

Cultural Metamorphosis in Translation: Domestication in One Chinese Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Lin Yupeng, Hefei University of Technology, China

Abstract

The present paper presents a case study of the cultural transformations from the original into one Chinese version of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. First, the paper makes an analysis of these target language culture-oriented conversions in images, moods and stylistic devices and discusses their different cultural connotations concerning such aspects as religion, ethics, aesthetics and daily life respectively in the two languages and the negative effects of this domestication translation on the reader's understanding of the source language culture. For instance, the palm leaf, a western-culture-loaded image in one Methodist hymn in the original, is rendered into the *bajiao* banana leaf, a heavily Chinese culture-charged image in the Chinese version. And then the present study makes an attempt at the causes that may underlie the translator's domestication approach in his translation. They are: (1) the comparatively conservative political and cultural environment in which the translation was done; (2) the translator's strong affinity for his own (Chinese) culture and his native-culture-oriented aesthetics; (3) possibly the translator's mistaken presuppositions of source language culture. Lastly, the paper tries to explore the possible relationship between the translator's conversion strategies and his life experience.

It is generally thought that the task of the translator is to translate faithfully the work from the source language into the target language and to keep as closely to the original ideas and style as possible in the work of translation. Literary translation is not only the transformation of the language, but also that of culture. But in reality, these requirements are seldom satisfactorily met. Sometimes this failure to fulfill these requirements results from the failure to correctly understand the original; sometimes it comes from the translation strategy the translator adopts and sometimes from both. In his translation of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Lin, 2005), the author of this paper did some research on some Chinese versions of this novel and he found that of various versions the one translated by the late professor Huang Jizhong is the most noteworthy. First, this translation has some historical significance. Because though as the second complete translation of this novel in Chinese, it is the first one in modern Chinese (the first one was in classical Chinese translated by Lin Shu in 1901) and also the first one after the Great Cultural Revolution. So it can be regarded as a pioneering work in the then barren field of foreign literature to some extent. Secondly, it still ranks among the best translations of the novel as far as the general quality is concerned and it is highly regarded by scholars of foreign literature (Wu, 2005). But even in this prestigious version, there are some mistranslations, or more precisely, the cases of metamorphosis of cultural objects or concepts out of the translator's translation strategy or out of his negligence.

This paper makes a case study of the cultural metamorphosis in Huang's translation and explores the causes that may lie behind his use of domestication strategy. The paper will begin with an analysis of the translation of a major image or motif in the novel.

1. Metamorphosis of Imagery: From the Palm to *Bajiao* Banana

1.1 Importance of rendering of imagery in translation

The rendering of imagery from one language into another in literary translation is very important. First, imagery, as an indispensable element of literature, bears the vein of the style of a particular work, and the writer. The appropriate transplantation of imagery is essential to recreating the original style in the target language. Second, imagery is usually loaded with implications and associations of a certain culture, so the selection of the equivalent images with appropriate cultural associations and implications—insofar as possible—in the target language so that the novel is accepted in the target culture is also important. But sometimes in translation one image in the source language is changed into another in the target language. This change or transformation usually results in the change or loss of cultural connotations.

1.2 Different connotations of the palm and *bajiao*

Let us first give an example to illustrate our point. In Chapter 22 of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Tom the hero sang a well-known Methodist hymn:

I see a band of sprits bright, / That tastes the glories there;
They all are robed in spotless white, / And conquering *palms* they bear.
(Stowe, 1981, p.259)

Surprisingly, the Chinese translator Huang Jizhong renders the word “palms” in line 4 of the above hymn into Chinese as 芭蕉 (*bajiao*, a herbaceous perennial, whose scientific name is *Musa basjoo*), in stead of the Chinese equivalent 棕榈 (*zonglü*, meaning palms) (Huang, 1993, p.246). In doing so he changed the original image in the target language.

Let us first compare these two images: the palm and *bajiao* and see their different connotations in their respective cultural contexts and see how this change of the imagery may affect the communication across cultures. The palm is one of most tropical or subtropical trees, shrubs, or vines of *Palmae* or the palm family. In Western culture, a leaf (frond) or branch of the palm is used as a symbol of victory or rejoicing or of triumph, which can be traced to the ancient Roman custom of giving the victorious gladiator a branch of the palm tree. Therefore, in the English language the word palm connotes victory, triumph, rejoicing, honor and so on and the collocations with the word palm also bear these connotations. For instance, “to bear the palm” means “to be the best”; other phrases such as “bear or hold off the palm” or “carry off the palm” also have similar meanings; “yield the palm” on the other hand, means “admit that... the other is victorious, of better quality, etc.” Even some derivative words such as palmy also have the same connotation. The phrase “palmy day” means “prosperous or happy days”. This is because of these connotations that in the aforementioned hymn Tom sang the word “palm” is used with “conquering”, meaning that the “band of spirits” will be victorious.

