

Cultural Consciousness and Translation Consciousness of Literary Classics—Taking the English Translation of *Dream of the Red Chamber* as an Example*

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Abstract—With the in-depth exchanges among different cultural entities, phenomena such as cultural misunderstandings, cultural discrimination, and cultural confrontations occur from time to time, which have affected the overseas dissemination of literary classics and the process of their foreign-language adaptation. The difficulties in the translation of classics caused by the cultural differences between China and the West have seriously hindered the effectiveness and timeliness of the dissemination of classics. Regarding such issues, Mr. Fei Xiaotong’s proposition of “cultural consciousness” can provide relevant solutions. This paper takes the Chinese classic *Dream of the Red Chamber* as an example. By comparing the content differences of different English translations of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and inspired by the theory of “cultural consciousness”, it further explores the feasibility and effectiveness of translation consciousness in the process of the foreign dissemination of literary classics. To some extent, cultural consciousness and translation consciousness of literary classics are different manifestations of the same nature. Therefore, the translation consciousness of literary classics can also be regarded as an extension and expansion of cultural consciousness at the translation and introduction level, thus playing a certain role in promoting the foreign translation and dissemination of classic literature.

Index Terms—cultural consciousness, translation consciousness, translation of classics, *Dream of the Red Chamber*

I. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Fei Xiaotong, a renowned Chinese scholar, has achieved abundant academic accomplishments and enjoys high prestige both at home and abroad. The concept of “cultural consciousness” he proposed at the end of the last century has provided new ideas and theoretical support for the cultural development of contemporary China. As one of the ways and forms of cultural expression in texts, the development and evolution of literature, to a certain extent, also reflect the ideological extension of culture and the progression and shift of conceptual levels. From a broad communication perspective, the literary dimension within the cultural field inevitably involves the information transfer in foreign translation. Translated literature and literary translation thus become different manifestations at the same level. “There is no literature that develops in isolation in the world. Literatures of all ethnic groups will surely influence, infiltrate, communicate, and learn from each other. Therefore, translated literature came into being” (Han, 2005, p. 1). Culture and literature seemingly have a relationship of leadership and being led, subordination and being subordinate, as well as primary and secondary. However, in terms of consciousness, the two share common value orientations and have deep-seated deductions and associations. As a highly condensed text form of culture, the existence of literary classics, especially the behavior display and value pursuit of their foreign translation, will, to a certain extent, inevitably have a logical succession and emotional connection with the spiritual connotation of cultural consciousness. Because the translation of literary classics is not only an equivalent conversion of bilingual information but also a transition of the signified and the signifier during the stages of contact, integration, and communication between the culture to which the literary classics belong and different cultural circles. Therefore, based on Fei Xiaotong’s concept of cultural consciousness, this paper takes the English translation of the Chinese literary classic *Dream of the Red Chamber* as an example, further summarizes the application, manifestation, and practice of cultural consciousness in the field of literary classic translation, and examines the integration and unity of cultural consciousness and the translation consciousness of literary classics at the text level in specific translation practices.

II. ON CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS

“Cultural consciousness” is a theoretical proposition put forward by Fei Xiaotong, a renowned Chinese sociologist, at

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the advanced seminar of Peking University in 1997. Its purpose is not only to address issues such as cultural confrontation arising from the conflicts of world civilizations since the 20th century, but also to attempt to provide reference for the cultural construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the 21st century. Mr. Fei Xiaotong believed that “cultural consciousness” refers to the “self-awareness” of people living in a certain culture towards their own culture. They understand its origin, formation process, unique characteristics, and development trend (Fei, 1997, p. 22). The value of cultural consciousness lies in “self-knowledge”, which is then extended to “knowledge of others” in order to achieve “common knowledge”. That is, one should not only fully understand the strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages of one’s own culture, but also view the cultures of other countries with an equal perspective. Cultural consciousness is neither a negation of national culture nor a complete acceptance of foreign cultures. Instead, through self-reflection, self-transformation, and self-innovation in culture, the immunity and adaptability of one’s own culture can be enhanced, achieving the coordination between culture and the current global political and economic development. Promote development through culture and benefit culture through development. As Fei Xiaotong said at the seminar of Peking University:

At the very end, I’d like to summarize and ask: What on earth are we all doing? Four words pop up in my mind: “cultural consciousness”. These four words might just express the reaction of the intellectual community to economic globalization at present. It is an urgent demand of the human mindset triggered by the contact of diverse cultures around the world. People want to know: Why do we live like this? What is the meaning of such a life? What consequences will this kind of life bring us? In other words, humanity has reached a stage where we have started to wonder where our culture comes from, how it has taken shape, what its essence is, and where it will lead us. Aren’t these emerging questions exactly a call for cultural consciousness? (Fei, 1997, p. 20)

From the above remarks of Fei Xiaotong, the connotations of cultural consciousness can be summarized as follows:

(1) With understanding as the prerequisite. Cultural consciousness is not only the self-awareness within the native cultural circle, but also encompasses the mutual understanding and mutual recognition based on various heterogeneous cultures.

