

A Comparative Study on Two Translations of Lao She's *Black Li and White Li*

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Abstract—This paper employs Manipulation Theory and Skopos Theory as theoretical foundations to understand why and how external and internal constraints have affected translators in using translation solutions. This paper has chosen Lao She's Chinese short story, *Black Li and White Li*, and compared the two translations from Wang Chi-Chen and Lyell A. Williams. A comparison of “patronage”, “professionals”, and translation solutions shows that the two translators produced remarkable translation works at their time and their translation solutions are worth learning.

Index Terms—Lao She, patronage, professionals, translation solutions

Lao She, whose original name was Shu Qingchun, is one of the most prominent writers in modern Chinese literature. Many of his works, including his best-known works *Rickshaw Boy* (骆驼祥子) and *Teahouse* (茶馆), have been translated by other translators. This paper has chosen *Black Li and White Li* (黑白李) because it was Lao She's first short story translated into English in the US. Based on Manipulation Theory (Lefevere, 2004) and Skopos (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013), this paper attempts to investigate why and how translators adopted different translation solutions (Pym et al., 2020) in the two translation works on Lao She's *Black Li and White Li* (黑白李). This paper consists of five parts: I. A brief introduction of the story; II. A brief introduction of the two translators; III. The comparison of the external translation constraints and the internal constraints of the two translators; IV. The comparison of translation solutions of the two translation works; V. Conclusion.

I. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE STORY

Black Li and White Li was written and first published in 1933 in *Literature Quarterly* (文学季刊) (Zhang, 2016). It was a story set in 1920s Beijing where two brothers, one old-fashioned and the other revolutionary, shared a profound brotherhood even though they had different views of life. The two brothers resembled but were distinguishable as Black Li, the elder brother, had a black mole over his left eyebrow. In the story, Black Li followed Chinese rituals and sacrificed his love and his life for his younger brother, the young anarchist. On the other hand, the younger brother White Li tried to keep his brother away from being implicated (Lao She, 1933, 2004).

This was a special story at its time. First, it was inspired by Charles Dicken's famous novel *A Tale of Two Cities* and Lao She followed the narrative structure of modern English stories. Second, Lao She was a master of Chinese and the Beijing dialect. The fluent application of idioms in the story added to the story a special flavor (Zhang, 2016).

II. AN INTRODUCTION OF TWO TRANSLATORS

There are three English versions of *Black Li and White Li*. This paper focuses on the earliest and the last versions because they were published at different times by university presses in the United States and different social settings could help us have a clearer picture of why and how the translation solutions of the two translators were employed.

The earliest English version of *Black Li and White Li* was translated by Wang Chi-Chen in 1944 and published by Columbia University Press. The last one was translated by William A. Lyell in 1999 and published by the University of Hawaii Press (Lyell & Chen, 1999).

Wang Chi-Chen, a scholar born in a traditional intellectual family in Shandong province, graduated from Tsinghua University in 1922 and later studied at Columbia University. After graduation, he started translating Chinese classics and his *Dream of Red Chamber* was first published in 1927 by Doubleday Doran Co. in New York and Routledge in London at the same time (Guan, 2016). The translation brought great fame to Wang and he had been offered a teaching position in Chinese literature at Columbia University from the 1930s until he retired in the 1980s. In the 1930s and 1940s, Wang translated three books published by Columbia University Press, *Ah Q and Others*, *Selected Stories of Lusin* (1941), *Traditional Chinese Tales* (1944), and *Contemporary Chinese Stories* (1944). *Black Li and White Li* was the first translated story of Lao She in *Contemporary Chinese Stories*.

The last English version was from William A. Lyell, an American research specialist at Stanford University. An avid fan of Lu Xun's works, Lyell showed equal admiration for Lao She and translated a bulk of his works, such as the novel *Cat Country* (Lyell, 1970) and dozens of Lao She's short stories (Lyell & Chen, 1999).

III. THE COMPARISON OF THE EXTERNAL TRANSLATION CONSTRAINTS AND THE INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS OF THE TWO TRANSLATORS

Lefevere (2004), in his manipulation theory, discussed two controlling factors that constrain the literary system: professionals and patronage. According to Lefevere (2004), professionals were internal constraints as they were closely related to the literary system, such as critics, reviewers, teachers, academics and translators. They might partly determine the dominant poetics. Patronages, such as publishers, academic institutions, or academic journals, were external constraints.

