

## From Emphasizing on “the Beauty of Domestication” to the Dialectical and Unified Pursuit of “Cultural Facsimile”: A Summary of Zhili Sun’s Translation Theories

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### Abstract

Zhili Sun is a famous western literary translator and theorist in China. Having been engaged in the translation of Western literature for more than 40 years, he has launched high-level translated works of more than 6 million words for readers. In practical level, he combined Chinese traditional translation ideas with western translation ideas, and formed his own dialectical and unified translation view of comprehensively seeking “faith” around 1993 and expressed many unique opinions. This paper mainly introduces Mr. Sun’s translation career and his valuable translation experience.

### Keywords

Zhili Sun; Translation Theories; Domestication; Dialectical Unity.

### 1. An Explorer Practically Seeking the Truth: A Brief Account of Zhili Sun’s Life

Mr. Sun is a famous English and American literary translator and translation theorist in China. He was once a professor and doctoral supervisor of the College of Foreign Languages of PLA Foreign Language University. He began to do translation in 1979. So far, he has been writing for more than 40 years and has translated about 6 million words of western literary works, including the mainly published 13 classic translations, 5 another works and several teaching materials. He has launched many high-level translations for Chinese readers, and created great spiritual wealth (Xiu Chen, 2005). His main translations include six novels by Jane Austen, namely *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, and other works like *Wuthering Heights*, *Tess*, *Maggie: A Girl of Streets*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, etc. Mr. Sun not only paid attention to translation practice, but also paid attention to the research of translation theories, and wrote books to publish his many unique opinions. His works on translation studies mainly include: *1949-1966: An Introduction to the Translation of Chinese British and American Literature*, *Translation: Exploration of Theory and Practice*, *A New English Chinese Translation Course*, *The Translation of Chinese British and American Literature: 1949-2008* and *Advanced English Chinese Translation*.

#### 1.1. First Time to Dream of Translating

In *The Indissoluble Bond between Me and Austin*, Mr. Sun narrated that he began to study English in 1960 and first had his “translation dream” in 1963. In this year, Mr. Sun went to college, and entered his junior year to study for the English degree. One day, by chance, he got into the small bookstall in the school and started to read Jane Austen’s original English novel *Pride and Prejudice*. It was at this moment that he was immediately attracted by the fantastic stories in the book and kept reading it until the bookstall closed. On the way back, Mr. Sun secretly made a decision to learn English well and translate *Pride and Prejudice* so that all Chinese people can enjoy it more easily.

However, Mr. Sun said that at this time he knew little about Austin. It was till later did he learn that the slender woman who was unmarried all her life and died young was one of the greatest writer of Britain, even being considered the national treasure. In *The Indissoluble Bond between Me and Austin*, Mr. Sun commented about Austin's works. He said that some writers have many works, but the qualities are not so even, but Austin was not like them and her six novels are all carefully written classics, and *Pride and Prejudice* is actually a rare treasure in the literary world (Sun Zhili, 2017).

Mr. Sun really began to translate his works in 1979, the second year of Chinese Reform and Opening Up. And the first time he started to translate Austin's novel was in 1983. At first, it was smooth sailing. He published three versions of *Sense and Sensibility*, *Persuasion*, *Northanger Abbey*. But it was then difficult to declare of translating *Pride and Prejudice* in 1988. The reason was claimed to be that the translation work by the famous translator Keyi Wang had already been published as early as the 1950s. Luckily after Sun's expressing his determination to surpass Wang's translation to editor Li for three times, after these twists and turns, his version was finally approved.

## 1.2. The Birth of His First Translation

Mr. Sun believes that the birth of a translation is supposed to be hard and long and translators should not hastily start any translation work before making a thorough study of the original text, and even impossible to maintain the average speed of one translation a year like so many other writers(Chen Xiu, 2005). When translating *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Sun spent the first two months preparing and the last ten months translating. Hundreds of pages of the original work have been studied over and over for five or six times. He has also read the two notes made by experts and scholars for the book, the author's own diary, two other biographies written for the author, and a large number of literary comments (Chen Xiu, 2005). Due to such meticulous research work, Mr. Sun had a very thorough understanding of the original text, so as to ensure the quality of translation.

