

The Tale of Two Cities: A Translated Novel

Connecting London and Shanghai

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The two seemingly unrelated cities, London and Shanghai were connected by a translated novel *Xin Xi Xian Tan*. LishaoJushi, the first Chinese translator, brought the Victorian novelist Bulwer-Lytton's Newgate novel *Night and Morning* to his Chinese readers. In his translation, he adopted translation skills, such as explaining, borrowing, and changing of cultural settings, to suit the Chinese readers. These skills were applied to image of women, religion, family structure, house structure and social customs as well as social systems. The purpose of his adoption of these skills was to cater for his readers' aesthetics, which formed the early reader-oriented translation frame. The first translated novel played an important role in Chinese literary translation and served as a spur for the East to further explore the West.

Keywords: LishaoJushi, *Xin Xi Xian Tan*, Shanghai, London, reader-oriented translation

Introduction

This paper focuses on Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Night and Morning* and its Chinese translation *Xin Xi Xian Tan* (昕夕闲谈) by LishaoJushi (蠡勺居士), and on how the original and translated novels connected the two seemingly unrelated cities—London and Shanghai by revealing the differences of social customs, living habits and religious beliefs from the perspective of the translator.

The mid-19th century witnessed London in its booming period of industrial development with middle class rising and social fortune fast amassed, while Shanghai became one of the five ports opening up to foreign trade by the Qing Government. The two seemingly unrelated cities were linked together through Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Night and Morning* and its translated version *Xin Xi Xian Tan* by a Chinese scholar LishaoJushi.

Original and Translated Novels Connecting the Two Cities

Night and Morning vs. Xin Xi Xian Tan (昕夕闲谈)

The original novel by Victorian novelist Bulwer Lytton was first published in 1841 in Knebworth, then reprinted in 1845, 1851, and 1891, about a life story in the setting of suburb of London with social contradictions arising among the lower, middle and noble classes. The story started from a secret marriage between a noble class dandy and a businessman's girl. When their marriage was about to be revealed to the public, the dandy killed himself in a horse game after inheriting a large sum of money. The widow and her two

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underage sons were driven out of their home by the dandy's unmerciful brother and with no support for life, the elder son Philip Morton had to work as an apprentice and the younger one be adopted. The poor widow died in poverty. The story then focused on how the older son grew from the social bottom and fought all the way to the London elite. During his growth, he received help and guidance from a criminal named Gawtreay, who came from the lower class, befriended with a wrong nobleman, was framed and sent to jail for a crime he never committed. Even though labelled a criminal and never given a chance to live a normal life, Gawtreay had a kind heart for the poor and the weak. Young Philip received his help and followed him travelling from London to Paris and some other cities in Europe, where he saw social changes after French Revolution and its influence on people. It was then when young Philip found a way to be a true and useful person to the society.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton was in his prime years as a novelist when he published *Night and Morning*. It was a less criticized novel comparing with his previous Newgate novels *Pelham* (1828) and *Paul Clifford* (1830). The famous literary critic Edgar Allan Poe praised the plot construction of this novel that "none of the leading incidents can be removed without detriment to the mass" and "in this view of the case the plot of *Night and Morning* is decidedly excellent. Speaking comparatively, and in regard to stories similarly composed, it is one of the best" (Poe, 1841, p. 198). Bulwer-Lytton not only did well with his writing skills, but also he shared his thoughts on the function of fictions—whether novels should please or instruct the readers should be the end of fiction. He argued for the function of novels that "if some great principle which guides us practically in the daily intercourse with men becomes in the general lustre more clear and more pronounced, we gain doubly, by the general tendency and the particular result" (Bulwer-Lytton, 1845, p. 7).

Bulwer-Lytton was criticized for glamorizing the personalities of criminals in his Newgate novels, but his intention in *Night and Morning* was to draw attention to the legal "crime" by the lower class and moral "vice" by the noble which he called "the corrupting habits" (Bulwer-Lytton, 1845, p. 9). He described the civilian crime and noble vice in his novel, criticizing the unfair treatments of the two by law and showed sympathy for the lower class criminals, alleging that they were the victims of rigid legal system. He shed light on the features of novel to reveal the ugliness of the noble class and urged people to learn from the successful example of French Revolution to abolish the privileges of the noble class and establish a free and equal nation.