(2) With inclusiveness as the criterion. Cultural inclusiveness lies in “seeking common ground while reserving differences”, which is not only the value concept that the cultural subject should have, but also the basic element of cultural consciousness.

(3) With self-identity as the starting point. Cultural self-identity means, based on a correct understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of one’s own national culture, examining the inherent forms and state changes of the culture from an objective perspective, thereby overcoming cultural inferiority and enhancing cultural confidence. This also takes “cultural uniqueness” as the measurement standard, and then integrates into the “globalized big society” at the level of “cultural individuals” (Fei, 2009, p. 254).

(4) With respect for others as the point of convergence. Respecting other cultures is an important value concept of cultural consciousness. This not only acknowledges the objective differences between one’s own culture and other cultures resulting from factors such as geography and history, but also serves as an effective way to observe and consider heterogeneous cultures from the perspective of others. In addition, external communication and extension are one of the basic attributes of culture, and also a form of manifestation of the value of culture. Therefore, the ideas emphasized by cultural consciousness, such as mutual respect and equal communication between different cultures, will contribute to the prosperity and development of world culture.

(5) With equal dialogue as the basic stance. Parallelism, or more precisely, the equality of dialogue between cultures, is the mutual interpretation and understanding between different cultural subjects and objects within the field of behavioral perception and communication. Therefore, “cultural consciousness” with equal dialogue as the basic stance is actually a manifestation of cultural diversity and cultural communication at the text level and the information interaction level. On the one hand, this kind of equal dialogue is the diffusion and integration of cultural factors brought about by globalization. On the other hand, cultural dialogue also depends on relatively peaceful and equal input (or output) without status differences. This latent dynamic behavior also reflects the proper stance that countries should adopt in cultural exchanges nowadays.

Cultural consciousness is a systematic, complex, and comprehensive project. Only by first understanding one’s own culture can one correctly view, respect, and appreciate other cultures with the same attitude, achieving inter-communication, integration, and mutual progress among diverse cultures. This in turn promotes the harmonious co-existence of cultures around the world and the building of a “world cultural community”. Its essence is not limited to the cultural construction of one’s own nation. Furthermore, cultural consciousness actually encompasses reflections on the entirety of human culture. This includes the unprecedented cultural exchanges brought about by globalization, and also implies an implicit principle: “The globally integrated market economy requires a set of cultural rules and social orders that everyone should abide by, and even a common language and common codes of conduct. This inevitably shakes the foundation on which local native cultures depend for survival. The de-territorialization of culture seems to be a trend” (Fei & Fang, 2001, p. 15). Therefore, the proposal of “cultural consciousness” is actually a reflection of Fei Xiaotong’s concepts of “appreciating one’s own beauty”, “appreciating the beauty of others”, “harmonizing the beauty of all”, and “achieving universal harmony” (Chu & Tian, 2010, p. 72). It is the continuation and inheritance of cultural and philosophical ideas. Against the backdrop of increasingly close globalization, it helps to overcome regional obstacles in

cross-cultural communication, break the inherent drawbacks of the binary opposition model between China and the West, as well as between the ancient and the modern. Moreover, it demonstrates a kind of humanistic care that transcends narrow national prejudices, expresses with the cultural subject as the core, and contains the implications of “integrity”, “globality”, and “universality”.

Overall, Fei Xiaotong’s concept of “cultural consciousness” is not a purely theoretical framework. The ideological system it encompasses includes the recognition of global culture and the understanding of the human subject. Therefore, as a research achievement in human sociology, cultural consciousness has universal applicability. It also plays an important guiding and referential role in current research in disciplines such as literature, philosophy, history, linguistics, and translation studies.

