

The Application of Trauma/PTSD Studies to Translation: Take Several Japanese Novels as an Example

Qiushi Gu*

Post-doctoral Research Station, Social Science Academic Press, Beijing, China;
Research Office, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China

Abstract—This research investigates issues associated with the translation of traumatic literary narratives in different languages. Initially, these narratives are constructed from the traumatic lived experiences of the survivors, serving as a means of recovery and making sense out of their painful experiences. However, in many traumatic literary narratives, when the survivor’s testimonies are represented in different languages and cultures, the foundational social trauma, traumatic aftereffects, and recovery are not adequately conveyed. The absence of a systematic and comprehensive theoretical framework in translation studies may result in translators offering uninformed and insufficient interpretations of traumatic elements in literary works. This issue necessitates a thorough and detailed understanding and perspective to assist translators in recognizing and representing the social trauma within literary works, while also acknowledging their social responsibilities. This study argues that trauma/PTSD studies provides an innovative, most fitting, and practical literary criticism to assist translators in adequately interpreting and appreciating traumatic narratives, as well as other serious literature that has heretofore not been discussed and recognized in psychoanalytical terms, by case studies of the translation examination of five Japanese novels.

Index Terms—trauma/PTSD studies, traumatic narratives, literary translation, translation studies, Japanese literature

I. INTRODUCTION

Traumatic literary narratives belong to a social-political engaged genre where survivors constitute the lived violent individual and collective historical events. They enable the audience to access the unspeakable horror and reflect on the social background that generates trauma. This distinctive representational form also gives chances to shape the public discourse and increase communities’ awareness to the recovery process and future repetition.

Though the trending topic in scholarly fields including psychology, history, and art, traumatic narratives is rarely discussed in translation studies, there are studies regarding the translation of survivors’ (oral) testimony examined from post-colonialism. Repetitions are rendered as semiotics and rhetoric of psychological pain, scholars conclude that suffering from the manipulation of homogenization and distortion, translators are intentionally neglect or omit the repetitions, mood words, and pauses. By that, translators effectively “de-traumatize” or “normalize” the source text (Pestre & Benslama, 2011; Batchelor, 2015; Pillen, 2016).

This paper argues that translators may not deliberately distort the trauma in the original text since it is possible that they are unable to adequately recognize the traumatic elements, nor can they interpret and appreciate the trauma appropriately without the help of innovative and practical literary criticism. Trauma/PTSD studies perspective enables translators to appreciate and interpret the lived traumatic experiences, the aftereffects, as well as the socio-political historical background associated with the trauma. With a thorough knowledge of this approach, translators should be capable of traumatic elements such as foundational trauma, failed mourning, and psychological defense mechanisms and represent them accurately. To substantiate my viewpoint, this paper will first provide theoretical background, including the relationship between literary criticism and literary translation and an introduction to trauma/PTSD studies, followed by case studies of the translation examination of classic Japanese novels, including *Grass on the Wayside* (1951), *A Personal Matter* (1964), *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* (1961), *Fires on the Plain* (1951), and *Thousand Cranes* (1952). By analyzing the English translations, the author argues that translators unwittingly fail to represent the traumatic elements in the original text and the representation of trauma is able to be improved with the help of trauma/PTSD studies perspective.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Translation and Literary Criticism

* Corresponding Author. Email: gu283657726@163.com

In the field of translation studies, there is a prevailing consensus that translation is fundamentally an interpretative act, widely discussed in fields like hermeneutics and cultural approaches. Schleiermacher (2002) emphasizes the role of technical/psychological interpretation, which entails an in-depth understanding of the author's unique style to navigate linguistic ambiguities originating from socio-historical contexts. This aligns with Bassnett's (2014) view that translation is a manifestation of a reader's interpretation, representing that translation is a creative activity involving extensive revision and rewriting. Esteemed literary figures like Vayenas (2010) and Márquez (2002) assert that translation stands as the most intimate and profound form of reading. This underscores that translation transcends mere linguistic conversion; it necessitates interpreting implications, nuances, unspoken meanings, and latent potentialities, some of which the author might not even consciously acknowledge.

Translators' interpretations are intertwined with close reading, which, as noted by Folkart (1982) and Tyson (1999), positions literary translation as a form of literary criticism. In the case of traumatic literary narratives, scholars like Kurtz (2018) and Hartman (1995) advocate for nuanced interpretation, recognizing the call for creative approaches to comprehension and reception. Freud's psychoanalytical exploration of the Greek myth of Oedipus in *Totem and Taboo* (1961) unveils the intrinsic links between trauma, psychology, and literature, pre-dating contemporary trauma theory. Similarly, Stahl (2018) applies trauma/PTSD studies theory to analyze *The Tale of Genji* (early 11th century), shedding light on the protagonist's intricate psychological dynamics.

