China Question of Western Postcolonial Translation Theory

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Abstract: "China Question of Western Postcolonial Translation Theory" deals with how western postcolonial translation theory is read, interpreted and applied in China, as well as how the reception in China influences revision and development of the theory. Western postcolonial translation theory, though frequently quoted and highly influential in China, is sometimes incapable of effectively explaining Chinese translation practice and convincing Chinese readers. Based on the analysis of the encounter between postcolonial translation theory and China, three suggestions are proposed to revise translation theory so as to build a "greener," healthier hetero-generative ecology of languages and cultures.

Zhijie WU and Yuping WANG

China Question of Western Postcolonial Translation Theory

"The China Question of Critical Theory" was raised by Liu Kang to explore the transmutation, dislocation, and misunderstanding that have occurred when western theories came to China in modern times. The inquiries have aroused considerable interest in revealing the blind spots of western theories through the lens of China, as well as the Chinese modifications impacting these western theories in return. This approach attempts to conceive of China as "China of the World," not "China and the World," thus transcending the dichotomy of China versus the West (Liu, "Maoism"; Liu, "China Questions"; Liu, "Chinese Encounters" 97-108).

As part of the critical theory, "the China Question of Western Postcolonial Translation Theory" similarly deals with how the theory is read, interpreted and applied in China, as well as how the reception in China influences the revision and development of the theory. Western postcolonial translation theory, upon entering China, addressed Chinese translation practice, particularly the translation of western works in the social sciences and humanities. However, these western translation theories are not designed for Chinese problems, and cannot adequately deal with the content, method, mode and scope of Chinese translation practice. Western translation theories, especially western postcolonial translation theory, mainly discusses the translation between old colonial powers and former colonies, with little reference to China, which has never been a full-blown colony. In what follows, we attempt to offer an overview of Chinese reception and application of western postcolonial translation theory, probing into the strengths and shortcomings of the theory and tapping into possible revisions so that the theory might be applicable to situations like that of China.

Venuti's Postcolonial Translation Theory
Western translation theory is a rather novel discipline, first referred to as translation studies by Holmes (1972) in the seminal article "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies." But it has been developing rapidly, drawing on ideas from a wide variety of disciplines and fields, post-theories (post-structuralism, post-modernism, and post-colonialism) in particular. Translation has remained a battlefield of post-theories, with Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and many other celebrated theorists taking translation as their cue (though usually for viewpoints in fields other than translation theory). While Bhabha's concepts of "the third space" and "hybridity" and Spivak's "translatese-ness" are still mentioned from time to time in Chinese translation studies, it is post-colonial translation studies scholars such as Lawrence Venuti and André Lefevere who are most frequently discussed and quoted. As of June 29, 2020, according to www.cnki.net, the most influential Chinese academic database, there are 18,088 papers citing Lawrence Venuti and 5,841 papers citing André Lefevere, while the frequencies of citing Bhabha and Spivak are 1,143 and 1,307 respectively, with most of Bhabha and Spivak's citations in the field of cultural and literary studies rather than in translation studies. Therefore, we shall in this article confine ourselves to discussing postcolonial translation studies, with special reference to Lawrence Venuti and André Lefevere.

Post-colonialism, as an influential theoretical approach, is generally concerned with the lasting impact of colonization upon the formerly colonized and even the colonizers and, more broadly, the imbalance of power relations between the third world and the first world. Similarly, postcolonial translation theories deal with the imbalance of power relations between the former colonies and empires in or through translation.

Lawrence Venuti, as a highly cited author of postcolonial translation studies in China, is mainly concerned with the trade imbalance in translation between the hegemonic English language and other languages (but not including Chinese, probably due to his unfamiliarity with the language). He has noticed that British and American publishers travel annually to international book markets like the American Booksellers Convention and the Frankfurt Book Fair, "where they sell translation rights for many English-language books, including the global bestsellers, but rarely buy the rights to publish English-language translations of foreign books" (*Invisibility* 14). In this way, British and American publishers have "reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership, while producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign" (15).

Publishers do not work alone. They form "complicity" with translators, who rewrite and review foreign text according to such English-language values as fluency and transparency: "Under the regime of fluent translating, the translator works to make his or her work 'invisible,' producing the

illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems 'natural,' i.e., not translated" (5). Translators, as well as publishers, work together to produce cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are not only aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, but also "accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other" (15). The argument here sounds very much like Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which is "almost a European invention" (1) rather than the real Orient in the geographical sense. "The translator's invisibility is symptomatic of a complacency in Anglo-American relations with cultural others, a complacency that can be described – without too much exaggeration – as imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home" (Venuti, *Invisibility* 17).

