

Problems with Perceptual and Cognitive Idiosyncrasies in Li Wenjun's Translation of the Benjy Section of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

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"Problems with Perceptual and Cognitive Idiosyncrasies in Li Wenjun's Translation of the Benjy Section of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*"

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Abstract: In his article "Problems with Perceptual and Cognitive Idiosyncrasies in Li Wenjun's Translation of the Benjy Section of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*," Aaron Lee Moore conducts a close explication of a 2014 English-Chinese edition of part of *The Sound and the Fury*. Li Wenjun's translation of the Benjy section of *The Sound and the Fury* is certainly admirable in its graceful rendering of Faulkner's complex, idiosyncratic prose style into accessible Chinese—and particularly laudable in its meticulous tracking of the a-chronological sequence of Benjy's stream of consciousness narrative. However, problems arise in the translation due to an overestimation of Benjy's perceptual and cognitive faculties.

Aaron L. MOORE

Problems with Perceptual and Cognitive Idiosyncrasies in Li Wenjun's Translation of the Benjy Section of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*

The Faulkner Craze (福克纳热) in China came about in the 90s and has continued with great vigor to the present day. Following the Cultural Revolution, a burst of interest and enthusiasm for Western literary works, particularly many previously neglected modernist classics, arose in the minds of Chinese scholars, who set to work translating and critiquing them. Perhaps due to its short length and relatively simple diction, syntax, and theme, "A Rose for Emily" emerged as the one work that would receive the most scholarly attention from Chinese critics by far (Zhu 76). In most of the world this short story still is the most frequently anthologized of Faulkner's work and historically has received the most critical attention. Of Faulkner's novels, *The Sound and the Fury* internationally has been translated into numerous different languages and has received the most critical attention. In all lists of the 100 greatest literary works *The Sound and the Fury* continues to rank among the greatest classics ever written. *The Sound and the Fury* is universally considered a masterpiece.

The Chinese case is certainly no exception. Li Wenjun undertook the first ever partial translation and piece of critical discussion on *The Sound and the Fury*, offering the first Chinese translation of the Quentin section along with very simple analysis in 《外国现代派作品选》 (*Foreign Modernist Works*) edited by Yuan Kejia (袁可嘉) and published in July, 1981. It is very interesting that Li Wenjun chose to first translate the second Quentin section of the novel instead of the first Benjy section. Both sections are notoriously difficult reads, especially when compared to the relatively straightforward narrative styles of the following third Jason section narrated in first-person stream of consciousness and fourth Dilsey section narrated from third-person limited point of view. Actually Noel Polk was originally in favor of rearranging the novel on account of the difficulty in understanding the Benjy section, so one can understand why Li Wenjun first translated the Quentin section instead of the Benjy section. Faulkner himself sought to alleviate some difficulty in reading the a-chronological Benjy section by indicating time shifts using differently colored ink. However, due to the great cost involved in printing such an edition, the idea never came to fruition. Indeed, owing to the difficulty there are approximately 200 time shifts (stream of consciousness narrative flashbacks or scene shifts) in the Quentin section and approximately 100 in the Benjy section (Cowan 10). The Benjy section in many ways is meant to be reread following the completion of the novel because for first-time readers, numerous portions only become significant once the reader can extrapolate what is going on exactly in the Benjy section, based on a reading of the following three sections. As a modernist stream of consciousness narrative sharing many similarities with Joyce's *Ulysses*, the Quentin section would have certainly been more palatable for Chinese readers than the Benjy section. Most people I encounter in the United States, even some literature professors, claim they can never get through *The Sound and the Fury* because of the difficulty of the Benjy section. The Quentin section, though still certainly difficult and puzzling, is more palatable for first-time readers of *The Sound and the Fury* because it is not too difficult to surmise and deduce what exactly is going on and why in the tortured mind of Quentin Compson. The Quentin section can stand alone better than the Benjy section.

Just three years following the publication of the Chinese translation of the Quentin section, Li Wenjun would publish the first Chinese translation of *The Sound and the Fury* in its entirety in April 1984. The preface to this edition constitutes the birth of the critical theoretical framework through which Chinese criticism on the novel has spread in subsequent decades. Li Wenjun's preface to *The Sound and the Fury* is largely based on his own impressions of the novel with little to no consideration of the critical conversation that took place in the English-speaking world. Some Chinese scholars have analyzed Li Wenjun's translations, and most tend to praise his works on account of their accuracy and faithfulness to the source material (Yu).