Night and Morning may not be his masterpiece, yet Bulwer-Lytton in a certainly way succeeded in drawing the attention of LishaoJushi, with his ideas about functionality of novels and the social reformation prospects (LishaoJushi, 1873, p. 5). LishaoJushi first translated Bulwer-Lytton's *Night and Morning* in 1873 and named it *Xin Xi Xian Tan*, meaning stories told at dusk and dawn (Zhang & Zhang, 2007, p. 464). He published it in 26 episodes from 1873 to 1875 on *YingHuanSuoJi* (瀛寰琐记)—a monthly literary magazine affiliated to *Shenbao* based in Shanghai and its circulation covered Shanghai and the other main cities in China. After the literary magazine stopped producing in 1875, LishaoJushi reprinted the novel in three volumes and *Shenbao* put on a series of advertisement on the first page for consecutively half a month. Then in 1904, LishaoJushi reprinted the novel in two volumes and added a few words to the original title: *English novel—Retranslated Foreign Novel: Xin Xi Xian Tan*. For this reprint, he made some changes to the new reprint including parts of stories, adding a preface and changed the name of the translator into Lichuang Wodusheng. The present paper will have quotations mainly out of the 1904 reprint.

Though criticized for romanticizing the criminals' life and for his writing styles, Bulwer-Lytton's foreseeing thoughts and political ambitions echoed in China when the Qing government was in shaky condition and the country was in earnest need for changes. The translated version of the novel covered the first half of the

original story telling an incomplete life story in a European setting with social systems and norms that were totally exotic to Chinese readers. LishaoJushi intentionally illustrated the differences in his translated novels in hope of copying the successful social reformation from French Revolution. He was a pioneer translator who chose to put forward his personal wishes and ideas as well as political petition through this translated novel (Zhang & Zhang, 2007, p. 467).

Bulwer-Lytton vs. LishaoJushi

Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873) was a well-known English nobleman, who endeavored in novel writing, poem composing, play writing and political involving. Though he is frequently laughed at with the infamous novel opening “it was a dark and stormy night” (Lytton, 1830, p. 1), he was considered a pioneer for experimental genres of contemporary literary works and for his profound opinions on the social function of novels.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton was born in 1803 and he moved to live in London at the age of four with his mother after his father’s death. He showed his literary talent early and published his first poem collection at the age of fifteen. He became a successful and productive novelist, trying different genres during his lifetime inspiring many novelists like Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and Wilkie Collins. He became interested in politics and held the seat in Parliament and the House of lords for many years where he led several activities on issues like reducing newspaper stamp tax. Due to his active involvement with political achievements and great influence, Bulwer-Lytton was raised to the peerage as the first Baron and also won himself the name of Victorian Man of Letters for his literary achievements.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* describes Bulwer-Lytton as

a British politician, poet, and critic, chiefly remembered as a prolific novelist. His popularity was largely a result of his skills in anticipating and satisfying changes in public taste. His books, though dated, remain immediately readable, and his experiences lend his work an unusual historical interest. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1994, vol. 7., p. 595)

After Scott’s death, he was England’s most popular novelist and an important social and political figure. Mary Shelley read his works with “admiration” and believed he was a “magnificent writer” and would be “the first author of the age” (Morrison & Stone, 2003, p. 59). But even with his literary fame and political reputation, “he was the frequently butt of Fraser’s Magazine, of John Lock hard, and of W. M. Thackeray. Nevertheless, he had powerful friends and admirers, including Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Dickens” (Birch & Hooper, 2012, p. 97).