Venuti's solution to the problem is "to make the translator more visible so as to resist and change the conditions under which translation is theorized and practiced today, especially in English-speaking countries" (17). Inspired by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Venuti has coined two terms, "domestication" and "foreignization." In "On the Different Methods of Translating," Schleiermacher put forward two choices for a true translator: "In my opinion, there are only two possibilities. Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him" (49).

The first option is Schleiermacher's preferred choice. It is also Venuti's. Whereas domesticating translation is "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values," foreignizing translation is "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text," "a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations" (Venuti, *Invisibility* 20). As a "highly desirable" translation method recommended by Venuti, foreignizing translation, also known as "minoritizing translation" in *The Scandals of Translation* (11), could be achieved by "a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others" (20). To be more specific, foreignizing translation could be realized "only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language," "deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience" (20), such as choosing to translate a foreign text excluded by domestic literary canons, or using a marginal discourse to translate it. Practically, Venuti advocates an interventionist translation strategy, using a hyper-corrective approach to translation and deviating from the hegemonic language norms, so much as to distort cultural others in disguised "exotic" and "alien" images.

Chinese Criticism and Reception of Venuti's Theory
As mentioned above, Venuti is highly-quoted in China, and has been cited 18,088 times in the Chinese academic database CNKI as of June 29, 2020. Ironically and also understandably, his translation theory has been used not in the way he has intended, but modified and revised in quite a few aspects.

First, Venuti's argument from fluency to invisibility sounds strange to Chinese academics, and is often overlooked, partly for the translator's visibility in Chinese history, and partly due to the obscure logic between fluency and invisibility. On the one hand, translation has occupied a rather important position in Chinese history. Since the Reform and Opening-Up in 1978, translations of western works have grown exponentially, yet the seriousness of translation as a job and the respect translators received have declined rapidly. In contrast, monk translators of Buddhist sutras were, in most cases, treated with respect and honor throughout Chinese history. Xuanzang (玄奘, 602-664), whose contribution as a great Buddhism translator was recognized by the emperor, became the "Imperial Brother" (御弟) and was canonized even in his lifetime. Another example showing translation's prestige in China was that Chinese scholars in modern history turned to translation for new ideas in science and technology to save China from foreign invaders (roughly from the 1860s to the 1920s, especially from 1860-1880), as well as for novel forms to create a spoken-language-based written system and new genres of literature (roughly from 1895 to the 1950s). In short, translation has played a pivotal role in the making of Chinese modernity and modern Chinese culture.

On the other hand, there is a logical disconnect from fluency to invisibility. Fluency is not the opposite of fidelity, although over-emphasis on fluency might distract a translator from his/her attention to fidelity. Absence of fluency, on the other hand, might raise an issue of intelligibility and understanding, and discourages readers instead of attracting them. Even if a translator succeeds in attracting readers' attention to the absence of fluency in translation, what effect might be produced? Such a translation might harm the reputation of the author, and undermine its function as a "decoy" (*méi* 媒) between cultures, as Qian Zhongshu (钱钟书), a celebrated Chinese writer, puts it. Lu Xun (鲁

迅), for example, was remembered as a writer rather than as a translator. Compared to the numerous readers of Lu Xun's creative writings, few people are willing to read his translated works, mainly because he recommended translators "take pains to bring [into the Chinese language] the alien syntax, be it from the past, from other provinces or places, or from a foreign land, and as such, turning them into the syntax repertoire of the Chinese language for later use" (陆续吃一点苦，装进异样的句法去，古的，外省外府的，外国的，后来便可以据为己有) ("Letters" 276). As a leading figure in the modern Chinese vernacular movement, Lu Xun wanted his translation "to import not just new content, but also novel forms of expression" (不但在输入新的内容，也在输入新的表现法) (276). He used "foreignizing" translation, but failed to attract and influence readers. As we can see, "foreignization" as a translation strategy, if overemphasized, might be an obstacle to instead of an attraction for readers, and is thus unable to bring in new elements for the target language.

