

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Translation Style in Two English Versions of Lu Xun's *Gushi Xinbian* -- A Case Study of "Flight to the Moon"

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Abstract:

Of Lu Xun's third story collection, *Gushi Xinbian* (故事新编), there are only two translated English versions available today. This article compares the translation style of the two versions through a case study of "Flight to the Moon" in the collection. Our qualitative and quantitative analysis establishes that the Yangs' version is stylistically different from Lovell's. At lexical level, simple words thread through the Yangs' version, whose style is very close to that of the original. Lovell's version uses refined and polished words, producing a somewhat flowery style. At syntactic level, the Yangs' version stays close to Chinese sentence structures whilst Lovell's features a habitual use of addition, condensation, and reordering. At discursive level, the number of paragraph rearrangement is similar in both versions, but the type of paragraphs rearranged and the way they are rearranged are different. At cultural level, Yang and Yang show a penchant for using conservation strategies, while Lovell prefers to deploy substitution strategies when translating culture-specific items in the Chinese original. It is argued that the stylistic differences between the two versions can be ascribed primarily to the translator's professional habitus and to the target readers the translators aimed for.

Keywords: Lu Xun; "Flight to the Moon"; translation style; Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang; Julia Lovell

1. Introduction

Generally acknowledged as the 'father of modern Chinese literature', Lu Xun (1881-1936) is well known in the West primarily for his short fiction. Yet, in sharp contrast to most studied and translated stories in *Call To Arms* (Nahan 呐喊) and *Wandering* (Panghuang 彷徨), his third story collection *Old Tales Retold* (*Gushi Xinbian* 故事新编) has remained under-explored by researchers and translators.



This is reflected in part by the current availability of only two English versions of the collection itself and scant scholarly attention to the translations. These retold stories, characterized as “old legends in modern dress” by Chi-chen Wang (1941: xxv) and “retellings of ancient myths, legends, and historical incidents for satirical purposes” by William Lyell (1971: v), tend to be critically under-evaluated in the West. Some Chinese scholars, however, have argued for their reappraisal. Tang Tao notes that the collection “artistically broke fresh ground and raised some questions,” so it “justifies further analysis and research” (Tang, 1982: 696-697). Yan Jiayan observes that when writing these pieces Lu Xun adopted a modernist or more precisely an expressionist approach, rather than based on realism, by introducing contemporary details into myths, legends, and historical incidents. According to him, “such a contrast produces a humorous, dissociative effect” (Yan, 1996: 142). Gu Mingdong argues strongly that “the collection testifies eloquently to Lu Xun’s zeal for experimental writing. Its thematic, formal, and stylistic innovations have produced a form of fiction whose artistic effects and affects are not only modern but also modernist and postmodern” (Gu, 2014: 108).

The two translated English versions of the collection available to us are: *Old Tales Retold*, initially published by the Foreign Languages Press in 1961; *Old Stories Retold* included in *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China* published by Penguin Books in 2009. The former is the fruit of the cooperative efforts of Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, the husband-wife duo working for the state-funded Foreign Languages Press, while the latter is produced by British sinologist Julia Lovell. Lovell acknowledged benefiting from access to the Yangs’ version, and like the Yangs, she also rendered the stories into British English.¹ Meanwhile, she claimed to have translated in her own unique style without imitating the Yangs’ style (Wang, 2014: 7-10). In view of this translatorial statement, this article aims to investigate to what extent Lovell’s version is stylistically different from the Yangs’ and explore possible reasons for such differences.

The story selected for this case study is “Benyue” (奔月), whose title appears in the same way as “Flight to the Moon” in both versions. A retold Chinese legend itself, the story narrates the plight of Yi 羿, the legendary archer who once shot down nine suns from the skies and rescued humans from the catastrophe. The story goes like this: wild creatures on the earth were extinct thanks to his superb archery, and he had great difficulties obtaining proper food for his family. To address his wife’s complaints about having only fried-bean noodles with minced crow meat (乌鸦炸酱面) every day, he rode afar for game hunting. After giving an old woman compensation for shooting her hen by mistake and a narrow escape from his pupil Feng Meng’s assault, he was back home empty-handed, only to find that Chang’e had already flown to the moon after taking his elixir of immortality. Depicting a noble hero grappling with a changed world and his dilemma, the story is believed to echo the author’s “grief, indignation, and desolate state of mind” at the time of writing (Yan, 1996: 143). Hence, it has its contemporary relevance, though packaged as a legendary tale.