III. ON TRANSLATION CONSCIOUSNESS OF LITERARY CLASSICS

Cultural diversity leads to cultural differences, and cultural differences affect the nature and choices of translation. In the article “Translation and Cross-cultural Communication Strategies”, Sun Yifeng also pointed out the translation dilemmas caused by such cultural differences:

As a primary means of cross-cultural communication, translation holds great significance in China’s cultural strategy of going global. Correspondingly, the cultural dimension of translation has become increasingly prominent. From a global perspective, it is necessary to fully recognize that translation activities in a cross-cultural context are subject to various factors, and we must address issues such as (un)translatability and cross-cultural reading. For a long time, we have seriously underestimated the obstacles caused by cultural differences. As a result, the effect of translating from Chinese to foreign languages, especially from Chinese to English, has often been less than satisfactory. Translation first needs to address the issue of cultural transcendence. The untranslatability at the cultural level is evidently the greatest obstacle to our communication. Untranslatability is, to a large extent, restricted by the unreadability or low readability of cross-cultural texts. The acceptance of a translated work inevitably involves the readability of cross-cultural communication. If the readability is low, the artistic value of literary translation will hardly be reflected. Therefore, in order to cross the barriers of different cultures and transcend narrow cultural nationalism, it is necessary to formulate effective cross-cultural communication strategies, explore the aesthetic commonalities among different national literatures, so as to achieve the true purpose of cross-cultural communication. (Sun, 2012, p. 16)

Due to the differences in cultural thoughts and development between the East and the West, deviations occur in the process of translating and introducing translated literature. Therefore, it is necessary to delve into the cultural reasons in detail. Only by achieving cultural consciousness can we achieve consciousness in the translation of literary classics. We can even say that, to a certain extent, cultural consciousness and the translation consciousness of literary classics exist in a relationship of inclusion and correspondence. Fei Xiaotong once believed that “emphasizing a deeper and renewed understanding of the social and historical nature of culture can help us deepen our understanding of culture” (Fei, 2003, p. 8). Therefore, Fei Xiaotong further pointed out that cultural consciousness, which is based on the cultural subject, is also conveying a sense of “historicity and sociality” (Fei, 2004, p. 1). Similarly, as a specific manifestation of traditional Chinese culture, the most prominent characteristic of literary classics lies in their “historical adaptability” that has endured the vicissitudes of time. However, during the process of foreign translation and introduction, due to differences in various aspects such as region, language, and culture, this “historical adaptability” inevitably shows a degree of adaptation based on the original cultural content of the text, thus consciously achieving a kind of “self-awareness” in translation. Literary classics, due to the existence of “historical adaptability”, also resonate with cultural consciousness in terms of logical connection. In the article “Cultural Consciousness and the English Translation of Chinese Classics”, Luo Xuanmin and Yang Wendi discussed the role of cultural consciousness in the translation of classics: “In terms of translation, the ultimate goal of cultural consciousness is to interpret and translate the most appropriate classic materials in the most suitable way without compromising the spirit of Chinese culture. This can help eliminate differences, promote cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, and greatly meet the needs of Western audiences to read Chinese classics” (Luo & Yang, 2012, p. 63).

Although the above-mentioned remarks clearly point out the purpose and value orientation of cultural consciousness in the translation of literary classics, this kind of interpretation overly focuses on the subjective response of translation attached to the “ego” culture towards the “other” culture. It is more of a one-way act of translation and elaboration. The translational nature is also overly subordinated to the cultural nature, losing the original connotation of the translation of literary classics. Therefore, based on the proposition of cultural consciousness, the translation consciousness of literary classics proposed in this paper can be understood as a construction of translation behavior that is parallel to the cultural orientation. The translation consciousness of literary classics is the extension, displacement, and reset of cultural consciousness in literary translation, embodying a cross-social, cross-communicative, cross-thinking, cross-linguistic, and cross-ethnic cultural awareness and logic. The translation consciousness of literary classics is not a one-way transmission of culture. Instead, based on a profound understanding of one’s own culture, it reflects on and respects other cultures, discovers the similarities and differences, advantages and disadvantages between them, and then consciously adopts translation strategies, means, and methods that conform to the values and spiritual connotations of both cultures. Further elaborating, the connotations of the translation consciousness of literary classics can be summarized as follows:

(1) Based on understanding the connotations of Chinese and foreign cultures. The translation consciousness of literary classics should not only have a deep understanding of the cultural content referred to in the text but also cross the time-space barriers of the knowledge spectrum to further understand the basic overview of other cultures.

