

Translated Literature Field & Translator's Habitus: Promotion of Mo Yan's Novels in the Context of World Literature

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ABSTRACT

The reading and influence of Mo Yan's novels are beyond the scope of their own culture and are accepted and recognized by scholars and ordinary readers under the recommendation of western mainstream media publishing houses and Sinologists, despite the fact that there is usually a very low status for Chinese-English translation literature in the western foreign literature translation field, and the translated literature from other languages occupies a rather marginal position in the multicultural literature field of western countries. Using the Sociotranslatological concepts of 'Field', 'Cultural Capital' and 'Habitus', this paper analyzes the elements which promote Mo Yan's works into world literature with the focuses on translators' habitus in the translated literature field. It is found out that the cultural capital and habitus of Howard Goldblatt, the English version translator of Mo Yan's works have great contribution in pushing Mo Yan's novels into the west literature field and promoting their worldwide reading and influence.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic concept of "World Literature" proposed by David Damrosch (2003) refers to all literary works that circulate beyond their cultural origin. Damrosch believes that only when the works go beyond their own cultural scope and actively exist in another literary system, can they have an effective life as world literature. Incorporated with modern Western thoughts and techniques, Mo Yan's novels embody the elements of cosmopolitanism and show the local and traditional variations. M. Thomas Inge commented on Mo Yan's literature from the perspective of Westerners and believed that Mo Yan tried to find a foothold for Chinese literature in the world literature with his unique personal style and aesthetic principles which influenced the Western world. With a series of introductions by Western mainstream media and the awards of international literary awards, Mo Yan and his novels have gradually entered the perspective of Westerners. As Mo Yan's novels are gradually read beyond their cultural origin, it can be said that Mo Yan's novels have a certain position in the western translation field and have the characteristics of world literature. In the process of literature globalization, translation is the main medium. Therefore, the process of national literature becoming world literature is the process of literary translation transforming into translated literature, in which authors, translators, mainstream media,

academic critics, publishing houses, readers and other factors influence and promote each other. This paper will examine the phenomenon of Mo Yan's novels being read as world literature in the Western literature field, with the focus on the western field of Mo Yan's novels by Western Field and the English version translator's habitus.

Mo Yan is a contemporary Chinese writer with the most translated versions of his works among the Chinese writers. His works have been read and loved by many readers, and many of his works have been translated and published in various languages. According to the incomplete statistics of Index Translationum, UNESCO's database of book translations, Mo Yan's words are translated into 83 different languages. Among them, there are 23 in French and 13 in English. *Red Sorghum* is available in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, Hebrew, Swedish, Norwegian, Dutch, Korean, Vietnamese; *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* is translated into English, French, Japanese, Italian, Dutch, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian. *Sandalwood Death* is available in Vietnamese, Japanese, Italian, Korean, and French. Many countries have published various collections of short stories and essays by Mo Yan. The French version of *Red Sorghum* was first published in 1990, and *A Transparent Carrot* published in 1993, and the German and English versions of *Red Sorghum* were published in 1993 and have been re-published

several times. Since the French translation of *Big Breast and Wide Hips* was published in France, it was of such a huge success among readers that Mo Yan was invited to go to France to participate in the book fair. He was interviewed by or commented on French press and newspapers like *New Observer*, *Le Figaro*, *Humanitarian* and *Viewpoint*. Such a wide range of translations, mainstream media interviews with writers, and comments on the work have formed a field of translation literature for Mo Yan's works abroad. So how did Mo Yan's novels enter the Western field of translation from the literary field in China? How are the authors and translators' habitus formed and how do they influence each other? What cultural capital do the translator and author have to promote and establish each other in the position of the field of literature and translation? In the entire world literature field, Eurocentrism has always been dominant. Only from the 19th century, due to the increasing political, economic and cultural communication, there have been more frequent exchanges of literature among different countries, and thus oriental literature gradually broke through the barrier and was translated into the Western world. There is a trend of the globalization of literature, or world literature. Due to the historical tradition of oriental literature that has been neglected, in the field of western literature, translated literature from the East can only be on a fairly marginal position. How the English version books translated from Chinese, a disadvantaged culture, enter the field of Western literature is related to the competition and interaction of different agents in the field of translation literature (translators, authors, editors, publishers, etc.) for the position in the field. The different cultural capital possessed by those different agents in the field of translation participate in economic operations and competition for interests, and determine the position of the agents in the literary field.

THE WESTERN TRANSLATION FIELD OF MO YAN'S NOVELS

The translation field of Mo Yan's novels consists of the following elements: institutions that promote Mo Yan's novels, such as various libraries (including national libraries, public libraries and university libraries), bookstores (physical bookstores and online bookstores) such as Amazon online bookstores, publishers of English translations of Mo Yan's novels, such as New York Viking Press, Arcade Press, London Seagull Press, etc. Symbolic capital for Mo Yan's novels may include *New York Times*, *World Literature Today*, *Chinese Literature* and other magazines and their editors, as well as relevant critics and Sinologists. The comments on Mo Yan's translations published in these magazines will promote the expansion of the reading range of Mo Yan's novels and thus become read beyond their cultural origin as world literature. As Tao Dongfeng (2012) said, "Only when literature is paid attention to by the media, and becomes a public event or even a news event, will it receive public attention and get rid of the so-called 'marginalized' fate".