For a study on translation style, the notion of style is an essential concept in the analysis. Baker defines style as the literary translator’s “consistent use of specific strategies, including the use of prefaces or afterwords, footnotes, glossing in the body of the text, etc.” “Style ... is a matter of patterning: it involves describing preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic behavior” (Baker, 2000:

¹ Lovell, “Acknowledgements,” in *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China*, 2009, p. vii.



245). Based on Baker's definition, here is our working definition of translation style: the style of translation that is shown in recurring patterns of choices and decisions taken during the translation process, particularly the translator's consistent use of specific strategies at various levels.

Meanwhile, we find the concept of habitus useful to investigate the motivation for translation style. According to Bourdieu, "the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations ..." (Bourdieu, 1990: 53). These unconscious dispositions "are acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, via the internalization of external constraints and possibilities" (Wacquant, 2006: 267). Our exposure to social conditions and conditionings involves early family instruction, education, professional training, etc. While habitus is "structured" by the social forces that produce it, it is also "structuring" in that "it gives form and coherence to the various activities of an individual." Therefore, Bourdieu defines it as the "unchosen principle of all choices" (Wacquant, 2006: 268). Hence, habitus can help account for a translator's consistent use of specific strategies.

2. Analysis of Translation Style in the Two Versions

As mentioned above, there is scant scholarly attention given to *Gushi Xinbian* in English translation. We analyzed the translation style in the two English versions of "Benyue" by looking at the translators' consistent use of specific strategies at different levels. Lexical choices made by the Yangs and Lovell were compared to investigate the recurring stylistic patterns. At syntactic level, we examined structural adjustments including addition, condensation, and reordering. Paragraph rearrangement was the focus in examining discourse-level strategies. At cultural level, the translators' overall tendency to use strategies for culture-specific items was investigated.

2.1 Lexical level

In their interview with Yang Xianyi, Qian and Almborg commented that Lu Xun's fictional writings featured a simple and trenchant style, influenced largely by his penchant for classical Chinese. Specifically, he preferred to use simple Chinese characters with few syllables. Yang Xianyi replied, "When translating Lu Xun's works we tried to choose, among several synonyms, the simplest word. Our style is like this. But some translators may like to use big words with more syllables. Their style could be flowery" (Qian & Almborg, 2001: 21). On the other hand, Wang (2014: 11) notes that Lovell prefers to use big words when rendering Lu Xun's stories, "producing a somewhat flowery style." This is verified by our observation of the two versions in terms of lexical representation: while the Yangs' stays consistently close to Lu Xun's plain style, Lovell's leans toward using a refined idiom. Below are some examples to show this stylistic disparity.

(1) 只有羿呆呆地留在堂屋里，靠壁坐下。(Lu, 2016: 38)

Yangs: Left alone at a loss, Yi sat down with his back to the wall. (Lu, 2016: 39)

Lovell: Yi stood, stupidly, alone in the hall. Eventually, he slumped down against a wall. (Lu, 2009: 308)



(2) 他望见人家的灯火已在前面，一高兴便不再想下去了。(p. 56)

Yangs: Now to his joy he saw lights ahead and stopped worrying. (p. 57)

Lovell: He gazed at the lamplight from other houses, the euphoria of success overriding his anxiety. (p. 314)

In Example 1, Yi returns home from game hunting with only three crows and one shattered sparrow. Greatly disappointed, Chang'e complains furiously. In the Yangs' version, “坐下” is simply rendered as “sit down” while in Lovell's it is translated as “slump down,” which better brings out Yi's physical exhaustion and emotional distress.

In Example 2, the Yangs render “一高兴便不再想下去了” into two separate phrases containing plain words. In contrast, Lovell's rendering makes obvious her preferred use of big words and complex grammatical structure.

(3) 那时快，对面是弓如满月，箭似流星。嗖的一声，径向羿的咽喉飞过来。(p. 52)

Yangs: In a flash, his enemy's bow arched like a full moon and the arrow whistled through the air towards Yi's throat. (p. 53)

Lovell: The bow, distended like a full moon, released its missile towards Yi's throat. (p. 313)

In the above instance, “弓如满月” is translated using different verbs in the two versions. Lovell's use of “distended,” whose history dates back to the Latin verb *tendere* meaning “to stretch, extend, or spread,” gives her version a refined aura. Meanwhile, the Yangs translated the above into two short sentences starting with “bow” and “arrow” respectively, closely matching the Chinese structure. Lovell combined the two sentences into one starting with “bow,” thus altering the original structure. As will be shown below, her version features a consistent use of condensation and reordering while the Yangs also condensed the original sentences, but to a much lesser degree.