1.3 Connotations of *bajiao* plant in Chinese culture

Then let us move on to examine *bajiao* and the image this word evokes in the reader cultivated in Chinese culture. A herbaceous perennial and quite similar to the plantain, *bajiao*

(*Musa basjoo* in Latin) is one of quite different families of plants. Besides, the *bajiao* does not have the fan-shaped leaves or fronds which characterize the palm tree. More importantly, the connotations associated with the image of *bajiao* in Chinese culture are poles apart from those associated with its counterpart in Western culture. In Chinese literature, especially in ancient Chinese poems, *bajiao* is a common image and a recurring motif. It is often associated with rain, wind, the moon, night, autumn, the change of seasons and shades of moods related to this change. It is an image sometimes used to strengthen the quiet and tranquil atmosphere, sometimes lonely or sorrowful mood of the speaker's, sometimes the atmosphere of ease and leisureliness. It is a vehicle to convey the speaker's state of mind. There are many ancient Chinese poems which have images of *bajiao* and the following are only a few examples. In the following examples the Chinese phrase 芭蕉 (*bajiao*) is rendered into different English words.

1. The rain dips and drips!/The hour strikes and strikes!/ Outside the window the *plantain*, inside the window the lamp./At such a time the feelings are unbounded.
//Dreams hard to fashion!/ Regrets hard to smooth out!/No wonder a sorrower dislikes to hear:/ In the empty courtyard the dripping lasts till dawn.
Rain by Moqi Yong (a poet in Song Dynasty:960-1279) ;Tran. Unknown
2. All night the west wind cuts the *banana leaves*;/Through the autumn, wearied eyes have endured the loneliness./ Grudgingly, I give myself up to the unstrained wine./While reading the Li Sao./My sorrow resembles,/ Day after day, night after night,/The Xiang River tides.
Nalan Singde (1655—1685) : Tune: Remembering the Prince
Trans. William Golightly
3. With cold and shade the pines and bamboos are verdant as emerald;
With rainwater the fragrance of wet *bajiao* blooms greets one's dreams.
Yang Wanli (1127—1206) : On the Ceasing of the Autumn Rain (My own translation)

From the above examples we can see that the image of *bajiao* or plantain is heavily-loaded with cultural connotations in Chinese culture, especially in ancient Chinese poetry. It recurs very frequently in ancient Chinese literature. It is with a sense of loneliness or a light melancholy that the image of *bajiao* is usually associated. So it is by no means an equivalent of the palm whether in denotation or connotation. The plantain image seems quite out of place in the context and it is absurd for the original “And conquering palms [the emblem of victory] they bear” to become “They bear the *bajiao* (plantain)” in the Chinese version.

2. Strategies of Translation: Domestication and Foreignization

The change of the image from the palm in the original into *bajiao* in the translation is not the result of a mistake nor of negligence. Because elsewhere in the book, for instance, in Chapter Six “Discovery” the word palm or palm-leaf or palm-leaves appear four times (Stowe, pp.42-43), the translator rendered them literally into Chinese as 棕榈 (*zonglü*) without changing the original image the way as we have discussed above. Then this change of the imagery is not accidental or occasional, but deliberate and systematic. It is the result of the strategy of domestication the translator used in his translating the novel: one of the two basic strategies in translation.

The question of the choice between domestication and foreignization in translation has long been the focus of discussion in the field of translation studies. Domestication is an

approach in which the original imagery, style of language, and moods are changed to those familiar to the reader in the target language, so as to ensure the greatest degree of acceptance. For example, roses in English may become peonies in Chinese, and English idiom “grow like mushrooms” may become “grow like bamboos after spring rains” in Chinese. Foreignization, on the other hand, is an approach in which the original imagery and other elements of the form or style are retained in the target language so that the original style can be kept, cultural color or implications will not get lost and the target language can thus be enriched with the fresh expressions. In the case of the above mentioned hymn, the palm in the English language remains the palm in Chinese when the foreignization approach is adopted in translation.

