dimmest: I have read books like *The Unbearable lightness of being* and *Love in the Time of Cholera*, and I understood them, I think". The publisher is quite brave to translate this work into Chinese. It's hard to imagine a Chinese book which heavily depended on the reader's knowledge of Chinese popular culture to even be considered for publication in the west.

¹⁴⁵ http://www.amazon.cn/s/ref=nb_ss?url=search-alias%3Daps&keywords=%E8%88%9E%E9%9F%B5%E5%90%88%E5%94%B1%E5%9B%A2&searchKind=keyword&Go.x=13&Go.y=12 2010-06-15

Band of Brothers

Band of Brothers is a book which tells the story of a company of American soldiers during the Second World War. It describes their training before going to war, the military operations they participated in during the war and briefly tells the story of what the survivors did after the war. But most of all perhaps this book is about the friendship or brotherhood that the author claims developed between the men in the company.

This book is based on real events and belongs to the “Military history” genre. But the book’s style is hardly documentary. Instead it reads like a novel and there are few sources, except a short chapter after the book itself where the author explains how he collected the source material.

The book has largely received favourable reviews on account of it being an exciting read, entertaining, vivid and involving. It has been criticised for being more about adoration than objectivity, for example the British soldiers are sometimes suggested of being not as professional as the American ones. The research that the author claims he carried out before writing his books, including *Band of Brothers* have been questioned. Of course interviewing a group of soldiers about their actions in a war and ending up with a description that makes them all look like heroes is cynically speaking perhaps an expected result.

Chinese translation

This book was originally released in 1992 and the Chinese translation was published in 2003 by Yilin. The Chinese publication was a consequence of the book being made into a TV-series in 2001 which became very popular in the west and was subsequently shown on Chinese TV in 2003. The Chinese translation was published shortly before the TV-series premiered on Chinese TV. The Chinese book has used the artwork from the TV-series on its cover.¹⁴⁶

Five persons were involved in the translation process. They each translated a few chapters and proofread each other’s works. One person among them, Wang Xiliu, was chief editor.¹⁴⁷

General impression and identification of aspects for further analysis

The translators have tried to follow the original closely, mostly sentence by sentence. But within sentences the clauses are often moved around to provide more natural Chinese. The approach used is that of dynamic equivalence. There are a few mistranslations which sometimes completely change the meaning of a sentence, and this is something I will analyse in greater detail. But overall they are very few, perhaps not more than half a dozen in the entire book.

There are also other slight differences in wording, style of expression that I will analyse in greater detail.

Overall this translation is very ambitious and it is difficult to find anything to remark on.

¹⁴⁶安布罗斯, 斯蒂芬·E. *兄弟连*. 南京: 译林出版社, 2003.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.* P 376

Examples of mistranslations

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
Early on the morning of D-Day, in its first combat action, Easy captured and put out of action a German battery of four 105 mm cannon that were looking down on Utah Beach. (15)	Early in the morning on D-Day, in E Company's first real combat, they wiped out a German artillery battery situated on Utah beach in a stroke, capturing 4 105 mm cannons.	D日凌晨,在E连的 一次实战中,他们一举 歼灭了位于犹他海滩的 一个德军炮兵连,缴获 了4门105毫米的 加农炮	It's hard to imagine that the Germans would have placed their cannons on the beaches, as well as the allies using airborne soldiers landing on the beaches to take them out. A serious mistranslation. It also takes away some of the heroism, I think one point in the original was that Easy Company risked themselves to save others.
The men of Easy have little memory of that week in London. (108)	The week the fellow soldiers of E Company spent in London didn't leave any impression.	E连的弟兄们对在伦敦 度过的那一星期没有留 下什么印象.	In the original the gist of the sentence is that they were too drunk to remember anything.
One newspaper compared the damage done to the Blitz.(108)	One newspaper compared the damage done by the American soldiers with a lightning-type assault.	一家报纸把美国兵们造 成的损失比喻成一次闪 电式的突袭	The Blitz should have been translated into its Chinese proper name (伦敦大轰炸) ¹⁴⁸
"I could have shot the little bastard six times as he lunged toward me, but I didn't think we could spare a man at the time"(109)	"When the young bastard stabbed me I could have shot at him 6 times, but at that time I decided to spare his life."	这小杂种刺我的时候我 本可以朝他开6枪的, 但在那时,我想我们 应该饶他一命.	The reason for sparing the young man's life is missing in the target.

Examples of slight differences

Original	My back translation	Translation	Comment
It had taken almost 150 percent casualties. (15)	The company took more than 200 casualties	该连先后有200多人伤亡	The meaning is preserved as the company included about 140 soldiers.
When the shooting started, they wanted to look up to the guy beside them, not down. (16)	When in a real fight, they hoped that the comrade-in-arms next to them would be a hero, and not a	真正打起仗来,他们希 望身边的战友个个是 英雄好汉, 而不是胆小鬼。	Look up to someone doesn't necessarily mean that this person must be a hero, just someone dependable.