With regard to criticism on *The Sound and the Fury* in the English-speaking world and China, there is undoubtedly a great deal of "variation" that occurs with regards to critical focus on the novel (Cao). From my own perspective, the most obvious variation between Faulknerian critical trends in the English-speaking world and those in China is the broad tendency of Chinese critics to focus on issues of morality, and by extension, more specially, ethics. I have encountered several essays by Chinese critics that focus exclusively on morality (道德) in *The Sound and the Fury* (Zang; Hu). Hence, there is also a noted propensity for Chinese critics to focus on close character analysis in *The Sound and the Fury*. In my opinion, this variation in critical trends on Faulkner reflects, in some ways, the fundamental variation between the development of Western philosophy since classical times and the development of Chinese philosophy since classical times. Western philosophy traditionally focuses on metaphysics—investigating

being and consciousness; whereas, Chinese philosophy traditionally focuses almost exclusively on ethics. Modern English literary theory, on the whole, is largely informed by European continental philosophy, so this inclination toward metaphysics has certainly influenced modern literary theory in the English-speaking world. Chinese literary scholars also regularly utilize these modern literary theories in analyzing both Western and Eastern literature, but I think the propensity toward ethical concerns in literature is deeply rooted in Chinese philosophy, particularly in Confucianism which still exerts an undeniably profound influence on contemporary Chinese culture. Undoubtedly I am painting with a very broad stroke here; however, fundamentally I believe the explanation for this variation in critical focus is rooted in this historic philosophical gulf between East and West.

The Benjy section of *The Sound and the Fury* poses many difficulties for any translator in spite of its relatively simple diction and simple sentence structure. The narrative simplicity of form is entirely deliberate, meant to reflect the cognitive simplicity of the simpleton, Benjamin Compson. In an article published in 1982, critic Seiji Sasamoto carefully explicated the text in order to show how Faulkner took great care in limiting Benjy's vocabulary and grammatical structures. The neighboring Quentin section functions as a polar opposite by comparison with its intricate diction and complex sentence structure, meant to reflect the cognitive complexity of the highly intelligent Harvard student and brother to Benjy, Quentin Compson. Although Benjy's narrative section is simple in terms of its diction, particularly in its lack of sophisticated adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs, difficulties arise in the translation of the narrative due to its extremely unconventional prose style. The narrative is not only unconventional but also deliberately ungrammatical, as Faulkner once commented that "[Benjy] didn't know too much about grammar, he spoke only through his senses" ("Discussions" 22). Therefore, a translator must decide between faithfulness and grammatical correctness. Li Wenjun opted for grammatical correctness, mainly, I think, in the interest of clarity. As scholar Yu Xiaomei has previously asserted, Li Wenjun's translation of *The Sound and the Fury* was undertaken in accord with the theoretical translation precepts originally set forth by Yan Fu and later perfected by Liu Zhongde that qualify translation as aspiring to "faithfulness, expressiveness, and closeness to the original style" (62). Mainly in terms of diction, Li Wenjun's translation succeeds in adopting these three principles; however, when confronted with the notion of faithfully translating the ungrammatical—by Faulkner's own admission—prose of the Benjy section, Li seems to have opted for normalization rather than faithfulness. The question of translating a technically ungrammatical work of literature *ungrammatically* is a difficult one, and I would be interested to read see such a faithful rendering and curious how the Chinese readership would respond to such a translation.