Skopos, the Greek word for “aim” or “purpose”, was first introduced by Vermeer as a term to demonstrate the purpose of a translation and the primal guideline of the action of translating (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013). In Skopos theory, achieving functional adequacy is a paramount task to the translators where the translators should be primarily concerned with the coherence of the target text. The fidelity rule, therefore, maintains that coherence in the target text is achieved, firstly, by how the translators receive the source text information, how the translators interpret what they have comprehended and how readers, or the target text receivers encode the target information (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013).

In this paper, “patronage” refers to the publishers in the US at different times; “professionals” refer to translators with different educational backgrounds, personal experiences, and ideologies of translation.

The patronage for Wang Chi-Chen’s translation was Columbia University Press and the translation works were aimed at readers in the 1940s (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013). As an ally of the US in WWII, China was a popular topic in the then US. Columbia University Press thus published a collection of books to introduce China from different aspects in the 1940s (Wang, 2000), and literature was just one part. As Wang Chi-Chen was teaching at the university and known for his proficient mastery of English and Chinese, he was invited to translate and introduce Chinese literary works to American readers.

William A. Lyell’s translation was published by the patronage, University of Hawaii Press in 1999. At that time, the great economic development in East Asia aroused another hot wave of oriental studies in the US. Hawaii University Press had an ambitious plan to publish a series of translation works to showcase the works of contemporary Chinese novelists in fresh and authoritative translations and from a range of cultural and political milieus (Goldblatt; cited in Lyell & Chen, 1999).

Unlike commercial press which concerns more about profits, the university presses are non-profit academic organizations and are more knowledge-oriented. Aiming at intellectuals and potential intellectuals of university students, the publishers view high-quality academic books as a priority. Therefore, translators, to contribute to the readers with high-quality translation works, were granted a wide space of freedom in translating material selections and in choosing translation solutions. In a word, the two translators are less under external constraints but more under internal ones in translating Lao She’s work.

In the preface of *Contemporary Chinese Stories*, Wang Chi-Chen (1944, p. vii) elucidated his purpose of translating contemporary Chinese stories: to show readers in the US more works of the “other side of China’s life”. The primary reason is that Wang Chi-Chen was deeply influenced by New Cultural Movement. As Lu Xun was Wang’s preference, Wang translated *Ah Q and Others, Selected Stories of Lusin* in 1941. However, there were negative reactions from “better sorts” of Chinese who remarked they were embarrassed at Lu Xun’s portrayal of “the other side of China’s life”. Wang was disappointed at the remarks and began his translations of contemporary Chinese stories. He selected Lao She’s works because those works gleamed with the acute observation of Chinese ordinary people’s life and were realistic. Another reason for the translation of Lao She’s works is that Lao She’s *Black Li and White Li* followed the style of English stories. After the great success of his *Dreams of Red Chamber*, Wang was aware that Chinese stories, adapted to English narrative structure, were more readable and acceptable to English readers. With the goal of portraying “the other side” of China’s life to English readers (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013), Wang adopted similar translation solutions as in his *Dreams of Red Chamber*.

In “Translator’s Postscript: the man and the stories”, included at the end of the book, Lyell (Lyell & Chen, 1999) asserted his purpose of translating Lao She’s work. In the 1970s Lyell accomplished his Ph.D. dissertation on Lu Xun and his works (Zheng & Huang, 2019). He translated *Diary of a Madman, and other stories* written by Lu Xun. A scholar with rich knowledge about China, Lyell was later keenly interested in Lao She’s works and highly acknowledged Lao She’s personal charm through Lao She’s works. Lyell claimed reading Lao She’s short stories was like viewing China through the perspective of Lao She. Lyell insisted that reading Lao She’s works was an enjoyable experience for English readers to know China and to understand the spirit of China. Furthermore, his experiences of teaching Chinese literature in universities amazed him that Lao She was one of the most well-known Chinese writers to university students in the US. Therefore, he believed Lao She was unique to every reader. As a translator, what he should do was present Lao She’s works with as little of his personal conception as possible, leaving readers the chance to get “a more accurate impression of Lao She’s own voice” with their own eyes (Lyell & Chen, 1999). Therefore, the Skopos Lyell persisted in translation was to present the source text to its full, without any omission. Moreover, in terms of some culture-loaded expressions, he provided explanations in an academic demeanor.