¹⁴⁸ <http://zh.wikipedia.org/zh/%E4%BC%A6%E6%95%A6%E5%A4%A7%E8%BD%B0%E7%82%B8> 2010-06-26

	coward.		
They had grown up, many of them, without enough to eat, with holes in the soles of their shoes, with ragged sweaters and no car and often not a radio.(16)	Many of them had grown up without enough food or clothes, no car, and couldn't even afford to buy a radio.	他们中有许多人在缺吃少穿中长大,没有小汽车,甚至连收音机也买不起	The target lacks some of the descriptions from the original.
"The men hated to fight."(122)	"The soldiers were unwilling to fight."	弟兄们不愿打仗	Not as strong a statement in the target.
"It just had the flavor of an ego trip for General Taylor, a play to show Eisenhower that now that Taylor's back his troops will get off their asses and go into the attack." (213)	"It seemed a bit as if general Taylor was trying to show Eisenhower: Look, when Taylor is back the troops immediately get going to fight a battle."	这很有点像是泰勒将军在刻意,他想表现给艾森豪威尔看:瞧,我泰勒一回来,我的军队就马上动身去打仗	While the original is rather blunt, the target is more polished.
He wouldn't say 'shit' if he stepped in it (23)	When he talked he never used obscenities.	说话从来不带脏字	Again, the target is more polished.
Krauts	German army	德军	The word kraut is derogatory slang invented during World War 1, derived from sauerkraut. ¹⁴⁹
You lucky S.O.B.(196)	You're a really lucky fellow.	你这小子真运气	Target is more polished.

Conclusion

A difference one can find in the target is that some of the blunt and rude language is polite in the target. This changes slightly how the reader might perceive the soldiers. In the original they are dirty, swearing, plundering but deep down good hearted. In the Chinese version sometimes the soldiers express themselves as gentlemen. This is far from always the case, mostly their conversation preserve the wordings of the original so overall this is just a very minor issue.

There are a few mistranslations and mistakes, but consider that those I found are almost all I could find in a 350-pages long book. In some places the style and wording is changed, but again one has to search long and deep before finding those places.

¹⁴⁹ <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/sauerkraut> 2010-06-24

Overall I think this is a very good translation transferring almost all of the original's "poetic" content, information, wordings and style. So according to both Benjamin's and Nida's criteria they are all highly fulfilled.

As I mentioned sometimes the intra-sentence structure is changed but this is only done to make the text into more natural Chinese and does nothing to change the content. An example of this is from the beginning of the second chapter, which in the original reads:

"Benning was, if possible, even more miserable than Toccoa, especially its infamous Frying Pan area, where the jump training went on." (chapter 2, first line)

In the target:

"In Benning, especially the frying pan area for practicing parachuting, the situation was possibly even worse than in Toccoa" (19) (本宁堡,尤其是那个正用于跳伞训练的平锅地区,情况可能比托科阿还要惨.)

In these two versions the information is in different parts of the sentence, for example the "possibly" is in the beginning of the original, while it is near the end in the target. All information is transferred while at the same time using a natural language in the target.

Conclusions

The general level and variance of quality in translation

This analysis of seven western works of literature in Chinese translation indicates that the quality of translation varies greatly:

Title	Fulfillment of Nida's and Benjamin's criteria	Comment
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	Very low	Overall quality is very low. Serious mistakes in transfer of information. Almost complete loss of poetic content.
<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>	High	Overall quality is very high, but could in certain aspects still be improved.
<i>Christine</i>	Very low	Overall quality is very low with serious mistakes, missing information and an almost complete loss of style and humour.
<i>The Da Vinci code</i>	Very high	Excellent translation, perhaps ideal.
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	Intermediate	Overall quality is fairly good but in one important aspect there's room for improvement.
<i>High Fidelity</i>	Very high	Excellent translation, just a few very minor mistakes.
<i>Band of Brothers</i>	High	Overall quality is very high, but could in certain aspects still be improved.

The variance in quality is very high. In *Christine* entire sentences are missing while in *the Da Vinci code* it is very difficult to find even the most insignificant mistranslation. In my sample two out of seven books are inferior translations of very low quality - almost one in three (!). Can the Chinese reader by reading reviews that raise the issue of translation quality avoid inferior translations? Judging by reader reviews of *Christine* and *the Lord of the Rings* the answer to that question is no. Both books enjoy great average reader grades on Chinese Internet bookshop websites.¹⁵⁰

What are the underlying factors causing inferior translations?

Even though *the Lord of the Rings* in all likelihood is the most difficult of the works in this study to translate, I think the most serious problems in the translation are caused by incompetent translators as opposed to untranslatability. It seems that the translators haven't thoroughly understood the original and haven't properly studied other works by Tolkien related to *the Lord of the Rings* that are necessary for translating the content successfully. But the translator also needs to be a great creative writer who can express Tolkien's style and humour in Chinese.