Translators, although proficient, may not fully fathom characters' psychology as authors do. Hence, employing a trauma/PTSD studies perspective is crucial, allowing translators to grasp the depth of literary works from psychoanalytical and psychosocial angles. This perspective safeguards against inadequate representation of trauma due to misinterpretation of social trauma and psychological aftereffects in the source text. In essence, translation being an interpretative act necessitates translators to possess comprehensive knowledge of trauma/PTSD studies, serving as an effective tool of literary criticism. This empowers them to appropriately interpret and appreciate literary works, ensuring the accessibility of traumatic narratives to target readers.

B. Introduction to Trauma/PTSD Studies

The study of Trauma/PTSD provides interpretive frameworks suitable for analyzing various fields such as culture, history, and literature. While scholars hold differing views on the extent to which traumatic memories can be transformed into coherent narratives, there is a unanimous agreement that literary language serves as a vital and effective means of representing trauma compared to ordinary language (Kurtz, 2018, p. 8). Literary scholars began exploring the intersection of literature and trauma in the mid-1990s (Kurtz, 2018, p. 8) and have approached trauma studies through the lenses of vocabulary and critical theory, including narratology, feminism, and deconstruction. This section will introduce several terms and concepts from trauma/PTSD studies that are integral to my research. These are primarily based on the work of Horowitz (1976), Lifton (1979), Herman (1992), van der Kolk and van der Hart (1995), and Stahl (2018, 2020).

(a). Trauma, Dissociation and Memory

Psychological trauma exhibits shared characteristics: it exceeds an individual's psychological capacities and resources, engendering sensations of "defenselessness, helplessness, terror, loss, humiliation, rage, and breakdown" (Stahl, 2018, p. 11). Furthermore, it exerts a profound and adverse influence on various facets of "human life and functioning" (Stahl, 2018, p. 11). Schwab extends this perspective, characterizing acts of violence such as combat, torture, and rape as manifestations of "soul murder" and "social death" (2010, p. 3). Given that overwhelming and devastating experiences cannot be readily articulated and integrated linguistically, they find organization on a sensory or iconic plane (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1995, p. 172). This accounts for the fact that a majority of traumatized individuals grapple with unexpressed traumatic memories. These "raw," unassimilated memories persist in shaping individuals' perceptions and behaviors long after the initial survival.

Inaccessible to conscious recall, dissociated traumatic experiences often resurface intrusively after a latency period, manifesting as flashbacks, nightmares, hallucinations, or fragmented sensory impressions (Horowitz, 2001, p. 22; van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1995, p. 176). Furthermore, this form of traumatic memory is automatically and involuntarily triggered by elements that subconsciously parallel dissociated traumatic events, encompassing images, concepts, emotions, gestures, sounds, and odors. Individuals who have experienced trauma may also be prompted by situational cues to enter altered states of consciousness, engage in compulsive behavioral re-enactments, or contend with psychic fragmentation or dissociative identity disorder.

(b). Compulsive Behavioral Reenactments

Individuals who have experienced trauma may, in specific circumstances, be induced into an altered state of consciousness, engage in compulsive behavioral re-enactments, and/or grapple with psychic fragmentation or dissociative identity disorder. This response is not a precise replication of the dissociated traumatic events and typically entails "distortions and variations of detail, theme, and meaning" (Stahl, 2018, p. 16). Furthermore, behavioral reenactment is intricately linked with phenomena such as "failed mourning" and "psychological defense mechanisms/fantasies" (Stahl, 2018, p. 4). In addition to the psychodynamics of intrusive memory, the prevailing

psychological state of many trauma survivors is frequently characterized by uncertainty, sorrow, shame, humiliation, guilt, and “suicidal attempts or other self-destructive behavior” (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1995, pp. 176, 178).

(c). *Psychological Defense Mechanisms*

The term “failed mourning” denotes the incapacity to engage in the mourning process, often arising from the overwhelming nature of grief and loss, particularly in instances of sudden and distressingly unacceptable death or its equivalents (Lifton, 1996, p. 170). Individuals who struggle with mourning may inadvertently resort to various psychological defense mechanisms, such as incorporation, substitution/replacement, and a desire for retribution. Both Herman and Lifton concur that the impulse for retribution stems from a sense of utter helplessness (Lifton, 1996, p. 170). Fantasies of revenge can intricately intertwine with traumatic events and may closely mirror historical details. Additionally, acts of vengeance may be coupled with substitution, incorporation, and role reversal (Stahl, 2018, p. 24). In instances of revenge fantasy, the traumatized individuals may transition into the role of perpetrators, having effectively and psychologically assimilated their former victimizer.

