

Is “Seven Sisters” Mistranslation of “六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)”?”—A Defense of Howard Goldblatt’s “Seven Sisters”

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Abstract—The author of the thesis has focused on the mistranslations pointed out in a thesis, entitled with A Study of Howard Goldblatt’s “Mistranslation”, specifically on “seven sisters”. The paper has discussed and defended it from four dimensions. First, semantically speaking, it is spiritual similarity instead of formal one to the original, for it has conveyed the connotative and associative meanings hidden in the original. Second, based on cognitive translation studies, it has embodied the cognitive experience as what the original has done. Third, from cognitive psychology, it is the best representation which language central nerve stimulates the translator to select and match with the original in information processing and communication. Finally, functionally speaking, it is more equivalent to the original than other translations. Therefore, the author holds that “seven sisters” translated by Howard Goldblatt is no mistranslation of “六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)”.

Index Terms—mistranslation, spiritual similarity, cognitive translation, cognitive equivalence, literary translation

I. INTRODUCTION

A paper, which is entitled with A Study of Howard Goldblatt’s Mistranslation co-authored by Zhengwu Zhu and Airong Qin (2014, pp.110-115), two scholars of translation studies, issued in journal of *Foreign Language and Literature* in June 2014, has listed Howard Goldblatt’s mistranslations in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips: a Novel*, though in a relatively objective manner. The paper, to some extent, is insightful and thought-provoking for readers of the paper, I can’t just agree with most of them anymore. However, as to one of the mistranslations, “seven sisters”, they claimed that it is a mistranslation of the original, “六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)”, I couldn’t agree with their analysis and argument, for which needs further detailed discussion and has ignited me to defend it and interpret the nature of literary translation.

II. DEFINING THE MISTRANSLATION

This part is a clear explanation of the mistranslation identified by Zhengwu Zhu and Airong Qin, with which I don’t agree. In the co-authored paper, the two scholars have claimed that Howard Goldblatt’s “seven sisters” is an obvious mistranslation of the original Chinese “六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)”. To make sure the original Chinese no mistake, they even had footnotes to explain the original. They have excerpted it from *Big Breasts and Wide Hips: a Novel*, the original text, written by MoYan, the first winner for 2012-Nobel-Prize for literature in mainland of China, for the original was taken down from the novel. Contextually, for reader’s convenience to understand the context of the original, the Chinese paragraph is listed below as the following:

母亲抱着我，带着我的六个姐姐(笔者强调)，跳下萝卜窖子，在黑暗潮湿阴冷中爬行一段，进入宽阔之地，母亲点燃了豆油灯。(《丰乳肥臀》，2010, pp.78, 莫言)

Corresponding with the original given above, Howard translated them into English as the following:

“With me in her arms, Mother led my seven sisters (my emphasis) down into the turnip cellar, crawling through the dark, dank tunnel until we emerged into a wider space, where Mother lit an oil lantern.

(Howard Goldblatt, 2004, pp.160)

The two excerpts are presented here by the two scholars to confirm both the original and its corresponding translation. They believe that, the contrastive texts can indicate that the original “六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)” they referred to is no mistake, and Howard Goldblatt has mistranslated “六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)” as “seven sisters” indeed. Probably, to prove the original more clearly, they quoted the subplot related to the original, which read roughly like this: In order to avoid the Japs’ persecutions, Mother led the whole families into the turnip cellar. According to the novel, there were nine children, eight girls and one boy altogether in Shangguan family. At the moment, First Sister had eloped with Sha Yueliang when Japanese Devils entered into our village; Second Sister, infatuated with Sima Ku, was away from home to disseminate heroic deeds of blasting bridges to resist the Japs together with her boyfriend. (What’s more, Second

Sister returned to the turnip cellar, which proved that she was not in at that moment.) Therefore, definitely, there were only seven children altogether staying at home with Mother, just six sisters and one boy. However, Goldblatt's translation corresponding with it is "my seven sisters". Furthermore, what other versions of the original Chinese text have referred to is the same as "六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)" as well. From the facts shown above, the two scholars were convinced that the translation was an obvious mistranslation for sure. (Zhengwu Zhu & Aironq Qin, 2014, pp.110) After referring to the long footnotes, and introducing the background of the original, we would be better clear to know what the mistranslation is on earth.