Furthermore, in terms of the overall structure of the novel, as previous Faulkner scholars have often commented, *The Sound and the Fury* is a work of narrative fragmentation—a work not of unity but rather one *in search of* unity (Kartiganer 613). Previous Faulkner scholars have also observed that while the structure of the novel is fixed, the "central situation," as Olga Vickery pointed out (29), is left uncertain and forces the reader into interpretation (Burton 625). A translator is thus burdened with either providing his or her own interpretation in the interest of clarity or with attempting to mimic Faulkner's conscious literary ambiguity. As Michael Cowan points out, "One of the most fascinating and frustrating aspects of *The Sound and the Fury*, in fact, is its ultimate ambiguity. Like much of the greatest modern literature, it is a novel of implication rather than of explanation, of concrete dramatization rather than of abstract analysis (8). Generally, once again in the interest of clarity, Li Wenjun provides his interpretation for the reader in his translation. This chaos of narrative form is meant to reflect Benjy's perceptual chaos in which external phenomena interact with a passive subject incapable, for the most part, of grasping basic concepts of causality through which the universe operates even at the most rudimentary level. Most Faulkner critics have tended to view Benjy as a passive participant of reality—a relatively inert vessel of memory lacking the tools for most rudimentary modes of cognition, which somewhat ironically qualifies as the most reliable narrator of the novel (Parker 18). As Donald Kartiganer stated, "The Benjy section represents extreme objectivity, a condition impossible to the ordinary mind and far in excess of even the most naturalistic fiction" (620). Benjy is not even capable of understanding that fire can be a source of pain when it contacts his skin, which is why his sister Caddy must monitor him beside the woodstove.

But that is not to say that Benjy is wholly incapable of reason. There is in fact one instance in which Benjy's narrative employs the subordinating grammatical conjunction "because" which indicates at least one instance of Benjy's understanding of a very basic cause-effect relationship. This occurs with the scene in the Compson's barn in which the horse Fancy leans her head out over the stall door presumably, as Benjy supposes, due to hunger and in preparation of feeding: "Fancy held her head over the door, because T. P. hadn't fed her yet" (*Sound* 43). Benjy supposes that Fancy is in a condition of hunger that

causes the effect of the horse leaning out over the stall door. This simple yet crucial sentence is a rare exception in a narrative of perceptual chaos largely bereft of cause-effect reasoning.

In a few other rare instances of cause-effect reasoning on Benjy's part the conjunction "but" is utilized. For example, during the scene involving Caddy's wedding Benjy reasons, albeit incorrectly while inebriated, that he is unable to climb onto a box on account of the box jumping away: "I ran into the box. But when I tried to climb onto it it jumped away and hit me on the back of the head and my throat made a sound" (Faulkner, *Sound* 58-59). This sentence constitutes another rare instance of simple cause-effect reasoning. Throughout the bulk of the narrative Benjy appears to the reader as a passive participant in reality for the most part. The majority of the sentences describing his observations and actions are fused together neutrally with the frequent use of the conjunction "and" rather than "but," "because," "so," "then," or conjunctive adverbs that would indicate causal relationships. In Benjy's perceptual field objects and sentient forms appear and disappear with no understanding of the natural cause and effect processes through which objects and sentient forms interact. For example, in one scene Benjy's sister Caddy is feeding Benjy with a spoon, and Benjy describes the spoon as appearing and disappearing in front of his mouth. This is meant to signify that Benjy has no conception that Caddy's hand acts as the intermediary agent through which the spoon is propelled. To Benjy the spoon appears inexplicably like magic. Just as the force that moves a car seems like magic to someone without any understanding of the workings of an internal combustion engine. That is not to say he is confused by this spoon-hand cause-effect relation or struggles to grasp the concept, but rather that the concept does not even register in his cognitive spectrum. For the most part, Benjy may be characterized phenomenologically as perception and memory without cognition. A translator must take great care, just as Faulkner once took great care, to transmit this perceptual chaos and stunted cognition to the reader through highly unconventional sentence patterns and structure. Although there are many fine renderings of Faulkner's prose into Mandarin by the able translator Li Wenjun, some important shortcomings in his rendering of Benjy's perceptual field and cognitive idiosyncrasies need to be pointed out. First published in 1984, Li Wenjun's Mandarin translation is the most ubiquitous edition of *The Sound and the Fury* available today in China. The edition features the English text on the left side of each page with the Chinese translation on the right, along with extensive endnotes. These endnotes are particularly useful in indicating the frequent chronological shifts in the Benjy section.

