



Western Female Translation Theorists and Their Translation Views

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Abstract: This paper explores some translation schools or translation theories advocated by the female translation theorists in the west, who, hard-working and sensitive in translation studies, challenging the traditional translation principles and criteria, have been pioneering in the trend of cultural turn and opened up new areas of translation studies of post-colonialism translation norms, corpus-based translation research and conflict in war and functional translation viewpoint with outrageous novelties, and flaunting the signs of female translation theories. It calls for the attention to their major translation concepts and the importance of their studies in the translation field. Firstly, behind the feminist translation theory, there are profound cultural, educational backgrounds and important identities. They, brave and strong, with sharp tongue, have different cognition to the faithfulness of translation theory from the female standpoint, and create an iconic female English word "womenhandling" to evaluate the translated text. Second, the translation perspective paid close attention to by feminist translation theorists deeply reflects their feminist translation aesthetics, values and the unique cognition of their female gender characteristics in translation. Thirdly, feminist translation theorists have a unique understanding of the nature of translation with sensitive to the trend of translation, and novel perspectives. Their specific viewpoints and indelible contributions can't be ignored in the world translation field.

Keywords: The Translation History of the West, The Female Translation Theorists in the West, Creation of Translation Theories, Their Contribution to Translation

1. Introduction

Tracing back to the history of Western translation theory over the past two thousand years, especially the main development routes that constitute the western translation theory systems, it is not difficult to find out: from the ancient Roman period to the modern times that Western female translation theorists are active in the forefront of translation studies. "For translation studies to nature as a distinct discipline, continued efforts would be both meaningful and necessary in investigating the development of translation theory across cultural borders." [14]

A remarkable feature of Western translation theory is reopening up and creative. Western female translation theorists treat the tradition, the heritage of learning, searching

spirit and critical attitude of theoretical construction as a basic profound. In the whole western translation theory, they are not afraid of power politics and show the sharp academic vision of western female translation theories in which unique perspectives and arguments have aroused different reactions in translation circles as well as more in-depth research and reflection on western translation theories.

2. New Leading Trend of the Translation Theory Study

Among the translation theories established by western female translation theorists, some achievements can be regarded as the leading trend of translation theory, which is of epoch-making significance to the development of

translation theory and discipline construction.

2.1. Snell Hornby Defines an Idea of “Translation as an Independent Discipline”

Mary Snell-Hornby, professor of Translation, in University of Vienna, is one of the founders of the European Translation Association and an internationally renowned translation theorist. She published *“Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach”* in 1988. The book comprehensively examines the history and present situation of translation studies, drawing on the strengths of linguistic schools and literary translation theories, with application of the valuable principles of other disciplines to translation theory, thus brings forth a comprehensive approach to translation. Mary Snell Hornby believes that although translation is inextricably linked with other disciplines, it does not belong to any one discipline, nor can it be replaced by other disciplines. It boldly advocates the idea of taking translation as an independent discipline which has opened up infinite space for the development of translation theory. Nida has also proposed translation as an independent subject, but his theory is based on linguistics, while Hornby’s view on translation culture and context. “Translation is a cross-cultural activity” and “this network of relations is much more important in the context, cultural context of the text than the traditional linguistic method of a single word.” [9] She views the role of text in the cultural context from a new perspective, regards translation as a cultural transformation rather than a simple interlingual transformation, and suggests that culture, not text, be taken as a translation unit and that cultural studies be incorporated into the study of translation theory. Mary Snell Hornby defines theory on translation as an independent subject reveals the academic status of translation. Her theory is of pioneering, historical and epoch-making significance.