III. DEFENDING "SEVEN SISTERS"

A. *The Connotations of "Seven"*

To some readers of *Big Breasts and Wide Hips: a Novel*, they will wonder that, how could "seven sisters", not "six sisters", be equivalent to "六个姐姐" in meaning. Obviously, there is none to second than "six sisters" to be equivalent to "六个姐姐". Literally speaking, "six sisters" is merely verbal equivalence to its original, but a "false friend" or "translation trap", because it hasn't conveyed the original associative meanings, and not aroused similar experience as the ST, but referred to meaning "many". Then, if, the readers further ask, what meanings does "seven sisters" conveyed to readers? Does it have similar associations like the original since translation requires faithful to the original in meaning? So, to answer those questions, we have to excavate the meanings hidden behind the number 7 like "an archaeologist to discover antiques". (Wensheng Deng, 2020, pp.304) First, let us make clear the implications of the number derived from "六个姐姐" and "seven sisters". Only by comparing them with each other, can we be clear to see whether "seven" can convey the connotation as "六". As we know that, in Chinese culture, 6 implies the idea of being safe and sound, complete and perfect, many, for instance, there are idioms like "六六大顺" in Chinese, so "六个姐姐" also can refer to the similar connotations besides referring to the meaning "more children, more blessings" for it has the number "6". Besides that, six sisters would be special supporters for Chinese parents in their old ages if they are unable to feed themselves. To convey such kind of implications more closely and accurately, only "seven sisters" is a counter-part to "六个姐姐" rather than "six sisters". For English readers, what the number "7" implies is more, large, blessing, holy and mysterious. In English culture, generally, people like odd prime numbers, like one, three, five and seven, especially seven is most favored among them for it is the biggest odd prime number among 0 to 9, consisting of three, referring to holy, and four, meaning human.¹ There are bunches of examples in English. And let us pick up some related phrases and expressions in *Bible*, like "the seven virtues", "seven deadly sins", "the seventh son of a seventh son". "Seven" in the phrases listed above has the implication of "六" that we mentioned above. If we date back to the origin of English culture, we might find that the connotations of number were tied with history and culture in old Greek and Hebrew. As we know that there was a Pythagorean School in old Greek, which was noted far and near for math studies, especially, Pythagorean Theorem. Moreover, old Greek was advanced rapidly in music and shipbuilding, for which require being accurate, in drama performance, rituals and making calculation in related industries, so the members of the School were masters of numbers. As to Hebrew heritage, *Bible* had been a major influence upon English culture. There are bunches of expressions, stories with "seven" in it. For example, "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." (*Genesis*2:3) Such kind of myth narrations are easily seen in *Bible*, which has brought connotative meanings like "holy, terror or mysterious" to seven, such as stories entitled to "Seven Angels with Seven Plagues" (*Revelation* 15) and "The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath" (*Revelation*16), which had indicated that seven is a number full of tensions. No wonder Westerners are both fond and afraid of it. On the contrary, the number "six" is regarded as secondary in importance than "seven", for "the six day" was an unimportant day in *Genesis*, and was a final day or Judgment day in *Revelation* before the seventh day, which had signified a holy day, a new kingdom would begin. From the sources we can see different connotations of seven and six; "seven sisters" is strayed off the denotation of "六个姐姐" in format sight, but is closer than "six sisters" to the ST in mind, i.e. in cultural popularity, aesthetics and implication, etc., it is a best vehicle to carry out the ST "六个姐姐" in "connotative, associative, emotional reflective or thematic sense". (Geoffrey Leech, 1985, pp.9-19)