The bulk of these phenomenological deficiencies in the Chinese translation occur in an apparent effort to standardize a word or phrase or sentence that in English would strike a native speaker of English as intentionally abnormal or unconventional. This analysis is by no means nit picking or splitting hairs, as the standardization of certain words in the translation could in effect overestimate Benjy's cognitive capabilities where in the English the unconventional diction serves to indicate either perceptual or cognitive idiosyncrasies. This deficiency in the translation is apparent in the very first sentence of Li Wenjun's translation:

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting.
透过栅栏，穿过攀绕的花枝的空当我看见他们打球。(Faulkner, *Sound* 9)

While the syntax of this opening line is rendered faithfully into Chinese, and generally Chinese syntax is the opposite of English syntax, a grave issue arises with the translation of "hitting" as "打球." "打" by itself may be translated simply as "to hit" or "to strike." "球" means "ball." These two characters when taken together can mean "to play ball" or "to play with a ball," and this is indeed the appropriate verb to use to describe someone playing golf, or basketball, tennis, ping pong, or any other sport involving a round ball. However, ironically it is precisely because this would be the appropriate verb to use in Chinese that makes this translation an imprecise rendering of the original. This opening English sentence of *The Sound and the Fury* is significant due to Faulkner's unconventional use of the verb "hitting." Something is missing from this sentence. The reader is immediately interrogated by the question *hitting what and with what?* On the whole, the Chinese rendering in Li Wenjun's translation is remarkable and excellent in its clarification of much of the ambiguities of the narrative, including extensive endnotes detailing chronological distortions, that make this section such a notoriously difficult read, and the translation should be lauded for making this novel more palatable for a broad readership. Undoubtedly Li must have studied the extensive amount of previous scholarship devoted to the charting of chronological shifts in the Benjy section (Parker). However, the question that arises here should be what is the character Benjy narrating that he perceives? It is not relevant that the reader is aware of the phenomena Benjy perceives but rather the onus should be on *the way* Benjy perceives phenomena. Why is "ball" absent from the entire opening paragraph? Let us suppose that from a distance a golf ball

may not be visible either because it's seen from too far away or because it's hidden in a tuft of grass. What then would one actually perceive looking onward at some folks playing golf? One would only see the motion of the golfers' swinging arms and clubs hitting—initially following the stroke the ball moves at too great a velocity to be visible to the naked eye. Most human beings would make the automatic and reflexive supposition based on experience that these folks are hitting golf balls regardless of the absence of actually perceiving the golf ball through the sense of sight. But someone like Benjy is largely incapable of making these sorts of basic instinctive cognitive suppositions and is only left with what is actually perceived; hence, the absence of a ball amounts only to "hitting" and nothing more in view of people swinging golf clubs. Benjy would even have no conception that the golf club is the means of propulsion through which a golf ball flies through the air. Perceptually, Benjy's world is a symphony of uncoordinated parts. The Chinese translation is inadequate because of the presence of "球" for "ball" in that it presupposes that Benjy could suppose the presence of a ball in spite of its absence in his field of vision. The robust phenomenological implications relating to Benjy's consciousness have been completely lost in translation. In spite of how strange the sentence comes across in Chinese lacking "球," one must consider that the sentence is intentionally nonstandard in English, and so "球" could be excised just as well. Instead of "打球" "hitting" may be rendered more faithfully in the Chinese gerund form as simply "打着."

This is not the only instance in which Li Wenjun fills in a blank that might more faithfully be left blank, although in his defense he certainly aids the reader in making the narrative easier to understand yet at the expense of an accurate depiction of Benjy. In one paragraph, Benjy describes Luster throwing something at a bird perching on the golf flagpole: "It [the flag] was red, flapping on the pasture. Then there was a bird slanting and tilting on it. Luster threw. The flag flapped on the bright grass and the trees. I held to the fence (Faulkner, *Sound* 10)." Once again a direct object is missing following the verb "threw." The reader is left with the question *threw what?* A rock? A clump dirt? A stick? And once again Li Wenjun fills in the blank with his own supposition—in this case, a clump of dirt: "小旗红红的, 在草地上呼呼地飘着。这时有一只小鸟斜飞下来停歇在上面。勒斯特扔了块土过去。小旗在耀眼的绿草和树木间漂荡。我紧紧地贴着栅栏。" (10).

For the Chinese reader Li Wenjun offers clarification; however, clarification is certainly not the point of this novel. The point lies in the failures and deficiencies in communication even on the most fundamental level. Numerous critics have previously commented that one of the main themes of this modernist novel is the impossibility of ideal communication (Kuminova 41). *The Sound and the Fury*, by the author's own admission, is a splendid failure. The fact "Luster threw" lacks a direct object indicates both a perceptual and cognitive failure on Benjy's part. He is not aware of what Luster threw and lacks the faculties to posit what he threw.