As a pair of binary oppositions, domestication and foreignization are two basic strategies in translation, though sometimes they may be referred to as other terms such as naturalization and barbarization (Liu, 1975, p.60), or assimilation and alienation (qtd. in Liu & Yang, 2002, p.20). The first one in the pair is referred to as TL culture-oriented and the second one SL culture-oriented (qtd. in Guo, 2000 p.276).

The terms domestication and foreignization were first put forward by the American translator Venuti (1995). The advancement of these two terms was based on the theory of German philosopher Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher thinks that there are two kinds of translation: one is that the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible, and moves the reader toward him; the other is that the translator leaves the reader in peace as much as possible, and moves the author toward him. Foreignization, according to Venuti is a strategy of translation in which a target text is produced which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original” (Venuti, 1995, p.43). Venuti regards foreignization as a challenge to domestication and it can “register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (Venuti, 1995, p.20).

In next section we will analyze the domesticated translations in this Chinese version of the novel and reveal cultural distortion of the original if domestication method is carried too far. We will come back to the question of foreignization and discuss the value of this strategy in translation.

3. Analysis of Domesticated Translations in the Chinese Version

3.1 Domesticating handling of images

There are many examples of domesticating handling of images besides the palm-*bajiao* change we have mentioned. For instance, “death and the grave”(Stowe, p.34) in Chapter Five is translated into Chinese as 阎王 (*Yen Wang*, similar to *Yama* in Indian mythology, King of the Hell in Buddhism) (Huang, p.33); “cheat the devil and save your own skin” (Stowe 64) in Chapter 8 in the original becomes “cheat the devil and *Yen Wang* and escape from the gate of the dead” (Huang, p.61); “run up a bill with the devil” (Stowe, p.64) becomes “be deep in debts to *Yen Wang*” (Huang, p.61); “nothing of the bear about him but the skin” (Stowe, p.89) becomes “with the tiger’s ferocious appearance and Buddha’s kind heart” (Huang, p.84); “plaster images” (Stowe, p.60;ch.8) becomes “clay image of Buddha” (Huang 57); Death (Stowe, p.130) becomes *Yen Wang* (Huang, p.123); “drink yourself into torment” (Stowe, p.213) becomes “drink till you see *Yen Wang*, the lord of death” (Huang, p.202). In this Chinese version of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, there are a total of 11 places in which the original expressions are turned into Chinese- culture- loaded *Yen Wang* (Huang, pp.33,61,61,63,123,202,339,353,385,385,396). Actually *Yen Wang* is the god of death in Chinese myths that was originally imported from Buddhist mythology. His task is to enforce

the law of retribution, infernal judgment. Sometimes he is also regarded as the king of the devils and thus as the tormentor of the most abominable souls. The change of the original neutral image into *Yen Wang* is not appropriate as far as cultural color is concerned. The same is also true of the image Buddha in the translation. There are quite a few words or images in the original inappropriately turned into Buddha in this Chinese version (Huang, pp. 57, 84, 261,339). This change of neutral or culturally unmarked images into the target-culture-marked images is, like the palm-turned *biaojiao*, a cultural metamorphosis or distortion which is the result of the misuse of domestication translation methodology.

3.2 Domesticated concepts or ideas

Besides the handling of imagery, the translator also domesticates ideas or concepts in the original into Chinese culture. For instance, in Chapter 11 of the novel: “There’s a God, George,—believe it; trust in Him, and I’m sure He’ll help you. *Everything will be set right*” (Stowe, p.114). The translator interprets the italicized words in Buddhism which has long been naturalized in Chinese culture and he translated the italicized sentence as “Everything will have its karma” (Huang, p.107). Literally “karma” is not equivalent to “set right.” More importantly we know that karma is a term from Buddhism which usually means preordained fate or retribution for sin one commits in another life or for sin committed by one’s ancestors. The term is usually connected with another Buddhist idea *samsara*, meaning the continuing cycle in which the same soul is repeatedly reborn. Here the Christian idea of the original is transformed into Buddhist concept because of the translator’s domesticated translation. Similarly, in his rendering of Legree’s fear of the ghost in Chapter 42 “An Authentic Ghost Story” the translator also interprets it in the concept of karma (Huang, pp. 400, 401). In his translation of the novel there are also such phrases as *yinjian* (the nether world or the world of the dead) and *yangjian* (this life or the world of the living) (Huang, p.400) which reflect characteristically traditional Chinese concept of the division of the two worlds. More surprisingly, in Chapter 35 “*Yen Wang*” and “Last Judgment” appear together in Huang’s translation (Huang, p.353) and the idea of Christianity and that of Buddhism are mixed. Domestication translation results in a contradiction of ideas and a mistake in common sense.