About LishaoJushi, very limited accounts were found about his life. One reliable source came from the 50th anniversary of *Shenbao* about the early editors including LishaoJushi. It turned out that his real name was Qizhang Jiang (蒋其章), and he also used such names as Zhixiang Jiang (蒋芷湘) and Zirang Jiang (蒋子让). His pen names include Master of Little Jiluo Hut (小吉罗庵主), Master of Hengmeng Hut (蘅梦庵主), Lichuang Wodusheng in Wu County (吴县藜床卧读生) (Hanan, 2001, p. 133; Zhang & Zhang, 2007, p. 464). He wrote large amounts of poems, essays, travel journals and editorials for *Shenbao*. According to the official record from Metropolitan Examinations by Qing Government, Qizhang Jiang was born in 1842, with household registration in Hangzhou. He worked in Shanghai as editor-in-chief for *Shenbao* for about three years (Shao, 2008). He won in the Metropolitan Examination in 1877, quitted the job and went to work in Dunhuang as a county governor. He lived in Suzhou after retirement (Qian, 1879; Zhu & Xie, 1979; Guo, 1992; Dunhuang, 1994; Feng, 2001; Zhang & Zhang, 2007).

Translator vs. Writer

LishaoJushi made changes to the original novel by adding explanations, modifying the original story in readers' familiar settings and borrowing ideas that could best illustrate the story. These translational techniques of foreignization and domestication catered for the readers' taste drawing the novel closer to readers. In this part, I will list some of the translation excerpts that were changed for its readability.

LishaoJushi changed the description of characters to suit Chinese readers' aesthetics. Take the image of women for example, the traditional Chinese prototype of beauty contains these elements: willow leave-shaped eyebrows, almond-shaped eyes, cherry-sized mouth, oval face, and willow-slender waist (Smith, 1914, p. 307; Hung, 1997, p. 78), and with small bound feet. Now take a look at how LishaoJushi transformed the English pretty ladies into Chinese beauties.

“She was uncommonly handsome, my sister Catherine”.

“Handsome is as handsome does,” said the wife, who was very much marked with the small-pox (Bulwer Lytton, 1851, p. 66).

This is the conversation between Mr. Morton and his wife talking about his sister Catherine. Obviously the husband had sympathy on his sister but his wife didn't share the same opinion and she used sarcastic tone when talking about his sister's dishonored life. As to her look, Morton said simply “uncommonly handsome”, but the Chinese version told another story:

“妹子的容貌真是沉鱼落雁，闭月羞花，算得一个绝世美人。”他娘子道，“依我说，面孔生得好算不得美人，须要行止端正，那才真真是美人呢。”原来这妇人相貌颇为不佳，…… (LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 70)

In order to show how contrastive life was to Catherine before and after the death of her husband, LishaoJushi used Chinese idioms to describe that her beauty could “charm the fish from swimming, the birds from flying; outshine the moon and make the flowers ashamed” (沉鱼落雁，闭月羞花) referring to the four beauties of Xishi, Zhaojun Wang, Diaochan and Yuhuan Yang (西施，王昭君，貂蝉，杨玉环) in Chinese history. Comparing with the simple description “uncommonly handsome”, Catherine immediately became one of the most unforgettably beautiful women throughout history, which could certainly draw sympathetic tears from the readers for Catherine's sad ending.

LishaoJushi applied this prototype to almost every woman in the novel, including the well-loved, caring and daring Madame de Merville.

She drew back, and, drawing her veil still more closely round her, said, in French, —

“Pardon me, I would wish a private conversation”. (Bulwer-Lytton, 1851, p. 323)

(美弗儿夫人) 缩住了金莲，将罩面纱帷挂下，口中款款的说，“我今日登堂有句要紧说话。”……将面帷掀开一半，露出樱桃红一点的小小嘴唇，羊脂玉一般的斩齐牙齿轻轻的一笑…… (LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 32)

In the original, Madame de Merville, who later saved young Philip Morton's life, didn't want to be seen at the “Temple of Love”, an infamous place Gawtreys made money, so she “draw her veil still more closely”. But in its Chinese counterpart, she drew back her little feet, then intentionally lifted up her veil by half to show her cherry-sized little mouth and jade like teeth before turning to speak to Mr. Love. The description of Madame de Merville made her a more pretty than daring lady in the translation.