B. *"Seven Sisters" Is Spiritual Equivalence*

As I have pointed out in afore-given paragraphs, I don't think "seven sisters" is a mistranslation of "六个姐姐". On the contrary, it is an excellent embodiment which represents Howard Goldblatt's perspective and purpose on translation. From the perspective and purpose, Howard is a successful translator because his translation is recognized and renowned over the world; the most powerful and proud proof is his translations of Mo Yan, who has won 2012-Nobel-Prize-for-literature; he is regarded as one of key forces to push Mo Yan into the view fields of the committee for Nobel Prize for Literature. Admittedly, Howard is one of the greatest translators for Mo Yan, who helped him to gain the prize. Even Mo Yan remarked on Howard's translation here and there, "Without Howard's outstanding

1. The explanation referred here was provided to the author of the paper by Curtis Manor, American journalist, scholar of Bible Studies, at Harding University in May 2008.

work... my novels, absolutely, are far from perfection like today's translation".(2005, pp.170-173) It is also a fact to prove that Howard is successful in translating Mo Yan. In short, so far, Howard's theory and practice are welcome and acceptable by both professionals and receptor readers.

Of course, just as the saying goes, Homer sometimes nods. So does Howard likely do. But, before the essence of the issue, the translation of “六(liù)个(gè)姐(jiě)姐(jiě)”, is worked out, let's not draw a hurry conclusion to it. Essentially, the problem, oft-visited, is an old one in translation, i.e., should a translator be spiritually or formally faithful to the original? According to Geoffrey Leech, a British linguist, there are seven types of meaning for a word: 1.conceptual meaning (sometimes called 'denotative' or 'cognitive' meaning), 2.connotative meaning, 3.social meaning, 4.affective meaning, 5.reflected meaning, 6.collocative meaning, and 7.thematic meaning. He has also referred to the meaning from No.2 to 6 altogether as associative meaning. (1985, pp.9-19) Hence, in translating any literary text, it is a must for a translator to distinguish exact meaning which a source text stands for from other meanings. Arguably, the author of the paper holds that what translation is faithful to denotative meaning, i.e. surface meaning, is a only kind of formal similarity and a kind of false loyalty to ST; other similarity and loyalty to hidden meanings, such as connotative, social, affective, reflected, collocative or thematic one embodied by ST could be classified as spiritual or essential similarity to ST. Therefore, simply speaking, should a translator be formal, outward or spiritual similarity to the original on earth? In fact, it is a problem of everlasting, enduring and renewed with new contents. Throughout the biblical translation initiated around the second century BC in West, or the sutra translation started from the Eastern Han Dynasty(25-220A.D.) in old China, there were such kind of debates revisited over and over, which have lasted till modern ages and each party had its own voice and played the trumpet of its own. In reality, the problem could never be figured out for different contexts of history home and abroad. Specifically speaking, as to Howard's case referred here, it is a kind of spiritual or essential similarity as well. If the idea was true, most of my readers would wonder that how could it be a spiritual similarity because “seven sisters” is not equal to “六个姐姐”(literally referring to six sisters). Understandably, readers like this sort of, similarity or loyalty means both ST and TT should share the same denotative meaning. But, it doesn't always be effective in translation which has proved by great translators' practice. Luo Xinzhang (1936--), a veteran translator, thinks that, spiritual similarity, i.e. conveying the spirit of ST, namely, should render the spirit or essence hidden between lines in ST, not just literal meaning. (2009, p.11) And Fu Lei (1908--1966), another translator, had a remark on it as well, “Translation, from the viewpoint of its effect, should just look like painting a copy of piece, what a translator strives for is spiritual similarity rather than formal one.” (2006, p.3) Therefore, from the viewpoints of the great translators, spiritual similarity is the first task for a translator. He should strive to keep TT to be faithful to associative or thematic meaning instead of denotative one. So, how is “seven sisters” contrasted against ST“六个姐姐”? If it is spiritual similarity to ST, what associative or thematic meanings has it conveyed? In *Big Breasts and Wide Hips: a Novel*, the six sisters refer to six daughters that Shangguan Lushi, for having lived with different men, gave birth to; and she had a twin with a Swedish missionary, her last man. In the end, actually, she had eight