(d). *Traumatic Legacies and Recovery*

Herman delineates a triphasic model of recovery. The initial phase is primarily concerned with establishing a sense of safety. The subsequent stage entails the processes of remembrance and mourning, while the final phase focuses on the reintegration into quotidian life (Herman, 1992, p. 155). Lifton underscores that the recuperative journey hinges on the capacity to grieve losses and to regain the capacity to experience the full range of emotions – terror, helplessness, humiliation, shame, rage, loss, sadness, abandonment (Stahl, 2020, p. 4). This progression is characterized by its gradual nature, demanding considerable time and effort. Importantly, there exists is “no single course of recovery” that adheres strictly to these three stages in a “straightforward linear sequence” (Herman, 1992, p. 155). Social reintegration plays a pivotal role in the healing process of survivors; recovery is not a solitary endeavor, and the survivor assumes the role of “the arbiter of her own recovery” (Herman, 1992, p. 133). While external sources can extend assistance, support, and care, they do not hold the capacity to affect a complete cure (Herman, 1992, p. 155). Thus, the survivor themselves must shoulder the mantle of personal responsibility. In essence, instances of social trauma transpire within specific frameworks of human relationships, and their resolution necessitates a reinstatement of supportive social milieus.

C. *The Position of Translators in Traumatic Narratives*

The inquiry into the responses and stances adopted by individuals in the face of an authentic traumatic occurrence is a subject of extensive discourse. Beyond professionals in pertinent fields who may experience vicarious traumatization, it is imperative to acknowledge the substantial number of individuals who assume the role of bystanders. This could be attributed to factors such as significant geographical separation or a lack of direct personal involvement. Consequently, a pertinent inquiry emerges: what stance do translators adopt when confronted with a cataclysm in traumatic narratives?

As an innovator in Holocaust testimonies, Laub elucidates the role of listeners, emphasizing that “bearing witness to a trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener,” underscoring the need for a profound connection with survivors (1992, pp. 70, 71). This suggests the imperative for listeners to extend their undivided attention and foster an atmosphere of intimacy to enhance the channels of communication. In the context of narratives marked by trauma, the act of reading assumes the character of bearing witness (Johnston, 2014, p. 5). The responsibility of readers lies in their capacity and willingness to wholeheartedly align or empathize with survivors; this fundamentally hinges on their ability and readiness to read as witnesses.

At the convergence of traumatic literature and translation studies, translators find themselves compelled to immerse deeply in their work to faithfully render trauma. This necessitates their complete subjective involvement, which serves as the foundational step in comprehending and duly honoring a literary work. Additionally, translators shoulder the responsibility of transposing trauma into different languages and cultures, effectively assuming the role of narrators who await their respective witnesses. Drawing on Assmann’s (2006) concept of a “secondary witness” – an individual who attentively receives a survivor’s narrative, demonstrates understanding, and aids in its documentation, preservation, and dissemination (p. 269). Deane-cox posits that translators of Holocaust literature are effectively transformed into secondary witnesses (2013, p. 310). Building on this premise, this paper contends that translators bear both ethical and professional obligations to function as secondary witnesses when translating traumatic narratives. In this capacity, the translator is tasked with engaging in a morally attuned listening, acknowledging the trauma, and empathetically coming to terms with the characters’ experiences of both restoration and horror. Moreover, translators must ensure a linguistically accurate transmission to uphold the integrity of the original, which, in turn, will itself be subjected to witness.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a multifaceted approach to investigate the representation of trauma in translated literary works. It argues that translators may inadvertently misinterpret and underrepresent traumatic elements due to a lack of specialized knowledge in trauma/PTSD studies. The study commences by establishing a theoretical foundation, delineating the

intricate relationship between literary criticism and translation. It further introduces the trauma/PTSD studies perspective, elucidating its relevance and significance in comprehending and translating traumatic narratives.

The research focuses on five seminal Japanese novels, *Grass on the Wayside* (1951) by Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), *Thousand Cranes* (1952) and *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* (1961) by Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972), *Fires on the Plain* (1951) by Ōoka Shōhei (1909-1988), *A Personal Matter* (1964) by Ōe Kensaburō (1935-2023). These works are chosen for their significant thematic emphasis on trauma, yet seldom research has been done to appreciate those novels from trauma/PTSD studies perspective. All of the five novels are employed to examine the enduring impact on individuals of childhood trauma, as well as the representation of traumatic elements in the source text. Then, the author manually chose all of the published English translations of those novels, composing an extensive trilingual database comprising over 7,000 entries including the Japanese source text and English translations. The study conducts a comprehensive analysis of English translations of the selected novels. By scrutinizing specific passages and scenes, particular attention is devoted to the portrayal of traumatic elements such as foundational trauma, failed mourning, and psychological defense mechanisms.