Here is another example. Catherine knew she was dying, so she handed her son in her brother's care but she couldn't bear to separate from her son. She dragged herself to wait under the outside window in order to

take a last look at her son when Mr. Morton inside heard the noise and asked:

“Who’s there?”

“It is I, it is Catherine! I cannot go without seeing my boy. I must see him. I must, once more”.
(Bulwer-Lytton, 1851, p. 82)

黑暗中有娇脆的声音应道“我，我是你妹子——爱格在此。我为放心希尼不下，要想再见一面，若不能再见一面，我不忍舍他远去，只得在此再住几天哩”。(LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p.39)

In the original, there was no description of Catherine’s voice but the translator instead used “娇脆” (clear and silvery sound) to describe a heart-broken mother and a dying widow, which seemed to the translator that a pretty woman would always be pretty no matter when and how, even though it might not be proper. On top of that, in the translation, Catherine even went further begging her brother to allow her staying in his house for a few more days because of her unwillingness to part with her son, completely ignoring that her brother was henpecked.

The spreading of Christianity to China could be tracked back as early as the 2nd century, but it did not go wide enough. Through Matteo Ricci and the missionaries’ effort from 16th century, it became known to part of the country, whereas to most Chinese, Buddhism was the main religion and had more influence. In this translated novel, there were some Western religious habits that might not be understandable to Chinese readers, so LishaoJushi used such techniques as comparison, borrowing and even avoidance to illustrate the religious habits to readers in China (Zhang & Zhang, 2010).

He would compare the differences and the similarities between Christianity and Buddhism. For example, at the beginning of the story, there was a preacher named Rev. Mr. Caleb Price who witnessed the secret marriage of Philip Beaufort and Catherine Morton. Then the story went on describing Mr. Price who lived a lonely life, hoping for a girl to marry him. Sensing the confusion from his readers, the translator showed himself and explained this way:

看官，你道外国教师通我们僧人一样的吗？却倒不然，仍旧是娶妻生子的。(LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 5)

He told his readers that preachers in the West were allowed to get married and have children, unlike the Buddhism monks who should keep single and devote themselves whole-heartedly to Buddha throughout their life. Even when preachers were invited to say the last prayer for the dead, the translator showed up again and explained that the process was like monks reciting scripts to calm the soul of the dead and comfort the living. Same was with the wedding ceremonies when preachers would pray at the wedding and register for the couple.

“原来教门中规矩，人死后须请教师念经就如大教中僧道诵经一样。成婚时亦须教师为之主持，都有册籍载明的”。(LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 78)

As a scholar, LishaoJushi understood more Buddhism creeds than those of Christianity. He would turn to Buddhism to explain religious rites his reader might not be able to understand. This can be seen in different parts of the story throughout his translation. For example, Mr. Robert Beaufort’s only son Arthur was knocked down and injured by a cart, but he was saved and sent back home by a couple of passersby. Mr. Beaufort complimented those people with tips. The passersby said,

Sir, may the Lord bless you! and I hope the young gentleman will do well. I am sure you have cause to be thankful that he was within an inch of the wheel;... Well, it’s enough to convert a heathen. But the ways of Providence are

mysterious, and that's the truth of it. Good night, sir". (Bulwer-Lytton, 1851, p. 110)

LishaoJushi translated this way:

此二人接过银钱欢天喜地的道：“如何倒要解囊呢？我看天意必当降福高门，保护令郎哩，真是大难不死，总有后福哩！”那一人道：“看到这里，死生真在毫忽间了，倘非积善降祥，报应不爽，那时候的危险还堪设想吗？”（LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 87）

The passersby used the creed “大难不死，必有后福” to comfort Arthur's father, because according to Buddhism, if one experienced and survived a disaster, he must have a big fortune waiting in the future. This could also be understood as merit accumulation in Buddhism, meaning one may accumulate his merits by doing good deeds, and then he could be saved from disasters or troubles.