IV. THE COMPARISON OF TRANSLATION SOLUTIONS OF THE TWO TRANSLATION WORKS

In this section, examples are chosen to demonstrate how internal constraints, that is, educational backgrounds, personal experiences, and ideologies of translation, have influenced translation solutions in the two translated works. The comparative analysis is conducted first at the discourse level to look at how sentences and words were translated in the context, then the analysis goes to the translation solutions on culture-loaded words. Each example, after the source text, Wang's version, and Lyell's version, is followed by the comments.

A. *Translation Solutions at the Discourse Level*

A parallel comparison between the source text and Wang's translation work has shown that Wang employed "text tailoring" (Pym et al., 2020), through which the omitted materials in the story can be more accessible to the English narrative structure. In fact, in the source text, there were many places where the narrator "I", who was also the avatar of Lao She himself, gave speculative comments about Black Li's behavior. To Wang Chi-Chen, such parts deviated from the plots and they were not useful in depicting "the other side" of China. Also, the integrality would not suffer by deleting these parts. Besides, to keep the flow of the story in English narration, Wang employed "perspective change" (Pym et al., 2020) to frequently rephrase some parts of the story.

Lyell's version, through the comparison with the source text, also revealed that it followed "text tailoring" (Pym et al., 2020), yet in another manner. That is, in addition to translating fully the work, Lyell employed "density change" (Pym et al., 2020), such as using explicitation, multiple translations and endnotes to display the translation in a more academic way. The added materials to the story were expected to enrich readers' understanding of the source text.

Example 1

Source text: "爱情不是他们兄弟俩这档子事的中心，可是我得由这说起。" (Lao She, 1933, 2004, p. 233).

Wang's version: "Love is not the central theme in this story of the two brothers, but it forms a convenient point of departure." (Wang, 1944, p. 25).

Lyell's version: "Love wasn't at the heart of that business between the brothers, but that's where I've got to begin." (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 45).

This is the first sentence of the short story. In Wang's version, the second half of the sentence was, with the translation solution of changing the semantic focus, rephrased. Such a solution epitomizes the translator's intention to tell a Chinese story in a way more acceptable to English readers. However, the second half of the first line from Lyell's translation has proved that Lyell's intention was to, through his translation, leave the readers to understand Lao She's works.

Example 2

Source text: "老四跟我好闹了一场，"他说，我明白这个“好”字--第一他不愿说兄弟间吵了架，第二不愿只说弟弟不对。这个字带出不愿说而犹不能不说的曲折。"因为她....."(Lao She, 1933, 2004, p. 233).

Wang's Version: "Four and I had quite a little row," he went on after a while, "because of her. ..." (Wang, 1944, p. 27).

Lyell's Version:

"Old Four and I got into a good one." I knew exactly what he meant by "got into a good one." First off, he didn't want to come straight out and say they'd had a fight. And then, too, he didn't want to lay the whole thing on his kid brother, either, even if it was White Li who was in the wrong. "Got into a good one" was also a handy way of avoiding saying something that really ought to be said, but he didn't want to say. "It was all because of her...." (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 48)

This example occurred at the start of the story when White Li, to get engaged in his revolution without bringing trouble to Black Li, worked out an excuse that White Li wanted to alienate Black Li as they fell for the same girl. In the source text, Lao She, the narrator of "I", gave some comments on the situation.

In Wang's version, Wang only included Black Li's words in the dialogue, and he converted the source text with the sentence "he went on after a while" to introduce the subsequent dialogue. Wang did this because what he decided was to tell readers a story in English narration.

In Lyell's version, fidelity in translation is strictly followed so that readers can form their own impression of Lao She's work. To achieve fidelity in form, Lyell has kept cohesive devices in the source text with "first off; and then, too; also". To maintain the original meanings in the source text, he used explicitation to keep meanings clearer. For example, he added "even if it was White Li who was in the wrong" to explain "不愿只说弟弟不对".