In the West, especially in the English and American literature field, translation literature usually occupies a marginal position. The position of Chinese literary translation in the

field of Western literature is particularly marginalized. In fact, the position of Sinology in the international academic community is very marginal. Except for a few Sinologists, many universities in Europe do not have a Chinese language and literature major. In the United States, there are only some major universities in the East Asian Department that offer Chinese language courses. Under such circumstances, compared with other Chinese literary works, the translated works of Mo Yan's novels have attracted a great deal of attention in the field of Western translated literature. Among contemporary Chinese writers, Mo Yan is the one who has most of his works translated and introduced into the west world. The number of the translated works and the number of the languages his works are translated into translation is the most among the contemporary fiction writers in China. Mo Yan's novels have received the attention of Western scholars and the literary community before winning the Nobel Prize in Literature, and have won many awards. France is the country with the most translations of Mo Yan's works. The French translation of *The Republic of Wine* won the Laure Batailin Foreign Literature Award in 2001. In a series of activities held in China-France Cultural Year 2004, Mo Yan became the focus of the *Chinese Literature* salon, and was interviewed and commented by many French media newspapers. In the same year, Mo Yan was awarded the "French Culture and Art Knight Medal". He has become the most read Chinese writer in France, and has a complete network of translation, publishing, distribution and marketing in France, which formed a relatively strong French translation field of Mo Yan's novels. It was the similar case in Sweden where Mo Yan's works attracted the attention of Mr. Goran Malmqvist, a referee of the Nobel Prize for Literature, more than 20 years ago. With the help of Mr. Goran Malmqvist, Chen Anna translated Mo Yan's works into Swedish which set up the basis for Mo Yan's winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature. In the United States, there was also a strong translation field of Mo Yan's novels. Some academic journals and well-known newspapers have published book reviews of contemporary Chinese literature, giving Mo Yan's novels a great attention and a great evaluation. In June 2000, *World Literature Today* published a series of commentary articles on Mo Yan's works. As a result, Mo Yan's novels began to receive international attention and enjoy high praises. Howard Goldblatt, the English translator of Mo Yan's works, vigorously promoted the translated English versions of Mo Yan's works. Each time when the translated English version of Mo Yan's novels were published, there would be a commentary article published to introduce the works by well-known western writers and critics. Among them, M. Thomas Inge and John Updike and other scholars, writers in the mainstream media all published literature reviews of Mo Yan's novels on *New Yorker*.

The U.S. publishing circle has given Mo Yan's works very high evaluation. The 1989 *Cox Book Review* described *The Song of Paradise Garlic Sprouts* as an "epic work", and the *Cox Book Review* in 2004 commented that Mo Yan's *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* "reflects China's past and reality".

Chinese Literature (Translation Review 2005 Special Issue No. 70), published critic Christopher Lupker's comment on *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*; Jonathan Spence published a review article on *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* called "Born Again" on *New York Times* on May 4th, 2008. Steven Moore published a comment on *Life and Death of Fatigue* in the *Washington Post*, Howard Goldblatt published "My writing life" in *Washington Post*, on April 28th, 2002; Shirley N. Quan published comment on *Life and Death of Fatigue* on April 1st, 2008 on *Library Journal*. Sinologist Wang Dewei, the chairman of the Judging Committee of the Second "Dream of Red Mansions Award", whose Mo Yan's works is also the main reason for the influence of Mo Yan's novels in the United States.

As the reputation of the work has risen in foreign literary circles, Mo Yan is often invited to participate in some overseas literary exchange activities, giving speeches at book fairs and being interviewed by local media, and local newspaper media will also introduce or comment on his novel creation. The world-renowned newspapers such as Time Weekly, The Times, The New York Times, and The Washington Post have published very positive book reviews, reports, or comments on Mo Yan's novels. Some of these review articles affirmed Mo Yan's uniqueness from an ideological point of view, some affirmed its innovativeness from a narrative skill and narrative point of view, some praised his rich imagination, and some appreciated the distortion of human nature in his works. Publishers Weekly commented: "If there is a Kafka in China, he is Mo Yan." In 2001, the American academic literary criticism journal World Literature Today awarded 40 novels in the past 75 years since 1927 as world's top literary masterpieces, among which Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* was selected as the only Chinese novel on the list.