It seemed to LishaoJushi that world religions serve the same purpose in urging people to do good deeds and accumulate merits. He saw the similarities of Christianity and Buddhism in daily practice and so he explained. People can consider LishaoJushi's attempts in explaining Christianity by using Buddhism creeds as initial contacts and dialogues between Western and Eastern culture in literary works, which laid a good foundation for the future communication in religions and cultures.

In Christian countries, a happy family means mutual support from husband and wife and any affair outside the marriage is regarded as a scandal and would cause dishonor to a person's reputation. But in traditional China, there used to be polygamy system where men were allowed to have one wife and several concubines depending on his financial condition. Sometimes the wife may live together with her husband's other women and it was generally believed that the more children from the man's wife and concubines, the more prosperous the family would be. Usually the concubines would have less legal rights and enjoyed lower legal status than the legal wife. With this concept in mind, LishaoJushi even changed the English family structure according to the Chinese family mode (Zhang & Zhang, 2009).

In the translator's opinion, rich people ought to have several concubines, while noblemen should have even more and these concubines would naturally be bullied by the legal wife. That was the normal family pattern for large families in traditional China even though it was not the case for most of the religious English families.

In Bulwer-Lytton's original, Beaufort family was a large family with good reputation in upper class. The family head, Philip Beaufort's uncle would like to make one of the two nephews his heir. But before that, he wanted to make sure that this person would not bring humiliation to his family. Upon his death, he summoned Philip to his bedside, verifying what he heard was not true. Then he reminded Philip:

“If ever,” said he, and he looked grimly at Philip while he spoke,

A gentleman was to disgrace his ancestry by introducing into his family one whom his own sister could not receive at her house, why, he ought to sink to her level, and wealth would but make his disgrace the more notorious. If I had an only son, and that son was booby enough to do anything so discreditable as to marry beneath him, I would rather have my footman for my successor. You understand, Phil. (Bulwer-Lytton, 1851, p. 57)

In order not to be turned down on the right of inheriting the immense possessions, Philip secretly married Catherine Morton in a suburb far away from his uncle and less was known about his two sons. But the translator LishaoJushi knew too well what a formal marriage meant to an upper class dandy in China, he modified the original into a conversation between Philip and his uncle this way:

.....渐渐的（地）传入坡弗耳中，坡弗身居高位，最是要脸面的人。听说他的胞侄娶了小户人家的女，心中甚是不悦，便将非利唤至面前，问道：“闻汝已娶一小家女为妻，可实有此事么？”非利答道：“并无此事。”坡弗道：“外边都如此说，你休瞒我。”非利道：“不敢瞒叔父，实无此事。不过在山桥曾纳一妾，并非娶妻。”坡弗道：“即是如此甚好。我家何等门户，你若娶了一小家之女，岂不玷辱祖宗且令傍（旁）人笑话。现在我年已花甲，看看是将要就木的人了，我的家业总是你们侄儿承受。你娶了这样那妻子却来承受我的产业，到（倒）不如把这产业遗与外人，反觉正大。你心里明白不明白呢？”非利听了这一番言语唯唯的答应。（LishaoJushi, 1875, p. 412）

In the translation, Philip directly told his uncle that he did marry a lower girl as a concubine in the suburb, but he assured his uncle he didn't marry a wife. At this, his uncle seemed satisfied and relieved, and he even said approvingly that it was good. LishaoJushi intentionally drew a line between wife and concubine to prove that, even though Philip married Catherine, she was just a concubine which would not affect his marital status and he still was capable of marrying someone at his level.

As the story goes, when Gawtreys' ex-girlfriend sold her own daughter to an old nobleman, the young girl came to cry to Gawtreys, "On the other hand, the girl confided to me her horror of the scenes she witnessed and the snares surrounded her" (Bulwer-Lytton, 1851, p. 213).