Example 3

Source text:

时间越长，他的故事越多。有一个礼拜天的早晨，我看见他进了礼拜堂。也许是看朋友，我想。在外面等了他一会儿。他没出来。不便再等了，我一边走一边想：老李必是受了大的刺激—失恋，弟兄不和，或者还有别的。只就我知道的这两件事说，大概他已经支持不下去了。他的动作仿佛是拿生命当作小玩艺，那正是因他对任何小事都要慎重地考虑。茶碗上的花纹摆不齐都觉得不舒服。哪一件小事也得在他心中摆好，摆得使良心上舒服。上礼拜堂去祷告，为是坚定良心。良心是古圣先贤给他制备好了的，可是他又不愿将一切新事新精神一笔抹杀。结果，他“想”怎样，老不如“已是”怎样来得现成，他不知怎样

才好。他大概是真爱她，可是为了弟弟，不能不放弃她，而且失恋是说不出口的。他常对我说，“咱们也坐一回飞机。”说完，他一笑，不是他笑呢，是“身体发肤，受之父母”笑呢。

过了晌午，我去找他。按说一见面就得谈老四，在过去的一个多月都是这样。这次他变了花样，眼睛很亮，脸上有点极静适的笑意，好像是又买着一册善本的古书。(Lao She, 1933, 2004, p. 239)

Wang's Version:

As time went on he took up more hobbies. One Sunday morning I caught him entering a church. Thinking that he might have gone in to see someone, I waited for him outside. He did not come out, however, and I gave up waiting for him. He had apparently decided to seek refuge in religion. I found him home that afternoon. For more than a month now. Four had been our sole topic of conversation, but on this occasion, he deviated from that usual routine. His eyes gleamed and there was a serene smile on his face, as if he had just acquired a rare old edition of some book. (Wang, 1944, p. 31)

Lyell's Version:

As time went by, he began doing more and more odd things. One Sunday morning I even saw him go into a church. Thinking he'd probably gone in to look for a friend, I waited outside, but he didn't come out right away. I couldn't wait around forever, so I left. I mulled it all over as I walked along. His peculiar behavior must be the result of the various shocks he'd suffered--a lost love, a falling out with his younger brother, and maybe something else, something even I didn't know about. If you just stick to the two things I *did* know about, either one would be enough to send him around the bend.

If you looked at the way he carried himself, you might have thought that he saw his own life as one of the antiques he collected, for you would sense that same note of careful consideration with which he approached everything, no matter how trivial. If the fish on the tea bowls didn't face in exactly the same direction, he'd be upset. It was like that with anything that came into his life. He always had to take it and arrange it in his mind with that same kind of care, get it just right so that it wouldn't bother his conscience.

Going to church was, no doubt, intended to strengthen that conscience, one that had long since been prepared for him by the sages of antiquity. And yet, he didn't want to dismiss everything new at one fell swoop just for the sake of that conscience, either. The upshot of all this was that the kind of guy he'd like to be was no match for the kid of guy he already was, and he just couldn't figure out what he ought to do. He probably really did love her but, for the sake of his younger brother, had no choice but to give her up, and that was something he couldn't tell anyone—even me.

He'd often say, "One of these days you and I are going to take an airplane ride, too!" Then he'd smile. But he wasn't really the one doing the smiling. From the parental pair come body, skin, and hair - and all that stuff from the classics about how a good elder brother is supposed to act was somewhere inside Black Li doing the smiling for him.

I went and looked him up after lunch. For more than a month now, as soon as we met, he'd start in about his brother. But his time he changed his tune. There was a slight twinkle in his eyes and just the trace of a satisfied smile on his face, the kind you'd often see just after he'd succeeded in buying a rare book. (Lyell, 1999, pp. 55-56)

In Example 3, the underlined parts in the source text and Wang's version indicate the translator only chose parts that might serve the plot development, deleting nearly 2/3 of the source text. Based on his understanding of the source text, Wang also achieved "perspective change" through rephrasing (Pym et al., 2020) For example, "故事" (gushi in pinyin) has been changed to "hobbies", which seemed reasonable as it meant similarly to the other two expressions of "小把戏" (xiaobaxi in pinyin), "小玩意" (xiaowanyi in pinyin), which appeared earlier in the source text (Lao She, 1933, 2004, p. 234). The sentence "He had apparently decided to seek refuge in religion" covered the idea of the deleted parts. However, if the source text was carefully read, it could be discerned that such a translation was a rough and inaccurate inference through Wang Chi-chen.