Venuti might have realized this problem himself, as he acknowledges it as "a weird self-annihilation": "The translator's invisibility is thus a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status in Anglo-American culture" (Venuti, *Invisibility* 8). He attempts to make up for the argument by adding another reason, "the individualistic conception of authorship," for translators' invisibility:

> On the one hand, translation is defined as a second-order representation: only the foreign text can be original, an authentic copy, true to the author's personality or intention, whereas the translation is derivative, fake, potentially a false copy. On the other hand, translation is required to efface its second-order status with transparent discourse, producing the illusion of authorial presence whereby the translated text can be taken as the original (6-7).

The conception of authorship could be an issue in China, although the classic mainstream Confucian idea would suggest that we "interpret rather than create" (Confucius: 述而不作), with a preference for intra-lingual interpretation/translation of creative writing. Translation as an inferior and derivative genre has also been taken up as a research topic by feminist translation theorists, who see a parallel between the status of women and that of translation, both often repressed and overlooked in society and literature, and seek to "identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder" (Simon 1).

Second, the ethical sense of the binary terms "domestication" and "foreignization" has been lost in its application in China. The advocacy of foreignization over domestication has been a call for the respect of foreign languages and cultures at the ethical level, which is in turn designed into some translation strategies such as resistance at the practical level. Just as Venuti put it:

> The terms 'domestication' and 'foreignization' indicate fundamentally ethical attitudes towards a foreign text and culture, ethical effects produced by the choice of a text for translation and by the strategy devised to translate it, whereas the terms like 'fluency' and 'resistancy' indicate fundamentally discursive features of translation strategies in relation to the reader's cognitive processing (*Invisibility*: 19).

The two terms "domestication" and "foreignization," however, have lost their ethical connotations and become value-free in the Chinese context. Foreignization and domestication are often used as two neutral translation methods in the practical sense, with no obvious preference for one over the other. They are no longer related to resistance against ethnocentrism, racism, or imperialism. As Yao Wenqun and Jia Dian argue:

> Translation of many works faces a choice between foreignization and domestication…No matter which side to approach, a translator should always follow one single principle: When you approach the writer, don't leave the reader too far; When you approach the reader, don't leave the writer too far. In other words, application of foreignization should not be an obstacle to the fluency and intelligibility of the translation, while employment of domestication should not mean a loss of original flavors of the source text (30).

The underlying reason might be that postcolonial translation theory does not apply to the Chinese situation. China has not been fully colonized in modern history, fitting uneasily into the category of colony, and Venuti's postcolonial translation theory, designed to analyze the power relationship between colonized and colonizer, is not appropriate for China. As a long-standing civilization, Chinese culture has evolved as inclusive and resilient, capable of absorbing alien elements from diverse and heterogeneous sources. In the history of translation, China cherished Buddhism from India, and later reinvented Buddhism in a Chinese fashion. China even exported Chinese Buddhism back to India. Another example would be the Manchu ethnic group, a nomadic minority that conquered China in

1644 and established the Qing Empire which held power until 1911. Even as rulers, they accepted and adopted the language and culture of the Han ethnic majority. Consequently, the conquerors almost became fully assimilated by the conquered.

Thirdly, foreignization as a translation method has been designed to resist ethnocentrism, racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism on the one hand and to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text on the other hand, but in reality it is mainly concerned with disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language to stage an alien reading experience, failing to show due respect for cultural heterogeneity and diversity. The Chinese tend to think in a more or less moderate way, and usually from an eclectic perspective, and they find it hard to agree with Venuti about abusing the power as a translator to rewrite and distort cultural others, even in order to resist the hegemonic power of English. In an example given by Venuti, he takes advantage of "abusive" translation and flaunts his partiality, saying that "By adopting a strategy of resistancy to translate De Angelis's poem, I have been unfaithful to, and have in fact challenged, the dominant aesthetic in the target-language culture, i.e., Anglo-American culture" (291), and that "my English version still deviates from the Italian text in decisive ways that force a radical rethinking of fidelity in translation" (291).

What we see here is that one regime of translation violence is replaced by another regime of even greater violence, though claiming to be heading for an ethics of difference. Foreignization, a tendency to overstate the difference, is ethno-centric in itself. It is different from the Chinese assumption that foreignization is an ethical translating method which always respects cultural otherness. Creation of imagined exotic foreignness is as horrible a translation practice as, if not worse than, the assimilative domesticating translation. It also eliminates the real identity of cultural otherness by an imaginary alienness, a situation quite similar to what Spivak describes here: "In the act of wholesale translation into English there can be a betrayal of the democratic ideal into the law of the strongest. This happens when all the literature of the Third World gets translated into a sort of with-it translatese, so that the literature by a woman in Palestine begins to resemble, in the feel of its prose, something by a man in Taiwan" (182). This is an imaginary projection of cultural others, also a translation violence against cultural otherness, a tendency Venuti himself claims to guard against.