In addition to the pursuit of a precise understanding of the original text, Mr. Sun also attaches great importance to the expression of the translation and strives to achieve what Zhongshu Qian has said—*we can't make translations hard and far-fetched because of the differences in Chinese habits, but also completely preserve the flavor of the original work*. In order to make the translation more like "Chinese", Mr. Sun has also read Chinese traditional works for a long time, absorbed the essence of Chinese expression, and never missed a word when refining the translation (Xiu Chen, 2005). It is precisely because of such rigorous academic attitude that Mr. Sun's translation is faithful, accurate, vivid, and is loved by the majority of readers.

Mr. Sun's translation of *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1990. Nearly 20000 copies were printed for the first time and sold out in less than one month. In the following years, it was reprinted every two or three months on average. The version in Taiwan in 1993 was known as "deeply winning the essence of Austin". And in 1994, it was rated as a national excellent best seller. In 1998, Mr. Sun was honored as one of the three representatives in the translation industry by virtue of the translation of *Pride and Prejudice*. He was invited to the large-scale reading special program of CCTV (Zhili Sun, 2017).

Inspired by *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Sun made up his mind to translate all six Austin novels, but it was not easy. From 1993 to 2008, Mr. Sun began to lead postgraduates majoring in translation. During these ten years, while simultaneously bearing the extremely heavy teaching tasks for doctoral, master's and undergraduate students, undertaking the cumbersome teaching organization work, Mr. Sun squeezed out his spare time and translated Austin's two longest novels, *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* under such circumstance.(Zhili Sun, 2015)

### 1.3. Embark on the Road of Retranslation

Although Mr. Sun has translated all Austin's novels over these years, which has been widely recognized in the literary world, and several translations have won provincial, municipal and even national excellent-book awards, Mr. Sun is far from satisfied. He clearly realized that many of these translations were completed in the 1980s and 1990s, and there were some deficiencies of them in both knowledge structure and translation concept, Therefore, there will inevitably be misunderstandings and imprecise expressions in the translation. Later, during teaching translation majors in school, he became very interested in translation theory, which significantly improved his translation skills and translation ideas. And this made him be able to be keenly aware of his limitations and shortcomings in the past, so as to make the old translation to a new level through careful revision (Zhili Sun, 2017).

Since 2013, Mr. Sun has completely retired from his teaching position and began to revise more than ten of his famous British and American literary works. These ten famous British and American literary works include all six novels of Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy, *The Old Man and The Sea* and *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway. Mr. Sun has repeatedly retranslated six Austin novels, including *Pride and Prejudice*, his most frequently published translated book, was revised for eight times and the first three published books were revised five times each, and the last-translated *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* were revised three times each (Zhili Sun, 2015).

### 1.4. Practically Seeking the Truth: the Transformation of His Translation Ideas

Mr. Sun is a persistent translator who has been consciously practicing his own translation ideas. In the first decades of translation, Mr. Sun believed in China's traditional translation concepts, paying attention to "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance" "authentic original text and authentic translation" "giving full play to the advantages of the target language" and so on. At that time, many translation schools emerged in the translation world. Mr. Sun set a rule for himself: instead of simply following one school, he should "draw on the strengths of others and form his own characteristics". Mr. Sun began to appreciate Zhilin Bian's "follow suit" and Zuoliang Wang's "translate everything according to the original". Later, due to his main translation of novels, he paid more attention to Fu Yan's "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance", and explicitly took translators such as Bi Yang and Guruo Zhang as examples (Zhili Sun, 2020). After more than ten years of such translation, Mr. Sun gradually found that most of the excellent translations of the older generation had only sold well for 20 or 30 years, and then withdrew from the book market one after another. Although Mr. Sun's own translations were favored by readers, he also felt his slight tendency to deliberately seek elegance.