¹⁵⁰ http://www.amazon.cn/gp/product/B002TOJWJ0?ver=gp&qid=1277719147&ref_=sr_1_1&sr=1-1&s=books
2010-06-28

Both in *the Lord of the Rings* and in *Christine* the poor level of translation is not because of any irreconcilable differences between English and Chinese. Instead simple mistakes such as leaving things out, sloppiness and seemingly not even trying or failing to preserve the style and spirit of the original is the cause of the low quality of these translations.

In the initial stages of this study I thought perhaps that works with great commercial potential would be better translated because of being given more resources but this doesn't seem to be the case as both *the Lord of the Rings* and Stephen King would both seem to be very commercially viable.

Evaluation of Nida's and Benjamin's criteria and ideas

Regarding the results when applying both sets of criteria, the results seem to always be the same, at least in this study. It seems difficult to imagine finding a translation which is adequate according to Nida but not Benjamin or vice versa. Overall, not just taking the criteria I have used into account, I think Benjamin's way of looking at translation is more reasonable. Measuring ease of comprehension seems irrelevant. If a work is difficult to understand or ambiguous, perhaps it is meant to be like this, and should also be experienced by the reader of the translation. One example is the ambiguity in the poem in *the Lord of the Rings* concerning the rings of power.

Nida claims that a translation always involves loss, change and skewing of information. But when reading *the Da Vinci code* in translation one wonders if that is correct. It seems some works are so suitable for translation that they can be translated with a preservation of information that is almost 100% and probably could be 100% with a few minor changes. What makes *the Da Vinci code* so suitable for translation is the focus on the story rather the style of writing (or perhaps lack of style in the writing). But also *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *High Fidelity* and *Band of Brothers* are so well translated that with some revisions, they could also be close to ideal.

Overall I think Benjamin's criteria makes most sense when practically applied. I think he is correct when saying that poetic content is more important than the transfer of information. But in some works the poetic content is the story, as in *the Da Vinci Code*. Several of Nida's suggestions seem to be completely wrong as when he proposes to analyse the quality of a translation by reader reaction or measuring the ease of comprehension. Benjamin is right in that you can't let the reader decide if the translation is adequate. If I had analysed these translations by reader reviews, all of them would have to be regarded as excellent translations. In fact, I don't believe quality of translation could ever be analysed through statistical means. Each work is unique and poetic quality is not something that could be perceived on anything but on a subjective basis. The only way of "anchoring" conclusions based on a translation analysis that I can imagine would be by reaching intersubjectivity.

Current approach to translation in China

It seems all the works in this study have been translated using the approach of dynamic equivalence. Even though the translators of *the Lord of the Rings* claim that they have been leaning towards a direct approach, this isn't the case. The inferior translations of this study are not to be blamed on any deficiency in this approach or that any work could be considered untranslatable. They are in my opinion caused by incompetent translators whose greatest failure is that they haven't properly understood the original text.

I have been unable to find any examples of the translators trying to "improve" the target by making additions or changes of their own, in the spirit of Bartolini's concept of cross cultural fertilization. It

seems the changes in the translated works are unintentional or caused by mistakes on behalf of the translators. The only exception is perhaps *the Da Vinci* code where I can find a few minor changes that improve the flow of reading.

Regarding specific aspects that cause problems for the translators it seems that names, slang, curses, humour and perhaps most of all preserving the style with which the original author has expressed himself are the greatest traps. It also seems to be the case that in order to translate works written by an author with a more developed personal style such as Tolkien or Stephen King, as opposed to Dan Brown or Stephen Ambrose, the translator needs to be a great creative writer also. To be able to transfer the meaning of a sentence from one language to another doesn't mean that you are qualified for these kinds of translations. The ability to write creatively is at least as important as that of transferring information when translating these kinds of works.

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Appendix 1. Stephen King's Christine

After leaving Danaier (back translation from Chinese)

"I have a car, it's full of gas, and I am on top of the world" – Glenn Frey

We squeezed into my car, and left that yard. It was almost nine o'clock. Bent moonlight hung in the sky. This moonlight, and the tangerine street lights at the Monrovia shopping center, will not let you miss any shooting stars in the sky.

As soon as we got on the road no one said a word, then we drove through two or three neighbourhoods. Suddenly Ani burst out crying. I was actually somewhat prepared for this kind of reaction, but I hadn't foreseen his pain, so I immediately stopped the car at the side of the road.

"Ani-----"

I didn't have a plan for what to say next; anyway he would hardly let it go until he had cried enough. His tears were like a flood strong enough to break through a dam, once released impossible to stop. In such pain, unable to cover up ----- today Ani's patience had already reached its limit. At first I didn't think it was too serious, but it's a kind of unbosoming. I myself had the same feeling, but when my feelings rush to my head, it's more like when I have a tooth-ache, giving me a splitting headache. Later this feeling comes to my stomach, where it makes my stomach have convulsions.