children, seven daughters and one boy in the Shangguan family, they were named Laidi, Zhaodi, Lingdi, Xiangdi, Pandi, Niandi, Qiudi, Yunv (literally meaning Jade girl) and Jintong (literally meaning golden boy), as the narrator in the story. Unfortunately, one of the daughters committed suicide in Hard Times of Three Years,² so the narrator, Jintong, had only six elder sisters left. From the seven names' hints, we are sure that, for so many years, Mother had been eager to have a boy to gain her position and dignity in the family, and to prove she was productive and fruitful. As we know that, on one side in Chinese tradition and culture, she would be seen as a shame to a family if a woman could bear no child or a son, and more children are more blessed to a family, for children in old China, are usually treated as supporters or pillars for parents in their older ages; on the other side, the number “六” also implies safe and sound, blessed. Therefore,“六个姐姐”implied the meaning more or less though they were suffered from troubles and disasters one after another. In a word,“六个姐姐” has a lot of connotations, i.e. associative or thematic meanings. Faced with such kind of ST, it is natural for a translator to come up with an idea, how he could get some TT to convey the connotations, hidden behind the ST, which can best convey the effects as the ST. Here, Howard Goldblatt, if he is like most of mundane translators, had translated “六个姐姐” literally into “six sisters”, it couldn't convey the connotations to readers at all because of cultural differences between Chinese and English. This explains that formal equivalence or word-for-word translation is, “false equivalence”, not available to be fidelity to ST, for it fails to render the original essence or spirit to target readers. And, so the connotative or thematic meaning of both the ST and the TT are not correspondent respectively, because the ST is cultural-specific, or culture-loaded, for which is derived from high context; the TT “six sisters”, from low context, is not capable of conveying the hidden or associative meanings of the ST“六个姐姐”, which is called a cultural default. However, it is a responsibility for a translator to find the naturally closest equivalent item to ST except literal translation. Under such circumstances, a translator should give up literal loyalty, and get other means and methods to convey ST with specific cultural connotation. But, for some average translator, which failed to grasp and grip with both cultures of ST and TT, he would take literal translation without careful thinking; as to the readers who are just like the translator, he wouldn't accept the expressions “seven sisters” because it is not faithful or equivalent to the TT in sight. Here, Howard changed “六个姐姐” into “seven sisters” to

2.It refers to 1959-1961in China, which a lot of people were suffered from starvation and died from it.

convey the associations transmitted by“六个姐姐”. It is a practical example to indicate that literary translation is a creation, only to convey the original intention. Actually, the TT “seven sisters” and the ST “六个姐姐” share the similar connotations. As Howard Goldblatt once remarked, “A translator always mistakes the word ‘faithfulness’; (What should he be faithful to? To vocabulary, format, meaning, style or influence?) Some idioms and vocabularies in the ST, to target-language readers, are meaningless at all, and even they will lead to completely distorted views to a writer, a culture which his literary works represent for. But, a translator is reluctant to translate them by using creative synonyms. In fact, there are bunches of similar thoughts and emotions among different peoples from different cultures; they are just different ways to express to some extent. Then, a translator’s task—which is a hard job to fulfill under any circumstances—should convey the similar thought and emotion to readers by employing different expressions, for he bears the similarities and differences in mind. That is to say, a translator can’t sacrifice the uniqueness of original style; he must try his efforts to present the different expressions instead of changing the thoughts throughout works.” (2011, pp.13-14) Here, “seven sisters” to convey “六个姐姐” is a creative expression to convey the connotation, association, concept or uniqueness of the ST, though the formal equivalence is lost. However, it is hard for a translator to reach the perfection of TT both spiritual and formal equivalence, he has to abandon the latter to succeed in satisfying the first; thus, TT readers could probably have the similar experience of the concept and emotion in the ST. It is a kind of differential equivalence. (Roman Jakobson, 2000, pp.12) In short, “seven sisters” is different from “六个姐姐” in denotative meaning, but it is equivalent in connotation, a kind of similar cognition as ST.