Some scholars have conducted statistics on the number of collections of Mo Yan's works in global libraries, and found that the number of English translations of Mo Yan's works is the largest, even exceeding the number of Chinese original versions, which means that the influence of the English versions is more than other versions. Among them, the collection number of the English version of *Red Sorghum* is the highest, in collection in 644 libraries, of which 602 in US, 16 in Australia, 11 in Canada, 11, 2 in the United Kingdom, 2 in Hong Kong, 1 in Israel, 1 in Japan, 2 in Germany, and 2 in Taiwan, China. The English versions of other works of Mo Yan are also in large collection by university libraries in the west. For example, *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* is in collection by 618 libraries, *The Garlic Ballads* by 504 libraries, *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* by 472 libraries, *The Republic of Wine* by 398 libraries, and *Shifu, You'll Do Anything for a Laugh* by 357 libraries. The top seven English versions of Mo Yan's works are published by well-known American publishing houses, such as Viking Press in New York and the Arcade Publishing house in New York (He, 2012). The large collection of the books by the libraries in the West can reflect the value of Mo Yan's works, and most of these libraries are mainly university libraries and community libraries. It can be seen that the English translation of Howard

Goldblatt has won Mo Yan an extensive influence in the West. The cultural capital of well-known publishing houses and the cultural capital of the English translator combined make great promotion to the position of Mo Yan's novels in the western translated literature field.

Mo Yan's works have attracted the attention of various agents such as critics, well-known newspapers, publishing houses, and libraries in the field of foreign translation literature. With the joint efforts of various factors, Mo Yan's novels have occupied a place in the field of foreign translation literature.

INFLUENCE OF WESTERN LITERARY TRANSLATION FIELD ON THE HABITUS OF THE TRANSLATOR

Howard Goldblatt (2014) believes that translation can find foreign literature new readers and makes the author gain an international reputation and he thinks that although it is not a perfect way for readers to read the translated literature instead of the original ones, it might be the only way for the authors to gain international prestige. Swedish translator Chen Anna believes that the role of the American translator Howard Goldblatt cannot be forgotten in Mo Yan's winning the Nobel Prize in Literature. Without his English translation of Mo Yan's novels, it is difficult for Mo Yan to be known and accepted by the West. The famous German Sinologist Wolfgang Kubin (2012) believes that such a trademark as Howard Goldblatt has enabled Mo Yan to gain unprecedented influence in the English-speaking world. Mo Yan has become the most read Chinese writer in France which is largely due to his French translators' contribution. These senior French Sinologists have devoted themselves to the spread of Chinese literature, translating excellent literary works in the Chinese literary world, and having established a complete translation, publishing, distribution and marketing network in France.

A translator's habitus comes from interaction with the translation field. As a socialized individual translator, the translator's habitus is also affected by his personal cultural education experience, attitude to the original culture, relationship with the publisher, and the translator's own professionalism. Other constituent factors in the field will also affect the formation of the translator's habits. For example, in the field of translation, various factors of translators, editors, publishers, readers and markets are interwoven to affect the translator's habitus. Venuti (1998) believes that translation is to shape the local subject through the process of "learning" or self-knowledge. The translator selects a foreign text under the encouragement of the local standard, and then writes this standard specification into the text through a specific discourse strategy. Then, the reader of the translation recognizes himself by recognizing the local standards in the translation, and the foreign text becomes clear and understandable. So, what are the local standards that Howard Goldblatt followed in the translation of Mo Yan's novels? What local standards are reflected in the English translation of Mo Yan's novels?

Influence of Western Literature and Translation Norms on Source Text Selection and Translation Strategies of Howard Goldblatt

Itamar Even-Zohar (2010) believes that the translated works are related to the original work in two aspects: First, the source text is selected by the target literature, and the principle of selection is related to the local parallel system of the target literature; second, the specific norms, behaviors and policies adopted depend on their relationship with other local parallel systems. This relationship is not limited to the language level, but also involves all levels of choices. Venuti (2013) believes that "translation is an inevitable process of domestication", and in the process of translation, "foreign texts are marked with the imprint of a particular group of local language and cultural values which are easy to understand", so translators often "rewrite foreign texts in local dialects and discourse". Western mainstream literature occupies a dominant position or a central position in the literature of the whole world, accumulating profound cultural prestige, which has a wide range of forms, diverse techniques and can develop independently. Therefore, once the mainstream literary tradition is translated, it will endow its own cultural tradition to the original text (Venuti, 2013). The literary norms in western mainstream field of literature will also affect the translation norms, and thus the translator's habits. The English translator Howard Goldblatt of Mo Yan's novels believes that after a long period of evolution, western novels, that is, fiction, have been basically shaped in the twentieth century and there is an unwritten agreement on how to write a good work (Goldblatt, 2013). He thinks highly of the first sentence at the beginning of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gasil Marquez. But he thinks that it is difficult to find such a popular first sentence in Chinese novels. Chinese novels start with a long speech to introduce a place (Goldblatt, 2013). He also thinks that the beginning of such Chinese novels may attract domestic readers, but for English readers, it will create a gap and make them lose their ability to continue reading. Obviously, due to the influence of Western literary norms, the works that Howard Goldblatt chose to translate must have obvious characteristics of Western literary creation, which is deeply influenced by Western modernist writing and can resonate with Western readers, or enable Western readers to recognize the original local norms from the translated works. He believes that "if the design and writing of Chinese novels are rigorous and international, they can definitely go out" (Goldblatt, 2013) In the process of Howard Goldblatt's translation, due to the influence of western literary norms, western literary traditions are unconsciously assigned to the target text, which endows the target text the characteristics of western literature. In addition, under the influence of western literary tradition, most publishers, critics and readers have been paying great attention to the acceptability of the translated works which read smoothly and make people believe as the "original texts". Therefore, in order to achieve such a goal, if the translation is translated from a less dominant culture, the translator will often "cut" or "wrap up" parts of the original work to cater to the Western