2.2 Syntactic level

After checking against the original Chinese, we found that the Yangs' version consistently keeps close to the original sentence structure and order, with only occasional minor changes, whereas consistent use of structural adjustments was observed in Lovell's. Some examples are given below, including addition, condensation, and reordering.

2.2.1 Addition

We found only four minor additions in the Yangs' version. Two additions are introductory words and the other two are “stepped forward to” and “as she went” apparently intended to make the actions of the characters more specific. There are, however, some twenty minor additions in Lovell's version, including intratextual glosses, connecting words or sentences, descriptions of action and further explanations. Below are two examples:

(4) 家将们听得马蹄声，早已迎了出来，都在宅门外垂着手直挺挺地站着。(p. 34)

Yangs: At the sound of hoofs, retainers had come out and were standing erect with their arms at their sides before the entrance. (p. 35)



Lovell: Straight-backed, arms hanging down at their sides, eyes cast to the ground, Yi's retainers stood outside ready to greet him, alerted by the approach of hooves. (p. 307)

(5) 这种情形, 弄倒久已习惯的了, 至少已有一年多。(p. 36)

Yangs: He had been used to this treatment for some time, for over a year at least. (p. 37)

Lovell: Yi was no stranger to such a reception -- things had been like this between them for at least a year now. (p. 308)

When translating Example 4, Lovell adds the description of retainers' drooping heads (see underlined) to depict their subservience. This echoes a similar description at the beginning of the story: “那马和它背上的主人同时垂了头” – “the horse, just like its rider, hung its head” (Lu, 2009: 307). Yet here Yi and his horse hung their heads because the hunt was not fruitful. In Example 5, Lovell inserts one sentence to help English readers capture the full meaning of “such a reception” – Chang'e treats her husband coldly because he fails to provide proper food.

2.2.2 Condensation

The use of condensation in the two versions differs not only in frequency but also in degree. We found several instances of condensation in the Yangs's version, yet most of them are minor omissions of phrases or short clauses in certain sentences. Again, this evinces their consistent attempt to stay as close as possible to the Chinese original. However, in Lovell's version we found 22 instances of condensation, half of which involve longer clauses or sentences. For example:

(6) 嫦娥将柳眉一扬, 忽然站起来, 风似的往外走, 嘴里咕噜着, “又是乌鸦的炸酱面, 又是乌鸦的炸酱面! 你去问问去, 谁家是一年到头只吃乌鸦肉的炸酱面的? 我真不知道是走了什么运, 竟嫁到这里来, 整年的就吃乌鸦的炸酱面!” (p. 36)

Yangs: Raising her willowy eyebrows, Chang E sprang up and swept from the room, grumbling as she went: “Noodles with crow sauce again! Noodles with crow sauce again! I'd like to know who else eats nothing but noodles with crow sauce from one year to the next? How ill-fated I was to marry you and eat noodles with crow sauce the whole year around!” (p. 37)

Lovell: Raising her exquisitely arched eyebrows, Chang'e stood up and flounced out of the room. ‘Crow, crow and more crow! With fried-bean noodles! Who else d'you know has to eat crow and fried-bean noodles every day, from one end of the year to the other? What did I do to deserve this?’ (p. 308)

Known for his verbal wit, Lu Xun combines two irrelevant things “乌鸦肉” (minced crow meat) and “炸酱面” (noodles with soybean paste) to create a queer food paste “乌鸦肉的炸酱面”. While “炸酱面” has been a popular Beijing specialty since the late Qing, crow meat is rarely regarded as suitable food except when sometimes used in traditional Chinese medicine. Owing to its black body and loud, unpleasant cry, the crow is seen by the Chinese as a symbol of misfortune. Consequently, the ingenious combination sets readers wondering why Yi and Chang'e are reduced to this state of affairs. In the above example, the term appears four times to emphasize Chang'e's garrulous complaint. The Yangs' version matches the original well by repeating the term four times. Lovell, however, renders “



乌鸦的炸酱面” in its first occurrence as “Crow, crow and more crow!” followed by “With fried-bean noodles!” That is, “crow” is purposefully repeated while “noodles” is not, presumably because Lovell sees crow as what Chang’e really hates. “吃乌鸦肉的炸酱面” is rendered cleverly as “to eat crow and fried-bean noodles.” In American English, “to eat crow” means “to admit that one was wrong or accept that one has been defeated.”² Hence, Lovell’s ingenious rendering suggests the deplorable state Yi is now reduced to. As for the term’s fourth occurrence in the speech, Lovell finds its repetition unacceptable to English readers and decides not to repeat it by rendering the sentence into “What did I do to deserve this?” By the way, “嘴里咕噜着” and “竟嫁到这里来” are omitted in Lovell’s version, which further evinces her penchant for condensation.