LishaoJushi again used his imagination and described the old Marquis' family like this:

（她）又呜呜咽咽的将手帕掩着面孔.....“如今又要卖作姬妾，想侯门似海，姬妾如林，本与院子里不差什么，倘或大妇凶悍，朝夕凌虐起来”，.....盈盈地拜上两拜。（LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 25）

Instead of showing how terrified the girl was, the translator added to the old marquis' family condition that he must have bought the girl as a concubine, that there must have been a sea of concubines in his house, and that the wife would definitely bully and torture those young concubines day and night. As the girl cried, she used her handkerchief to conceal her face and when Gawtreys promised to save her from the disaster, she bowed twice to thank him.

The translator continued the habit of naming places and houses as most Chinese intellectuals did. The story started at a small town in suburb of London called A—a quiet and beautiful place that Bulwer Lytton wouldn't even bother to give it a name—only an attraction to a few people for fishing. But LishaoJushi gave it a rather poetic name: Mount Bridge Town, meanwhile Philip Beaufort's house was named "Peach Garden Wonderland", meaning, quiet and comfortable place away from noise. And Philip Beaufort even had the name carved on the gate.

Chinese intellectuals made use of these names to express their desires, ambitions, or sometimes it was just a showoff of their talents. The translator himself named his own house "Little Jiluo Hut" and named himself "Master of Little Jiluo Hut". To the translator, it was unimaginable for Philip and Catherine to live in a beautiful house yet not to give it a name. Not only did the translator add a name to their house, he even made their house more like Chinese courtyard house.

A light step entered the room through the French casements that opened on the lawn, and... (Bulwer-Lytton, 1851, p. 18).

忽听得园门口一阵脚步声，原来爱格的住房窗户外紧靠花园，从二门到上房必要打从花园门首经过。（LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 11）

A house with a French casement opening to the lawn was an ordinary one in England, but LishaoJushi made it more like Chinese three-quadrangle courtyard style with a garden out of where Catherine lived, leading

to this third and most important part of the house. Translator's modifications to houses were not limited to this. He also turned the building style of the abbey where little Fanny lived into a more Chinese Buddhist nunnery.

It was a dismal-looking place as to the exterior; but, within, there was a large garden, well kept, and notwithstanding the winter, it seemed fair and refreshing compared with the polluted streets. The window of the room into which they were shown looked upon the green sward, with walls covered with ivy at the farther end. (Bulwer-Lytton, 1851, p. 221)

将近庵院已觉得风景清幽，水木明瑟，果然是低园净地，不染红尘，真好去处哩。……苔径之后围以砖墙，墙上……转过团墙左侧露出一个门堂，跨上石坡三级，又绸户一重，里边是个小客堂，地下铺着五彩绒毯，十分精洁。(LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 39)

The place where little Fanny, heroine of the novel, was raised was a small quiet abbey—a dismal looking place from outside, but clean and quiet inside, suitable for bringing up a child. But the translator wanted more for this place to show his favor for lovely little Fanny. He added tall trees, roses, and fragrant plum blossoms, making it more like a garden in a fairy tale. Only in this way, could the translator believe that the readers could feel the fatherly love from Gawtrey. The translator brought to this abbey in Paris plum blossoms, flowers unique to China making the little abbey more like a neat Buddhist temple.

LishaoJushi compared the difference of European social systems and Chinese existing systems. For example, the Paris police was compared to secret agents in Beijing who were capable of solving difficult cases, and the passport was explained to be the same with Chinese official sealed documents that allowed people to do business out of their hometown.

When introducing Lord Lilburn, LishaoJushi explained to his readers by comparing him with the most powerful ministers in the government—Hongzhang Li (李鸿章) and Zongtang Zuo (左宗棠). Readers would understand immediately what social status Lord Lilburn was, which could also explain why people stood up when Lord Lilburn came into the room. The translator also made an effort in explaining why Lilburn could become a lord even though he was crippled by saying that English peerage system was different from that of China in that it was the hereditary peerage system while the heir had to go through a series of government examinations and interviews before finally approved to be granted a title in China. The translator stealthily said if Lilburn had been born in China, he would have inherited nothing due to his health condition, let alone his notorious rotten life.