(2) Relying on “seeking common ground while reserving differences”, avoiding cultural conflict factors, and making the translated versions of literary classics strive to meet the horizon expectations of both cultures.

(3) Driven by the elimination of the dross content in literary classics, thus demonstrating the text value of literary classics that keeps pace with the times during the process of foreign dissemination.

(4) With the cultural community as an overall vision, through the instrumental nature of translation, further exploring the internal connections and essential original meanings between literary classics and world culture. Overall, the translation consciousness of literary classics is more of a unified system that interacts and influences cultural consciousness rather than a pure act of translation and introduction.

(5) Taking cultural expectation and cultural shaping as the coordinates of translation and introduction. The so-called cultural expectation and cultural shaping mean that, based on the phenomena of the source text and the translated text, the translator takes the cultural perception of the source-language author and the readers in the target domain and the recognition of the literary psychology of both sides as the starting point, thereby achieving the fusion of cultural expectations and the perception of cultural translation and introduction. This is actually a further shaping and displacement of the translation consciousness of literary classics in cultural form. This will not only further deepen readers' understanding of the content of the classics but also give play to or convey the cultural expectation concepts of the translator and the author manifested within the translation behavior.

The translation consciousness of literary classics can also be understood as a literary activity with consciousness and subjectivity, rather than a purely technical translation and dissemination. It avoids “translation extremism”, that is, during the translation of heterogeneous literature, one should neither blindly worship foreign cultures, nor advocate self-cultural superiority, nor accept the thinking of “cultural persecution” and “cultural arrogance”. Correspondingly, translation consciousness always deals with the interactive transmission between cultures with an open, inclusive, and confident attitude. Therefore, through the concept of the translation consciousness of literary classics, it not only helps to realize Fei Xiaotong's cultural proposition of “appreciating one's own beauty, appreciating the beauty of others, harmonizing the beauty of all, and achieving universal harmony”, but its ultimate goal is also to complete the great cultural integration of “the east, west, south, north, and center” through translation, realize the globalization of literary classics and world literature, and thus create a situation of common prosperity for all human cultures.

IV. AN INVESTIGATION INTO TRANSLATION CONSCIOUSNESS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF *DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER*

As one of the four great classical novels in ancient China, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, with its beautiful writing style and unique literary value, has continuously attracted numerous scholars at home and abroad to conduct research on it. Among these efforts, *Dream of the Red Chamber* has been translated into foreign languages by many Chinese and foreign translators. Therefore, conducting a case analysis of the English translation and introduction of *Dream of the Red Chamber* from the perspective of the concept of translation consciousness will help us further explore the specific manifestations and operations in the translation process of ancient Chinese cultural classics. At the same time, it will also contribute to observing the conscious cultural awareness and the efforts to consciously safeguard cultural dignity demonstrated by literary works represented by *Dream of the Red Chamber* (or other ancient Chinese cultural classics) during their overseas dissemination and export. In this regard, the translation consciousness of ancient Chinese classics is a manifestation of translation and introduction in cultural exchanges and cultural interactions.

A. On the General Situation of the English Translation of *Dream of the Red Chamber*

Traditional literature represented by the four great novels of the Ming and Qing dynasties has always been an important part of Chinese literary classics. Among them, “*Dream of the Red Chamber*, as the pinnacle of Chinese classical literature, has the longest history of translation, introduction and dissemination in the English-speaking world, with the largest number of translations and versions” (Wang, 2013, p. 243).

According to existing literature, the earliest English translation of *Dream of the Red Chamber* (The Chinese name is 《红楼梦》) was *Dreams of the Red Chamber* (1817) by the British missionary Robert Morrison. Subsequently, some other translations came out one after another, such as *The Red Chamber Dreams* (1819) and *On the Poetry of the Chinese* (1830) by John Francis Davis, *Hung Lou Meng or the Dream of the Red Chamber, A Chinese Novel, Book I* (1892) by Henry Bencraft Joly, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1927) by Wang Liangzhi, *An Old, Old Story* (1928) by Elfrida Hudson, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (1929 - 1958) by Chi-Chen Wang, *THE RED CHAMBER DREAM* (1930s - 1970s) by Lin Yutang, *Selections from Dream of the Red Chamber and The Lonesome Swallow* (1933) compiled by Yuan Jiahua and Shi Ming, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (1957-1958) by Florence McHugh and Isabel McHugh, *A Burial Mound for Flowers, Chinese Literature: Popular Fiction and Drama* (1973) by Hsin-Chang Chang, etc.