The research employs a comparative approach to evaluate how different translators navigate the intricacies of trauma representation. By juxtaposing various renditions, the study seeks to discern discrepancies in the portrayal of trauma-related themes and their impact on reader engagement. Through meticulous examination and comparison, the paper aims to substantiate its central argument: that translators, in the absence of a trauma/PTSD studies framework, might inadvertently neglect or misconstrue pivotal traumatic components within the source text.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before embarking on the task of translation, it is imperative to address certain considerations regarding how translators can ascertain whether a given novel constitutes a traumatic narrative, and under what circumstances they should incorporate trauma/PTSD studies in their analysis and interpretation. While not all novels revolve around trauma as their central theme, many literary works encompass elements of trauma. Given the prevalence of trauma in numerous serious literary works, translators ought to be cognizant of trauma/PTSD studies during their reading and interpretation process. To illustrate, the works of two Japanese Nobel laureates in Literature, Kawabata and Ōe, were not initially analyzed and appreciated as traumatic narratives until the studies conducted by Stahl (2018, 2020). Consequently, even if a particular novel has not been previously approached from a trauma/PTSD perspective, it does not preclude the potential for such examination. Moreover, readers should always keep this approach in mind as a viable method for exploring and scrutinizing literary works with renewed and insightful perspectives. Reader-translators should assess the traumatic elements in a novel through the lens of trauma/PSTD studies, encompassing but not limited to the presence of foundational social trauma(s), dissociation, situational triggering, psychosocial memory dynamics, intrusive memory experiences, altered states of consciousness, compulsive behavioral reenactment, failed mourning, melancholia, and psychological defense mechanisms and fantasies.

This paper will provide several illustrative instances to showcase the implementation of trauma/PTSD studies in translation and translation evaluation. This serves to underscore that should translators fail to discern these crucial psychological components, the traumas and their consequential impacts in the original text may not be faithfully conveyed.

A. Childhood Trauma

Example 1 (in *Grass on the Wayside*)

1.向うの聞きたかゝる返事を与えずに、わさゝと黙っていたくなった。

「御前誰かゝ一番好きたゝい。御父ッさん? 御母さん?」

健三は彼女の意を迎えるために、向うの望むような返事をするのかゝ厭てゝ堪らなかつた。彼は無言のまま棒のように立っていた。それをたたゝ年齒の行かないためとのみ解釈した御常の観察は、むしろ簡単に過ぎゝた。2.彼は心のうちでゝ彼女のこうした態度を忌み悪んたゝのでゝある。
(Sōseki, 1951, p. 131)

1. Sometimes, he felt more anger than pain, and would stand stiff as a board, refusing to answer. But Otsune would simply decide that his silence was due to his boyish shyness; 2. she did not know how much he hated her at such times. (McClellan, 1969, pp. 66, 67)

This instance pertains to the dissociated foundational trauma. It is imperative for translators to scrutinize the specifics to discern the points at which the character encounters difficulty, and the constructs around which their secondary elaborations evolve. In the novel *Grass on the Wayside*, there exists an excruciating interrogation scene, wherein young Kenzō is ruthlessly manipulated and deceived by his foster parents, the Shimadas, driven by their own insecurities about their adopted son. Despite being aware of Kenzō's reluctance, they show no intention of relenting. Rendered powerless and helpless like young Kenzō, he is left with no option but to “clam up” and “refuse to say a word” (Reilly, 2017, pp. 1352-1353). They persistently pose questions such as “where were you born?”, “whose child are you really? Come on, tell me the truth” (McClellan, 1969, pp. 66, 67), and “who do you like better, mama or papa?” (Reilly, 2017, p. 1353). This scene is pivotal to Kenzō's dissociated foundational trauma, encapsulating the profound psychological anguish

inflicted on Kenzō and the couple's self-serving possessiveness towards him. The unyielding interrogations result in his defensive mechanism of "unwillingness or inability to openly express himself to others," a trait that endures throughout his life in interactions with his wife, children, siblings, and other relatives when they inquire (Stahl, n.d.). Consequently, the dearth of emotional expression and genuine interpersonal communication engenders a lasting and profound sense of "frustration and alienation" (Stahl, n.d.).

Nevertheless, McClellan omits three questions in a row, which is unusual in literary translation. The sentence "who do you like better?" is the sixth similar question within the first half of chapter 41, which is less than 200 English words. The reason that McClellan chooses not to translate it may be the density of similar questions. However, the repetition effectively displays the vexation of the relentless interrogations, demonstrating Otsune's, the foster mother, obsessive possessiveness towards Kenzō. Though Kenzō at the time does not know that the foster parents are deceiving him, the interrogation casts a shadow on his uncomprehending mind as it is one of many methods they employ to manipulate him mercilessly. Moreover, "being silent" is mentioned twice in the original, and McClellan omits one instance here. This decision has the effect of obstructing readers from noticing the implications of "silence" in both Kenzō's traumatic childhood experience and post-traumatic character traits. McClellan's choice suggests that he does not have enough knowledge of trauma/PTSD studies to identify the significance of these sentences concerning Kenzō's foundational trauma. He takes them simply as wordy and unnecessary repetition and strategically omits them to make the paragraph flow better.