Since Mr. Sun served as a master's supervisor for translation studies in 1993, especially as a doctoral supervisor in 1998, Mr. Sun has been widely exposed to western translation theories which have gradually broadened his vision. After repeated investigation, he gradually realized that China's foreign literary translation between 1870 and 1970 basically followed a translation route of "focusing and serving myself". As a result, many translators lack due respect for the original works and often adopt the translation strategy of domestication, which virtually ignores the accurate transmission of the original meaning. In fact, "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance" is not a scientific concept, but a paradox. All translations should be "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance" even "faith" comes first and even the original text isn't "expressiveness" and "elegance". Isn't it not "faith"? Driven by "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance", many translators attach importance to "elegance" rather than "faithfulness" in translation practice, and like to copy the ready-made Chinese expressions which hinder the faithfulness and creativity of translation. Mr. Sun gradually realized the disadvantages of

China's traditional translation theory—the lack of due respect for the original works and deliberately pursued the “beauty of domestication”. (Zhili Sun, 2020)

During the decade from 1993 to 2005, Mr. Sun sought the “truth” from western translation theory with various problems encountered in translation practice and translation research. What had a great influence on Mr. Sun was the translation ideas of three scholars: first, Venuti's alienation translation view of respecting the “others” and differences; second is Benjamin's “pure language” translation view of blending and complementing means, and the third is Newmark's “endless translation” theory. With such translation concept as a reference, Mr. Sun has gradually formed a set of translation views that seek “faith” in an all-round way, that is, he should not only faithfully reproduce the ideological content of the original work, but also truthfully show the writing style and aesthetic effect of the original work, so as to make the translated work an “echo” of the original work. In order to achieve this goal, Mr. Sun set himself several principles: first, fully respect the original author; second, translate according to the original work as much as possible; third, regard “cultural facsimile” as the basic principle of cultural translation; fourth, regard fit as the highest level of literary translation (Zhili Sun, 2020). From 2006 to 2019, Mr. Sun had his own systematic view of translation, which was not only used in the translation of several later translated works, such as *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Old Man and the Sea* and *Walden lake*, but also revised more than a dozen old translations again and again with them as the motto (Zhili Sun, 2015).

Since Mr. Sun's thoughts and ideas changed around 1993, the dialectical view of translation after 1993 was widely known by the public and has aroused strong repercussions. The following will mainly introduce Mr. Sun's own comprehensive translation view of seeking “faith” gradually formed later.

## 2. Seeking “faithfulness” in An All-round Way – Zhili Sun's Four Translation Theories

Translation is different from writing. Writing can be done at one go without changing a word after finalization, but translation should not do so. If someone wants to make a thoroughly-understood translation, it must go through repeated and deliberated work. If you want to express accurately, you must consider the expressions twice. A good translator must strive for perfection, but translation is different from creation. Even if the author enjoys the freedom of originality, the translator does not have such freedom. They can only create twice with the original as the blueprint.

### 2.1. Fully Respect the Original Author

Nearly all Mr. Sun's 20 British and American literature translations are his favorite and respected works. Several of them are even regarded by Mr. Sun as perfect works that cannot be added, deleted or changed. It can be seen that Mr. Sun's basic attitude in translation is to fully respect the original author and strive to faithfully reproduce the artistic world created by the author.

To respect the original author, translators must first thoroughly understand the original work and make an accurate interpretation of it. In Mr. Sun's *Seeking Faithfulness in an All-round Way and Translating It According to the Original as Far as Possible*, he said that translators should try the best to clarify any uncertain or suspicious expressions. On the contrary, if we take translate casually instead of doing rigorous scientific interpretation, it would a violation to the ethics of translation and must not be eradicated (Zhili Sun, 2020). Making wrong or even absurd interpretation of the original work against the author's intention is an absolute mistake in translation, which can bring irreparable losses to the translation. If there are many mistranslations inside, it won't be called a good work, will even cause a “crisis of trust” among



readers. Therefore, the translator should primarily thoroughly understand the author's intention and strive to make an accurate interpretation of the intended object of the original work.