The opening paragraph of the novel, and the structural idiosyncrasies of the Benjy section are crucial to the reader's understanding of Benjy. Although Li Wenjun's translation is quite masterful in acclimating the reader to a very difficult story told in a very difficult way by frequently clarifying pronoun antecedents and employing extensive endnotes indicating time shifts in the Benjy section, the crucial point the narrative has to make lies in the way in which the story is told rather than the story itself. Case in point: this same scene, narrated by Benjy, portraying a group of people playing golf is again narrated in the fourth section of the novel, this time by a third-person omniscient narrator: "They watched the foursome play onto the green and out, and move to the tee and drive. Ben watched, whimpering, slobbering. When the foursome went on he followed along the fence, bobbing and moaning. One said, 'Here, Caddy. Bring the bag'" (Faulkner, *Sound* 424).

These two virtually identical events in the novel are narrated in two very different ways. Instead of Benjy's simple, nonstandard "hitting" lacking a grammatical direct object, we have the more sophisticated and standard "play onto the green and out, and move to the tee and drive." Faulkner is not being redundant in including this similar scene once again, but rather providing us with a subtle juxtaposition of narrative forms that speak profoundly to Benjy's cognitive deficiencies and idiosyncrasies. This passage Li Wenjun quite appropriately translates utilizing "打球":

They watched the foursome play onto the green and out, and move to the tee and drive.

他们瞧着那四个打球的把球打到小草坪上, 打进小洞, 接着走到开球处重新开球。(Faulkner, *Sound* 424)

There are in fact several instances in the translation that overestimate Benjy's cognitive capabilities by standardized the Chinese, almost like the translator fills in blanks that should be left blank. There are other instances in which verbs lacking direct object nouns in English are supplied with direct object

nouns in Chinese. In fact, with the third sentence of the Benjy section one encounters the same problem in the translation of "hunting" as with the translation of "hitting." In the sentence "Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree" the reader is immediately struck by something lacking as well with the verb "hunting." We ask *hunting for what?* Objectively the reader eventually may suppose, upon reading further ahead and acquiring new information that Luster is hunting for a golf ball. Thankfully the Chinese translation does not go this far in spoiling the narrative and translates "hunting" as "找东西" meaning "searching/looking/hunting for something." However, what about subjectively, that is, what does Benjy actually perceive and relate to the reader? Benjy sees that Luster's body is in a different sort of stance from normal, perhaps crouched over and fishing about with his hands, and this indicates "hunting," but what would be lacking from Benjy's understanding is the *for something* causal connection. Benjy perceives the peculiarity in Luster's action but would have no clue what Luster would be searching for; hence, "找东西" overestimates Benjy's cognitive faculties and perhaps simply the gerund form "找着" would be more precise.

Problems also arise in the translation of the Benjy section with respect to Faulkner's idiosyncratic use of prepositions. These idiosyncratic usages would appear to be incorrect to a native English speaker, but this is indeed entirely deliberate and entirely the point with Faulkner's portrayal of Benjy. Through Faulkner's employing prepositions in nonstandard ways, the narrative expresses to the reader that Benjy is unable to discern spatial relations. William J. Sowders notes, "For him [Benjy] vision was monocular, figure detached from ground. In this two-dimensional world, images floated vaguely in front of things, having no 'real place' in the world" (11). To Benjy, trees are actually *on* sky rather than beneath it: "The trees were black on the sky," and instead of someone walking beneath the backdrop of a full moon that person actually walks *into* the moon: "I went around the kitchen, where the moon was. Dan came scuffling along, into the moon" (Faulkner, *Sound* 67). The first instance of this occurs in the fourth paragraph of the novel where Benjy describes the flapping flagpole on the golf course: "I went back along the fence to where the flag was. It flapped on the bright grass and the trees" (10).

The reader is immediately struck by something odd here. There is nothing nonstandard about the prepositional phrase "on the bright grass" in referent to a flagpole, but a flag flapping on "the trees" is an idiosyncratic depiction. Actually we may suppose that the flag is flapping *in front of* the trees, but Benjy lacks an understanding of spatial relations, thus in his mind the flag really is flapping on the trees. Benjy does not understand that these trees are in the background of his field of vision. To be fair, nonstandard usage of prepositions becomes problematic to convey in Chinese, as often the pronoun "在," for example, may function as either "on" or "in" depending on the context. Li Wenjun translates this line as follows: "我顺着栅栏走回到小旗附近去。小旗在耀眼的绿草和树木间漂荡。(Faulkner, *Sound* 10)". In this case Li Wenjun has standardized the former sentence to read as "the flagpole flapped **among** the bright grass and trees" in using the 在 + noun + 间 grammatical construction. The idiosyncratic notion of the flag flapping *on* the trees has been lost.