In addition to the three full-length translations of *Dream of the Red Chamber*: *The Story of the Stone* (1973) by David Hawkes and John Minford, *A Dream of Red Mansions* (1978-1980) by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, and *The Red Chamber Dream* (released online by the Library of the University of Hong Kong in 2004) by Reverend Bramwell Seaton

Bonsall, the rest of the English translations of *Dream of the Red Chamber* are mainly in the forms of abridged translations (mainly fragment translations and translations of critical verses), adapted translations (mainly abridging and adapting the character dialogues in *Dream of the Red Chamber*), and compiled translations (see Table 1). Therefore, although there are a large number of achievements in the English translation of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, most of them are scattered fragment-style translations, lacking full-length translations like those by Hawkes, Yang Hsien-yi, Bonsall, etc. To a certain extent, this has limited the foundation for the overseas dissemination of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and also caused some difficulties for the related translation research.

TABLE 1
GENERAL SITUATION OF SOME ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF *DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER* (INCLUDING FORMS SUCH AS ABRIDGED TRANSLATION, ADAPTED TRANSLATION, COMPILED TRANSLATION, FULL TRANSLATION, ETC.)

| Translators | English translation versions of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> | Publication time |
|---|---|---|
| Robert Morrison | <i>Dreams of the Red Chamber</i> | 1817 |
| John Francis Davis | <i>The Red Chamber Dreams</i> | 1819 |
| John Francis Davis | <i>On the Poetry of the Chinese</i> | 1830 |
| Henry Bencraft Joly | <i>Hung Lou Meng or the Dream of the Red Chamber, A Chinese Novel, Book I</i> | 1892 |
| Wang Liangzhi | <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> | 1927 |
| Elfrida Hudson | <i>An Old, Old Story</i> | 1928 |
| Chi-Chen Wang | <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> | 1929-1958 |
| Lin Yutang | <i>THE RED CHAMBER DREAM</i> | 1930s-1970s |
| Yuan Jiahua and Shi Ming | <i>Selections from Dream of the Red Chamber and The Lonesome Swallow</i> | 1933 |
| Florence McHugh and Isabel McHugh | <i>The Dream of the Red Chamber</i> | 1957-1958 |
| Hsin-Chang Chang | <i>A Burial Mound for Flowers, Chinese Literature: Popular Fiction and Drama</i> | 1973 |
| David Hawkes and John Minford | <i>The Story of the Stone</i> | 1973 |
| Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang | <i>A Dream of Red Mansions</i> | 1978-1980 |
| Wang Yuping, Min Beiping, Su Minzhu | <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> | 1990 |
| Huang Xinqu | <i>A Dream in Red Mansions: Saga of a Noble Chinese Family (A Simplified English Version)</i> | 1991 |
| Victor Henry Mair | <i>The Traditional Chinese Literature</i> | 1994 |
| Yang Shuhui, Yang Yunqin | <i>Ladies of the Red Mansion: Abridged and Adaptive From the Chinese Classic Hong Lou Meng or A Dream of Red Mansions</i> | 2008 |
| Qian Ren, Dorothy Zhang | <i>A Dream of Red Mansions as Portrayed Through the Brush of Sun Wen</i> | 2010 |
| Retold by Christine Sun & illustrated by Shirley Chiang | <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> | 2011 |
| Reverend Bramwell Seaton Bonsall | <i>The Red Chamber Dream</i> | Released online by the Library of the University of Hong Kong in 2004 |
| Wang Guozhen | <i>The Dream of Red Chamber</i> | 2012 |

B. An Initial Exploration of the Translation Consciousness in English Translations of *Dream of the Red Chamber*

The translation consciousness of literary classics is a specific extension of cultural consciousness. Therefore, in the process of translating and introducing literary classics to foreign audiences, the consideration of cultural factors is an inevitable aspect. At the same time, due to the fact that *Dream of the Red Chamber* is rich in common knowledge of the ancient background, and the whole book is filled with obscure poems, songs and prognostic verses. Its language is not only profound, but also the time- space gap between ancient and modern times has led to problems in modern interpretation. Therefore, this paper attempts to list common translated fragments of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and by comparing the translations of some well-known translators, explore the specific changes and manifestations of the translation consciousness of literary classics.

(a). Case 1

Original text: 贾政忙陪笑道：“犬子岂敢谬承金奖” (Chapter 15 of *Dream of the Red Chamber*) (Ren et al., 2010).