2.2. Susan Basnet, One of the Forerunners of the Translation Cultural School

Susan Basnet, vice president of Warwick University in the UK, founded the Center for Comparative Culture in Translation in the 1980s, when she published *“Translation Studies”*, “which looked beyond the language and attention is paid to the interaction between translation and culture. In this process, translation is burdened with broad background, history and established social norms, and culture influences translation.” [9] First of all, she expounds the basic ideas of the school of translation culture: paying attention to the historical and cultural background behind the text, trying to understand the complex process of manipulating the text, and exploring the reasons why the translation strategy by the translator depends on the criteria and the ways accepted by the target language. She thinks that we should abandon the translation view of “science” linguistics based on the “equivalence” theory, and change from “text translation study” to “cultural translation study” [12] In fact, the cultural turn of translation studies is from the operational level of language technology to the cultural and social level. It

overturns the traditional translation view of “faithfulness” and “equivalence” in the traditional translation theory, and emphasizes the translator’s “right of speech” and “language manipulation”. She emphasizes that translation studies should focus on the holistic thinking of translation from a cultural perspective, thus setting off a new wave of translation in the cultural direction of translation studies with Susan Basnet as the leader of this translation of the “cultural turn”. Since the 1980s and even today, the “cultural turn” in translation studies has brought a new surge of interest and influence in translation studies. Edwin Gentzler, a famous American translation critic, commented highly: “Translation studies have been very formal in the cultural turn for a long time, but in the early 1990s, many scholars were still slowly groping in this direction. Basnet and Andre Lefevere have long been the first to explain this theory very clearly.” [6] Mr. Gentzler confirmed Susan. Basnet is the leading figure in translating the theory of “cultural turn”, although there are many translation theorists in front of her who have laid the theoretical foundation for “cultural turn”. But Susan Basnet is the first person to blow the horn of cultural turn in translation studies.

2.3. German Female Translation Theorists Site Functional Translation School

The German functional school is also a force that cannot be ignored in the female translation team. Its representatives are Katharina Reiss, Hans Vermeer, Justa Holz Manttari and Christiana Nord.

Katharina Reiss is the forerunner of the modern functional translation school. In 1971 she published *“Possibilities and Limitations in Translation Criticism”* in which she advocated the basic ideas of the functionalism theory while agreeing with the equivalence theory, but finding some impossibility of equivalence in translation practice. Reiss believes that the translator should have different functions in different translation contexts and translation requirements. Therefore, the translator should give priority to the functional characteristics of the target text rather than the principle of equivalence. She transplanted the views of German psychologist Karl Bühler on language function into translation, and proposed three functional text types: informational type, expressive type and inductive type. Reiss, for the first time, combined translation with language function, which laid the foundation for functional translation theory.

Hans Vermeer, a student of Reiss, formally sited the Skopos theory of functional translation school which broke the shackles of equivalence theory. According to Vermeer interpretation, the translator determines the translation techniques and strategies of the target text without regard to the equivalence of the source text, depending on the expected communicative function, expectations and communication needs of the target text in different social contexts.

After Vermeer’s Skopos theory, Justa Holz Manttari added some translation concept “Translational Action”. She thinks that behavior is purposeful, “is the process of purposefully

changing or converting one state of a thing to another, if it is to be collectively referred to according to some examples, and then, this “Translational Action” theory becomes an interactive theory.” [4] Therefore, “translation Action” is considered as a “complex behavior” designed to achieve cross-cultural and cross-linguistic translation of information”, and Manttari further broadens the field of functional translation theory.

It is Christian Nord who has a big impact on the field of translation today. Nord is a professor of applied linguistics and translation at Magdeburg University of Technology, and one of the leading proponents of functional translation theory in Germany. She systematically interprets functional translation theories and standardizes complex academic terms. More importantly, she made up for the shortcomings of previous theories with her unique “principle of faithfulness in Translation”, and, additionally, with documentary translation and instrumental translation according to the relationship between the function of the text and the purpose of translation. Her theory emphasizes the behavior of the translation process, the role of the participants and the context in which the translation process takes place. The functional school of Skopos tries to liberate translation from the enslavement of the source language and interpret translation activities from the perspective of the translator, thus bringing a new revolution to the field of translation.