A similar situation occurs in the translation concerning Caddy appearing in front of Benjy in a doorway:

She went away. There wasn't anything in the door. Then Caddy was in it.

她走开去了。门洞子里空空的，什么也没有。接着，凯蒂出现了。(Faulkner, *Sound* 64)

The use of "door" instead of "doorway" is entirely deliberate because Benjy's mind has difficulty differentiating the functional difference between an open door and a closed door. Both simply register as door. The Chinese translation thankfully does not include "doorway," but it does entail the notion of the door's empty space: "门洞子空空的." However, instead of Caddy being in the door with "Then Caddy was in it" we have essentially "Then Caddy appeared" "接着，凯蒂出现了." This translation ignores the perceptual muddling in Benjy's mind implicated by Faulkner's use of the nonstandard "in a door" rather than in front of the door, behind the door, or even in the doorway.

There are numerous instances in the Chinese translation, which through standardizing the source text overestimate Benjy's understanding of causality. Some critics have commented on Benjy's incapacity to understand causality except in rare circumstances (Sellevold 74; Moore 82). In several cases, Benjy's muddled perception of light and darkness and the source of these phenomena fail to come across appropriately in translation. This generally occurs in the narrative with Faulkner's nonstandard use of the word "black." For example, "There was a fire in the house, rising and falling, with Roskus sitting black against it" (Faulkner, *Sound* 46).

In this case, "black" functions as an adverb modifying "sitting." Benjy misconstrues Roskus' shadow as a part of Roskus, lacking the understanding that the light of the fire creates his shadow. This does not come across in translation: "屋子里有堆火, 火头一会儿高一会儿低, 罗斯库司坐在火前, 像一团黑影。" (46). In the Chinese translation Benjy describes Roskus sitting in front of the fire "坐在火前" *seeming* or appearing "像" like a shadow. This not only implies Benjy's understanding of the spatial relation between Roskus and the fire but also of the cause-effect relation between fire and shadow.

Benjy's lack of understanding of fire, its source and effect, is made abundantly clear in his narrative; however, in the Chinese translation Benjy's understanding is overestimated. For example, when Benjy describes the Black servant T. P. fueling the fire with more wood: "There was a fire in it and T. P. squatting in his shirt tail in front of it, chunking it into a blaze" (Faulkner, *Sound* 42). To Benjy, T. P. rouses the fire into a blaze like a magician because Benjy is not aware of the effect that dry wood has on a fire in increasing its flames. In the source English text the pronoun "it" refers to the fire; however, in the Chinese translation it would appear Benjy has a fully developed understanding of the cause-effect relationship between wood and fire: "屋子里生着火, T.P.正蹲在火前, 衬衫后摆露在外面, 他把一块块木柴添进火里, 让火饶旺。" (42). The latter portion of the Chinese translation of this sentence describes T.P. taking a piece of firewood, "木柴," feeding the flame, and making the fire flame up, "让火饶旺." Although this is, we must suppose, what is happening in the scene it is not what Benjy describes he is witnessing. Faulkner quite deliberately avoided any mention of wood in this sentence instead relying on the irregular verb "chunk" to make it seem to Benjy like T. P. fueled the flames of the fire as if by magic. This is a serious error in the Chinese translation.

Benjy's position in the world is also unknown to him as a passive subject. When people carry him around he fails to perceive that he is the one moving, but instead perceives that everything else is moving. Thus, scenery is often described as coming in and out of existence. In fact, most people can relate to this sensation in which we falsely perceive the exterior world is in motion rather than ourselves. For example, if one looks out the window of a subway car and the neighboring train is in motion that person might falsely think he or she is in motion when in actuality it is the neighboring train in motion. Such is the case with Benjy when he is being carried around, except the inverse is true—he is the one in motion but he is not having to move his muscles, so he senses everything else is in motion. This is why when Benjy is being carried by Dilsey up to his room he narrates, "The room went away" rather than "I left the room." The passage appears as follows: "'And tell Dilsey to come and take Benjamin up to bed.' Mother said. 'You a big boy.' Dilsey said. 'Caddy tired sleeping with you. Hush now, so you can go to sleep.' The room went away, but I didn't hush, and the room came back and Dilsey came and sat on the bed, looking at me" (Faulkner, *Sound* 64).