Yes, in the beginning I really didn't think it was more than a kind of reaction, a kind of natural way to vent one's anger. But after a while I finally understood that things were far away from being so simple, it was absolutely not a normal way to vent anger. Gradually, I could hear from his hardened voice some vague words: at first just some unclear words, later I could clearly hear they are curses.

"I will get revenge!" he was both sobbing and with an indistinct voice screaming "I risked my life with those sons of bitches. I will kill them, Dennis, I will make them regret it, I will let those bastards take it and swallow it, swallow it down....swallow it!"

"Don't say more". I felt scared, "Ani, shut up now".

But he couldn't calm down, and kept pounding my beloved Dasite's dashboard, he kept pounding it with such force that it seemed it would have to break before he had vented his anger.

"I will kill them, you will see!"

In the faint light from the moon and the street lamps, his face was distorted and looked like that of a witch, so unfamiliar. His thoughts didn't know into what cold corner of the universe that they should drift to. I didn't want to understand him, not one bit, I could just sit there without helping him, calling for the Ani I knew to quickly come back. After a while, he returned, from that ice cold world.

The crazy curses became silent sobs. The hatred disappeared, only tears remained--- pain through heart and soul, shouted himself hoarse, sobbing in a confused state of mind.

Sitting there, staring at the dashboard, I didn't know what to do. Just hoping to escape to another place, anywhere would be okay ---- trying on shoes in Donald McAhan's shop; go shopping in a

discount store, having diarrhoea running to the pay toilet and then discover you don't have any change. Anywhere is okay. Even so sitting there I was hoping I could become more mature, hoping we both could become more mature.

But that's just an escape. I knew what I should do, but I absolutely didn't want to lean to Ani, hold him in my arms, and closely embrace him. His head was boiling hot, pressing on my chest, we sat like that for five minutes. After driving him to his home, I went home alone. Later we never discussed this again, that I held him. That evening there was no one else on the street, so no one saw us, or they would certainly have thought we were gay. I was sitting there, holding him, giving him the love I had to give. At that time I was thinking, if I were Ani's only friend, what would happen? Because at that moment I really didn't want to be his friend.

I don't know why, but at that moment I felt, even though just faintly, perhaps Kelisiding would very quickly become his friend. Regarding this, I couldn't make clear what my own feelings were. But that whole day, because of her, me and Ani both had to suffer a lot of hardship. When I stopped the car at the side of the road outside his house, I said to him "all this will pass, buddy".

Even though he said to me with a smile "yes, I'm okay". He looked at me hurtlingly, and said "you know what? You should join a charity. Like 'the foundation for heart disease', 'the cancer foundation' or something like that".

"haha! Get out!"

"you know what I mean"

"if you mean that you're a blubbering little fool, I already knew that".

The lights on the porch lit up. Mike and Lijiana dashed out, maybe to see if it was us or the state police coming to tell them that their beloved baby and only son had been in a car crash on the highway, dying an unnatural death.

"Anuode?" Lijiana's shrill voice piercing our ears.

"You go, Dannisi" Ani said with a grin, this time it was a genuine smile, "you don't want to see us fight again". He went out of the car, he greeted them very respectfully, "Hello mother, hello father".

"Where did you go?" Mike asked, "you terribly frightened your mother, young man!"

Ani was right, I didn't have to see the scene with their whole family. I quickly looked in the rear view mirror, to see if he was still there, a helpless shape – then his parents hugged him, like pursuing a sheep, and together they returned to their 60000 dollar home. There's no need to mention that they will again use tricks and skills that parents have on how to behave yourself, from the secret book that they got from the "how to be good parents"-class, and god knows what other things. Regarding how to raise a child, they understand more than 100 percent that this is where the trouble lies. They have a responsibility for Ani's appearance today, and they are completely clear about this.

I turned on the radio, and listened to FM – 104's "neighbourhood weekend concert". Bob and Silver Bullet were playing "Remain as before". Their fortuitous cooperation was actually this beautiful, so beautiful it was a bit scary. So I switched to "Team Feili's live scene".

Feili will soon lose, but that's okay, winning and losing are after all normal things.

Outside (the original English text)

"I got me a car and I got me some gas, told everybody they could kiss my ass..." – Glenn Frey

We got into my car and I drove out of the yard. Somehow it had gotten around to past nine o'clock. How the time flies when you are having fun. A half-moon stood out in the sky. That and the orange lights in the acres of parking lot at the Monroeville Mall took care of any wishing stars there might have been.

We drove the first two or three blocks in utter silence, and then Arnie suddenly burst out into a fury of weeping. I had thought he might cry, but the force of this frightened me. I pulled over immediately.

"Arnie---"

I gave up right there. He was going to do it until it was done. The tears and the sobs came in a shrill, bitter flood, and they came without restraint—Arnie had used up his quota of restraint for the day. At first it seemed to be nothing but reaction; I felt the same sort of thing myself, only mine had gone to the head, making it ache like a rotted tooth, and to my stomach which was sickly clenched up.