Even if we modify foreignization as a translation strategy to retain rather than magnify the foreign or alien elements of cultural others, we might still find it a tough and almost impossible job to apply this theoretical tool of foreignization to Chinese translation practice. As we know, Chinese scripts are ideograms, fundamentally different from the exclusively phonetic writing systems of other languages, making it difficult to use a foreignizing translation, such as borrowing words directly from other languages via transliteration. For example, science and democracy were translated as 德莫克拉西 (*de mo ke la xi*, a transliteration) and 赛因斯 (*sai yin si*, also a transliteration) by Chen Duxiu (陈独秀) the leading proponent of modern Chinese intellectual enlightenment in 1919. The two transliterations were not widely accepted, and were later replaced by 民主 (*min zhu*) and 科学 (*ke xue*), both readily understood, with the former adopted and revived from archaic Chinese by missionary translators and the latter newly coined by Japanese translators using native Chinese words (Shen, *Chinese Language Evolution* 258-267).

One fact worth mentioning is that China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia, and other neighboring countries form the cultural Sinosphere, members of which (used to) take Chinese as their (written) language. Among the most frequently used vocabulary, Chinese and Japanese share 65.2% in politics, 58.4% in popular science, and 43.5% in daily spoken language (Shen, *New Words Borrowed and Returned* 22). Korean and Vietnamese share more than 60% of their basic vocabulary with Chinese (Shu and Nguyen 42-50; Quan 56-61). A distinct feature in Chinese translation practice is that earlier western intellectual works were primarily translated via Japan and Russia. Since Japan has long been part of the cultural Sinosphere, using *kanji* (Chinese scripts) extensively to express its essential concepts, it is much easier for Chinese to accept western ideas through a Japanese intermediary, as if sifting grains and filtering cooking ingredients. Such a filtering/intermediary practice of translation is inevitably a domesticating translation, frowned upon by Venuti's postcolonialism translation theory.

Lefevere's Imagined Cultural Otherness of China
The exaggeration of cultural otherness in translation is misleading, resulting in a distorted, "exotic" other via translation. The "unfaithful," "deviating," "stranger," "abusive" translation Venuti flaunts in his own translation practice and theory is a typical example. Another case in point is the image of cultural otherness of China André Lefevere has created/distorted in an article entitled "Chinese and Western Thinking on Translation" (12-24). (His *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary*

Fame is also a highly quoted work of postcolonial translation studies in China. However, quite a large proportion of the quotations (1131/5841, or 19.36%) misused his cultural studies critique tool "rewriting" as a practical translation strategy, similar to what happened to Venuti's theory. In the article, Lefevere "move(s) away from the normative approach that has obstructed our view of translation for so long" and makes an attempt at "historicizing" Chinese and Western translation histories (12-24). However, although it has helped to attract some attention to the Chinese translation tradition, this pioneering research itself has some problems, such as incorrect key terms, wrong facts, overgeneralization, and overemphasizing the "Other" elements in China. For example, Lefevere has confused the two key concepts "wen" (文) and "zhi" (质): "Of course the first translations of the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese were done in what was referred to as a 'simple' style, or *wen* [sic], but mainly because the early Buddhist missionaries, such as An Shigao, a Parthian, and Zhi Loujiachan [sic], a Scythian, who translated those scriptures were not all the well-versed in Chinese" (21). The key term *wen* is a mistake. The right word is *zhi*, used to mean "literal translation," analogous to "a translation full of transliterations from Hebrew, and syntactic constructions closely modelled on Greek" (21). An Shigao's Buddhist translations were reviewed as "prioritizing adherence to the text without ornament" (贵本不饰) (Zhu, Zhang, and Huang 3) and "pertinent but not stylish, simple but not crude" (辩而不华，质而不野) (44), and Zhi Loujiachen's translations were regarded as "obtaining the essence, without any ornament" (审得本旨，了不加饰) (46). It should be noted that the monk translator's name Zhi Loujiachan is also a misspelling. Its Chinese spelling should be Zhi Loujiachen, and its Romanized spelling, Lokaksema.