Sometimes Huang domesticates Western ideas into traditional Chinese ethics. For instance, he translates “and grow up, and *be a comfort to her* [your mother]” (Stowe, p.99; ch.10) into “let her live in comfort” (Huang, p.93), which is a Chinese ethical idea of filial piety: returning one’s parents’ love by enabling them to enjoy ease and comforts of life. Besides religious and ethical concepts, the translator also domesticates other concepts or ideas. For instance, “the choicest chicken” (Stowe, p.93) is rendered into Chinese as “the fattest chicken” (Huang, p.89). This shows the translator’s traditional Chinese idea that the fatter the food the better, which may be contradictory to the Western notion of healthy food.

3.3 Domesticated expressions and style

3.3.1 Use of four-character expressions and Chinese idioms

It seems that the translator is so fond of four-character Chinese phrases or expressions that almost every page of the Chinese version of the novel is filled with them. Some of them are well used, conveying the original meanings precisely and recreating the

imagery vividly. But quite a few of these expressions are not appropriately used, and they not only give the translation the characteristics of the Chinese language, but also tinge this American novel with the color of Chinese culture. For instance, “writing utensils” (Stowe, p.29) becomes “*wen fang si bao*” (traditional Chinese four treasures of the study: writing brush, ink stick, ink slab and paper) (Huang, p.28); “ruse” (Stowe, p.49) becomes “*jin lang miao ji*” (effective and confidential instructions for dealing with an emergency, which, because of its source in the Chinese classic *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has a strong flavor of Chinese culture) (Huang, p.47); “hunted down ...like a deer” (Stowe, p.90) becomes “*sang jia zhi quan*” “as frightened as a stray cur,” which also traces its origin to a Chinese classic (Huang, p.85). The last example not only changes the image from the deer in the original to the dog, but also acquires a derogatory overtone in the Chinese language.

The translator also uses quite a few other typical Chinese idioms or fixed phrases and colloquial expressions besides four-character expressions. For instance, “fool” (Stowe, p.117) becomes “*er bai wu*”, (literally *two hundred and fifty*, very colloquial or slangy expression meaning a foolish person) (Huang, p.110); “best hand ” (Stowe, p.104) becomes “*di yi ba jiao yi*” (literally the first chair, the most important person or the person who takes the greatest responsibility) (Huang, p.98); “hang it all” (Stowe, p.84) becomes “*buguan san qi ershiyi* ” (a very colloquial expression meaning *be reckless or desperate*) (Huang, p. 80). The use of all these expressions with the characteristics of the Chinese language and Chinese culture may give the reader an impression that the version was originally written in Chinese rather than in English. The alien or exotic flavor sometimes desirable for a translated work is lost.

3.3.2 Use of naturalized structure in stead of typical structure of the English language.

Though generally it is difficult to retain the characteristics of the original language in the target language, especially between very different languages like English and Chinese, sometimes it is not only desirable but also possible to keep some features of the original language in the translation. The domesticated handling of the original structure will weaken the effect of expression. For instance, “and in the chair, gently swaying back and forward, her eyes bent on some fine sewing, sat our old friend Eliza (Stowe, p.131). In Chinese it becomes “In the rocking-chair sat our old friend Eliza” (Huang, p.124).

In the original the present participle and absolute structure are at the beginning of the sentence while the main clause comes at the end, which keeps the important information till the last moment, thus creating the suspense which is needed for the effect of story-telling. But the Chinese translation changes the original structure and uses the typical Chinese sentence structure, that is, the original is naturalized in Chinese. Therefore the effectiveness of original structure is lost in the transformation.

3.4 Domesticated scene or mood

Connected with the domesticated expressions are the domesticated scenes or mood created by the use of expressions or images which are characteristic of Chinese culture. For instance, the beginning of Chapter 15 “Of Tom’s New Master and Various Other Matters” is an introduction to Tom’s new master, St. Clair, and his experience of love affairs and later of his marriage. The reader learns how the misunderstanding between St Claire and his first love led to his marriage with another woman he did not really love and the reader learns how he later felt remorseful when the truth was revealed that his first love still fostered love for him and she was now very miserable without seeing him. In rendering the account of St Clair’s