tastes. And Chinese literature is clearly a subordinate literature in the weak culture. Based on the norms of western translation literature, English translators of Mo Yan's novels will inevitably follow the tradition of Western literature and "cut" or "wrap up" Mo Yan's novels during the English translation process.

The Influence of Translator's Attitude towards the Original Culture on Translator's Habitus in Source Texts Selection and Translation Strategies

The translator will take an attitude toward a certain cultural context, and the translator's cultural attitude will directly affect the choice of translation strategy. Since translators are across two cultures, translators can adopt different cultural attitudes in the face of original and target cultures. If the translator is biased and favors the original language culture, he is likely to adopt the strategy of foreignization. While if the translator favors the target language culture, his translation is likely to be domesticated translation. But if the translator is designed to communicate primitive culture and target culture, he is likely to make compromise between the original language culture and target language culture and thus to avoid the extreme strategy of domestication or foreignization (Bao, 2014). Howard Goldblatt, the English translator of Mo Yan's novels, has shown his extraordinary love for literature. He believes that literature can cultivate temperament and promote mutual understanding between different cultural traditions, so he has a very positive attitude of appreciation and learning towards the original culture. With a strong curiosity about different cultures, and he can actively feel the "difference" and "sameness" of other cultures and his own culture in literature works. He believes that a good story is the experience that people share the same heart and the same reason, and that although the backgrounds, lifestyles, political systems and philosophy are different; people, as human beings, all have many common and basic beliefs, hopes, emotions, and needs. It is these artistic forms that make literature attractive, often surpassing the external, short-lived form of human existence, and focusing on human temperament and condition. It is the process of learning that produces a deeper and clearer understanding of others, of ordinary people, or of yourself. When reading another era or other literary works, learning and understanding come from two aspects: Not only do we know the difference between people and ourselves, but we can constantly find out how similar we are. (Goldblatt, 1984) With a strong love for the Chinese language and translation of Chinese works, Howard Goldblatt is willing to serve the people of both cultures faithfully. He once expressed modestly in an interview with a reporter from *China Daily* under the interview title "My passion for translating Chinese literature", "I like reading Chinese, and I like writing in English. I like the challenge, ambiguity and uncertainty. I love the conflict between creativity and loyalty to the original, and the inevitable compromise that is ultimately inevitable. When I come across an exciting book, I will devote myself to the work of translating it. In other words, I translate and

therefore I am” (Goldblatt, 2008). Howard Goldblatt is also very confident in his ability to translate Chinese literature. He believes that “this may be the only thing I do well in the world”. He has a natural passion for translation, and thinks that for him “translation is like air”, and if there is no translation he can’t live (Goldblatt, 2008). With such a positive attitude towards Chinese literature and translation of Chinese literature, Howard Goldblatt tried to adopt the strategy of maintaining the heterogeneous cultural characteristics of the original as much as possible in the translation.

Howard Goldblatt’s translation of Chinese literature is mainly on fiction, and some prose and a small amount of poetry as well. He believes that the prose is the most difficult to translate. It is difficult to translate prose because prose is generally linguistically refined and concise in style, and the subject matter is closely related to the local culture and history. Thus, it is a great challenge for translators and readers. Therefore, Howard Goldblatt believes that not everyone has the ability to translate all genres such as poetry, novels, prose, and drama. He believes that every translator has a translation genre that he feels more comfortable with. His love for literature, his familiarity with Western literary traditions, and his understanding of the “differences” and “sameness” in literary works of different cultures enables him to have a high appreciation and translation ability for novels. He likes every novel by Mo Yan, and his works can be evaluated from the perspective of literary critics. In the 2009 Norman Award nomination speech, he gave quite incisive comments on the style characteristics of Mo Yan’s novels. In his recommendation, he said: “Most good novelists have difficulty maintaining a consistently high standard in their writing, but not Mo Yan. Each of his novels has been universally praised, and each demonstrates the depth and breadth of his exceptional talent. He is a master of diverse styles and forms, from fable to magic realism, hard-core realism, (post)modernism, and more. His imagery is striking, his tales often bewitching, and his characters richly appealing. He is, quite simply, one of a kind.” (Goldblatt, 2009).