Lefevere then proceeds to discuss the elegant style, which is *wen* (文) in Chinese, and means "ornament" in classic Chinese and approximates "literary translation" as a term in translation studies. He, however, uses *zhi* mistakenly: "After Zhi Qian, translations were done in the elegant style, or *zhi* [sic], suitable for literary production, no doubt because the translators realized that was the only style that would be taken seriously by the target audience of officials, literati, and intellectuals" (21). As we could see, the other key term *zhi* is mistakenly used by Lefevere to mean a translation method similar to literary translation, a translation method to achieve the elegant style. The correct term is *wen*.

Lefevere also makes an assertion in the article that the Chinese translation tradition (ending with Yan Fu and Lin Shu's nineteenth century translations) has "attached comparatively less importance to the 'faithful' translation that became such a central notion in the thinking on translation that arose in the West" (15). According to Lefevere, "This (elegant style) remained the style for translation until classical Chinese was replaced by spoken Chinese also as the language of communication among those elite groups at the beginning of the twentieth century" (21).

Are the Chinese and Western translation traditions really so different from each other? Are Chinese translations in an elegant style with "faithfulness" overlooked or neglected? I think the answer is "NO."

Buddhist sutras in Chinese translations have served as sacred scriptures to the Chinese Buddhists for ages. How could they overlook and neglect faithfulness in the translated sutras? When Lefevere severs the two poles of the faithful-elegant antithesis from their natural connection in western translation culture and assigned one (faithfulness) to the West and the other (elegancy) to China, he commits an error that he himself has opposed, namely, false historicization. The problem becomes worse when he continued this line of thought by transplanting the faithful/elegant opposition to China. That is, Lefevere thinks since Chinese translators valued the form and style of translation, they must have neglected the content and "attached comparatively less importance to the 'faithful' translation." We are quite certain that this is not the case in China. It is a non-issue, simply because attention to the form does not necessarily result in disrespect of the content. There is no causal relationship between the two.

As we mentioned earlier, Chinese people tend to think in a more or less balanced way. Chinese translators did attach great importance to the form and style of translation, but they paid at least the same amount of attention to the content, if they did not give priority to it. In fact, the principle of faithfulness is always there serving as the ultimate touchstone for a true translation, although people disagree about what faithfulness is. The very concept of faithfulness has haunted translators for thousands of years, and Chinese translators are no exception. The fact that more and more revised editions and better versions of Buddhist scripture translation were produced was telling evidence of Chinese translators' efforts towards their faith and faithfulness. Another eloquent piece of evidence was the choice of source texts for sutra translation. Over time, more and more Chinese translators began to choose Buddhist sutras from the Sanskrit original. Some translators even went to such an extreme as to travel to India to obtain *zhenjing* (真经), i.e. "genuine sutras." The number of these scholars and/or monks was quite large, up to more than 180 just in the Jin and the Tang Dynasties

(Liang 139). The great translator Xuanzang was such a legendary monk, who was canonized and later became the hero in *A Journey to the West* (《西游记》), one of the four greatest classic novels in China. The reason why he enjoyed such a high reputation both as a translator and a Buddhist was partly due to the fact that he himself had been to India, spent many years studying Sanskrit and Buddhism there and finally brought many Buddhist sutras back to China. In a word, he tried his best to be faithful to what Buddha had said.