C. “Seven Sisters” Is Cognitive Equivalence

The third aspect I will defend for “seven sisters” is cognitive equivalence. That is, cognitively speaking, “seven sisters” can arouse us more experiences and perceptions similar to“六个姐姐”than other translations like “six sisters”. As we know that cognitive translation studies stresses that a TT reader has the same or similar experiences and perceptions as a ST reader has. The key to attain the effect lies in translator’s subjectivity. He has to change or create his TT to make his readers share the effect that TT readers have. Because what ST has mapped into its readers’ mind is not equal to what TT has done to TT readers’ with cultural differences and personal backgrounds, change and creation should be based on ST’s cognitive experience to its readers, but not on translator’s at all; but he must be familiar with readers’ experience of ST and TT. The experience is a kind of bottom line for him to create in translation. He can’t go beyond it. As the saying goes, a translator is a dancer with anklets. (Wang Yin, 2015, pp.583-588) The anklet is ST’s cognitive experience to readers. Based on the discussion of six, in Chinese cognitive world, the key meanings implied behind“六(liù)”can be conceptualized as the following:

1. Six is many;
2. Six is blessing;
3. Six is large;
4. Six is safe and sound;

And in English cognitive world, the major connotations in “seven” can be conceptualized as the following listed below:

1. Seven is many;
2. Seven is blessing;
3. Seven is big;
4. Seven is complete;
5. Seven is mysterious.

Therefore, we may make comparisons between ST “六(liù)” and TT “seven” from cognitive perspective. At least, they share four similar items each other. That is to say, probably, what the readers of ST and the TT were mapped have a sort of same or similar experiences or feelings about the four. If the ST “六(liù)” were literally translated into “six”, they, both readers of the ST and TT wouldn’t share the experiences or feelings because the number “6” in English has such sort of connotations as follows: 1. Six is unimportant; 2. Six is terrible; 3. Six is final; 4. Six is changeable, they are quite different from the number “6” in Chinese cognitive world. In short, cognitively, the TT “seven” is functionally more similar to the ST “六(liù)”. Here “seven sisters” to convey “六个姐姐” is a representation of Howard Goldblatt’s subjectivity, a small sample of creation in his translation, which is referred as cognitive equivalence or faithfulness.

In fact, such kind of creation and change in translation made by Howard can also be found in *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China*. If we are clear about the novel, we might be greatly surprised by the translation of the novel. That is, Howard even has changed the original structure to get and guarantee cognitive equivalence.

“From the structures of both the translation and the original to consider, we find that there are giant gaps between the two. The original is composed of 9 chapters, which each chapter has no topic. There is only one title “Red Sorghum” capitalized from Chapter 1 to Chapter 9 throughout the original. As to the translation, *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China*, it consists of 5 chapters, in which each chapter has a sub-topic of its own; they are listed as the subsequent, Chapter 1 Red Sorghum, Chapter 2 Sorghum Wine, Chapter 3 Dog Ways, Chapter 4 Sorghum Funeral, and Chapter 5 Strange Death. Apart from the curtailment and adjustment of Chapters, Howard Goldblatt has made combinations, changes, revisions and additions to some of the original chapters. He deleted some grotesque narration, which seems odd to some

extent at one's first glance, cut off the length of Chapter 4, and rewrote the end of the original, etc. Though the translation of *Red Sorghum: A Novel of China* has changed much here and there, compared with the original, we readers of the translation can hardly feel the changes and gaps. On the contrary, we think that the translation is structurally loyal to the original... ” (Wensheng Deng & Zhang Ke, 2017, pp. 49-54)