So, yeah, at first I thought it was nothing but a reaction sort of thing, a spontaneous release, and maybe at first it was. But after a minute or two, I realized it was a lot more than that; it went a lot deeper than that. And I began to get words out of the sounds he was making: just a few at first, then strings of them.

"I'll get them!" he shouted thickly through the sobs. "I'll get those fucking sons of bitches I'll get them Dennis I'll make them sorry I'll make those fuckers eat it...EAT IT...EAT IT!!!"

"Stop it", I said, scared. "Arnie, quit it"

But he wouldn't quit it. He began to slam his fists down on the padded dashboard on my Duster, hard enough to make marks.

"I'll get them, you see if I don't!"

In the dim glow of the moon and a nearby streetlight, his face looked ravaged and haglike. He was like a stranger to me then. He was off walking in whatever cold places of the universe a fun-loving god reserves for people like him. I didn't know him. I didn't want to know him. I could only sit there helplessly and hope that the Arnie I did know would come back. After a while, he did.

The hysterical words disappeared into sobs again. The hate was gone and he was only crying. It was a deep, bawling, bewildering sound.

I sat there behind the wheel of my car, not sure what I should do, wishing I was someplace else, anyplace else, trying on shoes at Thom McAn's, filling out a credit application in a discount store, standing in front of a pay toilet with diarrhea and no dime. Any place, man. It didn't have to be Monte Carlo. Mostly I sat there wishing I was older. Wishing we were both older.

But that was a copout job. I knew what to do. Reluctantly, not wanting to, I slid across the seat and put my arms around him and held him. I could feel his face, hot and fevered, mashed against my chest. We sat that way for maybe five minutes, and then I drove him to his house and dropped him off. After that I went home myself. Neither of us talked about it later, me holding him like that. No one came along the sidewalk and saw us parked like that on the curb. I supposed if someone had, we would have looked like a couple of queers. I sat there and held him and loved him the best I could and wondered how come it had to be that I was Arnie Cunningham's only friend, because right then, believe me, I didn't want to be his friend.

Yet somehow – I realized it then, if only dimly- maybe Christine was going to be his friend now, too. I wasn't sure if I liked that either, although we had been through the same shit-factory on her behalf that long crazy day.

When we rolled up to the curb in front of his house I said, "You going to be all right, man?"

He managed a smile. "Yeah, I'll be okay". He looked at me sadly. "You know you ought to find some other favourite charity, Heart fund. Cancer society. Something."

"Ahh, get out of here."

"You know what I mean."

"If you mean you're a wet end, you're not telling me anything I didn't know."

The front porch light came on, and both Michael and Regina came flying out, probably to see if it was us or the State police come to inform them that their only chick and child had been run over on the highway.

"Arnold?" Regina called shrilly.

"Bug out, Dennis," Arnie said, grinning a little more honestly now. "This shit you don't need". He got out of the car and said dutifully, "Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad."

"Where have you been?" Michael asked. "You had your mother badly frightened, young man!"

Arnie was right. I could do without the reunion scene. I glanced back in the rear view mirror just briefly and saw him standing there, looking solitary and vulnerable- and then the two of them enfolded him and began shepherding him back to the \$60000 nest, no doubt turning the full force of all their latest parenting trips on him- Parent effectiveness training, est, who knows what else. They were so perfectly rational about it, that was the thing. They had played such a large part in what he was, and they were just too motherfucking(and fatherfucking) rational to see it.

I turned the radio on to FM-104, where the Block Party Weekend was continuing, and got Bob Seger and his Silver Bullet Band singing "Still the Same". The serendipity was just a little too hideously perfect, and I dialled away to the Phillies game.

The Phillies were losing. That was all right. That was par for the course.

Dan Brown's the Da Vinci Code (retranslation from Chinese)

An English mile outside, the albino called Silasi limped into door of a luxurious brown sandstone residence situated at Labuly street. The ascetic belt he had fastened on his thighs pricked his flesh. Even so, because he was serving god, he was singing because of feeling so spiritually perfectly content.

Pain has advantages for a person.

When he walked into the house his red eyes quickly swept over the main hall. There was no one there. He tiptoed up the stairs, hoping not to wake any of his companions. His bedroom door was open, as locks weren't allowed here. After he got inside the room, he closed the door smoothly. The room's furnishing was simple – hardwood floor, pine-wood wardrobe, in the corner there was a mat serving as a bed. He had stayed here every day of this week. He considered himself fortunate, who for many years, always staying in New York City enjoying this kind of place.

God has given me a sanctuary and shown me a reason for living.