Lovell notes that one habit of Lu Xun that has given her regular pauses throughout the translation is “his frequent, deliberate use of repetition.” At times, she has judged that because of the gap between Chinese and English literary conventions, “to recreate a repetition precisely may strike the English reader as uncomfortable and inelegant.” Therefore, she has occasionally reworded the repetition.³ The above example apparently fits in with the cases she cites; she rewords and condenses the author’s deliberate use of repetition to meet English literary conventions.

Lovell’s inclination for condensation is also reflected in her habitual combination of sentences or clauses to make the translation more formal and compact. For example:

(7) 他忽然愤怒了。从愤怒里又发了杀机。(p. 60)

Yangs: Fury took possession of him. And in his fury he felt the urge to kill. (p. 61)

Lovell: He suddenly experienced a *murderous rage*. (p. 316)

In the above example, the two short Chinese sentences with the deliberately repeated use of “愤怒” (fury) are faithfully recreated in the Yangs’ version while in Lovell’s they are rolled into a slightly longer English sentence. Sure enough, her version reads more comfortably, but the author’s deliberate use of repetition is omitted. Consequently, the original force is diluted and the original style changed.

2.2.3 Reordering

We found in the Yangs’ version eight minor cases of reordering, most of which involve short introductory words and characters’ speech to facilitate reading. On the whole, the Yangs exercise caution when reordering original sentences. Rather, they try to faithfully reproduce Lu Xun’s style in the way the sentences are originally arranged. In Lovell’s version, however, at least thirty instances of reordering were found. Below is just one example:

(8) 暮霭笼罩了大宅，邻屋上都腾起浓黑的炊烟，已经是晚饭时候。家将们听得马蹄声，早已迎了出来，都在宅门外垂着手直挺挺地站着。[.....]他刚要跨进大门，低头看看挂在腰间的满壶的簇新的箭和网里的三匹乌老鸦和一匹射碎了的小麻雀，心里就非常踌躇。(p. 34)

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eat%20crow>

³ Lovell, “A note on the translation,” in *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China*, 2009, p. xlv.



Yangs: The great house was overhung with evening mist, while thick black smoke rose from the neighbours' chimneys. It was time for supper. At the sound of hoofs, retainers had come out and were standing erect with their arms at their sides before the entrance. [...] At the moment of crossing the threshold, he looked down at the quiverful of brand-new arrows at his waist and the three crows and one shattered sparrow in his bag, and his heart sank within him. (p. 35)

Lovell: The mansion was shrouded in evening mist, the thick black cooking smoke of dinnertime curling up from neighbours' chimneys. Straight-backed, arms hanging down at their sides, eyes cast to the ground, Yi's retainers stood outside ready to greet him, alerted by the approach of hooves. [...] Before he crossed the threshold, he hesitated, glancing down at the full quiver of the new arrows at his waist, and the three crows and tiny, shattered sparrow in his string bag. (p. 307)

It is not hard to see that while the Yangs' version strictly follows the original sentence order, in Lovell's version three clauses are relocated. “已经是晚饭时候” is condensed as “dinnertime” and then moved to the foregoing participle phrase to modify “cooking smoke”. “听得马蹄声” is relocated to the end of the sentence. Describing Yi's mental activities, “心里就非常踌躇” appears at the end of the Chinese original in accordance with Chinese literary conventions. In Lovell's version, however, it is moved to the beginning of the sentence, and the entire sentence reads more naturally. Despite the structural adjustments made by Lovell and the resultant stylistic change, her version reads more comfortably and ought to be more appealing to general English readers.

2.3 Discoursal level

We found that the rearrangement of paragraphs occurs eight and six times in Yangs' and Lovell's versions respectively. And the type of paragraphs rearranged and the manner they are rearranged are different. The Yangs invariably separate direct speech from the description of a character's thoughts and actions by putting the latter into a new paragraph, creating more paragraphs than in the Chinese original. Lovell tends to combine the introductory words ending with a dash with the direct speech that appears originally in a new paragraph. Two typical examples are analyzed below.