first love's feelings, the translator used quite a few archaic expressions from typical traditional Chinese literature about love-sick women who are discarded by their husbands or lovers (怨妇). For instance, 伊人 (that person) 徒唤奈何 (cannot help something from happening), 愁肠百结 (feel gloomy), 日渐憔悴 (pine away day by day) (Huang, p.143). The use of these typical expressions in traditional Chinese love-sick women literature creates a typical mood in which a discarded woman pities her misfortune and curses her fate or a sentimental young woman enjoys her sour and sweet love. In such cases, the melancholy mood is more enjoyed for its own sake than pitied. The mood created in the Chinese version of the novel is so typical of Chinese culture that the reader may misunderstand the source culture and think that American literature is similar to Chinese literature. This domesticated rendering not only shows that the translator is well-versed in traditional Chinese literature, but also that he is too fond of it and Chinese expressions, images, structure and mood appeal to him greatly.

At the beginning of Chapter 14 there is a citation from stanza 43, canto 15 of Byron's long poem *Don Juan*:

A young star! Which shone / O'er life—too sweet an image for such glass! /
A lovely being, scarcely formed or molded; / A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet
Folded (Stowe, p.140)

Huang's translation of the above lines from Byron's poem also shows his favoritism with Chinese culture and aesthetics. Whereas the original lines are in common language, he used a very rigid form of poetry called *wuyan* lüeshi, that is, a form of poetry each line of which has five words or five tones, and elevated or poetic words, or archaic words are used. In addition, Huang uses such clichés as commonly used in some sentimental popular Chinese literature: 闭月羞花貌 (her beauty is so great as to shade the moon and shame flowers)

From the above we can see that domestication methodology in translation distorts concepts or ideas, indiscriminate shades of cultural meanings. It will twist the reader's scheme of the culture of the source language, lead to his misunderstanding of the culture in the original work and will be a barrier to the communication of different cultures and hence a hindrance to the introduction of new expressions into the target language. Because of all this, foreignization strategy should be preferred in translation.

4. Value of Foreignization in Translation

4.1 Newmark's idea of foreignization

We hold that foreignization approach should be the dominant one in translation or intercultural communication. This is presupposed by the function of translation itself. Translation, according to Newmark, is "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text" (Newmark, 2001, p.5). He further argues that translation "is an instrument of education as well as of truth precisely because it has to reach readers whose cultural and educational level is different from, and often lower or earlier, than, that of the readers of the original" (Newmark, 2001, p.6). From this we can see that the function of translation is to overcome the barrier of language, bridge the differences in culture and education, and facilitate communication between different groups of people. Through translation, people speaking different languages from different cultural backgrounds can communicate, learn things new to them and thus gain an understanding of people of other nations and also an understanding of alien places and things. It is in the introduction of the newness or foreignness that lies the very value of translation. That is why Professor Zhang Jin

maintains that “we advocate that the national characteristics of a literary work should be retained and that the vocabulary expressing things and concepts that are typical of the culture of the translator’s own nation should not be used” (Zhang, 1987, p.167). Newmark also maintains the same view and he has some quite illuminating remarks as to this question

While I think that all images have universal, cultural and personal sources, the translator of poetry cannot make any concession to the reader such as transferring the foreign culture to a native equivalent. If autumn in China is the season not of Keats’s “mists and mellow fruitfulness”, but of high clear skies and transparent waters, and the sound of clothes laundered for the cold weather pounded on the washing blocks, then the reader must simply accept this background and, if he wants to feel it, repeated reading is more likely to make it his own possession than are detailed background, explanation of allusions and so on. (Newmark, 2001, p.164)

What Newmark is advocating here is the introduction of foreign things into the target culture by using foreignization strategy.

4.2 More theories of foreignization

Besides Newmark, other theorists of translation studies also advocate the strategy of foreignization. Fredric Jameson holds that “translation tends to block out what makes up the most confusing and vivid feature of our experience of Otherness, namely, the unfamiliar itself”. The limitation of any attempt to domesticate or familiarize the unfamiliar would be that “nothing mars a translation more than the attempt to render an idiom idiomatically” (qtd. in Xie, 2000, p.68). Here what is highly regarded in translation is the quality of Otherness or the unfamiliar, which can only be achieved by foreignization. Venuti has the similar idea that the task of translation is to reveal cultural differences (Venuti, 1992, p.13).

In summary, the value of foreignization lies in its cognitive and epistemological as well as its communicative functions, which is determined by the very function of translation itself. We owe it to this foreignization approach that we have knowledge of foreign countries and alien culture and that we have quite a few expressions in our language which reflect things and objects that originally were foreign. For example, in the Chinese language, such expressions as “Olive twigs” and “crocodile’s tears” are now common idioms used by people without their realizing these idioms’ foreign origin.