In the translated novel, LishaoJushi also explained unfamiliar terms to readers like public cart, pistol, garden, will, and even pockets, while sometimes, he would retreat to Chinese customs for explanations to some others. For instance, when the preacher was about to write a letter, he asked his servant to fetch Four Treasures (writing brush, ink stick, ink slab and paper), but the fact was European people wrote with feather quill, ink and sealing wax. The same was with the pistol and pocket. When Mr. Morton heard some noise outside the window, he fetched the pistol and hid it in his sleeve, which sounded weird and English people would usually hide things in a pocket. After Catherine settled her two sons, she felt relieved and fell down ill and a volunteer doctor came to look after her. The translator explained in traditional Chinese medicine practice procedure: The doctor felt Catherine's pulse and diagnosed that she suffered from inner sadness and outer coldness. This doctor then brewed herb medicine for dying Catherine.

LishaoJushi often showed up as a narrator to explain unfamiliar customs to his readers. For example, when Philip Beaufort came to Catherine's house inviting her to go outing, her father agreed and she merrily went with him, not knowing she would leave for a secret marriage. This part of story sounded incredible to Chinese

readers because in traditional China girls were not supposed to meet with boys before marriage, let alone travelling with them. Besides, marriages were mostly arranged by parents and match-makers, and independent marriage would be regarded elopement which would bring dishonor to both families. To avoid misunderstanding, the translator felt obliged to show up and explained that this was acceptable in the Western culture, and that girls were allowed to meet with boys in order to know them better before marriage decisions were made.

Reader-oriented Translation

A translator is in the first place a reader. Except for the transferring process from source language to target language, a translator should also consider reader's acceptability and aesthetics. LishaoJushi, as the main writer for *Shenbao*, obviously understood what readers meant for a newspaper, and he bore the responsibilities in mind to attract, amuse and instruct his readers. Throughout the translated novel, changes can be spotted everywhere: some were explanations; some comparisons and some completely new stories outside of the original. The reasons why LishaoJushi took such pains to cater for his readers were shown in his foreword of the translated novel, which said he wanted to show his readers the exotic life and different system in the West, but at the meantime, he carefully catered for their preferences in readers' aesthetics. This reader-oriented frame went throughout the translation. Now let us take a look at the social background and readers' ideology that shaped the translator's poetics in accommodation.

Social Background

London, as the political and cultural center of the British Empire, represented the highest level of political system and the advanced technical skills and fashionable lifestyle in Europe. With the fast growing of industry, social contradictions appeared with the noble class going downward but remaining powerful politically, the middle class growing to become the main stream of the society, and lower class struggling to survive. This novel revealed the desires for a social reformation might change this situation from both the middle and lower classes.

Shanghai was a natural sea port as well as center for river transportation at the mouth of Yangtzi River—the longest river in China. It was a center for domestic trade connecting the nearby rich provinces like Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Anhui in China. Because of its natural location, Shanghai was among the first five ports opening up to foreign trade in 1843 after the failure in the first Opium War (also known as Anglo-Chinese War). With the fast development of the international port, Shanghai soon became a gathering for both Western and local Chinese residents with English language and culture gradually accepted.

Shanghai soon turned into a city with colonies built on parts of its territory and Western explorers coming to seek opportunities. This opportunity paradise attracted people from all parts of the world, among whom was Earnest Major (1830-1908), who started the first non-religious commercial newspaper *Shenbao* in Shanghai (Huang, 2001). LishaoJushi was hired by Major as his first editor-in-chief. After travelling and seeing much in many places, LishaoJushi formed sharp insights about Chinese future and he made clear his political opinion and called for political reformation to improve the social condition in his translated novel (LishaoJushi, 1873, p. 5).

Targeted Readers

When Earnest Major started *Shenbao* based in Shanghai, he targeted his newspaper readers as normal

people ranging from government officials, gentry class, intellectuals, and businessmen to clerks in cities and the nearby rural areas. These readers had the similar features: a) they received formal Chinese education, and were familiar with idioms and customs; b) they read Chinese classics, and familiar with the characters in the classics; c) they were literary lovers, and they sometimes would like to compose poems to express their feelings; d) they were interested in news stories at home and abroad.