Tonight Silasi felt that he was finally able to give something back to God. He hurried to the wardrobe and from the lowest drawer took out a mobile phone hidden there and called a number. "Hello?" A male voice answered on the other end. "Master, I have returned." "Speak" the voice ordered, sounding as if he was very pleased to hear the news. "Four are completed. Three attendants.... And one master." The other was quite a little while, as if praying. "So, I think you have gotten the information." "The four all said the same. Separately." "Do you believe them?" "They all said the same thing, it couldn't be a coincidence." He heard the sounds of someone breathing in an agitated way. "Perfect. They usually maintained strict secrecy, after all they had a reputation outside. At first I was even worried that they would protect the Xiutu society's secret and not speak of it." "Death approaching is a powerful motivator to make them speak." "So, pupil, quickly tell me the things I need to know." Silasi knew that the information he had got from his victim would be very shocking. "Master, four persons have all confirmed the keystone – the existence of that legendary keystone." Through the telephone, he could hear the other part immediately gasping, he could feel his master's excitement. "The keystone, just as we had guessed." According to rumour, the xiutu had made a stone map, the keystone, or as some called it the spline stone. It is a flagstone, on the top of it there are carvings that describes the place where the Xiutu's greatest secret was hidden. These secrets are so important that the Xiutu existed to protect them. "Once we have the keystone, we are just one step away from success" the master said. "We are closer than you know. The keystone is in Paris." "Paris? That's hard to believe, that's too easy." Silasi continued to tell him what had happened a bit earlier that evening: how the four victims had tried to bargain for their evil lives by giving information. Each person told Silasi exactly the same thing: the keystone was skilfully hidden in a church in Paris – inside the church of Saint-Sulpice at a precise spot. "In God's own holy place", master exclaimed with admiration. "They really know how to mock us!" "For several centuries!" Master suddenly got solemnly silent, as if to make this moment's victory always stay in his heart. Finally he said "You have successfully served your master, and done something extraordinary. We have already bitterly waited several hundreds of years. You must find that slabstone – immediately – tonight. You know that this matter is very serious." Silasi knew that this matter was very serious, but master's order seemed impossible to carry out. "But that church is well-guarded. Especially now at night, how can I get in?" Master began to give a briefing using his voice which had great power to

influence people. Silasi hung up the phone, and was so full of expectation and excitement that his skin got reddish. One hour. He told himself, and at the same time thanked his master for giving him time, so that he could practice asceticism before entering god's holy place.

I must get rid of the evils from today in my soul.

The goal of today's crimes are holy. The opposition to the war of God's enemies have already been under way hundreds of years. They definitely will be forgiven. Silasi knew, even though it was like that, that he also needed to offer tributes. He took off his sunglasses and all his clothes and kneeled in the center of the room. He lowered his head and carefully looked at the barbed ascetic belt tightly wound around his thighs. All true followers of The way all carry this thing. It is a leather belt, with metallic barb on top, that pricks your skin, so that you are always reminded of the pain Jesus suffered. The pain this thing leads to also helps you to control desires of the flesh.

Silasi had already worn the ascetic belt more than the stipulated two hours today but he knew that today was unusual. He adjusted it made it tighter still. As the barbs penetrated deeper into his skin, the instinct of his muscles was to shrink. He gradually breathed out, his breath tasted of the purifying effect the pain from the belt gave him. Pain has benefits for a person, Silasi whispered. He repeated their leader Hesaimaliya Isaacliwa's holy prayer. Even though Isaacliwa had passed away in 1979, his wisdom is eternal. When the thousands and thousands of the world's believers kneeled on the ground to perform the holy ritual called "ascetic practices of the flesh" it was still his words that they were whispering. At this time Silasi transferred his attention to a big, unwieldy rope that was next to him on the floor. Needs restraint. On the rope blood was spreading. Because he was eager to get the most pain and the most purifying result, Silasi quickly finished the prayer. After that he grabbed one of the rope, closed his eyes, and with all his strength swung the rope back and forth on his shoulder. He could feel the knot of the rope pounding his back. He swept the rope again, whipping his own shoulder, whipping his own body. Like this, he kept whipping himself. This is called the flogging of the flesh. Finally, he felt blood coming out.

Dan Brown's the Da Vinci Code (the original English text)

One mile away, the hulking albino named Silas limped through the front gate of the luxurious brownstone residence on Rue la Bruyère. The spiked cilice belt that he wore around his thigh cut into his flesh, and yet his soul sang with satisfaction of service to the Lord.

Pain is good.

His red eyes scanned the lobby as he entered the residence. Empty. He climbed the stairs quietly, not wanting to awaken any of his fellow numeraries. His bedroom door was open; locks were forbidden here. He entered, closing the door behind him.

The room was spartan-hardwood floors, a pine dresser, a canvas mat in the corner that served as his bed. He was a visitor here this week, and yet for many years he had been blessed with a similar sanctuary in New York City.

The Lord has provided me shelter and purpose in my life.

Tonight, at last, Silas felt he had begun to repay his debt. Hurrying to the dresser, he found the cell phone hidden in his bottom drawer and placed a call to a private extension.

"Yes?" a male voice answered.

"Teacher, I have returned."

"Speak," the voice commanded, sounding pleased to hear from him.

"All four are gone. The three *sénéchaux*...and the *grandmaster* himself."