5. Exploration of the Causes behind Domesticating Strategy of the Translator’s

5.1 Factors that may influence the translator’s use of strategies

The choice of either of these two alternative approaches—foreignization and domestication—is not only a question of preference, there are some more fundamental factors underlying the choice.

According to some translation theorists, the adoption of certain translation strategies is determined by such factors as the translator’s way of thinking, his values, aesthetics, his goal in translating a certain work, his potential reader in the target language; the way of thinking, the values, aesthetics and the horizon of expectation of the above reader, the cultural tradition of the target language, the respective status of SL and TL, interaction between the translation and the target language culture (qtd. in Sun & Zhen , 2000, p.12). We can put these factors into three categories: the translator’s personal factors, factors on the part of the reader and the cultural environment of the translator. Of all these factors, we think that the last category is the most important and the first comes next in importance. In the following we

will discuss the factors that may have influenced Huang the translator's adoption of domestication strategy in his translation of the novel.

5.2 Social and political condition in which the translation was done

5.2.1 Social climate and translation

In a society where communication between cultures seldom occurs, the domestication approach is usually adopted for fear of possible cultural shock or failure of communication or misunderstanding for the sake of easier acceptance of the source culture in the target culture. In a more open society where communication between cultures is favored, encouraged and therefore, frequent, cultural shock is out of the question and foreignization approach is preferable. This has been proved by the history of translation in China. There are four prosperous periods of translation in China in which a lot of achievements in translation were made. They are (1) the period of translation of Buddhist classics (146-1111); (2) the period from the end of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), that is, the first few decades of 17th century, to the eve of the Opium War (1840-42); (3) the period from the Opium War to 1930s; (4) the period from the end of Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) to the present and it is still ongoing (qtd. in Wang, 2000, p.5). In most of these periods the dominant strategy adopted in translation was foreignization because there was the need to learn from foreign countries. What is more important, in all these periods of prosperity in translation, the social and political climate was benign and the conditions for satisfying that need were favorable. Therefore the social context in which the translator lives usually has a determining influence upon his choice of domestication or foreignization.

5.2.2 Politic-oriented social context and the strategy of domestication

This section is a survey of the condition and environment in which the translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was done by Huang in order to see the possible relationship between the domesticated translation and the political and cultural climate. From the introduction written by the translator, the late Professor Huang Jizhong, we know that although the first edition of his translation of the novel was published in 1982, the translator actually began his work as early as 1956: "In 1956 Shanghai Xinwenyi (New Literature and Arts) Press asked me to translate this book [*Uncle Tom's Cabin*] and I finished the task in 1958. But unfortunately the translation was not published as scheduled and it was delayed for over 20 years. During the Great Cultural Revolution the manuscript was burned, therefore the present translation was remade later" (Huang, p.xi). From this we can see that the translation was made between 1956 and 1970s, a comparatively conservative period in China as far as political and cultural policies are concerned. In 1957, immediately after the above mentioned press asked Huang to translate the novel, there came a political movement called anti-right-wingism in which a lot of intellectuals were involved and Huang was not the exception. Then the Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was also disastrous for culture. One of the outcomes of these two political movements was the overemphasis on politics (ostensibly Marxism) and resistance to the so called bourgeois ideology, hence there was a closed-door policy and a conservative climate not favorable to the introduction of foreign culture and intercultural communication. Under such a political and cultural climate, there was a tendency to resist western culture. Thus domestication was preferred: the method to naturalize as much as possible what is foreign or alien to the translator's own culture. In order to be accepted by the then political and cultural mainstream, the translator, consciously or subconsciously, tended to suit his

environment by adopting the naturalizing method in his translation. The translator made the foreign culture as invisible as possible in the target language to ensure his political and cultural identity in the mainstream.

The influence of the political environment on translation can also be seen in the translator's choice of the literary works to be translated. In case of the translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the reason why Huang chose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to translate was really political. Because this novel had long been regarded as a political novel or progressive novel in China in that the theme of the novel is anti-slavery and the Chinese people had long identified themselves with the oppressed Tom and other slaves in the novel. This can be seen in the introduction in which the translator outlined the history of the novel and also that of the translation of the novel in China. He recommended the Chinese version to Chinese readers by telling them the political significance of the novel and his recommendation is purely political-oriented. For instance, he regarded the novel more as a political novel than a literary work. He thought that the significance of the novel not only lies in its exposure and criticism of inhuman slavery, but also in its encouragement of the oppressed people in the world (especially in China) to fight against imperialism and oppression by foreign countries and to resist the insult and humiliation from the foreign invaders (Huang, pp. i-xi). So it was not likely for the translator to run the risk of offending the authorities because of the unwise choice of literary works which might be contradictory to the prevailing authoritative policies. This choice of novel was politically safe, as it were.