3. Opening up a New Field of Translation Studies

Western female translation theorists think rationally that translation is not a simple conversion between languages, based on women unique vision of observing things and their special sensitivity to politics, combining translation with the relevant social background. It is a battlefield for cultural hegemony and translation politics, which opens up a new field for translation studies.[15]

3.1. *Mona Becker's Translation Studies of Corpus-Based Research and Conflict in War*

Professor Mona Becker, director of the Centre for Language and Cultural Studies at the University of Manchester, pioneered the application of corpus technology in translation studies in the mid-1990s. Translation studies are “freed from the level of language manipulation in the past”, and “Mona Becker’s creation of corpus linguistics is another powerful proof of the cultural shift in linguistics.”[5] On the basis of corpus-based translation studies, she describes the nature and characteristics of translation, and has its own unique mode of thinking on corpus construction and corpus linguistics, and constructively proposes three kinds of corpora related to translation studies. “That is, parallel corpus, multilingual corpus and comparable corpus”. [1] Mona Becker boldly bases translation studies on corpus technology, which provides new tools and new ideas for translation studies, and expands the breadth and depth of translation

studies. The translated English Corpus is a collection of the original works of other languages of the world and translated into English by British and American translators. Its vocabulary capacity has now reached about 30 million, the final ultimate size of about 50 million. She leads the staff of the Language and Culture Translation Center to improve and update the corpus. At the same time, the use of different translation software for students from different countries is another feature of the translation center led by Mona Becker.

Mona Becker was the first person who links translation to war and makes a brilliant theory in 2006, with the title “*Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account*” which signs a major turn in her study of translation theory. Her new academic work is highly regarded by Western translation experts, and David Johnston, a professor at Queen’s University, Northern Ireland, says she “has a quick eye”. “Her passion is immersed in the observation of the invisible realm of translation practice, which refers to the rising human, political and international casinos.” [2] Professor Susan Petrelli of the University of Bari, Italy, spoke highly of the significance and value of the book’s translation to this era, saying: “Science and critical, never gradually polemic... this groundbreaking volumes rigorously examine the relation between translation, power and conflict. In this courageous volume, Mona Baker shows the importance in today’s global world of translation and interpreting for life over the planet and succeeds in calling our attention to the responsibilities that translators and interpreter must never evade.” (ibid.). Professor Cananot (Africa Vidal Claramnote) of the University of Salamanca in Spain also predicted with certainty: “Translation and conflict undoubtedly constitutes a turning point in translation studies.” (ibid.)

Translation and conflict, as the name implies, is a dialogue and conflict that sets out the invisible elements of translation and various texts, in the words of Mona Becker, “in a broad sense, conflict refers to different goals.” Conflicts of interests and absolute differences in values, two or more social groups in a certain situation secretly vilify each other. Conflict is understood in terms of political meaning, or between human beings, religions, and nations, and my book borrows the broader concept of conflict, quoting politics, armed conflict as the premise of this theory. “At the same time, I think translation and interpretation are part of the war apparatus, and translators will play a role in conflicts manipulated by militants or the sponsors of the peace movement, including all groups.” [2] Mona Becker put forward: how to choose the text to be translated? Who was involved in the translation? Who do they serve? How does translation function? In addition, she also paid attention to how powerful the political groups with strong financial support interfere translation, and how various peace activity groups make use of translation. There are a number of questions about the use of translation by international humanitarian organizations without funding and without access to mainstream media. She explains why translation and conflict are studied from the perspective of narrative theory: “in social organizations at all levels, narration is the initiation of conflict, the maintenance of

conflict, a very important tool for mediating conflicts and describing them.” (Briggs Charles, 1996, p. 3) Mona Becker stressed “what I have expressed in this book can be understood as a strong condemnation of the politics carried out by the United States, Britain and Israel in the so-called third World, especially in the Arab world.”[3]

3.2. *Post-Colonialism Translation Theory and Ideology in Translation*

Post-colonialism translation theory is a translation view which combines translation with the whole ideology for rational thinking. Its main theorists are Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha, Tejaswini Niranjana and Maria Tymoczko. All but Homi Baba are women.