The Influence of Editorial Evaluation Criteria on Translator’s Habitus in Source Text Selection and Translation Strategy

In the field of Western translation literature, the editor plays a decisive role in the process of translation literary works from translation to publication to reading. Howard Goldblatt talked about the process of translating his work in a self-interview. For some works which are not recommended by publishing house, Howard Goldblatt usually translates part of the book first, about thirty or fifty pages. Possibly, if the publisher is interested, then he will continue to complete the translation until publication. But if no publisher is interested, this translation can only be put on hold. This shows that the editors of the publishing house have a decisive influence on the final publication of the translated works. For novels whose English translation copyrights have already been purchased by the publishing house, Howard Goldblatt usually translates two or three novels at the same time, as he will

wait several months for the editor of the publishing house return the translated manuscript. During this period of time, Howard Goldblatt usually starts to translate a second book, and it is very likely that when he is in the middle of the translation of the second book, he receives the edited manuscript from the editors of the publishing house and then he will complete the revisions proposed by the editors. In the case where the editor of the publishing house participates in the translation process in such a meticulous manner, the final published manuscript inevitably bears the influence of the editor’s evaluation standard.

In a speech delivered at the Chinese Literature Translation Seminar-“Mirror Within the Mirror” at the East China Normal University in April 2014, Howard Goldblatt made clarification on some of the deletions and corrections in his translation. Since many Chinese readers, especially the media, always believed that he was not faithful to the translation of Mo Yan’s novels, and the deletion and modification were too often, Howard Goldblatt made an explanation, pointing out that most of the translations were edited by American or British publishers and that they did the deletion or modification on the translated draft versions. Since these English editors do not understand Chinese, and they do not understand Chinese society and culture, in the editing process, the only available criterion to judge the quality of a translated book is the smoothness of the English language in the translated book. In his self-interview, Howard Goldblatt quoted the request of the editor of Penguin Publishing House to cut down one-third of the original text when he translated and published *Wolf Totem*. As there are more than 500,000 English words with the novel *Wolf Totem*, the editor suggested to delete one-third of the content. The editor of Penguin Press wrote in a letter to Howard Goldblatt:

This novel is really good! The original is very challenging, you can translate it, and it is even more convincing to turn it so well. What we need to do next is to make this work more easily accepted by Western readers. What I have seen is mainly to make some (many) key deletions. How much to delete, I initially think about deleting about one-third. The novel has many repeated phrases and paragraphs, even concepts, but these should be easy to skim. (Goldblatt, 2014)

So in order to “make this work easier to be accepted by Western readers”, the editor decided to make some cuts to make the English version read smoothly. In the field of Western translation literature, the editors of publishing houses generally require that the translated work must read smoothly and be simple and transparent. As one of the agents in the literary field, the editor has a great right to speak. In many cases, writers also have to listen to the editor’s suggestions. Howard Goldblatt once pointed out, “Most world-famous writers have an amazing editor who helped them become great writers.” (Goldblatt, 2014) Howard Goldblatt respects the authority of editors more, he believes that “the most important supporting role of a work from writing to publishing and to reading is editing. The publisher purchases English copyright, and we (translators and authors) have to listen to them” (Goldblatt, 2014).

The Influence of Western Readers' Reading Habits on Translators' Habitus in Text Selection and Translation Strategy

Literature readers are in different strata, of different ages, genders, experiences, occupations, and different cultural accomplishments. Western readers often read foreign literary works in their own languages and in the context of Western literature, so they will have their own traditions and expectations out of the reading experience. Mo Yan once said: "You find someone who translates contemporary literary works well and sends them abroad to sell. Foreign readers may not buy them. They have their standards" (Shu, 2013). Generally speaking, Western readers will try to read works of foreign writers who can share with them their familiar habitus. If the foreign writers can resonate with them and remind them of the similar kind of western writers who are more familiar for them, such as Dickens, Faulkner, and Marquez, the works are easier to accept. Therefore, the similarity between Mo Yan's works and other Western writers has become a major reason why Howard Goldblatt chose Mo Yan's works to translate in consideration of his readers' reading habits. In addition, readers' reading habit is also one of the factors that affect Howard Goldblatt's choice of translation works and translation strategies. Howard Goldblatt believes that from the perspective of Chinese literary works that Americans like, the main types of literary works popular in the West are: "First is sex, a little more sex; the second is politics, a little more politics. There is another kind of detective novel. Some other more profound works are more difficult to sell." (Ji & Goldblatt, 2009). In addition, Howard Goldblatt also believes that American readers are eager to understand the current Chinese society. Therefore, compared to Chinese classical literature, "American readers pay more attention to the present, contemporary, and reforming and developing China. In addition to reading newspaper reports, they I also want to understand how writers view Chinese society. In addition, Americans are particularly interested in ironic, government-critical, and anti-singing works." (Luo, 2008). According to the above American readers' reading habits and standards, Mo Yan's works are mainly based on sex and history. Some of the works involve Chinese political system and are ironically criticized, fully in line with Western readers' reading expectations. Hunting for exotic cultures and glimpses of Chinese political characteristics in literature.