Yang Hsien-yi: “My worthless son does not deserve such high praise,” rejoined Jia Zheng hurriedly with a courteous smile (Ren et al., 2010).

David Hawkes: Jia Zheng smiled politely: “My son is doubtless unworthy of the compliment Your Highness is good enough to pay him” (Ren et al., 2010).

Analysis: As a term of humility, “犬子” was an ancient Chinese way of referring to their own son when speaking to others. This is actually the influence of the unique Confucian concept of self-modesty on kinship terms. Such terms of

humility with Confucian paradigms are also a textual manifestation of the Chinese traditional cultural values of “emphasizing human relations”, “esteeming modesty”, and “being respectful externally and reverent internally”. In the above-mentioned case, Hawkes directly translated “犬子” as “My son”. Although it accurately conveyed the literal meaning of the source text, the Confucian cultural connotation of “esteeming modesty” implicit in the original sentence was “dissolved” and even “deconstructed” in Hawkes’ translation. Although this translation achieved the so-called “faithfulness” in translation, the cultural elements in the source text disappeared, thus preventing readers from appreciating the connotations of ancient Chinese culture. In contrast to the loss of traditional culture in Hawkes’ translation, Yang Hsien-yi translated “犬子” as “My worthless son” (worthless: having no value; useless). This not only vividly reflects the cultural orientation of the original text but also demonstrates the translator’s conscious transmission and translation of the implicit culture in literary classics.

(b). Case 2

Original text: 露凝霜重渐倾欹，宴赏才过小雪时 (Chapter 38 of *Dream of the Red Chamber*) (Ren et al., 2010).

Yang Hsien-yi: Slowly drooping below congealed dew and heavy frost; Just after a feast in its honour on the Day of Light Snow (Ren et al., 2010).

David Hawkes: The feasting over and the first snow fallen. The flowers frost-stricken lie or sideways lean (Ren et al., 2010).

Analysis: In Chapter 38 of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, “小雪” is one of the 24 traditional Chinese solar terms. Yang Hsien-yi’s translation “the Day of Light Snow” clearly renders “小雪” as a symbol of the solar term representing a climate change. This conscious translation behavior not only effectively conveys the information in the original text but also transmits the correct connotation of the solar term to readers. However, Hawkes’ translation “first snow” doesn’t add explanatory words (such as “day”, “season”, etc.). This can easily mislead Western readers into regarding the traditional Chinese solar term “小雪” as a “snow-falling state”, thus deviating from the basic meaning of the original text and causing reading obstacles for readers. Since the “24 solar terms” are common knowledge about the division of solar terms unique to Chinese culture, Yang Hsien-yi’s translation accurately presents the knowledge of solar terms in ancient culture.

(c). Case 3

Original text: 谋事在人，成事在天 (Chapter 6 of *Dream of the Red Chamber*) (Ren et al., 2010).

Yang Hsien-yi: Man proposes, Heaven disposes (Ren et al., 2010).

David Hawkes: Man proposes, God disposes (Ren et al., 2010).

Analysis: “天” is a relatively important concept in the Confucian tradition. According to the explanation of Zhu Xi, “Heaven represents the principles of the universe. It is of unparalleled dignity, with nothing equal to it, and is beyond comparison with the God of the Inner Shrine and the Kitchen God” (Zhu, 2007, p. 23). That is to say, Zhu Xi regarded “天”(Heaven) as an ideal existence that transcends divinity and represents the laws and principles governing all things in the universe. In the Confucian concept, it more often refers to the shaping of beliefs with moral significance. Li Zehou also pointed out that “although it (here referring to ‘Heaven’) has been naturalized, rationalized, and depersonalized, there still remains the vestige of the god that was feared and worshiped in primitive witchcraft. It is directly linked to human emotions” (Li, 2007, p. 63). In conclusion, “天” and its related derivative meanings (such as “天命”, “天理”, “天道”, etc.) are cultural concepts unique to ancient China, as well as the collective cognition and memory shaped under the influence of specific ways of thinking. Yang Hsien-yi translated “天” as “Heaven”, and the word “Heaven” (or “god in heaven”) mainly refers to “paradise” or “the Kingdom of Heaven”(Hornby, 2010, p. 949) that are highly colored by Christian culture. Translating “天” as “Heaven” is likely to mislead readers in the English-speaking world about the true meaning of “天”. This not only fails to demonstrate the “faithfulness” of translation but also erodes the original cultural identity and characteristics of the literary classic. Hawkes translated “天” as “God”, the God in Western Christianity. Essentially, both he and Yang Hsien-yi adopted a translation approach of “explaining the Chinese with the Western”, replacing Chinese culture with Western culture during the translation process. This shows a “Western-centric” translation concept, and further implies an “acceptance of the world-view order of the East-West binary opposition and Western centrism” (Zhou, 2006, p. 6). Therefore, in the process of disseminating literary classics abroad, seeking a translation construction behavior under the awareness of “cultural equality” is not only the due moral obligation to preserve the original culture of the classics, but also the internal pursuit of translation consciousness.