Then, how to make the translation style fully respectful to the original authors? At the beginning of the translation of British and American literature, Mr. Sun once agreed with the saying that the style of the translation should be the style of the original plus the translator's own characteristics. At that time, Mr. Sun not only agreed with this statement, but also tried to really apply it in practice. However, when translating Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* in 2011, Sun's translation style seems to be completely subordinate to Hemingway, thinking only about how to reproduce Hemingway's style, completely unaware of the existence of his own style. In other words, when doing translating, Mr. Sun buried himself as much as possible and translated according to the original work as much as possible, such as the following dialogue between the old man and the boy, "... How much did you suffer?" "Plenty," the old man said. The original language is extremely concise and simple. Guan Hai translated *plenty* as 一言难尽 in Chinese, but in fact, the image of the tough guys in Hemingway's works are "good at action and weaker than words" and idioms such as 一言难尽 obviously do not accord with the image of tough guys in Hemingway's works (Zhili Sun, 2020). Then in Mr. Sun's translation, he insisted on the author's style and translated as 可不少. It is precisely because of Mr. Sun's self-consciousness that he can respect Hemingway to the greatest extent and reproduce Hemingway's artistic style to the greatest extent, so that the translation has reached a new realm.

## 2.2. Try to Translate According to the Original as Much as Possible

In China, there is the "spirit-like" school represented by translators such as Lei Fu, Jiang Yang and Bi Yang, as well as the "form-seeking" school represented by Mr. Bian. However, Mr. Sun took both form and spirit into account and put forward the theory of the so-called "equilibrating spirit and form" which means that the translator should not have a preference between spirit similarity and shape similarity, but should adopt the principle of paying equal attention to both spirit and form to achieve "equilibrating spirit and form" as far as possible. This principle is undoubtedly much more challenging for translators (Zhili Sun, 1992).

"Everything translated according to the original" is an opinion put forward by Zuoliang Wang. He said that everything should be translated according to the original, with elegance and vulgarity, depth, tone and style. Mr. Sun agrees with Mr. Wang very much especially for the opinion of "following the original" that translators should faithfully convey the meaning and style of the original on the basis of a deep understanding of the author's intention, especially for the ideographic way, rhetorical devices and even syntactic structure of the original work to be translated according to the original work as much as possible, because translation produced in this way may be most faithful to the original work and show the style of the original work (Sun Zhili, 2020).

Professor Sun explained that in the contradiction between spirit similarity and form similarity, spirit similarity is first-rated and form similarity is the second position. Therefore, the understanding of words cannot stay on the surface, but must be considered in connection with a broader language scene, try the best to grasp the charm of the original text, and then make incisive interpretation with vivid and accurate language (Zhili Sun, 1992). At the same time, similarity in spirit and similarity in form are the unity of two opposites. We must not ignore similarity in form just because we are trying pay attention to similarity in spirit. The translator should not give consideration to one thing and lose the other. Instead, one should make a unified balance between spirit similarity and form similarity, and try to make the interpretation of "equilibrating spirit and form". The more "equilibrating spirit and form", the more it can fully

express the flavor of the original work. If one can't really balance both form and spirit, he can only retreat and settle for second best, so as to pass on its "spirit-likeness" and give up its "form".

### 2.3. "Cultural Facsimile" Is the Basic Principle of Cultural Translation

As a tool of cultural exchanges, translation cannot achieve the goal of "language facsimile", but it can require "cultural facsimile" which can be said to translate in a larger context. Sometimes, from the perspective of language equivalence, one translation method can be obtained, while from the perspective of cultural facsimile, another translation method may be obtained, which may be a higher level. Language and culture are an interdependent and inseparable entirety. Translators should not only pay close attention to language differences, but also to cultural differences. Language can be transformed or even domesticated, but cultural attributes should not be changed. We must convey them truthfully. In short, translation should put an end to the phenomenon of "cultural distortion" (Zhili Sun, 2015).