It was not unusual for Huang to be so politically prudent, or politically conscious. A list of the political movements since the Liberation to 1957 will speak for itself. There had been the campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries in 1950; the "San Fan" campaign against the three evils (corruption, waste and bureaucracy) and the "Wu Fan" campaign against five evils (capitalist bribery of government workers, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts and stealing economic information from government sources) from 1951 to 1952; the campaign to ferret out counterrevolutionaries in 1955 and anti-right-wingism in 1957. All these contributed to the then rigid political atmosphere unfavorable to an open-minded attitude toward western culture, hence the preference for domestication in translation.

5.3 The translator's strong affinity for his own Chinese culture and his native-culture-oriented aesthetics

The domesticated translations can also be attributed to the translator's attitude to his own culture. That is, he usually has a higher estimation of the things in his own culture than those that are not.

Biographical data show that the late Professor Huang, the translator, was brought up and educated in Old China, when there was a strong affinity for traditional Chinese culture in both general principles and the specific curricula of educational institutions. His early education must have left a deep impression upon his later life. So it was quite natural for him to have favorable feelings for Chinese culture. This favoritism shows itself in the translator's naturalization of the things or ideas which he thought alien to the reader in the target language. Consciously or subconsciously, he was making comparison between the two cultures and in his sub-consciousness he tended to prefer his own to foreign culture.

As we have discussed, Huang's favor with Chinese culture manifests itself in the whole translated novel: in his fondness of four-character expressions and typical structure of

Chinese language, in his recreating the scene or mood resembling traditional Chinese literature, and in his changing things foreign into Chinese ones. Connected with the translator's affinity for his own culture is his aesthetics, in this case Chinese aesthetics. Like the writer, the translator should also be guided by his aesthetic tenets in his translation. Chinese aesthetics is characterized by symmetry, balance and harmony which can be seen in the writer's use of language as well as in his expression of ideas. Unlike the writer, a translator's aesthetics is mainly reflected in his expression and in his use of imagery to render the source text into the target text. As we have mentioned, in the translation Huang uses a lot of four-character expressions; the use of these expressions is also related to the concepts of beauty of balance and of symmetry in Chinese aesthetics. Besides, the translator's Chinese-culture-oriented aesthetics can also be seen in his creating mood by imagery as we have discussed in 3.4. Because in that recreation of the quasi-scene of the discarded woman or love-sick lady in her sentimental mood or sour-sweet melancholy in traditional Chinese literature lies the translator's own aesthetical ideal.

5.4 The translator's mistaken presuppositions of source language culture

Sometimes the translator's domesticated translations may result from his wrong concepts of western culture and from his failure to understand the implications of the objects, things, and events in foreign culture. Generally speaking, Huang the translator had a good knowledge of the source language—English and its culture. But in spite of the generally acknowledged good quality of his translation of this novel, we find that there are still considerable mistakes in the translation, quite a few of which can be attributed to his misunderstanding of the source culture and to his over-domestication of things foreign. Besides some examples previously discussed, there are some others. For instance, “the flag-bottomed rocking-chair” (Stowe, p. 131) is mistranslated as “rocking-chair with flagstone at the bottom” (Huang, p.124). Besides, in this version of the novel the word state or its equivalent is mistakenly rendered into Chinese as *jun*, meaning “shire” which is generally devoted to the area in Great Britain. Furthermore, as we have discussed in 3.2, Huang mistakenly interprets “*be a comfort to her*” in traditional Chinese ethics. Similarly, as we have mentioned above, the translator's idea that the best chicken is the fattest chicken is also mistaken concept of western idea of what is good about food.

6. Relationship between the Translator's Personal Experience and His Strategy of Domestication

Huang's strategy of domestication is closely related to his personal experience: early education in Chinese culture, involvement in political movements in middle ages and guilty feelings for his mother in his late years.