B. Situational Triggering and Behavioral Reenactment

Example 2 (in *The House of the Sleeping Beauties*)

鳥は不当に子供あつかいされたように感じて執拗になった。(Ōe, 1981, p. 76)

Bird felt humiliated by circumstance, which made him dogged. (Nathan, 1969, pp. 47, 48)

This depicted scenario, characterized by situational triggering and the reenactment of behaviors, is extracted from Ōe's novel *A Personal Matter* (1964), narrated through an omniscient, third-person perspective. According to Stahl's interpretation (2020, pp. 135-194), the central character, Bird, grapples with enduring trauma induced by his father. At the tender age of six, Bird attempts to engage in a conversation, inquiring about the mysteries of death. However, remaining in absolute silence, his father responds with a forceful blow to Bird's face, resulting in bloodied lips and a bruised countenance.

His father kills himself three months later, yet Bird dissociates from these fundamental childhood experiences. When Bird enrolls at college, he goes out drinking with Himiko, a female friend. Himiko unintentionally laughs at him as he tries unsuccessfully to have sex with her while standing outside. The narrator makes a statement, "鳥は不当に子供あつかいされたように感じて執拗になった (Bādo wa futō ni kodomo atsukaisareta yōni kanjite shitsuyō ni natta; Bird felt he had been unfairly treated as a child and became more persistent)" (Ōe, 1981, p. 76). He continues by raping Himiko on the floor.

Stahl claims that Bird's father's punching him and bleeding his mouth can be interpreted as a metaphorical rape since Bird's mouth can be seen as a protruding anus or vagina and his father's fist serves as a phallus. This aggressive act is posited to represent a profound betrayal, constituting an unjust assault that shatters Bird's innocence (Stahl, 2020, p. 154). In the episode involving Bird and Himiko, Himiko's laughter triggers in Bird an acute sense of unjust treatment, reminiscent of a prior traumatic event. This occurs in the aftermath of a failed attempt at intimacy, wherein Bird, unconsciously prompted by intrusive memories, embarks on a compulsive reenactment. Here, Bird assumes the role of aggressor, mirroring his father's position, with Himiko cast as a surrogate victim. Himiko not only serves as a psychological surrogate for Bird's father, whom he subconsciously seeks to avenge, but also a surrogate for his own innocent pre-trauma self. This profound sense of "unjust treatment as a child" emerges as a potent emotional catalyst, compelling Bird to reenact his dissociated foundational trauma through coercive actions. In his English rendition, translator John Nathan conveys this sentence as "Bird felt humiliated by circumstance, which made him dogged" (1969, pp. 47, 48). This interpretation deviates from the original, potentially confining readers' grasp of this pivotal scene. By reducing the intricacies of the psychological turmoil to a state of mere "humiliation," the translation obscures the profound complexities inherent to the situation. Regrettably, it fails to encapsulate the profound interplay between this forceful encounter and Bird's foundational trauma. Consequently, readers might encounter challenges in discerning the situational triggering of Bird and the compulsive reenactment characterizing this incident.

C. Traumatic Memory Experiences

Example 3 (in *The House of the Sleeping Beauties*)

江口老人が「最初の女は母だ。」だどと思えば、あのような母の死に様が浮かんでくるのは当然だった。(Kawabata, 1959, p. 215)

It was natural that when old Eguchi thought of his mother as the first woman in his life, he thought too of her death. (Seidensticker, 1970, p. 101)

This example is related to traumatic memory experiences. *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* (1961) is a third-person narrative presented from Old Man Eguchi's perspective. The contemporary narrative consists of the detailed descriptions of Eguchi's five visits to the house of "sleeping beauties," where old men pay to spend nights with naked

young virgin girls drugged into unconsciousness. The novel further delves into the (intrusive) recollections of young Eguchi's amorous entanglements, interwoven with harrowing encounters involving his mother and daughters. These episodes, which he unwittingly reexperiences and reenacts during his visits, form a central narrative focus. In line with Stahl's analysis, Eguchi's subconscious compulsion to frequent the house stems from an underlying dissociated foundational trauma. At the age of seventeen, Eguchi, bearing witness to his mother succumbing to tuberculosis in their familial abode, on their sleeping bed, in his arms, experiences a profound sense of past failure for being unable to save his mother (Stahl, 2020, pp. 145-165). This latent guilt prompts vivid fantasies of rewriting this narrative in the present, manifesting in his attempts to rouse the dormant girls. Concurrently, Eguchi navigates a web of ambiguous sentiments, grappling with feelings of betrayal and abandonment by his mother. It is this intricate interplay of emotions that propels him toward a form of retribution against the girls, who unwittingly serve as surrogates for both his mother and his innocent pre-trauma self. Yet, owing to the dissociation of his foundational trauma, Eguchi remains oblivious to the true impetus underlying his compulsive behavior.