As can be observed from the above examples, during the translation process, translators should, from an objective stance, recognize the loss of the traditional culture within the source text and strive to prevent the manifestation of such cultural loss in the translation. They should be brave enough to face up to the strengths and weaknesses of the source culture. In addition, the translator's translation consciousness should also take into account the cultural feelings and acceptance of the readers, and strive to achieve equivalence at the communicative level between the target language and the source language in translation.

V. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND TRANSLATION CONSCIOUSNESS

The relationship between culture and translation can be understood as translation being the communication between two heterogeneous cultures (Liu, 2011, p. 71). The relationship between cultural consciousness and translation consciousness is akin to that between water and fish, or a tree and its branches a relationship of existence and being-existent. Without water, there would be no fish; without a tree, there would be no branches. Therefore, without the foundation of cultural consciousness, the consciousness of translating literary classics loses its inherent subjective basis. Cultural consciousness gives rise to translation consciousness, and in turn, translation consciousness reflects on cultural consciousness. The two are interconnected, yet they also possess individuality and differences, and are unified within an organic system. Therefore, through the above-mentioned examination and summary of the translation consciousness of literary classics, taking *Dream of the Red Chamber* as an example, the paper believes that the relationship between cultural consciousness and translation consciousness can be summarized as that between the whole and the part, the general and the particular, connection and essence.

A. *The Relationship Between Integrity and Partiality*

On the one hand, cultural consciousness and translation consciousness are interconnected, inseparable, and interact with each other. Cultural consciousness is a whole, and the consciousness of literary translation is an organic part of it, and is itself an act of cultural consciousness. However, the partial functions and changes of translation consciousness can affect the functions of cultural consciousness, and even play a leading role in its development. Without cultural consciousness, translation consciousness cannot “stand on its own” and may not even form an independent and self-consistent theoretical system. On the other hand, as a whole, cultural consciousness dominates translation consciousness, influences it, and has functions that the latter does not possess. As André Lefevere pointed out in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, “Translation itself is an act of constructing culture” (He & Si, 2016, p. 89). As an extension of translation in the literary field, the consciousness of literary translation, as a part and branch of cultural consciousness, has its functions subordinate to and in the service of the latter. It also constructs and promotes the development of cultural consciousness.

B. *The Relationship Between Universality and Particularity*

There is a relationship of universality and particularity between cultural consciousness and translation consciousness. The former is universal. As a cultural theory, it has universal applicability and conforms to the current mainstream cognitive level of human civilization. The particularity refers to the latter, that is, translation consciousness is derived from cultural consciousness but differentiates from it. It has its own uniqueness, namely the function of translation, which is absent in cultural consciousness. It is precisely because of the “translation-based” particularity that translation consciousness differs from cultural consciousness, each having its own way of elaboration and connotative structure.

C. *The Relationship Between Connectivity and Ontology*

Connectivity means that cultural consciousness and translation consciousness are interconnected and construct each other. Cultural consciousness cannot do without the “bridge” provided by translation consciousness for cross-cultural communication. In turn, translation consciousness cannot lack the macro-perspective and methodology of cultural consciousness, which is a behavioral reference of “each contains the other”. However, both have their own ontologies. That is, cultural consciousness and translation consciousness are objectively existing ideological concepts. Under certain circumstances and special conditions, the latter should have its independence and autonomy to avoid excessive intervention and influence from cultural consciousness, which could lead to the loss of the functionality of translation consciousness and the absence of its conscious system. Connectivity and ontology are closely related and complementary forms of existence. Therefore, an important manifestation of translation consciousness also lies in the mutual manifestation of connectivity and ontology in the translated text.