There was a momentary pause, as if for prayer. "Then I assume you have the information?"

"All four concurred. Independently."

"And you believed them?"

"Their agreement was too great for coincidence."

An excited breath. "Superb. I had feared the brotherhood's reputation for secrecy might prevail."

"The prospect of death is strong motivation."

"So, my pupil, tell me what I must know."

Silas knew the information he had gleaned from his victims would come as a shock. "Teacher, all four confirmed the existence of the *clef de voûte*...the legendary keystone."

He heard a quick intake of breath over the phone and could feel the Teacher's excitement. "The *keystone*. Exactly as we suspected."

According to lore, the brotherhood had created a map of stone—a *clef de voûte*...or *keystone*—an engraved tablet that revealed the final resting place of the brotherhood's greatest secret...information so powerful that its protection was the reason for the brotherhood's very existence.

"When we possess the keystone," the Teacher said, "we will be only one step away."

"We are closer than you think. The keystone is here in Paris."

"Paris? Incredible. It is almost too easy."

Silas relayed the earlier events of the evening...how all four of his victims, moments before death, had desperately tried to buy back their Godless lives by telling their secret. Each had told Silas the exact same thing—that the keystone was ingeniously hidden at a precise location inside one of Paris's ancient churches—*Eglise de Saint-Sulpice*."

Inside a House of the Lord," the Teacher exclaimed. "How they mock us!"

"As they have for centuries."

The Teacher fell silent, as if letting the triumph of this moment settle over him. Finally, he spoke.

"You have done a great service to God. We have waited centuries for this. You must retrieve the stone for me. Immediately. Tonight. You understand the stakes."

Silas knew the stakes were incalculable, and yet what the Teacher was now commanding seemed impossible. "But the church, it is a fortress. Especially at night. How will I enter?"

With the confident tone of man of enormous influence, the Teacher explained what was to be done.

When Silas hung up the phone, his skin tingled with anticipation.

One hour, he told himself, grateful that the Teacher had given him time to carry out the necessary penance before entering a house of God. *I must purge my soul of today's sins*. The sins committed today had been Holy in purpose. Acts of war against the enemies of God had been committed for centuries. Forgiveness was assured.

Even so, Silas knew, absolution required sacrifice.

Pulling his shades, he stripped naked and knelt in the center of his room. Looking down, he examined the spiked *cilice* belt clamped around his thigh. All true followers of The Way wore this device—a

leather strap, studded with sharp metal barbs that cut into the flesh as a perpetual reminder of Christ's suffering. The pain caused by the device also helped counteract the desires of the flesh. Although Silas already had worn his *cilice* today longer than the requisite two hours, he knew today was no ordinary day. Grasping the buckle, he cinched it one notch tighter, wincing as the barbs dug deeper into his flesh. Exhaling slowly, he savored the cleansing ritual of his pain.

Pain is good, Silas whispered, repeating the sacred mantra of Father Josemaria Escriva-the Teacher of all Teachers. Although Escriva had died in 1975, his wisdom lived on, his words still whispered by thousands of faithful servants around the globe as they knelt on the floor and performed the sacred practice known as "corporal mortification."

Silas turned his attention now to a heavy knotted rope coiled neatly on the floor beside him. *The Discipline*. The knots were caked with dried blood. Eager for the purifying effects of his own agony, Silas said a quick prayer. Then, gripping one end of the rope, he closed his eyes and swung it hard over his shoulder, feeling the knots slap against his back. He whipped it over his shoulder again, slashing at his flesh. Again and again, he lashed.

Castigo corpus meum.

Finally, he felt the blood begin to flow.

Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone chapter two (retranslation from Chinese)

The quietly disappearing glass (excerpt)

Since mr and mrs Desili woke up after a sound sleep and found their nephew on the steps outside their front door, almost ten years have passed, but there's almost no change on Nuzhen road. The sun still rises over the neat garden in front of the house, illuminating the bronze number four on the Desili's front door; the sun silently climbs into their living room, and it is still exactly the same as that year when mr Desili watched important news on the TV about owls. Only the photos over the fireplace revealed how much time had passed. Ten years before, there were many photos there resembling a large beach ball wearing baby hats in many colors – it's just that Dali is not a baby anymore, on the photos are a big headed boy riding his first bicycle, on a carousel at the fair, playing video games with his father, being embraced by his mother. There was no sign that in this house there was also another boy living there. Hali Bote also lived here, sleeping now, but not for much longer. His aunt Peini had already woken up, the first noise heard every morning was her screaming. "Get up! Get up from bed! Quickly!" Hali woke up. His aunt also patted his door. "Get up!" She screamed. Hali heard her walking towards the kitchen, then heard the frying pan being put on the stove. He turned and his back faced the door, trying his best to remember what he had dreamed. It had been a good dream. There had been a flying motorbike in the dream. He thought that was amusing, perhaps that was something he had dreamed of before. His aunt was outside his door again. "Did you get up yet?" She questioned. "Soon" Hali said. "Hurry, don't lost any time, I want you to look after the bacon. Don't dare to overcook it, I want everything to go smooth on Dali's birthday. Hali muttered. "What did you say?" his aunt asked with a stern voice. "Nothing, nothing...." Dali's birthday – how could he have forgotten? Hali got of bed exasperatingly slowly and started to look for his socks. He found a pair under his bed, off one of them he grabbed a spider, then put it on. Hali had gotten used to spiders long ago, because they were everywhere in the cupboard under the stairs, and that was where he slept. He put on his clothes and then followed the corridor to the kitchen. The