In the novel, when Eguchi contemplates who is his first woman in his life during his stay at the house, he experiences an intrusive recollection of his mother's final moments. The narrator duly notes that: 江口老人が「最初の女は母だ。」などと思えば、あのような母の死に様が浮かんでくるのは当然だった (Eguchi rōjin ga "saisho no onna wa haha da" nado to omoeba, anyōna haha no shinizama ga ukandekuru no wa tōzen datta; It was natural that when old Eguchi thought "my first woman was my mother," the image of his dying mother floated up in his mind) (Kawabata, 1999, p. 215). Edward Seidensticker translates this sentence as: "It was natural that when old Eguchi thought of his mother as the first woman in his life, he thought too of her death" (1970, p. 101). However, Seidensticker's rendition raises a critical concern, as he notably translates the verb "浮かんでくる (ukandekuru; float up)" as "thought of," thus inadvertently obscuring the nuanced imagery intended by the original text.

It is evident that the two verbs encompass distinct nuances. Seidensticker's misstep in this instance arises from his unfamiliarity with trauma/PTSD studies. Firstly, "think of" implies that the protagonist possesses the capacity to intentionally summon and manage the memory. Conversely, "float up" signifies that the "repressed" recollection of his mother's death scene remains beyond deliberate retrieval, a hallmark trait of dissociated traumatic memory experiences. When activated by specific circumstances, the images, sensations, and emotions emerge and dissipate beyond conscious control, in contrast to a deliberate act of "remembering" or "recalling". Seidensticker's translation, however, may lead readers to believe that Eguchi wields mastery over his memory, thereby distorting the original intent. Secondly, as Eguchi's foundational trauma is dissociated, he lacks a coherent narrative memory pertaining to his mother's final moments. In this particular scene, Eguchi undergoes a psychological triggering induced by the house, the season, and the state of the slumbering girls, momentarily provoking the intrusive memory experience, which he subsequently re-dissociates. Furthermore, with regard to the detailed account of his mother's last breath, readers are apprised of this incident not through Eguchi himself, but via the narrator. Nonetheless, Seidensticker's rendition insinuates a more active role for Eguchi, inadvertently fostering the misconception that this memory resides within his conscious awareness. This complicates readers' efforts to discern Eguchi's foundational trauma and the associated dynamics of his memory. Consequently, Seidensticker's translation underscores his failure to recognize Eguchi's foundational trauma, along with the concomitant facets of traumatic memory, and adequately differentiate between the third-person narrator and the protagonist.

D. (Mis)translation of Tense

Fires on the Plain (1951) is a first-person memoir composed by Tamura, a former Japanese soldier who endured the harrowing Battle of Leyte Gulf in 1944. Tamura authored his recollections while hospitalized for mental distress in Tokyo during 1951. Langer astutely notes that Holocaust survivors may recount their narratives employing a blend of past and present tenses (1991, p. 95). This novel exhibits several salient instances where the tense undergoes such a shift. For example, Tamura narrates his perilous traversal across the plains, braving exposure to adversaries as follows, "異郷の不安な黎明を歩くという状況は、確かに私にとって初めての経験のはずであるが、今私の感じている感情は未知ではない (ikyō no fuan na reimei o aruku to iu jyōkyō wa, tashikani watakushi ni totte hajimete no keiken no hazu de aru ga, ima watakushi no kanjiteiru kanjō wa michi dewanai; Although walking like this in the uneasy dawn of a foreign land should actually be my first such experience, the feeling that I am having now is not unknown to me)" (1996, p. 69). Tamura thus depicts this experience in the narrative present tense while in the process of recollection and composition of his memoir. According to Stahl, the adoption of the present tense signifies Tamura's induced shift into an altered state of consciousness while writing, where "the dissociated battlefield experience is triggered and intrudes into and affects contemporary memory, experience, and narration" (Stahl, 2020, p. 101). Regrettably, both English and Chinese translations neglect this present tense usage, opting instead for the past tense, which dominates the novel (see Morris, 1957, p. 91; Wang & Jin, 1987, p. 52). These translators, it appears, failed to recognize the present tense shift as a crucial indicator of Tamura's altered psychological state. Furthermore, they did not grasp that traumatic narratives frequently exhibit a fusion or muddling of tenses. The novel features numerous similar instances, most of which are not faithfully reproduced.