Based on this understanding, when revising his own translation, Mr. Sun always carefully looked for whether he has domesticated the concept of foreign culture into Chinese culture. The so-called "cultural distortion" means that the translator should not easily change the exotic flavor contained in the original text, especially avoid changing the foreign cultural characteristics into Chinese cultural characteristics. In a word, domestication can be used in language, but domestication should be avoided in culture, especially of the assimilation. "Cultural distortion" seems to be trivial, but it actually matters a lot. The translator should not be confused about it, especially in English-Chinese translation. (Sun Zhili, 2015)

In order to achieve "cultural facsimile", Mr. Sun proposed a translation strategy of "foreignization first and domestication second" (Xiu Chen, 2018). He believes that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the increasingly frequent international cultural exchanges and the continuous communication between people of all countries, there will be a further trend towards foreignization translation. The core of foreignization translation is to try to convey the "heterogeneous factors" of the original text. Specifically, it is to try to convey the exotic cultural characteristics of the original work and the author's abnormal writing techniques. The heterogeneous factors of transmitting the original text mainly include: convey the exotic cultural characteristics of the original work, not use words with obvious Chinese cultural characteristics as the means of interpretation, and avoid replacing "foreign flavor" with "Chinese flavor", resulting in "cultural distortion". The content and form in literature can't be separated. Content determines form, and form often plays a decisive role in expressing content; Conveying the author's abnormal writing techniques requires the translator to be able to keenly identify the variation or strange phenomenon of the original text, understand the aesthetic value contained therein, and try to express it in the corresponding target language form (Zhili Sun, 2002).

### 2.4. The Highest Realm of Literary Translation: Fit

The texture and potential of a language can be revealed not only through creation, but also through translation. Some scholars emphasize the harmonious coexistence of signifying modes between different languages, the translator's search and transmission of signifying modes, and the translator's attention to the interpretation of signifying modes, so as to strive to achieve a harmonious state of harmony.

Zhongshu Qian advocates that "converting" is the highest realm of literary translation. However, Mr. Sun believes that "convert" is difficult to grasp. He believes that "fit" is easier to understand and easier to be accepted by people. The so-called "fit" is to seek the blending and complementarity between the two languages. The matching words can be existing words in Chinese or newly created words. For example, Mrs. Clinton's biography *Living History* was translated into "亲历历史" by the Chinese translator. For another example, in the last paragraph

of the first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*, when summarizing Mrs. Bennett's personality characteristics, she said, "Her mind was less difficult to develop... (Jane Austin: *Pride and Prejudice*, Ch.1, V.I)" Mr. Sun commented that "mind" is a very difficult word to translate no matter in the past or nowadays. There is no appropriate translation can be found in English-Chinese dictionaries. Chinese translators basically adopted two translation methods of "头脑" and "性格", Mr. Sun translated it into "脑子" like Mr. Keyi Wang. However, the lady's mind is neither a "头脑" nor a "性格" problem. Until more than ten years ago, when he repeated the following sentence *When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous*, he had an idea and immediately translated the sentence into: "这位太太的心性就不那么难以捉摸了". Only then did he rejoice that he finally found a proper translation. (Zhili Sun, 2020)

### 3. Establishing a Dialectical and Unified View of Translation—the "Ten Relationships" of Literary Translation

In his article *Uphold Dialectics and Establish a Correct View of Translation* published in 1996, Mr. Sun proposed that the level of a translator's translation level depends not only on his literary quality and general artistic quality, but also on his view of translation (Zhili Sun, 1996). Mr. Sun believes that literary translation is full of various contradictions, including the contradiction between scientificity and artistry, the contradiction between maintaining "foreign flavor" and avoiding "foreign accent", the contradiction between "spirit similarity" and "form similarity", the contradiction between literal translation and free translation, the contradiction between "self-restraint" consciousness and "creation" consciousness, the contradiction between translator's style and author's style, the contradiction between being loyal to the author and readers, the contradiction between the whole and details, the contradiction between "domestication" and "alienation", the contradiction between gain and loss, etc. In these contradictions, the two sides of the contradictions are not only opposite, but also unified. Therefore, Mr. Sun believes that the core issue of translation theory is materialist dialectics. Once anyone deviates from dialectics and cannot look at problems in two, there will be deviations in theory and practice.