For the idioms and sayings, some of them were hard to understand if not living in China for a long period of time. For example, the translator talked about the personalities of Mrs. Beaufort by referring her to Lady Xing, a character in Chinese classics *A Dream of Red Mansions*, implying that Mrs. Beaufort was “not talented, nor virtuous” (LichuangWodusheng, 1904, p. 70). LishaoJushi was pretty sure that his readers could understand what it meant for Mrs. Beaufort through such comparison. Such borrowing from Chinese poems and idiom stories could be found throughout the translation. Some of them were lines from poets, such as Shangyin Li’s poem *Untitled* (无题); some were from ancient idiom stories such as life and death friendship (刎颈之交); some were slangs like woman about to give birth to a baby (坐草), and even the common sayings such as “what’s bred in the bone comes out in the flesh” (龙生龙, 凤生凤, 老鼠儿子会打洞), etc..

With these readers in mind, LishaoJushi knew as the first editor-in-chief what to do to cater for the steady group of readers to keep the newspaper running. First, he assumed that readers meet the literary demand when reading this translated novel, and he also assumed that readers didn’t know and were curious about the Western lifestyle and social systems, so that the translator would try to satisfy his readers with clarifications through approaches in this translated novel. As the first translated novel, LishaoJushi was right in his assumptions.

Translator’s Ideology and Reader-oriented Translation

Translation studies have gone through text analysis to linguistics level, making translation more accurate, but in the recent two decades the studies again have turned from linguistics to a more cultural level, making the studies comprehensive taking the three steps of translation into account: pre-translation of bicultural understanding, translation process itself, as well as after-translation of product consumption. Translation studies could highlight its literariness under peculiar cultural settings.

As the reader to the original, LishaoJushi must understand Bulwer-Lytton’s intention and story layout, while as a translator, he was obliged to understand his readers’ acceptability and ensure the readability of his translation. He knew that only through clarification and closeness to target language, can he display the original well to attract his readers, which proved an effective tactics because his translation went serializing for three years.

LishaoJushi, after his own cultural digestion, successfully brought to his Chinese readers what he sensed and felt from Bulwer Lytton’s novel, displaying the society and people of the West to his readers. LishaoJushi’s translation was loyal to the original—in story itself, in personalities of characters and in story narration. He was loyal to his readers as well. During translation process, he chose to give up long lectures in the original (for which Bulwer-Lytton was good at but was hated by contemporary readers) and to go straight to the essence. Translation itself was a process of creation and during the process translator took many elements into consideration. It can be safely said that *Xin Xi Xian Tan* was a recreation of Bulwer-Lytton’s novel based on Chinese cultural environment.

LishaoJushi set a good example to the early translators and also proved the validity of the contemporary translation theories. In his translation, he answered the practical need of the readers—to learn more about

Western culture and social systems to help improve Chinese system. From this perspective, it came natural that his translation was widely accepted. The next translated novel in China came into being about a quarter of a century later in 1898.

Conclusion

LishaoJushi's translation was done long before modern translation theories came into being like Nida's Dynamic Equivalence or Lefevere's rewriting theory. But given the circumstances, LishaoJushi creatively and smartly proved the validity of contemporary translation theories, making the theory more enduring and can stand the test of time and languages.

Xin Xi Xian Tan was read widely within Shanghai area, other cities and rural areas in China, which caused thoughts about the possible ways that China might take in the future of the benefit of its people. Social reformer Qichao Liang and Youwei Kang openly expressed that they had read *Xin Xi Xian Tan* and were inspired by the social reforms described in this translated novel (Xia, 1984; Dong, 1996; Zhang & Miao, 2013).

Bulwer-Lytton's ideas were thought-provoking to them so much so that they made use of the entertainment and instruction features of novels and started through this easy reaching literary means to educate and to preach their political reformation ideas, which led to a series of literary revolutions and eventually brought the downfall of Qing Government. *Xin Xi Xian Tan* was the first sparkle introducing the West to the East and was the start for a huge wave of literary translation and social reformation in the following years throughout China.

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