E. Literary Interpretation

Example 4 (in *Thousands Cranes*)

太田夫人との間の罪の暗さが、その娘の声を聞くことで、かえって消えてしまったのは、菊治になお思いがけなかった。(Kawabata, 1999, p. 97)

It was strange that his guilt in the Ōta affair seemed to disappear when he heard the daughter's voice. (Seidensticker, 1969, p. 93)

Thousand Cranes (1952) is a narrative characterized by third-person omniscience and also authored by Kawabata. The protagonist, Kikuji, gains early awareness of his father, Mr. Mitani, a revered tea master, engaging in an illicit liaison with Chikako, a younger disciple. Kikuji is also a firsthand witness to his father's deception of his mother regarding this matter. In later years, following the demise of his parents and Kikuji's own transition to adulthood, he fortuitously encounters Mrs. Ōta, his father's second paramour, during Chikako's annual tea gathering. Subsequently, he enters into a romantic entanglement with Mrs. Ōta. Several months following their affair, she tragically takes her own life. At this juncture, Kikuji begins to discern Mrs. Ōta's lingering essence within or through her daughter, Fumiko. Within the narrative, there emerges a sentence embedded in the third-person narrator's account of a scene where Kikuji apprehends Fumiko's voice over the phone subsequent to Mrs. Ōta's demise, “太田夫人との間の罪の暗さが、その娘の声を聞くことで、かえって消えてしまったのは、菊治になお思いがけなかった” (Ōta fujin to no aida no tsumi no kurasa ga, sono musume no koe o kiku koto de, kaette kieteshimatta no wa, Kikuji ni nao omoigakenakatta; It came as a surprise/unexpected to Kikuji that the darkness of his sin with Mrs Ōta had been erased upon hearing her daughter's voice) (Kawabata, 1999, p. 97).

Stahl offers a trauma/PTSD-oriented interpretation of this novel. According to his analysis, Kikuji's inability to properly mourn his father stems from an unconscious inclination to believe that “his father persists within him as an integral part of himself” (2018, p. 54) which is a symptom of incorporation, belonging to psychological defense mechanisms. Moreover, Kikuji's complex sentiments towards his father lead him to subconsciously employ Mrs. Ōta as a surrogate for his concurrently cherished and resented father. Kikuji's emotions towards Mrs. Ōta are intricate, further complicated by his association of her with Chikako, whom he harbors resentments against. Moreover, he is hindered in his mourning process for his mother due to the conviction that “he can maintain a tangible connection with her through Mrs. Ōta” (Stahl, 2018, p. 54). Upon Mrs. Ōta's tragic demise, similarly, Kikuji is unable to grieve, and unconsciously looking for a surrogate for his loss, which in this situation, is her daughter.

Seidensticker renders this as “it was strange that his guilt in the Ōta affair seemed to disappear when he heard the daughter's voice” (1969, p. 93). The phrase “罪の暗さ (tsumi no kurasa)” directly translates to “the darkness of transgression,” implying the intricate nature of Kikuji's emotions concerning his morally complex entanglement with Mrs. Ōta. Kikuji, in effect, disassociates from his foundational trauma, remaining oblivious to the underlying causes and consequences of his ineffective grieving. In this process, he incorporates his father and engages in various psychological displacements, projecting blame onto Mrs. Ōta. Additionally, he perceives Mrs. Ōta's as living on within Fumiko, who simultaneously functions as a surrogate representing Kikuji's unscarred pre-trauma self (Stahl, 2018, p. 22). Seidensticker's translation of the term as “guilt” simplifies Kikuji's sentiments and falls short of capturing the intricate nature of his post-traumatic psychological defense mechanisms and transgressive compulsive conduct. In instances within traumatic narratives, where expressions might appear “peculiar” or “obscure,” a lack of familiarity with trauma/PTSD studies can lead translators to misinterpret the protagonist's traumatized mental state, missing the subtleties in their perceptions, responses, and behaviors. Instead, they may tend to “normalize” or “de-traumatize” them. In this specific case, Seidensticker interprets their relationship on a surface level, framing it within the context of moral corruption. Consequently, this example underscores how translators who lack the requisite background in trauma studies may inadvertently overlook the characters' psychological experiences, intricacies of memory dynamics, and motivations, inadvertently failing to accurately convey the nuances, essence, and implications of the original work.

From these instances, it becomes evident that the intricate psychological processes of trauma, the facets of traumatic memory, and their enduring effects within original texts are inadequately captured in translation. Translators, inadvertently, dilute, misrepresent, or obscure the characters' psychological conditions, unintentionally diminishing the impact of the narratives. Consequently, there exists considerable scope for enhancement in the translation of artistic works dealing with trauma, a potential that can be effectively harnessed through a deeper engagement with trauma/PTSD studies.

V. CONCLUSION

In light of the preceding analysis of translations, this paper is poised to distill the findings for their practical applicability in the translation process of traumatic narratives. The translator's mandate lies in unobtrusively represent the traumatic elements in the source text “even when and if at moments the narrator becomes absent, reaches an almost detached state” (Laub, 1992, p. 71). The call for “unobtrusive” representation does not imply a passive subservience in translation, but rather an acknowledgment that translation transcends linguistic boundaries. Translators must possess a comprehensive contextual grasp, inclusive of those traumatic elements the authors themselves might not consciously recognize. Furthermore, Laub (1992), Deane-Cox (2013), and Johnston (2014) collectively affirm that in the process of translating traumatic narratives, translators commence as reader-witnesses. In contrast to reader-listener witnesses,

translators assume a more active role, both professionally and ethically, in responding to these narratives, as translation constitutes an alternate mode of storytelling. In their capacity as translator-witnesses, they bear the onus of meticulous fidelity to the original text, functioning as empathetic witnesses.