Mr. Sun uses the law of dialectic unity of contradictions, that is, the two sides of the contradiction are not only opposite, but also should be unified. He advocates that in dealing with the specific contradiction of specific things, we should avoid being one-sided, but grasp the main contradictions and the main aspects of the contradictions, and give consideration to the secondary contradiction and the secondary aspects of the contradiction. Mr. Sun adopted the policy of sublation and inclusiveness, looked at various contradictions in literary translation in two ways, and put forward the dialectical theory of literary translation. In 1996, he published his monograph *1949-1966: An Introduction to English and American Literary Translation in China*, in which he discussed the ten dialectical relations in literary translation. Three years later, he launched *Translation: Exploration of Theory and Practice*, which systematically sorted out his theoretical development track in the translation practice of British and American Literature in the past 20 years.

#### 3.1. Dialectical Unity of "Scientificity" and "Artistry"

There has always been a difference between scientific school and artistic school in translation circles at home and abroad. Qiusi Dong believes that translation is a kind of science, while Dun Mao pays attention to the artistry of translation, and puts forward the theory of "artistic creative translation", but he also points out that the translation of artistic creativity should be based on "strict scientific research" at the same time. Mr. Sun agrees with the contradictory view, which reveals the dual characteristics of translation. On the one hand, it is art, and on the other hand, it is scientific (Zhili Sun, 1996).

Mr. Sun believes that a translator should have a solid foundation in foreign languages and certain knowledge of linguistics, grammar, semantics, rhetoric, stylistics and logic. Otherwise, he will not be able to accurately and thoroughly understand the spirit of the original text, and there will be great blindness in translation. In addition, a translator should master the knowledge of contrastive linguistics and be familiar with the similarities and differences between the original language and the target language. Only in this way can he preserve the flavor of the original without revealing a “translation cavity” and make the translation loved by readers. Facts have proved that a translation that only pays attention to science and does not pay attention to art is not infectious. A translation that only emphasizes on art and does not pay attention to science is not “reproducing” the original, but distorting and betraying the original. Only by melting art and science into one furnace can it be regarded as a qualified translation (Zhili Sun, 1993).

Mr. Sun once said that our translators should fully understand the dual characteristics of translation. They should not be only one “science school” or one “art school”. Instead, they should integrate science and art and be a “scientific-art school”. In specific practice, we should not only seek “artistry” but ignore “scientificity” or “scientificity” but ignore “artistry”. We must “make overall plans”.

### **3.2. Dialectical Unity of Preserving “Foreign Flavor” and Avoiding “Foreign Accent”**

In Dun Mao’s words, the task of literary translation is to “convey the artistic conception of the original in another language, so that readers can get the same inspiration, movement and beauty when reading the translation as when reading the original. In short, the translation should fully preserve the “flavor” of the original. However, Mr. Sun believes that in view of the huge differences in morphology and syntax between Chinese and Western languages, in the process of conveying “foreign flavor”, the translator should always pay attention to overcoming the “foreign accent and foreign tune” that is not popular with Chinese readers, so that it doesn’t read like what is translated. Therefore, literary translation must take into account two aspects: one is to try to preserve “foreign flavor” and the other is to avoid “foreign accent”. The so-called preservation of “foreign flavor” is to faithfully convey the content and flavor of the original work. In particular, the concept of exotic in the original text should be transplanted as much as possible in translation to maintain the national color of the works (Zhili Sun, 1986).

### **3.3. Dialectical Unity of “Spirit Similarity” and “Form Similarity”**

“Spirit similarity” and “form similarity” are also two aspects of a contradictory unity. For how to master the scale of “spirit similarity” and “form similarity”, Lei Fu’s proposition of “emphasizing spirit similarity rather than form similarity” is the most impressive and influential. Mr. Sun believes that although Lei Fu’s proposition has played a certain role in promoting China’s literary translation, it is easy to mislead young translators by overemphasizing the opposition of contradictions and ignoring the unity of contradictions (Zhili Sun, 1992). When translating literary works, especially the works of famous experts, the content and form are an inseparable unity. A good translator should not only accurately convey the ideological content of the original text, but also try to translate the image language of the original text, and even reflect the beautiful form of the original text. The ideal translation should be “similar in spirit and form”, and that this goal can sometimes be achieved. Therefore, every translator should try his best to work towards this goal. If he can achieve “similar in spirit and form”, he should strive for it with all his strength and never miss the opportunity. For example, Zhilin Bian’s translation of *Hamlet* in the corresponding poetic style is a successful attempt to fully convey the charm and flavor of the original work by “preserving form and seeking similarity” (Zhili Sun, 1996).