VI. AN EXPLORATION OF THE SUBJECTIVITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE TRANSLATION OF LITERARY CLASSICS: AN INVESTIGATION BASED ON THE “TRINITY” OF THE ORIGINAL WORK, THE TRANSLATOR, AND THE READER

Subjectivity refers to subjective initiative, which includes purposiveness, autonomy, initiative, and creativity, etc. (Huang, 2005, p. 149). For a long time, there have been different views on the subjectivity of translation in the academic community, and no unified consensus has been reached. For example, the domestication theory of American translation theorist Venuti holds that translation should be oriented towards the target-language readers, with the readers as the subject. In contrast, his foreignization theory emphasizes that translation should be oriented towards the author, with the author as the subject. The Reception Theory school shifts its focus to the text and the reader, emphasizing the dominant role of the relationship between them. Deconstructionists and the Western “Manipulation School” highlight the subjectivity of the translator.

The subjectivity of the consciousness in the translation of literary classics, from the perspective of commonalities and group-integration relationships, breaks through the limitations of the single-subject theory of literary classics, translators, and readers, emphasizing the “trinity”. That is, the three are not isolated in a one-way manner. While each exerts its subjectivity, they reduce the constraints among them and are unified in the self-construction of the consciousness in the translation of literary classics. To a certain extent, this can also be understood as the group consciousness in the interaction

among the three.

On the one hand, literary classics play a leading role. In the process of others' understanding of the original text, they not only affect the translator's grasp and acceptance ability of text translation, but also influence the adaptability of the text to the target-language culture and potential influencing factors. At the same time, they also affect the readers' emotional acceptance, thinking orientation, national beliefs, etc. Therefore, the textual research on the versions of some literary classic texts and the sorting and exploration of documents are of great significance to both translators and readers.

On the other hand, the translator plays a central role in the subject of the consciousness in the translation of literary classics. Fundamentally, the translator exerts the creativity, initiative, and moral responsibility of translation, especially reflected in the selection and application of translation strategies and methods. During the translation process, based on a deep understanding of the original text, the translator should carry out subjective and active creation without departing from the original text for so-called "over-interpretation", but should grasp the "degree" of the text. Otherwise, there will be an unrestrained deviation from the original text, resulting in a "radical tendency" in translation. At the same time, the translator should discover the ideological content, style characteristics, aesthetic value, and cultural connotations of the text, so as to achieve the re-creation of translation or the secondary development of the text, and improve the correction of the content of literary classic texts, so that the translation result takes into account the readers' cognitive level and cultural identity.

As the final recipient of the translated text, the reader plays a critical role. Therefore, the reader should give full play to his or her own acceptance consciousness and critical initiative, analyze and think about the original and translated texts, and provide expected feedback on the original text and the translator from the perspective of his or her own culture, so as to achieve the coordinated sharing of information among the three.

Overall, the subjectivity of the consciousness in the translation of literary classics is essentially a dynamic process of continuous reconciliation, connection, and consensus-seeking among the original text, the translator, and the reader. It is an internal drive of the "trinity" of initiative and passivity, value and ethics, subjectivity and objectivity.

VII. CONCLUSION

The translation consciousness of literary classics takes the understanding of both native and foreign cultures as the guiding principle, places cultural recipients and cultural exporters on an equal footing, maintaining an unbiased and neither humble nor arrogant attitude in translation. With a down-to-earth approach, it realizes the spiritual value of translation consciousness, thus achieving Fei Xiaotong's beautiful cultural vision of "universal harmony". The purpose of the translation consciousness of literary classics is to serve the cultural, value, thinking, and contextual diversity in a global perspective, and to promote the common development of native and foreign literature. Mr. Ji Xianlin once pointed out that "the secret to the long-standing existence of Chinese culture lies in the translation of Indian culture and Western culture" (Xie, 2009, p. 1). Similarly, the exchange of different heterogeneous civilizations within the realm of literature also hinges on the development of literary translation. Therefore, the dissemination of native-culture literary classics abroad is not only the "one and only way" to keep Chinese culture full of vitality and vigor, but also one of the ways to promote the harmonious progress, prosperity and co-existence of human civilization. There is no so-called "dualist division" or "intrinsic contradictory confrontation" between cultural consciousness and the translation consciousness of literary classics. Instead, they are more manifested in the "from many to one" semantic reference and the "from one to many" network-like expansion. The two are unified within the "field" of "consciousness". Relying on "consciousness", they enrich and perfect their own theoretical construction, and promote the prosperity and development of world culture.

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