Though some of translators mayn't agree with Howard for his changes and creations, the fact is he is one of the most welcome translators in today's world; without deny, he has made the greatest contributions to communicate Chinese literature to the world. If we go further deep into his translations, we may find there are all kinds of mistranslations among them. The change or creation is just a method to keep his translation cognitive faithful to the ST.

So, from cognitive translation studies, we translators are supposed to pay more attention to cognitive functions of ST and TT, rather than focus on 'denotative' or signifier's meanings blindly, but to guarantee cognitive equivalence or faithfulness of the two parties. Cognitive equivalence is preferred than verbal one in literary translation.

D. "Seven Sisters" Is Scientific Choice in Cognitive Psychology

If we treat "seven sisters" from cognitive psychology, we may find that it is optimal choice and relevance, closer to the TT readers than "six sisters" to convey the original intention at all; i.e., "seven sisters" is more easily acceptable than "six sisters", because it is unable to arouse readers' feeling, recognition and consciousness as the ST readers can get. What "six sisters" has aroused, to a translator, both as a reader of ST and TT, is distanced and alienated from him on reading them, "seven sisters" and "six sisters". According to cognitive psychology, the language central nerve is ape to select, identify and process the information which is psychologically familiar, close to a subject. (Robert L. Solso, Otto H. Macline & Kimberly Macline, 2008, pp.303-312) That is to say, a translator is supposed to convey the information which is psychologically familiar, close to TT readers, i.e. his translation is reader-oriented, including Poetics, Aesthetics, culture and psychology, dominant ideology favored by TT readers, (Wensheng Deng, Weiran Zhang & Zhang Ke, 2010, pp.130-131) otherwise, it would be rather hard to accept his translation, let alone to be spread and recognized as a classic in an others' world of ST. For example, as we know that, Yang Xianyi (1915--2009) and Gladys Yang (1919--1999), two great translators, have translated *A Dream of Red Mansions*; David Hawkes(1923-2009) and John Minford(1946-) have done *The Story of the Stone* as well. The Yang's is author-oriented, and Hawkes and Minford's receptor-oriented, after several decades' elapse, the latter is identified as a classic of Penguin Group among English literary works in 20th century.(Wensheng Deng & Ke Zhang, 2020, pp.777-784) It indicates that the orientation of TT is one of key factors to decide place and position of TT over the other world. Both *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of the Stone* are mirrors to shed some light on us translators. Actually, it is a universal phenomenon that if we accepted or identified with some idea psychologically, we would be more welcome to it than something new and different to us. Because of the cultural differences, a translator has to make adjustments and changes about his translation to satisfy his readers. He has to bridge cultural gap between two parties, ST vs. TT, or author vs. audience. Translation, as one of important vehicles in crossing-cultural communication, a translator, as a ferryman, transmitter of cultures, to make the communication available, his creation, adjustment and change, are a series of normal actions from perspective of cognitive psychology.(Wang Yin,2015,pp.583-588) As to the idea, Howard had remarked, "How to translate a text, how to manage complicated relations with crossing-cultural communication, they are key problems to a translator...", (Howard Goldblatt,2011,p.15)in the course of the communication, "...a translator's task is hard and big...for he is a transmitter, an interpreter, a leading link of chains of mutual understanding internationally."(Howard Goldblatt, 2011, p.15) The remarks have indicated that Howard was clearly conscious of the role played by such kind of translation; his "seven sisters" is "a purposeful action".(Christiane Nord,1997, pp.19-48) He transmitted the original idea, its implication to TT readers by doing so, which led two folds to his translation: the TT has gotten an afterlife or a renewal of the ST;(Walter Benjamin,2000, p.4) the TT is not only faithful to the ST cognitively, but also aesthetically. So it can partially tell us why his translation is a great help to Mo Yan in succeeding in gaining 2012-Nobel-Prize for literature. In a word, "seven sisters" is psychologically resembles the original "六个姐姐". The ST and TT both share interpretive resemblance. (Ernst-August Gutt, 2014, pp. 26-79) The translation resembles the original psychologically, aesthetically and cognitively.