The Impact of Book Markets on Translators' Habitus of Text Selection in the Field of Western Literature

Hassan believes that in an era of globalization, non-Western writers and their works began to enter the world literature, but these writers are selective, such criticism and academic selection for non-Western texts often reflect the powerful new paradigm with control. (Wail, 2008) Howard Goldblatt's most decisive criterion in choosing who to translate and who does not translate is to ensure that The West can find a publisher. He believes that "the market must be considered." (Goldblatt, 2013) This can be proved from

the translation process of his works. For example, he sent Liang Xiaoshen's *Confessions of a Red Guard* and a novel written by a Taiwanese writer on the theme of Xiao Hong to several publishing houses, but no publishing house is willing to publish in the United States. Howard Goldblatt once analyzed in detail the market constraints on the publication of translated literary works in different periods. He pointed out that another important consideration when selecting works for translation is the market. In the early days of his translation career, only the English translations of Chinese classics literary works were published. Anglo-American University Press is the main channel for such works. The translation of modern and contemporary novels into English began to appear in the 1980s (mainly through University Press). Although sales and critics and accepting foreign literature lovers far from matching, but it is not a translator of interest, because most translators have academic positions and a stable salary, except for a translator to work outside Asia publishers, a full-time translator It does not exist. Later, commercial publishing houses became interested in Chinese creation. Although the translators were underpaid, their work was increasingly recognized, and the translators became an important contributor to global literary production (Goldblatt, 2014). For economic, political, and even ideological reasons, it is difficult to sell the English translation versions of Chinese novels. After spending half a year translating a collection of novels and stories, translators still can't guarantee that the works will have a happy ending, so commercial and academic publishers have to find popular works.

HABITUS OF HOWARD GOLDBLATT IN THE WESTERN TRANSLATION FIELD

In the field of Western translation literature, Western literary traditions, translation norms, translation literature occupies a place in domestic literature, individual translators' attitudes towards the original culture, publishers' evaluation standards, readers' reading habits, and the Western book market. As a result, Howard Goldblatt, an English translator of Mo Yan's novels, formed the following habits in choosing the translation text and how to translate it.

Source Text Selection

Howard Goldblatt attaches great importance to the choice of text. He believes that determining who to choose to introduce, what to translate, when to introduce, and when to translate will be critical to the entry of Chinese contemporary literary works into the mainstream of Western literature. Howard Goldblatt believes that translators bear great responsibility in the choice of text. He said, "The most important task of translation is to choose, not to translate. I want to pick a work that must be more suitable for my taste, and I like it more. Some American critics think that Chinese literature has a very common problem. It's all written dark, contradictory, and bad between people, but it's actually not the case, because most of the works are selected by translators. This is not a good status quo, and I'm re-

sponsible for this Take responsibility, but I cannot violate my own requirements and principles.” (Goldblatt, 2014) His own requirements and principles largely depend on personal preferences, including content, style, and even personal intuition, including the translator’s attitude towards the original culture. Although some choices are accidental, because authors, agents, publishers, editors, etc. in the translation field will provide translation opportunities or make translation requests, it is ultimately the decision of the translator to decide or reject what to choose. (Goldblatt, 2014) Some people think that Howard Goldblatt’s translation of Chinese literature to readers has a clear tendency to be based on personal preferences, and therefore cannot represent the work that Chinese readers usually read. For this criticism, Howard Goldblatt admitted and asked “why do translators want to It took months to translate something that he did not like personally, or the quality was not high, or the reader should not be affected by it? (Goldblatt, 2014) He once said frankly that there are only two conditions for his choice of translation: one is that “I like and (the book) is suitable for me to translate”; the other is “considering whether there is a market and readers.” Because in the United States, if a book is not sold out within three weeks, it will be returned to the publishing house, or dealt at a discount, or even burned out. The operation mode of the market economy will undoubtedly affect the publication (Luo, 2008). Howard Goldblatt also talked about someone criticizing his selection of works as “dark” and ugly as the standard. He interpreted this as strictly following the “market principle”. “When I see a work of novel, even if the Chinese like it specifically, but if I think it is foreign and there is no market for it, I will not touch it. I basically look at it from the perspective of a “foreigner”. Howard Goldblatt chose to translate the novels most by Mo Yan and Su Tong’s, whose novels show the ugliness and vices in Chinese society and Chinese human nature, such as *Sandalwood Death*, *The Republic of Wine*, *Rice*, etc. On the evil side, there are many scenes of lust and violence. Howard Goldblatt once admitted that he basically agrees with the saying that “humanity is evil”, which may also be a basis for his selection of the theme of the translated material, as he commented on Su Tong’s novels, “I like his works, especially “*My Emperor’s Career*” and “*Rice*” are particularly well written. The theme of the novel is dark, and there is no good person, there is nothing good (in the novel). He wrote all the bad side, and even suppressed the good side, so the inner world of those people he described is really rich, and I basically agree that ‘human nature is evil’ (Goldblatt, 2014).