Born in 1942 in Calcutta, Spivak was the first generation of Indian intellectuals to graduate from the University of Galegda and received a doctorate from the University of Iowa in the United States. She teaches at many universities in the United States, Europe and Asia and is a member of the editorial board of several magazines. She moved to the United States in 1963 and is now a professor at Columbia University School of Humanities. In 1993, she published the book “*Outside in the Teaching Machine*”, and elaborated on her post-colonial translation theory in the chapter “Politics of Translation”. She closely links translation studies with politics, insight into the invisible power struggle in translation and the reality of unequal dialogue, and corrects the bias of pure text studies in the first half of this century with her ideological and cultural and political criticism. “Spivak discussed the great role of translation in colonization and in spreading the ideology of colonial peoples,” [9] when translating from one language to another. Spivak said, “there is more about political transitions between languages, cultures, countries and states around the world, especially on ethnic and gender issues” [11] Different social environment can change the political effect of translation. Translation from the original to the third world language is often different political activities. As a female translation critic of the Third World immigrants in the United States, Spivak felt the aphasia in the discourse of the First World and observed the implicit political operation outside the translation of the text and the influence of colonialism on the colonial ideology. She has a deeper understanding and feeling of post-colonialism.

Another female translation theorist in post-colonial translation theory is Tejaswini Niranjana, a renowned scholar at the Indian Center for Cultural and Social Studies. In her monograph “*Siting Translation: History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context*”, Niranjana regards literary translation as a kind of dialogue. She pays close attention to the power politics of colonialism in the process of translation into English. The rewriting of the literary image of oriental literature illustrates the colonial consciousness imposed by the colonialists. Niranjana believes that translation, as a form of practice, exists in itself and is an unequal power relationship under the operation of colonialism. [8] She has sharply criticized a large number of translation studies that

tend to be westernized, clearly pointing out the three major mistakes caused by such studies: first, translation studies neglect the imbalance of rights in different languages; Secondly, many concepts existing in western translation theories are flawed; Thirdly, translation in the context of colonialism portrays the theory of colonial domination as a dialogue with western philosophy, and the humanism in translation deserves to be questioned. [9]

Niranjana explores the role of translation in the construction and deconstruction of European cultural centralism and imperialist cultural hegemony, emphasizing the cultural and political functions of translation. All these theoretical discussions on the relationship between translation, colonialism and decolonization practice show that translation is a cultural and political practice permeated with the atmosphere of the times and social relations. Therefore, from the perspective of post-colonial theory, translation activities are examined within the broad framework of international politics and culture, with emphasis on the power relationship and historical context implied in the translated text. It is a meaningful exchange between translation studies and other fields of humanities and social sciences, and it is also a time for the new subject of translation studies to gain theoretical depth and broad prospects for development. Become a true sense of interdisciplinary research opportunities.

Maria Tymoczko is a professor of comparative literature at the University of Massachusetts and a visiting professor at the University of Warwick. the Irish. She is also a translation theorist who links translation to politics. In 1999 she published “*Translation in a Postcolonial Context*”. The book constructs a complex dual theme based on extensive case studies of early Irish literary translation into English. She examines the translation practice carried out by the Irish in the struggle for independence and shows how translators express their resistance to British colonialism and cultural oppression through various ways in translating the Irish national literary heritage. This kind of cultural track and pioneering analysis of the first British colony is an important contribution to the study of post-colonialism, and also provides a reference model for the study of other cultures similar to colonial rule. Maria Tymoczko had her own unique views on translation and put forward a combination of macro and micro methods to reconcile the contradiction between the linguistic school and the cultural school. At the same time, the translator can adopt the microcosmic research method of the linguistic school and the macroscopic research method of the cultural school: from the macroscopic way, a whole cultural background is seen through the telescope; from the microscopic way, the linguistic factors are studied in detail by microscope.