(9) “唉唉，这样的人，我就整年地只给她吃乌鸦的炸酱面……。”羿想着，觉得惭愧，两颊连耳根都热起来。(p. 42)

Yangs: “Ah, no! How can I feed a woman like this on nothing but noodles and crow sauce!”
Overcome by shame, Yi flushed up to his ears. (p. 43)

Lovell: ‘She deserves better than crow in fried-bean sauce.’ Yi's face flushed with the shame of it. (p. 310)

(10) 羿低了头，想着，往里面走，三个使女都惶惑地聚在堂前。他便很诧异，大声的问道
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“你们都在家么？姚家，太太一个人不是向来不去的么？”(p. 56)

Yangs: His head lowered in thought, Yi entered the house. The three maids were standing nervously in front of the hall. He cried out in amazement:



“What! All of you here? Your mistress never goes alone to the Yao family.” (p. 57)

Lovell: Yi went on into the house, head bowed, thinking through the possibilities. Inside, he was startled to discover the three maids gathered nervously in the hall. ‘What are you all doing here?’ he shouted at them. ‘The mistress never goes alone to the Yaos.’ (p. 315)

Where direct speech is closely followed by the description of a character’s thoughts and actions, the Yangs tend to relocate the latter to a new paragraph while Lovell generally makes no changes to the original structure. In cases where introductory words ending with a dash lead to direct speech that is put in a new paragraph, Lovell habitually combines introductory words with direct speech while the Yangs keep the original layout unchanged. To those accustomed to reading English novels, Lovell’s version reads more comfortably. In an attempt to figure out the possible reasons for the translator’s stylistic choices, we assume that Lovell, who is steeped in English literature, tends to translate in a way that conforms with English literary conventions, whereas Yang Xianyi, who plays a decisive role in the translation process, is disposed to translate in a way that conforms with Chinese literary conventions. As a result, the Yangs’ version is stylistically closer to the Chinese original while Lovell’s reads more smoothly.

2.4 Cultural level

In “Benyue” Lu Xun used many Chinese culture-specific items, including personal names, place names, units of measurement, dialect terms, idioms, sayings, allusions, etc. We find Aixelá’s taxonomy of translation strategies for culture-specific items (CSIs) useful for this study. CSIs refer to “those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text,” often “due to the nonexistence or to the different value (whether determined by ideology, usage, frequency, etc.) of the given item in the target language culture” (Aixelá, 1996: 57-58). Through analyzing relevant data of English originals and their Spanish translations, Aixelá identified 12 strategies that can be applied to CSIs in translation. They are put into two categories separated by the conservation or substitution of original references. Grouped in the category of conservation strategies are repetition, orthographic adaptation (incl. transcription and transliteration), linguistic (non-cultural) translation, extratextual gloss, and intratextual gloss. Substitution strategies include synonymy, limited universalization, absolute universalization, naturalization, attenuation, deletion, and autonomous creation. In real-life situations, these translation procedures are, as a rule, not used alone; rather they “can be combined - and in fact are often combined” (Aixelá, 1996: 60-64). Given the peculiarity of language pairs, some of these translation procedures, e.g., repetition and autonomous creation, do not apply to Chinese-English translation.

In an attempt to pin down the translator’s overall tendency to render Chinese culture-specific items in “Benyue,” a quantitative analysis was conducted based on all the items and their English renderings. In the story we found 45 CSIs, which can be categorized into five groups: personal names and titles, place names, units of measurement, object names and other items. Each CSI translation was carefully checked against the translation strategies defined by Aixelá before determining which strategy was used in that case. Our statistical data indicates that 10 translation procedures, including the use of two methods for a single item, were observed in the two versions. The original data are shown in the Appendix. Table 1 shows only the statistical results of CSI translation strategies listed in two



categories, i.e. cultural conservation and cultural substitution. The results were manually collected, sometimes assisted with Excel to re-verify the numbers.

Table 1. Translation Strategies of CSIs in “Benyue”

Cultural Conservation	The Yangs	Lovell	Cultural Substitution	The Yangs	Lovell
Trans	6	3	Nat	9	6
Trans +Extra	3	2	Abs Uni	9	15
Trans +Ling	1	1	Del	1	3
Ling	15	7	Del+Ling	/	3
Ling+Intra	/	3	Nat+Intra	/	1
			Att	1	1
Total	25	16	Total	20	29

Note: Transliteration - Trans; Linguistic (non-cultural) translation - Ling; Extratextual gloss - Extra; Intratextual gloss - Intra; Absolute universalization - Abs Uni; Naturalization – Nat; Deletion – Del; Attenuation – Att.