### 3.4. Dialectical Unity of Literal Translation and Free Translation

Literal translation and free translation are the two most basic translation methods. They exist in the corresponding unity and are indispensable. Every translator should treat and apply these two translation methods dialectically. Generally speaking, the translation of “equilibrating of form and spirit” is usually the result of literal translation. Therefore, Mr. Sun believes that in the process of brewing expression, the translator should first try literal translation. If literal translation can express the meaning smoothly, he should adhere to literal translation. If literal translating can't fully express meaning, he can take certain compensation measures (Zhili Sun, 1996). The so-called literal translation method is not only to faithfully express the ideological content of the original text, but also to retain the language characteristics of the original text as much as possible. However, when literal translation does not work, the translator should also retreat from difficulties and adopt free translation, that is, he should no longer stick to the surface form of the original text, but focus on conveying the deep meaning of the original text. Literal translation and free translation exist objectively, not artificially.

However, for a long time, there has been a debate between “literal translation school” and “free translation school” in China. Those who advocate literal translation emphasize on preserving the language form of the original text as much as possible, while those who advocate free translation emphasize on using the expression form of the target language as much as possible. In fact, literal translation and free translation have their own strengths and weaknesses. Translators must learn to be flexible and try to translate literal translation when possible. Although free translation is necessary, the two can be used together, or even interleaved (Zhili Sun, 1993).

### 3.5. Dialectical Unity of “Self-Denial” Consciousness and “Creation” Consciousness

Mr. Sun believes that the translator should be faithful to the original as his own responsibility, and must not arbitrarily go against the author's intention and change the content and style of the original. The translator needs to make a comprehensive study of the original work, the author and his era, strive to integrate the spirit of the full text into the heart, and strive to reach a spiritual fit with the original author, so as to accurately express the divine flavor of the original work. Some translators, like Shu Lin and others, like “icing on the cake” in translation because they are driven by “inappropriate writing impulse”. Therefore, Zhongshu Qian warned “translators who can write” to have “self-restraint” (Zhili Sun, 1996).

Literary translation is indeed like dancing in shackles. Faced with various natural constraints between two cultures and two languages, translators should not only have enough “self-restraint”, but also give full play to their creativity in the use of language to convert the authentic original text into authentic translation. A good translator should master the kind of time Dun Mao said, “on the one hand, he reads foreign languages, on the other hand, he thinks and imagines in his own language”. Only in this way can our translation get rid of the constraints of the particularity of the grammar and vocabulary of the original text, so that the translation is not only a pure native language, but also faithfully conveys the content and style of the original work (Zhili Sun, 2000).

### 3.6. Dialectical Unity of “Translator's Style” and “Author's Style”

The success of a literary translation depends largely on whether it accurately reproduces the style of the original. However, literary translation is a recreation of art. When the translator expresses the content he understands in the target language, the translation often reflects the translator's own style due to the influence of the long-term thinking set and the habitual way of expression. On the one hand is the author's style; on the other hand is the translator's style. How to deal with the relationship between the two?

Mr. Sun agrees with Lao She, saying that if the translation cannot maintain the original style, at least the translation should be with the translator's own style, which has a literary flavor and makes people happy (Zhili Sun, 1996). The ideal translation method should be to use the literary language suitable for the style of the original work to reproduce the content and form of the original work accurately, so that the readers can get "inspiration, moving and beautiful feeling" like reading the original work. That is, the style of the translation should be organically combined with the style of the original text. The style of the translation should be both the style of the original work and the translator's own characteristics. Only such a translation can properly and incisively show the artistic charm of the original work.