Furthermore, there is no such thing as an unchanged Chinese translation tradition that has lasted for more than a thousand years, no matter whether this tradition is an elegant one or a faithful one or something else. As far as Buddhist sutra translation was concerned, the translation strategies and theories varied in different periods of time. At the beginning (roughly towards the end of Han Dynasty), the strategy used in the translation of Buddhist sutras was mainly literal translation and in some cases transliteration, which was named "immature straight translation" by Liang Qichao (142). These translations were hard to understand and consequently not well-received by the Chinese people. This practice was rejected not only by the ordinary people but also by scholars and translators themselves. The sutra translators soon turned to the other extreme, "immature free translation" (142) as a backlash to the previous unaccepted translation practice. The new free translation strategy was in its prime in the Three Kingdoms Period and the Western Jin Dynasty (roughly from the time of Zhi Qian). To make the translated sutras easily understood, some translators began to resort to borrowing concepts from Confucianism and Taoism to express the ideas in sutras. These translations were welcomed and embraced by Chinese readers at first, but people soon came to find out that the ideas in sutras are only similar to, but not identical with, those in Confucianism and/or Taoism. They usually differ from each other in some subtle ways. To replace one with the other could amount to a departure from the true meaning of Buddha's words. Dao An was the first one to argue against this practice, comparing it to "shoddy wine adulterated with water" (葡萄酒被水) (144-145). In this way, he brought sutra translation "back" to the old tradition of literal translation. However, compared with the former wave of literal translation, it arose in a new historical environment and attained new meanings (and in fact acquired a new name as well: "*anben*" (案本) (145), which could be literally rendered as "to adhere to the source text"). By new historical environment we mean that the society then was not as ignorant of Buddhism and Sanskrit as in the period when the Chinese first encountered Buddhist sutras. Translators and readers had a basic idea of Buddhism and a better command of Sanskrit. New, more successful translations became possible because of what the first batch of translators had done in previous years. The "returned" strategy of literal translation also acquired new sensibilities, very different from those in the first period of translation, and the most obvious new feature perhaps was that new translations contained far fewer incidences of transliteration. Thanks to all these changes on the part of translators, readers, and the society at large, the newly translated sutras in this period had a much better reception. Of course, this new trend was still a bit too "foreign" to be fully accepted by all Chinese people and hence came the second backlash towards the fluent translation style. And people went back and forth again and again between the two poles of literal and free translation, with a new historic height achieved every time. This height was not a new record of the gap between two poles. Rather, it amounted to a narrowing of the gap and signified a new and better understanding bridging the two cultures.

Unique Chinese ideogrammatic scripts also played a role here, as this was the early encounter between an ideogrammatic language and a phonetic language. The employment of unique ideogrammatic scripts to register the sound of Sanskrit phonetic writing (i.e. transliteration) presented special challenges, turning out to be not easily accepted by the Chinese people. Creation of new Chinese ideograms or words integrating some semantic components, a typical method of vocabulary coinage in China, proved to fare better. Quite a few Chinese ideograms were created this way, inspired by Buddhism, such as "伞"(*san*, umbrella) and "袈裟" (*jiasha*, cassocks). "伞" looks like an umbrella. And both characters of the word "袈裟" contain the radical "衣" (*yi*, clothes) to indicate that the word represents a kind of clothes, and the other parts "加"(*jia*) and "沙"(*sha*) indicate the pronunciation. All three of these ideograms were translated and localized in a unique Chinese way.

As we can see, there is no such thing as an unchanged Chinese translation tradition, though we could identify a tendency toward a somewhat unique Chinese trend in translation and reception. It is in this sense that we regard translation theories as events, because every translation theory has its unique historical and social environment, preliminary empirical and theoretical conditions, special issues to deal with, new perspectives on the problem, and idiosyncratic solutions. Each is necessarily different from others. Of course, they can share some common features and may have connections with each other in one way or another. It is these common features or connections that link one with

the other and ultimately put them in a tradition. So a tradition is a constellation of events sharing some common features or having some connections with each other. It is not something independent of events, nor can it be abstracted into some theme or keynote. Consequently, a tradition or convention can only be understood and interpreted in terms of events and as a result is always subject to the beholder's perspective; whenever the angle of view changes, the tradition or convention becomes different. To historicize a history would mean that you might have to give up the concept of tradition and go into the very facts of history,, the events that have made up a history. In other words, we should start from facts rather than traditions. Judged from this line of thought, Lefevere's article obviously displays a tendency towards overgeneralization.

Lefevere seemed to have made a hasty and shocking generalization of Chinese translation history. A question thus arises: How could a scholar aim to historicize Chinese translation history without seriously reading some books about Chinese translation history, not to mention digging into some first-hand historical documents? Instead, Lefevere seemed to have "constructed" Chinese translation history from one single, and unfortunately unreliable source, judging from the footnote in the article. In the note, Lefevere acknowledges his "former graduate student Yan Yang, late from Shanghai, and at present working in Austin, whose doctoral dissertation on Chinese thinking about translation has provided me with new insights" ("Thinking on Translation" 24). Some mistakes about Chinese translation history can be traced back to that dissertation. Lefevere, although possibly with good intentions, over-assimilates and "rewrites" (to use his favorite term) Chinese translation history, based on scarce facts, to make it accessible to western readers. This reminds us of Spivak's critique of western feminist translators, suggesting that feminist translators from hegemonic countries should show real solidarity with women in postcolonial contexts by learning the language in which those women speak and write, which is "preparation for the intimacy of cultural translation" (191-2). "It is a great first step" (191), but what Lefevere lacks is an intimacy with the Chinese language and culture and a living experience in China that enables him to really understand the Chinese situation.