Maria Tymoczko’s study of translation takes an open and pluralistic approach to the practice of translation in the struggle for independence of the Irish people. In translating the Irish national cultural heritage, translators expressed resistance to British colonialism and cultural oppression. Faithfulness is important in translation, but for some political

purpose, the flexibility of faithfulness can be mediated freely. Maria Tymoczko's study of the translation cases tells us that translation in the traditional sense is done through the free exchange of information, but in the context of post-colonialism, translation is carried out in the center of colonialism and imperialism, and the translation is not only a text, but also an action. The context of translation is as important as the text. [11]

4. A Unique Feminist Translation Theory of "Womanhandling" Translation Texts

The high female independence consciousness of western female translation theorists is not only a powerful spiritual force for them to enter the field of translation theory, but also an inexorable female impression for western translation theory.

4.1. Birth of Feminist Translation Theory

The development of feminist movement in the early 1960s promoted the development of feminism in western academic field. The ideological war initiated by intellectual women has spread to all fields of the superstructure of society. Translation, as a mode of thought and behavior, emerges as the times require under the background of feminist movement.

In 1981, Canadian feminists hosted a major conference entitled "Dialogue" at York University in Toronto. Two years later, another conference called "Women and Words" was held in Vancouver. Soon, an annual edition called "Tessera" appeared in the form of an existing journal. The publication of the magazine has opened up a new field of female translation studies in Canada, and a group of outstanding female translation theorists have emerged. They have published books with outstanding achievements, which have attracted many people to pay close attention to the study of Canadian feminist translation. The first to publish a monograph on translation is Susanne Harwood, a professor at the University of Concordia, Montreal, Canada. "The Body Bilingual: Translating as a Feminine Rewriting" was published in 1991. Five years later, in 1996, Sherry Simon, another professor at the University of Concordia, who published her feminist translation monograph "Gender in Translation: Cultural identity and the Politics of Transmission" in 1997. Luise von Flotow, professor at the University of Ottawa, published her academic monograph "Translation and Gender: Translating in the-Era of Feminism". The publication of their monographs established Canadian leading role in feminist translation studies and laid a theoretical foundation for Western feminist translation studies.

4.2. Resisting Patriarchy and Gender Discrimination and "Womanhandling" Translation Texts

French translator Gilles Menage wrote in a pun in 1654 that "unfaithful beauty" is a "beautiful and unfaithful

translation." In the preface to the translation of Horace's work by Thomas Durant, a 16th-century English translator, expressed his view of translation in a highly sarcastic tone: "It is like God order for the Israelites to treat beautiful female capturers— shave her hair, cut off their nails and make them the wives they expect is to remove all the symbols of beauty from them." [13] Durant had comments on translation and his attitude of placing translation and women in a low position reflect his extreme patriarchal thinking of discriminating against women, while Durant's concept of translation is only the tip of the iceberg of male society attitude towards translation. If we carefully review the source of translation for more than two thousand years, we will be surprised to find that the field of translation is full of various gender metaphors, such as comparing translation to "matchmaker" and "beautiful but unfaithful wife". In short, translation is placed in the same position as women, suppressed and enslaved.