6.1 His early education and his attitude toward Chinese culture

From the account of his former colleague and old friend Professor Wu, Huang was born into an intellectual and well-off landed gentry's family on September 28, 1923, and he had a good education in traditional Chinese culture in his early years (Wu, 2005). His good nurturing in Chinese culture shaped his positive attitude toward, and cultivated his love for, traditional Chinese culture in general and Chinese literature in particular. His early good cultivation also went into the making of his sensitive and urbane temperament. His love and

good knowledge of traditional Chinese culture can also be seen in the fact that he translated quite a few Chinese classics into English, such as *The Analects of Confucius* and *The Dao De Jing*. His love of Chinese culture is the aesthetic foundation of his domestication.

6.2 His experience in the political movements and his political prudence

The political prudence of the translator can be attributed to the political environment at that time and Huang's personal experience. In the 1957 political movement Huang was criticized and severely punished. Under such circumstances, either pressed by the political climate, or from the lessons he learned from other people's experiences and his own experiences, or out of his own caution and prudence, or from his own political consciousness acquired through gradual permeation and insinuations. What with one cause or another, he became quite politically conscious or political oriented. This is confirmed by the account of his former colleague Professor Wu at Beijing University in the early 1950s. According to Wu, Huang was very "progressive" or even radical in his political viewpoint. He was very enthusiastic in his work and very active in all political movements from the end of 1949 to 1957. But in spite of his political enthusiasm, he himself later became the victim of political movements, especially the movement in 1957. He suffered a lot either because of his family background or of his political naivety. He was forced to do hard labor on a reform-through-labor farm from 1958 to 1969. Then he was sent back to his home village to do physical labor under supervision. In the most difficult times he even attempted suicide. It was not until after the end of the Great Cultural Revolution in 1978 that his sufferings ended (Wu, 2005). It was very likely that he learned a lesson from his hard experience and became more politically conscious or politically prudent. The political prudence requires the resistance to Western ideology and culture, hence domestication.

6.3 The translator's guilty feelings for his mother and his rendering Legree's story

According to Professor Wu, Huang's father died when he was very young. It was his widowed mother who, in spite of all hardships, brought him and his brother up with her scarce means and provided them with good education. But under the pressure of the political situation at that time, Huang declared that he had cut off the family ties with his mother to show his "progressive stand" since his mother was the widow of a landlord (the "enemy of the people") (Wu, 2005). In his later years Huang must have felt guilty for having misunderstood and maltreated his mother and the guilty feeling manifested itself in his rendering the story of Legree who brutalizes his old mother and who for this reason in his later years is afraid of getting retribution. Huang's translation of Legree's cruelties to his mother is mingled with his own guilty feelings for his mother and shows traditional Chinese ethics of filial piety. Probably that is why the scene is translated into Chinese so vividly and so touchingly, and why Legree's workings of mind are rendered so realistically, so true to life. This is the emotional foundation of the translator's domestication.

References

- Guo, J. (2000). A cultural approach to translation. Guo Jianzhong (Ed.). *Culture and translation*. Beijing :China Translation Press, 276-290.
- Huang, J. (1993). Introduction. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. By Harriet Beecher Stowe. Shanghai: Shanghai Yiwun Press, i-xi.
- Huang, J. (1993.) trans. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. By Harriet Beecher Stowe. Shanghai: Shanghai Yiwun Press.
- Lin, Y. (2005). trans. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. By Harriet Beecher Stowe. Nanjing: Yilin Press.
- Liu, J. Y. (1975). Polarity of aims and methods: Naturalization or barbarization? *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, (24), 60-68.
- Liu, Y. & Yang Z, (2002). On “domestication” and “foreignization”. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 2002, (6), 20-24.
- Newmark, P. (2001). *A textbook of translation*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Stowe, H.B. (1981). *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. New York & Toronto: Bantam Books.
- Sun, H. & Zhen, Q. (2000). The cultural shift in the field of translation research. *Chinese Translators Journal*, (5), 11-14.
- Venuti, L. (Ed.). (1992). *The translator's rethinking translation: Discourse, subjectivity, ideology*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility: History of translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wang, D. (2000). Cultural position of translated literature and translator's cultural attitude. *Chinese Translators Journal*, (4), 2-8.
- Wu, N. (2005). Huang Jizhong: A forgotten translator of literature.
<http://www.northnews.cn/view.asp?NewsID=17197&classID=23> (September-21)
- Xie, M. (2000). Intercultural translation: distance and appropriation. in Guo Jianzhong (Ed.). *Culture and translation*. Beijing: China Translation Press, 54-81.
- Zhang, J. (1987). *The principles of literary translation*. Kaifeng: Henan University Press.