Lefevere has not only based his argumentation on scarce facts, but also manifested in his argumentation a tendency to "foreignize the foreign." By this we mean Lefevere exaggerated the difference between Chinese and Western translation practice, and saw the Chinese translation tradition as something entirely different from its western counterpart. As we know, for the most part westerners used to look on other civilizations as made up of barbarians, infidels, or savages. This idea once served as one of the excuses for their invasion and conquest of "other" nations, and was intricately linked with colonialism. Nowadays, the former colonialists have undergone a thorough transformation and have become the avant-gardes to "discover and protect" the "other" cultures. In this way, they have a tendency to overemphasize elements of "otherness" in China. However, we hold that this new tendency to discover and protect the Other is still something similar to colonialism, because there is still a perception that "other" cultures are something utterly different, exotic, and alien. Western intellectuals assume a role of patronage that materializes other cultures which they can discover, protect and appreciate. Whether seeing other civilizations as something barbarian which needs to be wiped out or as something exotic which should be valued and appreciated, the underlining starting point is the same: Other cultures are OTHER elements. What this attitude lacks is the ability to see others as equals, who not only possess some unique qualities but also share many common features. The common features and the equal status make it possible to engage in dialogue, while the unique qualities and the special characteristics render it necessary to communicate and exchange ideas.

Concluding Remarks
The postcolonial translation theory of Lawrence Venuti, with its high ground of ethics of difference and sympathetic attitude towards the marginalized, appeals to Chinese readers. Though frequently quoted and highly influential in China, it reveals its partiality and blind spots in its application to the Chinese situation.

Lefevere, a postcolonial translation theorist, happened to "come, see and construct" a Chinese translation history in an article. The article serves as a typical case to analyze almost all the demerits and blind spots of postcolonial translation theories and theorists. Basic terms and facts in the paper were contrary to the Chinese reality, and the argument was oversimplified, all contributing to building up a fantasy of an entirely different and alien Chinese translation tradition, a creation that reflects the author's expectations.

From Venuti's theoretical construction and Lefevere's case study, we find that postcolonial translation theory and theorists lack an attitude of respect and equality for cultural others, and

postcolonial translation theory makes Chinese readers uneasy because of its condescending and patronizing stance.

As an old Chinese saying goes, "Conflict might be a precursor of true friendship." From the encounter of postcolonial translation theory and China, strengths and shortcomings of the theory might be better reflected, helping to revise and improve the theory itself and to make the theory feel more "at home" in China. Three suggestions, as such, are proposed.

The first suggestion is that, to show real respect and appreciation, postcolonial translation theorists should walk into the real life and language of the marginalized. They are expected to learn, experience and understand cultural otherness before they translate and talk about it. Then their dedication and commitment to cultural pluralism might be felt in their translations and studies.

The second one would be to adopt a more balanced and eclectic view of the binary concepts of foreignization and domestication. Foreignization, domestication, or more often than not, a combination of both, could be used, as long as the translators do not intend to replace or substitute, by coercion or force, other languages or cultures. Translation has a much stronger impact upon the target language and culture, therefore more respect and choices should be offered to the target language and culture. We translators have a choice whether to help a marginalized language and culture or not, but we also have a mandatory obligation not to replace or destroy language and culture. To do otherwise constitutes immoral and murderous behavior. Translators are supposed to nourish the target language and culture by borrowing a digestible amount of cultural otherness, tapping the right point on the continuum of foreignization and domestication, subject to the specific historical conditions.

The third suggestion is to learn from the hetero-generative philosophy of China and promote a translation ecology that nourishes cultural pluralism. The traditional hetero-generative philosophy of China holds that a suitable amount of hetero elements helps generate new life, while sameness stifles vitality. The ethics of difference might be discarded as the ultimate faith we worship. Instead, we translate in order to appreciate cultural pluralism. The difference is that the former treats cultural others as foreign and exotic, while the latter, as peers and equals. And our purpose is not just to reserve the difference, but also to nurture new forms and ideas. The nourishing and nurturing relationship can be found in translations among Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese in the cultural Sinosphere. Nourishing translation should be able to generate forms and ideas without much interference with the original linguistic and cultural system, so as to build a green, healthy, prosperous hetero-generative ecology of languages and cultures for our shared future.

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