kitchen table was almost full to the brim with Dali's birthday gifts. It looked as if he was getting the computer he wanted, and it goes without saying that he was getting his second TV and a racing bike. Why Dali wanted a racing bike was a riddle to Hali, because Dali was chubby and hated physical exercise, unless of course the exercise included boxing and kicking. His favourite boxing ball was Hali, but he couldn't often catch it. Hali appeared thin, but he was agile. Perhaps that had something to do with him living in a pitch-black cupboard, he seemed to be thinner and smaller than others his age. He even looked thinner than he actually was, because he only wore Dali's old clothes, and Dali was three or four times his size. Hali had an emaciated face, knees where the kneecaps pointed out, pitch-black hair and a pair of blue-green eyes. He wore a couple of glasses that had been repaired with transparent tape many times, because Dali always used his fists to beat his nose. The thing Hali liked the most about his own looks was the pale lightning shaped scar on his forehead. He had had it for as long as he could remember, he could remember that the first thing he asked aunt Peini was how he had gotten it. "it's from the car crash that killed your parents." She said like that "you are not allowed to ask questions." Not allowed to ask questions - if you want to live in peace with the Desili's, this is the first rule. When uncle Funong came into the kitchen Hali was turning over the bacon. "Comb your hair!" he roared, this was his way of saying good-morning.

Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone chapter two (original version)

The vanishing glass (excerpt)

Nearly ten years had passed since the Dursleys had woken up to find their nephew on the front step, but Privet Drive had hardly changed at all. The sun rose on the same tidy front gardens and lit up the brass number four on the Dursleys' front door; it crept into their living room, which was almost exactly the same as it had been on the night when Mr. Dursley had seen that fateful news report about the owls. Only the photographs on the mantelpiece really showed how much time had passed. Ten years ago, there had been lots of pictures of what looked like a large pink beach ball wearing different-colored bonnets--but Dudley Dursley was no longer a baby, and now the photographs showed a large blond boy riding his first bicycle, on a carousel at the fair, playing a computer game with his father, being hugged and kissed by his mother. The room held no sign at all that another boy lived in the house, too.

Yet Harry Potter was still there, asleep at the moment, but not for long. His Aunt Petunia was awake and it was her shrill voice that made the first noise of the day.

"Up! Get up! Now!"

Harry woke with a start. His aunt rapped on the door again.

"Up!" she screeched. Harry heard her walking toward the kitchen and then the sound of the frying pan being put on the stove. He rolled onto his back and tried to remember the dream he had been having. It had been a good one. There had been a flying motorcycle in it. He had a funny feeling he'd had the same dream before.

His aunt was back outside the door.

"Are you up yet?" she demanded.

"Nearly," said Harry.

"Well, get a move on, I want you to look after the bacon. And don't you dare let it burn, I want everything perfect on Duddy's birthday."

Harry groaned.

"What did you say?" his aunt snapped through the door.

"Nothing, nothing..."

Dudley's birthday--how could he have forgotten? Harry got slowly out of bed and started looking for socks. He found a pair under his bed and, after pulling a spider off one of them, put them on. Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them, and that was where he slept.

When he was dressed he went down the hall into the kitchen. The table was almost hidden beneath all Dudley's birthday presents. It looked as though Dudley had gotten the new computer he wanted, not to mention the second television and the racing bike. Exactly why Dudley wanted a racing bike was a mystery to Harry, as Dudley was very fat and hated exercise--unless of course it involved punching somebody. Dudley's favorite punching bag was Harry, but he couldn't often catch him. Harry didn't look it, but he was very fast.

Perhaps it had something to do with living in a dark cupboard, but Harry had always been small and skinny for his age. He looked even smaller and skinnier than he really was because all he had to wear were old clothes of Dudley's, and Dudley was about four times bigger than he was. Harry had a thin face, knobby knees, black hair, and bright green eyes. He wore round glasses held together with a lot of Scotch tape because of all the times Dudley had punched him on the nose. The only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead that was shaped like a bolt of lightning. He had had it as long as he could remember, and the first question he could ever remember asking his Aunt Petunia was how he had gotten it.

"In the car crash when your parents died," she had said. "And don't ask questions."

Don't ask questions--that was the first rule for a quiet life with the Dursleys.

Uncle Vernon entered the kitchen as Harry was turning over the bacon.

"Comb your hair!" he barked, by way of a morning greeting.