In fact, Benjy is carried from one room to another; however, he does not distinguish between the two and both are referred to as "the room." Instead of Benjy describing his position changing he describes the change of the exterior scenery. This passage is translated into Chinese as follows,

"在去迪尔西来, 让她带班吉明上床去睡觉。"母亲说。"你是一个大孩子了。"迪尔西说。凯蒂已经不爱跟你睡一张床了。好了, 别吵了。快点睡吧。"房间看不见了, 可是我没有停住哭喊, 接着房间又显现出来了, 迪尔西走回来坐在床边, 看着我。 (Faulkner, *Sound* 64)

In the translation the "the room went away" essentially in Chinese "房间看不见了" reads as "the room went out of sight." This would presuppose that Benjy understands the concept of line of sight. To Benjy the room simply goes away rather than goes out of sight. Benjy is incapable of espousing the existence of the room beyond his field of vision. This is an imperfect translation, but the translation of "the room came back" as "接着房间又显现出来了" is acceptable since this describes the room as simply reappearing "显现出来了" rather reappearing *in sight*.

The final sentence of the Benjy section is extremely significant because it signifies another rather almost clairvoyant instance of reasoning on Benjy's part: "Then the dark began to go in smooth, bright shapes, like it always does, even when Caddy says that I have been asleep" (106). Although Benjy may have little to no understanding of the physiology of his world he is still able to recognize patterns, which give him a sense of order and security. In fact this oxymoronic line of dark going in bright shapes foreshadows the ending of the novel in which Luster, driving the carriage to the left of the Confederate statue at the graveyard rather than to the right, painfully disrupts Benjy's sense of order pre-established by routine. "Even when" espouses a hypothetical conditional that is completely unprecedented in Benjy's

narrative. Perhaps intuitively, Benjy is able to hypothesize that even while he is asleep the dark still goes in smooth, bright shapes, as he puts it, as before. Li Wenjun's translation clarifies the ambiguity of the initial clause of the sentence while preserving its oxymoronic quality: “接着黑暗又跟每天晚上一样，像一团团滑溜、明光的東西那样退了开去” (Faulkner, *Sound* 106).

Although Benjy's obviously describing the darkness at nighttime before going to sleep, there is no mention of "night" or "nighttime," but in the Chinese this is spelled out with "每天晚上" meaning "every night." The rest of the above portion of the sentence is translated masterfully, preserving the oxymoronic notion of dark "黑暗" starting to go out "退了开去" like smooth, bright shapes "像一团团滑溜、明光的東西." Unfortunately, the crucial "even when" subordinate conjunction is not preserved in the Chinese. The final line is concluded as, "这时候凯蒂说我已经睡着了。" (Faulkner, *Sound* 106). The Chinese translation here indicates roughly "during this time Caddy says I've already been asleep." The significance of Benjy's unprecedented hypothetical of darkness in the world that continues to exist *even when* he's asleep has been lost in the translation.

The full effect of Benjy's cognitive deficiencies is diminished in Li Wenjun's Chinese translation of *The Sound and the Fury*. These variations in the Chinese translation of the Benjy section, however seemingly miniscule, undermine entirely an appropriate depiction of Benjy's cognitive faculties. Like pulling out a single card out from a house of cards, the entire structure crumbles once Benjy's cognitive faculties become overestimated in the translation. Although the reader may be given clarity as to what is going on in terms of what Benjy observes and experiences, this comes at the grave expense of accuracy in Benjy's portrayal. Thus the Benjy section of Li Wenjun's translation often functions more as cliff notes than as a faithful Chinese rendition of Faulkner's challenging prose. Yet in spite of its flaws, one must still laud Li Wenjun's attempt at making *The Sound and the Fury* as accessible as possible for a wide Chinese audience, and thankfully Li's edition features the unadulterated English, based on Noel Polk's corrected 1984 text edition, alongside the Chinese simplified characters.

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