Traumatic narratives encapsulate themes of mortality, bereavement, powerlessness, and despair, among others, wherein even proficient translators might encounter challenges in fully comprehending and articulating the nuanced expressions, imagery, and metaphors inherent to such accounts. Those who have experienced trauma possess distinctive perceptual frameworks that remain largely inaccessible to those who have not shared the same encounters. Translators should remain cognizant of the fact that the interpretation of catastrophic traumatic occurrences and the ensuing narrative development is inherently idiosyncratic. The most judicious approach involves a faithful rendition of these narratives, refraining from any (un)intentional “normalization” or “rationalization,” actions that invariably culminate in a “de-traumatization” of the narrative. Instances may arise where translators are inclined to inject their own interpretations, potentially leading to the omission or alteration of elements from the source text, often deeming certain expressions as excessively aberrant or gratuitously repetitive. Moreover, instances of seemingly inexplicable outbursts of anger or emotion might be dismissed as “senseless.” In such instances, a discreet representation emerges as the preferred strategy, one that serves to preserve the traumatic facets while effectively conveying them to the readership.

“Traumatic elements” stands as a pivotal concept in the precise representation of trauma. It includes nuanced terminologies such as dissociated foundational trauma, intrusive memory experiences, triggered behavioral reenactment, and psychological defense mechanisms. Notably, traumatic childhood experiences are inexorably linked to one’s initial caregivers, engendering enduring sentiments, whether negative or affectionate, towards these primary figures. These sentiments can reverberate across the individual’s lifespan, potentially culminating in a profound sense of social betrayal and emotional devastation, thereby shaping their interpersonal affiliations. For translators, a keen focus on pivotal traumatic events, encompassing bereavement and its analogues (e.g., rejection, abandonment, and separation), occurring during a protagonist’s formative years or instigated by their parents, assumes paramount importance. Among the most critical tasks for translators well-versed in trauma/PTSD studies lies in delineating the causal nexus interlinking the past, present, and future: how foundational traumas metamorphose into psychological defense mechanisms and intricate fantasies, the intricate interplay between post-traumatic incidents and traits vis-à-vis the foundational trauma, the potential for a victim to transition into a perpetrator, engendering various transgressions, and the narrative construction and reconciliation with the past.

Discerning the distinct roles of the third-person narrator and the central protagonist assumes critical importance in the apt representation of trauma. Given that numerous traumatic narratives are composed years after the actual events, variations in recovery levels are to be expected. Likewise, it is imperative for translators to delineate between intrusive memory experiences and volitional recollection. As gleaned from the analysis of translations, intrusive memory experiences manifest distinct characteristics, comprising an absence of subjective control, a fragmented nature, a dearth of emotional resonance, and a chronological sequencing. Furthermore, they have the propensity to be elicited spontaneously and involuntarily, often by seemingly inconsequential stimuli bearing direct or tangential associations with dissociated traumatic events. These stimuli may encompass specific lexicons, imagery, affective states, olfactory sensations, auditory cues, and physical gestures.

In recapitulation, this investigation furnishes a pragmatic instantiation of trauma/PTSD studies within the domain of translation studies. This innovative framework serves to equip translators with the means to faithfully reproduce, preserve, and convey the original traumatic narratives. Furthermore, it facilitates the reader’s interpretation of literary works through a hitherto unexplored perspective. Of paramount significance is its proposition of the concept of “translator-witnesses,” an antreaty to the ethical consciousness, empathetic capacities, and wholehearted engagement of reader-translators when confronted with traumatic literary works. With this methodological orientation, both translators and readers are poised to exhibit heightened cognizance of the enduring repercussions of social betrayal and failed mourning. They are additionally encouraged towards greater compassion for trauma survivors, while concurrently assuming a more active role in fostering secure environments and communities conducive to recovery. This approach impels a circumspect introspection into personal conduct, along with a vigilant commitment to shielding communities against individual and collective traumatization.

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Qiushi Gu was born in China in 1992. She obtained her Master’s degree in Japanese Language and Literature from Beijing International Studies University (BISU), China, in 2016, and her PhD degree in Translation Studies in The State University of New York at Binghamton, U.S.A. in 2021.

She is currently a post-doc in Social Science Academic Press, China. Her research interests include translation studies, audio-visual translation, Japanese literature, interpreting studies. She can be reached through gu283657726@163.com.