Table 1 shows the translator’s overall tendency in using cultural translation strategies. In the Yangs’ version, conservation strategies outnumber substitution ones with a ratio of 25:20. Of the four conservation procedures, linguistic (non-cultural) translation, which is roughly equivalent to literal translation, is most frequently used. Of the three substitution procedures, absolute universalization (roughly equivalent to free translation) and naturalization are mainly adopted. Since linguistic (non-cultural) translation (15 times) is employed almost twice that of absolute universalization or naturalization (9 times for both), we can say that the Yangs’ version features a fairly consistent use of cultural conservation strategies.

In Lovell’s version, substitution strategies are much more frequently deployed than conservation ones with a ratio of 29:16. Of the five substitution procedures, absolute universalization is most frequently used. And like the Yangs, she used linguistic (non-cultural) translation most often to preserve the cultural connotations of the Chinese items. The fact that absolute universalization (15 times) is employed twice that of linguistic (non-cultural) translation (7 times) further demonstrates that her version features a fairly consistent use of cultural substitution strategies. In addition, Lovell uses the intratextual gloss or endnote to provide English readers with background information; whereas the Yangs use a minimum number of footnotes (only two) and rarely insert short explanations into the text.

In summary, the Yangs’ version is stylistically different from Lovell’s. At lexical level, simple words thread through the Yangs’ version, a faithful reflection of the original. Lovell’s version tends to use elegant words, producing a somewhat flowery style. At syntactic level, the Yangs’ version stays close to the Chinese original while Lovell’s features habitual adjustments. At discursual level, the type of paragraphs rearranged and the way they are rearranged are different in the two versions. At cultural



level, the Yangs show a penchant for using conservation strategies, whereas Lovell prefers to employ substitution strategies when translating culture-specific items.

3. Conditioning Factors of the Stylistic Differences

A translator's style can be conditioned by a multiple of factors: socio-cultural, professional, personal, etc. This section discusses the key factors that might have contributed to shaping the distinct style of each version.

The disparate style of the two versions can arguably be ascribed primarily to the translator's professional habitus. The Yangs joined the Foreign Languages Press as full-time in-house translators in 1952. Their translations of Lu Xun's *Old Tales Retold* were completed in 1961 while working for the state translating institution. Through the 1950s and up until the 1970s, the FLP strictly implemented the intra-institutional policy of "keeping faithful to the original." The in-house translators had no alternative but to act in compliance if they wanted to stay employed (Ma & Ni, 2017: 147-150). Under such external constraints, Yang Xianyi, who had taken liberties with the Chinese original before working for the FLP⁴, opted for observing the institutional translation norms. Gladys Yang, however, acquired her professional habitus in British culture, where fluency is the dominant translation norm. Hence, she tried to rid herself of such institutional constraints and fight for greater liberty for translators. But since her role in the duo was confined to proofreading and polishing, it was, arguably, Yang Xianyi who had the final say on the translation. According to Simeoni, translators nearly always opt to go along with the existing norms, leading to "translatorial subservience" which is the defining feature of the translator's habitus (Simeoni, 1998: 7-8). It is observed that Mr Yang's translating habitus was characterized by submissiveness to the institutional translation norms during his FLP years (Wang, 2022: 145-146). Consequently, the Yangs' version stays close to the Chinese original with few instances of addition, condensation, alteration, and reordering.

Born and trained in England, Julia Lovell is a specialist in modern Chinese history with a general interest in modern Chinese literature. She works part-time as a translator when solicited by publishers or as opportunities arise. Wang and Wang observed that Lovell has a deep understanding of the power and the dynamics of the western literary field. As a result, her translating habitus involves conforming to western poetics and accommodating general English readers' reading habits. Hence, she strives for readability in translation. Meanwhile, her scholar's habitus predisposes her to pursue accuracy in translation (Wang and Wang, 2018: 77). The alleged pursuit of accuracy on the part of Lovell, however, is not really the case. After carefully comparing Lovell's translation against the Chinese original, a famed Lu Xun specialist concludes that her version, marred by inattention to the original style, inaccurate renderings, and simplifications of Lu Xun's thoughts and diction, is far from accurate (Kowallis, 2012: 201-210). We posit that Lovell's translating habitus features an attempt to strive for fluency and an elegant style, often at the expense of accuracy. Her professional habitus, we believe, was acquired through lasting exposure to the translation norm of fluency dominating Anglo-American

⁴ For instance, in their 1948 rendition of Liu E's *Laocan Youji* (老残游记), entitled *Mr. Derelict* (London: George Allen & Unwin), six chapters of the original twenty-chapter novel were truncated, on dubious textual grounds. See Lee, "Contemporary Chinese literature in translation: A review article," 1985, pp. 564-565.



culture. Nearly all her stylistic choices and translation strategies are derived from this translating habitus.