### **3.7. Dialectical Unity of Loyalty to the Author and Readers**

Mr. Sun often mentioned that the translator's duty is to be faithful to the author and accurately convey the flavor of the original work (Zhili Sun, 2007). However, because the translation is for the target language readers, the translator naturally has the problem of adapting to the needs of the readers as much as possible on the premise of being loyal to the author. Literary translation should pay attention to social benefits. In view of the fact that the target audience of translators is contemporary readers, translators must fully understand their needs, their artistic hobbies and cultural cultivation, and then they can better serve them. It is based on this consideration that Mr. Sun believes that it is not suitable to translate British and American classical literature in classical Chinese today, but to adapt to the contemporary style of writing and translate in bright and fluent vernacular (Zhili Sun, 1996).

Due to the different social and historical backgrounds, customs and traditions of the two countries, as well as the huge differences between the two languages, the target language readers will encounter unexpected difficulties when reading the translation. Therefore, in order to facilitate the target language readers to fully understand the original work, the translator should do something that the original author has not done. For example, where the original text is really obscure and difficult to understand, the translator may wish to deal with it with a little "clarity", while for the difficulties caused by historical background, social customs and word games, the translator can make up for them by adding notes.

### **3.8. Dialectical Unity of "Whole" and "Details"**

Mr. Sun proposed that when translating literary works, translators should also deal with the relationship between the whole and the details (Zhili Sun, 1996). The so-called whole refers to the writer's creative intention and thoughts and emotions, the central idea, artistic conception, character image and writing style of the work, and the so-called details refer to the individual plot, individual words and sentences of the work. Every work is possessed with a central idea, and every detail forms an organic whole around this center. Therefore, before starting the translation, the translator should first obtain a "whole" concept of the work, and then carefully ponder every detail in the book under the guidance of this "whole" concept. In translation, only when every detail is integrated with the whole and can help reveal the whole, can the whole be fully set off. The whole commands the details, and the details serve the whole. While grasping the whole, the translator should not ignore the details, especially for the key details, he must carefully experience and carefully interpret them.

### **3.9. Dialectical Unity of "Domestication" and "Alienation"**

Mr. Sun said that in translating foreign literary works, we should convert "authentic original text" into "authentic translation". To put it more popularly, it is a process of "domestication" (Zhili Sun, 2003). However, there is a problem of discretion or degree with "domestication". In order to fully convey the "flavor" of the original text and promote the perfection of our language, we should allow moderate "alienation" with "domestication". Some translators like to apply the ready-made statement in Chinese, but after careful consideration, this ready-made statement

is not completely consistent with the original text in meaning. In this case, it is better to translate it from the original rather than trying to save trouble. If necessary and possible, we can even create new words. Of course, this creation must conform to the habits of Chinese.

### 3.10. Dialectical Unity of “Gain” and “Loss”

When translating foreign literary works, we always encounter with various obstacles, which are caused by both cultural differences and language differences. Sometimes, due to the great differences, translators even face insurmountable obstacles. In this case, it is often impossible to make a complete “equivalent” translation. Therefore, some translators believe that translation should be “equivalent” and can only be “vivid”.

Mr. Sun believes that translators should not ignore the objective existence of the phenomenon of gain and loss in translation, and strive to find the best “break point”. This “break point” may be slightly “lost” in some aspects, but it is the best choice to weigh it all (Zhili Sun, 1996).

## 4. Conclusion

In his more than 40 years of translation research career, Mr. Zhili Sun has become both a translation practitioner and a translation theorist. Seeking in practice, combining Chinese traditional translation concepts with western translation theories from one-sided emphasis on “the beauty of domestication” to dialectical and unified pursuit of “cultural facsimile”, he has formed a set of its own dialectical and unified translation view of comprehensively seeking “faith”. Mr. Sun deeply believes that “translation is a noble and truth-seeking profession” (Zhili Sun, 2007). He firmly believes in the sublimity of translation and is a persistent and obsessed pursuer. He has been engaged in translation all his life without complaint and regret, has always been conscientious and persistent, abides by his professional ethics as a translator, tirelessly improves his translation level, and has made his due contribution to the further brilliance of Chinese culture. And the valuable experience and experience summarized by Mr. Sun can also provide learning and reference for future generations.

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