The translator’s selection of translation materials is also affected by external factors. In an interview Howard Goldblatt once reviewed his experience of selecting translation materials. He reviewed that when he first translated in the 1970s, there was no publisher or writer looking for someone to translate, nor did he Agent, so I chose to read a book by myself, and then put it there after reading it, completely out of personal interest (Yan & Goldblatt, 2014). Later, the publisher asked him to translate. Yan (2013) found that in the 1976-1990, the works that Howard Goldblatt selected

to translate were mainly of academic interest and political factors, 1991-2000 years based on literary preferences and market factors, and 2001-2010 in the market to influence More than its literary preference (Yan, 2013). Howard Goldblatt translated more than 40 Chinese modern and contemporary novels, reflecting his personal preferences and the literary field he focuses on. He once proudly declared that his translation basically represents Chinese novels and short stories that English readers can get the essence of the novel.

Translation Specifications

Regarding the essence of translation, Howard Goldblatt believes that translation is a rewriting process. He said, “To improve and perfect the original work is a temptation hard to resist. By its very nature, translating is to some extent an effort of domesticating and modernizing, a genuine transformation,... as long as there is no error as great as the wrong choice of word or sentence, my responsibility is to faithfully reproduce the original author’s meaning (or rather, my personal interpretation of the author’s meaning), not necessarily to reproduce what was written by the author” (Goldblatt, 2013). It can be seen from here that Howard Goldblatt has been trying to find a compromise and balance between “domesticating” and “modernizing”. His “loyalty” to the original work does not appear in the translation of “what is written by the author”, which means literally, but to the faithful reproduction of the author’s meaning, that is, his understanding and interpretation of the author’s intention. So does his understanding and interpretation of the author’s meaning reveal “values, beliefs, and concepts in the cultural environment of the translation” as Venuti believes?

About for whom to translate, Howard Goldblatt believes it is for the foreign readers who turn to the translated works. Although translators have multiple responsibilities, “be responsible for the author, for the text, and for the readers” (Goldblatt, 2013) but he felt that “the most important thing is to be responsible for the readers, not the author.” In response to Mo Yan’s comment, when a writer is writing his works, he should leave the translator behind, and only in this way can he write in his own style, the Chinese style.” Howard Goldblatt believes, “Mo Yan can say this because he is not writing for us translators or foreign readers. But what about the target readers who read the author’s work through translation? Should the translator not hesitate to sacrifice the fluency of the translation, but to stick to the original text as much as possible to please the author? Of course the answer is no”. Therefore, he believes that “the author does not write for himself or for the translator, but for his readers, so we are translating for readers, for the foreign readers.” (Goldblatt, 2013)

Regarding the methods of translation, Howard Goldblatt adopted omission and deletion for certain allusions. In the “Translator’s Notes” of Wang Shuo’s *Don’t Treat Me as a Human*, Howard Goldblatt explained the reason that he did not use “annotations or other means” for some allusions, because he believed that those obscure allusions did not affect the development of the novel. It does not increase the

interest of reading, so it is fine delete the translation. In the foreword to the English translation of Mo Yan's *Republic of Wine*, Howard Goldblatt also made a similar statement, "Translation of all puns and allusions basically fails to achieve the purpose, especially considering that non-Chinese readers simply cannot fully understand them." Howard Goldblatt opposed the practice of inserting translator's comment in the translation of novels. He believes that it is best to put the comments in order of translation or at the end of the text, or to integrate them into the story. The comments should not affect the readability of the novel. In the English translation of Bi Feiyu's *The Moon Opera*, Howard Goldblatt attached a glossary at the end of the book to explain the Chinese drama vocabulary and characters such as "Dan" and "Chou". In the English translation version of Mo Yan's *Sandalwood Death* published in 2012, Howard Goldblatt explained in the translator's notes the reason why he retained the original Chinese pronunciation of some proper names instead of translating them into English. He pays attention to the readability of the translation, as far as possible, on the basis of maintaining the original appearance of the original text, using various means to simplify the original text and enhance the readability of the translation. In the English translation of Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem*, many parts involving Chinese history and literary allusions have been cut down, but where it may hinder readers' acceptance, Howard Goldblatt deliberately added relevant background information to the corresponding parts of the text. Obviously, the translator always takes the reader's "acceptability" as the reference coordinate of his translation behavior.