There are some other factors which also contribute to shaping the distinct style of each version. One factor deserving a brief discussion here is the target readership that the translator aimed for. Bonnie McDougall, who worked for the FLP in the early 1980s as a translator, said that it was difficult to know precisely who the readers of its publications were and gathered that a majority of the FLP's English-language readers were not native speakers of English (McDougall, 2011: 38-42). This is echoed by Gladys Yang, who complained that they translated for "faceless people," including not just native speakers of English but also those English-reading people in Asia and Africa (Henderson, 1980: 36). Kowallis (2012: 206) suggests that when translating Lu Xun's works, the Yangs had an international audience in mind, and that is why they strove for a plain style of English. It is worth noting that the mode of co-translation also shaped the Yangs' plain style. Mr Yang read the original Chinese and translated it orally into English while Gladys typed and polished the English together with him. This affected the degree of lexical complexity and sentence length in their translation, as oral texts often feature simple words and short sentences (Li, Zhang, & Liu, 2011: 163).

Initiated by Penguin Books, Lovell's translation targets educated general English readers in Britain, America, and Australia (Wang, 2014: 3). To attract her primary readers, she strived toward the goal of fluency, often at the cost of habitually contracting and reordering original sentences. Her use of refined words for Lu Xun's plain language also evinces the same pursuit. In an attempt to pave the way for general readers, she opted for substitution strategies when treating culture-specific items in the Chinese original.

4. Conclusion

The significance of this study lies in the fact that Lu Xun's third story collection in English translation has hitherto been under-researched. Our case study shows that although Lovell benefited greatly from access to the Yangs' version, her translation style is markedly different from the Yangs'. It thus verifies Lovell's claim that she translated Lu Xun's stories in her own style without trying to imitate the Yangs' style. With a new translation, she has rendered a great service to English readers today by making this lesser-known volume available in its entirety. Our study also suggests that a translation style is largely conditioned by the translator's professional habitus acquired through lasting exposure to social contexts. This can shed fresh light on translator studies relying on old concepts like "translator's view on translation", "translator's subjectivity" etc. Last but not least, we realize that translation style matters, not just because it helps distinguish one translator from another, but because different styles satisfy the needs of different readers. While the Yangs' version appeals mainly to those who want to study Lu Xun with the help of an English translation, Lovell's should be embraced by those who want to know about Chinese fiction, the particular society and culture depicted. Each translation, with its distinctive quality and style, has its pros and cons: the Yangs' version is more reliable but reads slightly stiff; Lovell's reads highly fluent but at times is less accurate.

Admittedly, the research methods used in this case study have some limitations. Firstly, the issue of sample representativeness, as only one story was chosen for analysis. Secondly, the manual counting method may not be very systematic. If more stories from the collection were examined and a corpus-



based approach adopted, the investigation of translation style and translator's style would be more complete.

Declarations and acknowledgment

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix: List of 45 culture-specific items (CSI) in English translation