Western female translation theorists believe that translation in this weak position is the result of a long period of patriarchal oppression. In the history of the West women were not allowed to write but allowed to translate. No wonder female translator Harwood complained, "I translate because I am a woman." [13] Women and translators are devalued to the same level, and the hierarchical authority of the original over reproduction is linked to masculine and feminine images, and the original is seen as a strong and productive man. The translation is a weak derivative of the female. We can see that the study of translation under the patriarchal centralism has transplanted the gender ethics of male and female superiority in social culture, so that the cross-cultural language activities of translation are also regarded as subordinate and derivative parts, thus being feminized and marginalized and share a destiny with a woman. Women and translation find the basis of similarities and analogies in the common historical circumstances, which lead to the possibility of the two combining each other. Therefore, Western feminist translation theorists shoulder the dual historical task of correcting their own name and translation. In translation, they want "womanhandling texts". "womanhandling", a new English word, has epoch-making significance, which symbolizes the right status of women on the stage of translation and manipulates the text from a female perspective. They boldly practice their theoretical purposes and creatively reshape the image of the female protagonist in the original work. Rewriting the feminine characteristics and behavior of women in different times tends to correct the narratives in the original works which are different from their value orientation. The translation strategy of "interventionist" is advocated in translation. Flotow proposes three translation methods for women: "supplementing", "hijacking" and "prefacing and footnoting". In their translations, hypertext forms, such as statements and theoretical statements, cooperation between writers and translators, through the establishment of a synchronic framework for dialogue, strengthen communication, so that the intention of the original text can be further extended and

expanded. Thus, the symbiosis between the original text and the translated works show the expansion of the influence of writers and translators on the same period of time. All these subversive womanhandling, foreshadowed that translation under the guidance of feminist thought became a way for women to fight for political rights.

4.3. Deconstruction of the Concept of Faithfulness in Translation by Manipulation of Gender Politics

Feminism regards language as a powerful tool of identity politics and translation as a means of cultural interference. In essence, feminist translation practice has become a political action aimed at creating a feminist cultural context. Susanne de Lotbiniere-Harwood, a woman translator, wrote a letter to Gaowen in France, saying: “my translation practice is a political act aimed at speaking for women. Therefore, my signature in translation indicates that every translation strategy used in this translation is to reproduce feminism in language.” [9].

“From a gender perspective, faithfulness sometimes defines the relationship between translation (female) and the source text, especially with the original author as male.” [9] Women must be faithful to men, translators must be faithful to authors, and translations must be “faithful” to the original text. Since the gender metaphor and the violent trace of patriarchal ideology are hidden behind “faithfulness”, deconstructing faithfulness and rewriting this millennium myth of translation has become the primary goal of feminist translation theorists. Feminist translation theory restates faithfulness, arguing that “faithfulness is neither to the author nor to the reader, but to a scheme in which both the author and the translator are involved” [13] Feminists believe that creative treason actually implies the concept of faithfulness in translation and redefines the boundaries of “faithfulness”, “creation” and “treason”, which completely subvert the traditional two-element opposition structure. Since faithfulness is the writing practice and textual interpretation of the faithful female self, creation is inevitable, and treason is true to the creation of feminist translators because it implies that it is different from the original text. Therefore, faithfulness, creativity and treason serve the feminist translator’s writing practice and therefore feminism is no longer silent in the field of translation. “They are happy with rereading and rewriting, and openly hold high their banner of manipulation of the text.” [7] Under this banner, female translators will no longer follow the original, obedient, but actively manipulate the original text. This paper attempts to recreate the text from the feminist perspective of faithfulness.

5. Conclusions

Throughout the history of western translation, in the field of translation studies, with men as the main force, the female translation scholars, with women’s high sense of self-reliance and sensitivity, who dare to challenge the traditional, demonstrate unique viewpoints in translation, have written a

great deal for the study of western translation theory, and have contributed greatly to the development of translation theory. Generally speaking, the history of western translation studies is divided into three stages: the traditional, modern and contemporary stages of translation studies, [10] during which the female translation theorists play a very important role. During the three stages, they have made their research achievements in the fields of linguistics, pragmatics, comparative literature and culturology to translation studies. It reveals that we should attach importance to the theory of relevant disciplines and open up new fields of translation research. Therefore, how to draw on the essence of western female translation theory, combining Chinese translation theory and translation practice, and create translation theory with Chinese characteristics? It is still an important goal which the Chinese translation scholars should make great efforts to.

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