E. "Seven Sisters" Is Functional Equivalence

Functionally speaking,"seven sisters" is equivalent to "六个姐姐". According to Roman Jakobson (2000,p.12), there are six kinds of functions in terms of speech: 1. Referential, 2. Emotional, 3. Vocative, 4. Phatic, 5. Meta-language, 6. Poetic. As we have discussed in afore-given paragraphs, "seven sisters" carried out the connotation, aesthetic imagination, cognition and experience of "六个姐姐", so actually, it has conveyed the emotional function as well. Or describe it in another way, "seven sisters" is full of imagination, a kind of literariness, it is a part of poetic piece, *Big Breasts and Wide Hips: a Novel*, so it is a perfect carrier of the poetic piece. Though there were and are a lot of classical pieces in China, some of which had been translated into other foreign languages over the world, unfortunately, not many of them were and are welcomed by others because the translations hadn't fully fulfilled the emotional and poetic functions of the original works, besides political ideologies. Frankly speaking, they were merely verbal signs, which could not give rise some aesthetic enjoyment in reading, like synaesthesia, sympathy and empathy, catharsis or even thought to receptors; that is, the translations were not functionally equivalent to ST. That is why there are not many of

Chinese works, compared with the total sum of Chinese classics, which are recognized as world classics, and translation might be partially responsible for the embarrassed state of translation and communication. And we translators are supposed to get some lesson from the failures. But in the last forty years, the state and situation have been changed better and better since Howard Goldblatt began to play a big player in translating modern and contemporary Chinese works. Mo Yan is one of Howard's prides for his four translations were accepted and discussed among committee of Nobel Prize for Literature in 2012. No wonder, medias and experts claimed that Howard was a pushing force to help Mo Yan to gain the Prize; it is probably proper with kind of truth, which is a proof that his translation has undertaken functions of the original, i.e. "functional equivalence". (Eugene Albert. Nida, 1982, pp.200)

IV. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

After the defense of "seven sisters", probably we are clear that it is a creative counterpart with "六个姐姐" instead of a mistranslation, which is just a representation of Howard's translation idea, i.e. reader-oriented, including Poetics, aesthetics, reading interest, crossing-cultural communication, and market principle. It is not a domestication to be remarked simply, but an adaption, creation, adjustment, deletion, or even rewriting. Definitely, the defense will give rise to four questions. First, is it to be faithful to denotative or connotative sense in literary translation? Or in other words, is it to be formal or spiritual similarity in literary translation? In fact, to the question, history and reality in translation has provided some hints to us with hard facts. In West, as early as in 2nd century B.C., Marcus Tullius Cicero proposed that translation convey sense and spirit in the original, (Tan Zaixi, 1991, p.4), Martin Luther, renovator of Christianity over 400 years ago, strongly opposed word-for-word method in biblical translation, through Eugene A. Nida, he proclaimed "dynamic equivalence" or "functional equivalence"; and in East, in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420 D.C.) in Old China, Kumārajīva, translator of Buddhist scriptures, held that the scriptures be translated liberally rather restricted by formal syntax structure so as to make them acceptable and understandable for Buddhists to read aloud and study, (Yang Xiaohua, 2003, pp.44-47), Yan Fu put forward "faithfulness", "expressiveness" and "elegance" over 100 year ago, until modern times, Ch'ien Chung-shu (1910-1998), a renowned scholar, his idea of "transmigration of soul", Fu Lei, a translator, his view of "spiritual similarity", Xu Jun, a modern translator of China, maintained that a translator get rid of literal meaning and pursue connotative one. (2014, pp.3-15) From the theories and proposals, old and new, home and abroad, we are clear that the essence of literary translation should put spiritual similarity or functional equivalence first before other choices.