Lyell's version in Example 3 has shown that the translator not only covered the whole content of that excerpt, but also did explicitation in an academic way. The translation of "身体发肤，受之父母" is a piece of solid evidence.

The fixed idiom "身体发肤，受之父母" ("shenti fafu, shouzhi fumu" in pinyin) implied Black Li was a very old-fashioned person. Even though he claimed he would try flying one day, his belief that his body, skin, and hair were given by his parents would never allow him to risk himself because trying flying would violate the practices he learned from Filial Piety. As for such an idiom, Wang Chi-chen omitted it deliberately.

In Lyell's understanding, this idiom was important to demonstrate the mindset of a conservative Chinese person in the early 20th century. He sought faithful translation by copying the original structure of the Chinese idiom, hoping modern readers could fully understand old China's life. He even added an endnote (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 67) to discuss the importance of the Classic of Filial Piety for Black Li and "I", and the tenets an elder brother was expected to follow.

In a word, the three examples above reveal that compared with Lyell's fidelity to the form and content of the source text, Wang's translation is more like an abridged version in nature with frequent rewriting to keep the flow of the plots.

Example 4

Source text:

我还记得清清楚楚；正是个初夏的晚间，落着点小雨，我去找他闲谈，他独自在屋里坐着呢，面前摆着四个红鱼细磁茶碗。我们俩是用不着客气的，我坐下吸烟，他摆弄那四个碗。转转这个，转转那个，把红鱼要一点不差的朝着他。摆好，身子往后仰一仰，像画家设完一层色那么退后看看。然后，又逐一的转开，把另一面的鱼们摆齐。又往后仰身端详了一番，回过头来向我笑了笑，笑得非常天真。(Lao She, 1933, 2004, p. 233)

Wang's version:

I remember it well. It was an evening in early summer with a light rain falling. I went to see him and found him alone in the room with four fine porcelain teacups decorated with red fish before him. As we never stood on ceremony with each other, I sat down with a cigarette while he went on studying the cups. He turned first this one and then that and went on doing that until he had all the fish exactly facing him. After he had arranged them to his satisfaction he leaned back and looked at them like a painter withdrawing from his canvas in order to get a better perspective of his work. Then he rearranged the cups so that the fish on the other side faced him and again leaned back to look at them. He turned and smiled at me with satisfaction. (Wang, 1944, p. 26)

Lyell's version:

I remember it like it was yesterday. It was an early summer's night and a light drizzle was coming down. I went over to Black Li's to chew the fat. I found him alone in his room. He had four tea bowls set out in front of him. They were porcelain and decorated with goldfish. We never stood on ceremony, so I just plopped down and took out a cigarette. He was fiddling with those damned bowls. First he gave one a turn, and then another, until he had all the goldfish lined up so they faced him at exactly the same angle; he leaned back and looked down the bridge of his nose at them, the way an artist might look at a painting after adding a masterful stroke. And then he switched them all around until he had the goldfish on the *other* side lined up in the same way. He leaned back again, gave them another once-over, and then turned to me.

He was grinning just like a kid—a very young one at that. (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 46)

By reading the two translated versions, it is quite obvious that syntactically the sentences were generally similar except for several minor places. With the goal of creating a story, Wang simplified “我去找他闲谈” to “I went to see him”, deleting the word “闲谈” while Lyell, instead of using a more common word of “chat”, chose a colloquial expression, “chew the fat”, to help readers enjoy the beauty of local dialect in the source text. “to chew the fat” means “to talk with someone in an informal and friendly way”. (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/chew-the-fat>) Moreover, both translators used explicitation to describe how Black Li was studying and turning the four cups like an artist. Yet when translating the last clause of “笑得非常天真” (literally meanings “smiling naively”), Wang rephrased the part and used “with satisfaction”, instead. Lyell, gave explicitation to “naive” with “grinning, like a kid, a very young one”, to keep faithfulness to the source text.

B. Translation Solutions of Culture-Loaded Words

Born and bred in old Beijing, Lao She was a language master in depicting the local people's life and the local culture. The following examples show the different translation solutions to culture-loaded words.