CSI category	Original CSI	The Yangs' rendering	Translation procedure used	Lovell's rendering	Translation procedure used
Personal Names, Titles	羿	Yi <i>Footnote:</i> Yi or Hou Yi was a heroic archer in ancient Chinese legends.	Trans+Extra	Yi <i>Endnote:</i> A mythical archer, Yi was banished from heaven for killing nine of the sunbirds, whose mischief was bringing terrible drought to the earth. In the conventional telling of his legend, he heroically rids the mortal world of terrifying monsters and scourges. (p. 409)	Trans+Extra
	嫦娥	Chang E <i>Footnote:</i> A goddess in ancient Chinese mythology, supposed to be Yi's wife. She took some drug of immortality and flew to the moon to become a goddess there.	Trans+Extra	Chang'e <i>Endnote:</i> Chang'e (another fallen immortal), is left so long alone at home that, in boredom, she takes the elixirs of eternal life that Yi has begged from the Queen Mother of the West, and ascends to heaven alone. (p. 409)	Trans+Extra
	尧爷	good King Yao	Trans+Ling	King Yao	Trans+Ling
	逢蒙老爷	Lord Feng Meng <i>Footnote:</i> Yi's pupil and another good archer. This is a thrust at Gao Changhong, a young writer who was Lu Xun's pupil and later attacked him in his articles.	Trans+Extra	Feng Meng <i>Endnote:</i> Here, the reference to Feng Meng (an archer pupil of the legendary Yi) is a veiled stab at Gao Changhong, a former disciple of Lu Xun who began to criticize his conduct in the 1920s. (p. 409)	Trans+Extra
	老爷	sir	Nat	you	Abs Uni
	女乙	Nüyi	Trans	Maid Number Two	Del+Ling
	女庚	Nügeng	Trans	Maid Number Seven	Del+Ling
	女辛	Nüxin	Trans	Maid Number Eight	Del+Ling
	王升	Wang Sheng	Trans	Wang Sheng	Trans
	赵富	Zhao Fu	Trans	Zhao Fu	Trans
Units of Measurement	道士	the priest	Nat	the Daoist priest	Ling
	家将	retainer	Abs Uni	retainer	Abs Uni
	里	li	Trans	mile	Nat
	斤	catty	Ling	pound	Nat
Place Names	升	measure	Abs Uni	pint	Nat
	二更	the second watch	Ling	the second watch of the night	Ling
Place Names	月宫	the moon	Abs Uni	the moon palace	Ling
	堂前	hall	Abs Uni	hall	Abs Uni



Object Names	打牌 (麻将)	Play mah-jong	Ling	Play mahjong	Ling
	乌鸦炸酱面	noodles with crow sauce	Ling	crow fried-bean noodles	Ling
	白干	/	Del	liquor	Abs Uni
	一盘辣子鸡	a dish of chicken with paprika	Ling	fry that chicken with some chillies	Ling
	金丹	elixir	Nat	elixir of immortality / elixir of life	Nat+Intra
	炊饼	baked cake	Ling	wheat cake	Ling
	柳眉	willowy eyebrows	Ling	exquisitely arched eyebrows	Abs Uni
	长庚	the evening star	Abs Uni	Venus	Nat
	封豕长蛇	the giant boar and the huge python	Ling	the Great Boar and the Long Python	Ling
	彤弓、彤矢、卢弓、卢矢	vermilion bow and arrows, black bow and arrows	Ling	crimson bow and arrow (bestowed with the blessing of the emperor himself), black bow and arrow	Ling+Intra
Other Items	像捣米一样	like a pestle pounding rice	Ling	like a pestle pounding rice in a mortar	Ling+Intra
	“啮镞法”	skill in “biting the arrow”	Ling	art of arrow-biting	Ling
	射日	shoot the suns	Ling	shoot the nine suns out of the sky	Ling+Intra
	硬着头皮	put a bold face on things	Nat	steady the nerve	Nat
	心惊肉跳	a moment of panic	Abs Uni	heart began to pound	Ling
	心花怒放	his heart leaped with joy	Ling	his anger evaporated	Att
	鸦雀无声	Neither crow nor sparrow could be heard	Ling	Silence reigned	Abs Uni
	不差丝发	without a hair's breadth	Ling	/	Del
	枉长白大	No fool like an old fool.	Nat	You look old enough to know better.	Abs Uni
	引经据典	quote some adage	Ling	/	Del
	偷去的拳头打不死本人	You can't kill your boxing master with blows learned from him	Ling	Hopeless: trying to kill your teacher with his own tricks.	Nat
	以其人之道，反诸其人之身	pay you out in your own coin	Nat	enjoy a taste of your own medicine	Nat
	剪径	highway robbery	Ling	highway robber	Ling
	打了丧钟	Curse you	Att	Damn you to hell	Nat
	没出息	stoop so low	Nat	hopeless	Abs Uni
	头上淋了一盆冷水	as if doused with cold water	Ling	(sth.) hit him particularly hard	Abs Uni
	(眼光) 闪闪如岩下电	his eyes darting lightning	Ling	eyes flashing	Abs Uni

Note: Transliteration - Trans; Linguistic (non-cultural) translation - Ling; Extratextual gloss - Extra; Intratextual gloss - Intra; Absolute universalization - Abs Uni; Naturalization - Nat; Deletion - Del; Attenuation - Att.