Second, how should we deal with literary language, including numbers? First of all, we translator should always remember that literary speech is quite different from scientific one; so literary translation is different from scientific one. In science, $1+1=2$, so does it in its translation, it requires accuracy or truth, but in literature, $1+1 \neq 2$, it could be \leq or ≥ 2 , and its translation stresses conveying some kind of beauty, connotation or experience in original language to reader. Then, we should focus on the literariness of language, rather than literally denotative meaning for it is false friend in translation.

Third, how do we translate numbers in literature? Anyhow, it is not always wise for us to translate number literally; we had better make it clear, whether it is a real referent or just a sort of indefinite one with connotations; and corresponding ways should be adopted properly. We have to pay more attention to its function or cognition. For example, in the poetic lines from the Tang Dynasty, "白发三千丈, 愁缘似个长", the number "三千(3,000)" refers to sad emotion, anxiety without end, not literally sad as long as 3,000 *zhang* (Chinese measure unit); Herbert Allen Giles (1845—1935), a Sinologist, his translation is "My whitening hair would make a long rope, /Yet could not fathom all my depth of woe", and Chinese modern translator, Xu Yuancong's (1921-) version is "My whitened hair would make a long cord./As long as I am often bored." The two masters haven't made it word-for-word, but deal with it spiritually or cognitively.³ So it does from English into Chinese; like "the seventh son of a seventh son",⁴ which implies a supreme glory, high-ranked honor as the king of kings, if we treat it literally, the connotation is far from being conveyed. Therefore, though a number is minor, we should be never careful about it anymore.

Last, what is translation idea in literary translation? Indeed, this is a hot-debated question among translation circle. Some say it is author-oriented (ST-oriented), others say it is reader-oriented (TT-oriented), whose debates have brought about many oppositions and conflicts of views, like, foreignization vs. naturalization, liberal translation vs. literal one, spiritual similarity vs. formal one, etc. Both sides of the views claimed there were some truth in the argument, and reluctantly gave in to draw an agreement. In my opinion, a translator had better abandon binary opposition in the mode of thinking and hold a dialectical thinking on translation. For instance, during the time of Chinese-culture-go-to-global, a good translator is required to both translate or introduce Chinese culture and to pay enough attention to readers' recognition and reception, i.e., appreciation, cognition, Poetics, experience and aesthetics. (Deng Wensheng, 2010, pp.130-131) On the contrary, if sticking to the binary oppositions in translation, we try to preserve original flavor, style or characteristics in translation or introduction, which likely lead to resist recognizing the translation in others' world. What we have striven to spread Chinese classical culture is not available to others in the end. Like Panda Series of

3. Wen Hui. It Might Be the Best Translation. (2017-02-07). 2020/5/23, <http://www.myzaker.com/article/5899318e9490cba34c000064>.

4. The Chinese version could be "位极尊荣" or "至高荣耀"之类.

Chinese works, a series of translation of source-text oriented, which had been almost ignored by others and all efforts paid for were just in vain, it was a painful lesson for us to be worthy of reflecting upon. But *The Story of the Stone*, co-translated by David Hawkes and John Minford, has proved to be a classic in English literature; and a great number of works by Howard Goldblatt were recognized and popularized by others. One of the main reasons to be successful was that they had dialectical thinking on translation, a relatively good balance between ST and TT.

Of course, even the four questions given above are well solved; it is far from enough to be perfect in literary translation, for translation is never finished. A translator is wise, who can reflect upon translation history constantly and get a lesson from it, and he always puts literariness of the original into translation.

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