(a). Translating Terms of Addressing Titles

Examples 5 to 8, with the differences in translating words of kinship, display different translation ideologies of the two translators.

Example 5

Source text: “...老四跟我好闹了一场”，他说... (Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 234)

Wang's version: “Four and I had quite a little row,” he went on after a while... (Wang, 1944, p. 27)

Lyell's version: “Old Four and I got into a good one.” (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 48)

Example 6

Source text: “...他老拿我当作‘弟弟’，老拿自己的感情限定住别人的行动...” (Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 237)

Wang's version: “... He is always so solicitous about me, his didi, always trying to work on my feelings...” (Wang, 1944, p. 29)

Lyell's version: “... He always thinks he's gotta look out for his 'kid brother'. Tries to dictate my activity on the basis of his feelings...” (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 52)

Example 7

Source text: “四爷不管我的腿，可是管我的心；二爷是家长里短，可怜我的腿，可不管这儿。”他又指了指胸口。(Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 243)

Wang's version: “Ssu-yeh doesn't care anything about my legs, but he cares about my heart. Erh-yeh is considerate and pities my legs, but he doesn't care anything about here.” He pointed to his heart again. (Wang, 1944, p. 35)

Lyell's version: “Fourth Master couldn't care less about my legs, but he cares about the way I feel. Second Master worries about every piddlin' little thing inside the family and he's got real sympathy for my legs, but he really doesn't care about me here.” He pointed to his chest again. (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p.62)

Example 8

Source text: “老二大概是进了天堂，他在那里顶合适了；我还在这儿砸地狱的门呢。”(Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 247)

Wang's version: “Lao Erh has probably gone up to Heaven. That's the right place for him. I, however, have to go on trying to break down the gates of Hell.” (Wang, 1944, p. 39)

Lyell's version: “Old Two is probably up in heaven -- just the place for him--and I'm down here still trying to smash down the gates of hell”. (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p.67)

In the four examples, the Chinese ways of addressing titles and kinship, such as “老二，老四，弟弟，二爷，四爷”，are translated differently. In most cases, Lyell has opted for “cultural correspondence” (Pym et al., 2020). He used a Western way of addressing titles, For example, he used the American slang “the kid brother” to mean “弟弟”，“Fourth Master, Second Master” to “四爷，二爷”，and “Old Two” to “老二”.

On the other hand, Wang adopted transliteration, or copying sounds after Chinese words, to address the titles of the characters and refer to the Chinese way of kinship, for example, “Erh-yeh”, “Ssu-yeh” and “Lao Erh”. In fact, this way of naming Chinese titles was maintained after Wang translated *Dream of Red Chamber*. It helped readers to understand the social ranks and the addressing system in China, a unique feature of China. In case such an addressing system might confuse the readers, Wang appended a glossary for further explanation (Wang, 1944, pp. 228-234).

(b). Translating Idioms and Colloquial Expressions

Lao She was a master of the Beijing dialect. In *Black Li and White Li*, he used idioms to display the unique local flavor. To Wang Chi-chen, he was the most concerned with the plots, so anything not closely relevant to the plot was deleted. For example, the idiom “身体发肤，受之父母”，as discussed previously, was not translated by Wang. How were the idioms both translators came across translated? Here four examples are chosen.

Example 9

Source text: “所以你不是现代人，”我打着哈哈说。(Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 234)

Wang's version: “That's why you're not a man of this age,” I said jokingly. (Wang, 1944, p. 26)

Lyell's version: “Shows you're not a very up-to-date guy,” I said, trying to make light of the whole thing. (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 47)

Example 9 came as the narrator's comment when he was informed that Black Li gave up the love affairs that three parties were involved in for the brotherhood. “打着哈哈” (dazhe haha in pinyin) is a colloquial expression spoken in the northern part of China, meaning giving vague comments to avoid embarrassing the speakers involved. From the Chinese meaning, Lyell's version is better as it is more faithful to the context.

Example 10

Source text: 不是：老狗熊学不会新玩艺了。三角恋爱，不得劲儿。(Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 234)

Wang's version: It's not that, but you can't teach an old circus bear new tricks. I can't go in for these triangular affairs.” (Wang, 1944, p. 26)

Lyell's version: “It's not that exactly. It's just that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Triangular love affair? Not for me.” (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p.47)

The source text occurred when Black Li told the narrator that he withdrew from the love affairs. In the source text, 老狗熊 is a metaphor to refer to Black Li as one who did not want to learn a new way. In Wang's version, the old bear is given with explicitation as an “old circus bear” to help readers understand the original meaning. Lyell found a perfect match for the Chinese expression with American slang “teach an old dog new tricks”, achieving the cultural correspondence of the two languages. Such a translation is better of the two as through the American slang, the English readers can sense the charm of Beijing idioms.

Example 11

Source text: “..... 老二以为这个关系应当叫作神圣的, 所以他郑重地向她磕头, 及至磕了一鼻子灰, 又以为我也应去磕, 对不起, 我没那个瘾”。 (Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 236)

Wang's version: “... Two, however, seems to think there is something sacred about it and insists on Kowtowing before her. Now after he only got his nose smeared with dirt for all the kowtowing he did, he wants me to do the same thing. I am sorry, but I don't care for that sort of thing.” (Wang, 1944, p. 28)

Lyell's version: “... Number Two thinks that there's something holy about that desire, and so he throws himself at her feet. And what's he got to show for it? Face full of dirt. He thinks I ought to do the same thing. Sorry folks, but I'll have to take a pass on that one!” (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p.50)

This dialogue was from White Li when he was commenting to the narrator on Black Li's vain effort to apologize to “her” and asked for a reunion between “her” and White Li. In terms of the expression 磕头 (ketou in pinyin), Wang employed transliteration, copying sounds of the expression “kowtow” while Lyell gave a vivid picture with a verbal phrase “throws himself at her feet”. As to “磕了一鼻子灰” (ke le yibizi hui in pinyin), Wang did literal translation by copying the structure of the source text while Lyell's translation used metonymy to discuss the consequence of Black Li's apology. Using rhetorical devices here has achieved a similar local flavor in translation as in the source text.

Example 12

Source text: 我晓得他还有话呢, 直怕他的酒气教酳茶给解去, 所以有紧了他一板: “往下说呀, 王五! 都说了吧, 反正我还能拉老婆舌头?” (Lao She, 1933/2004, p. 243)

Wang's version: I knew that he had more to tell and being afraid that the tea might get the better of the stimulating effects of the wine I urged him on: “Go on, Wang Wu! Tell me everything. I can gossip just as well as any woman, don't you worry!” (Wang, 1944, p. 35)

Lyell's version: I knew he had more to say and was afraid that the strong tea I'd given him would undo the loosening effect of the wine he'd drunk. So now I came in with a little drumbeat to keep him from losing his rhythm. “Come on, Wang Wu, get it all off your chest. After all, I'm not the kind to go round running off at the mouth like some old lay and get you in trouble.” (Lyell & Chen, 1999, p. 62)

Example 12 is from the latter part of the story where the narrator was eager to know how Black Li got White Li's secret anarchy deeds. In the source text, three underlined segments are colloquial and idiomatic expressions from the local dialect. For the first underlined segment, 酳茶 (yancha in pinyin) means strong tea, so both translators did the free translation of explaining the essential meaning of the expression. The second one, “紧了一板” (jinle yiban in pinyin) means to urge the chain of actions. Therefore, Wang did free translation by explicating the inner meaning of the expression. Lyell, on the other hand, achieved “cultural correspondence” by using “drumbeat”, a word familiar to US readers to mean the pressure to push Wang Wu to spill out more details. 拉老婆舌头 (la laopo shetou in pinyin) is an idiomatic expression spoken in the northern part of China, meaning “gossiping”. Both translators did the free translation, and Lyell's one was more lifelike.

In sum, through the eight examples in discussing translating culture-loaded words, we can see how two translators applied translation solutions to achieve their translating Skopos.

V. CONCLUSION

Wang Chi-Chen was the first one to translate Lao She's works to the readers of the United States. Through the translation solutions he employed, he displayed a fantastic Chinese story and partially brought Lao more recognition in the United States. Nearly half a century later, Lyell discovered that Lao She had been so well-known among students in the US that the students were bored of any critiques on Lao She (Lyell & Chen, 1999). Therefore, Lyell presented his translation work with different ideologies and translation solutions. It's hard to judge which of the two translations is better, yet they offered us different perspectives to understand the controlling factors in constraining literary translation.

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