Translation Style of Howard Goldblatt

Howard Goldblatt's translation is not a word for word translation, not even a paragraph by paragraph translation, but an overall rewriting. In this way, the weakness of the original work can be avoided, as in Wolfgang Kubin's comments, "Howard Goldblatt used a very clever way to translate the original into English. He did not translate word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, he translated it as a whole. This is a popular translation in Europe since about the 18th century. That is to say, Howard Goldblatt knew the author's weaknesses clearly. He sorted everything out and then translated it into English, the language is better than the original Chinese. He has been doing this for many years, so he is in the translation market reached remarkable achievements, and because of this, the works of these Chinese writers were translated from English to German, not from Chinese to German." (Beijing News, 2012). Gladys Yang, the wife of Yang Xianyi, a senior Chinese translator once commented that Howard Goldblatt paints Chinese literature in the colors of contemporary British and American literature. This translation method largely beautifies the original Chinese. With "accuracy", "readability" and "acceptability" as his literary translation ideas, Howard Goldblatt believes that the ideal translation should be as American scholar Horst Frenz put it, "Contemporary works using modern vocabulary and word order,

out of the expression of our time, and they should not look like translated works." (Goldblatt, 2014)

INTERACTION OF HABITUS BETWEEN THE TRANSLATOR AND THE AUTHOR

Howard Goldblatt's personal understanding of literature and Western readers' reading habits have formed his own unique habit of selecting texts for translation, and it endows him a special preference for Mo Yan's works. Howard Goldblatt believes that Mo Yan's novels have a more "historical sense" than other Chinese writers of his time. He believes that Mo Yan can grasp the readers' attention from the historical perspective whether it is the theme of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom or the Cultural Revolution." (Goldblatt, 2012) He expressed that he really liked all of Mo Yan's novels, each of which has its own unique features. He commented that *The Republic of Wine* may be the most imaginative and most creative of the Chinese novels he has read; *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* can be called a talented long fable; *Sandalwood Death* is extremely rich in music. (Ibid) When a translator of the work of the source text normally has a "selective resonance" or "elective affinity", even if he can not completely translated in essence the work which he chose to be translated, at least he can reflect on resonance of this work (Shaw, 1982). In fact, this "selective resonance" reflects exactly the agreement between the habit of the author and the habit of the translator. Domestic scholars also believe that if the translator's "long-term cultural background" is consistent with that of the original work, it is often possible to achieve successful understanding and translation. The higher the degree of agreement between the two, the better the effect of understanding and translation (Yang, 2000). It also shows that if the translator's habitus is consistent with the author's habitus, the translator's understanding of the original work is more accurate with better translation. Just as Fu Lei chose to translate Balzac, Ye Junjian chose to translate Andersen, Bing Xin chose to translate Tagore, Zhu Shenghao chose to translate Shakespeare, Ru Long chose to translate Chekhov, etc. Yang Wuneng (2000) believes that the translator and the author should know each other -- the author himself, his ability, hobbies, temperament and style of writing; the other, everything about the original author and the original work, such as the original author's thoughts and life, the era of the original writing. The background of the personal life of the society and even the writer's personal life, the ideological connotation and artistic style of the original, etc.

Howard Goldblatt deeply understands Mo Yan and the characteristics of his works. He believes that *Red Sorghum* ushered in a new era of Chinese literature in the post-Mao era. Howard Goldblatt appreciates Mo Yan's view of "continuing to resurrect and reshape historical novels" in the novels after *Red Sorghum*, which frequently echoes Edward Gibbon's view that "history. is almost a record of human crimes, stupidity and disaster" (Goldblatt, 2014). Howard Goldblatt expressed an accurate understanding of Mo Yan's creation in the translator's preface of the English version of *Big Breast and Wide Hips*. In fact, all of Mo Yan's novels

are based on the fictional hometown of Gaomi County in Northeast China. The stories heard from grandfather and relatives fueled his rich imagination, and Howard Goldblatt found a flashpoint in a series of huge, vibrant, and controversial novels. (Goldblatt, 2010) In addition, Howard Goldblatt also has an incisive evaluation of the characteristics of Mo Yan's novels: "This novelist is not interested in official history and documented 'facts', but is accustomed to using folk beliefs, bizarre animal images and different Imaginative narrative skills, mixed with historical reality (national and local, official and popular) to create unique literature, the only satisfactory literature" (Goldblatt, 2010). Therefore, he believes that these works have the theme of attracting the world's attention and the image of moving hearts, and it is easy to cross the border and be accepted and understood by foreign readers, which is why Mo Yan's novels attract him to translate.

CONCLUSION

With translation being a social behavior, various factors including translators, editors, publishers, readers, markets, etc. are interwoven to affect the translator's habitus in the field of translation. The translator's habitus comes from his interaction with the translation field. As a socialized individual translator, translator's behavior is also affected by his personal cultural education experience, attitude to the original culture, relationship with the publisher, and his own professionalism. The combined habitus of the author and the translator determines the quality of the original text and the translated text, and with his own unique habitus and capital in a variety of translation of domain-specific translation field, the translator's translation activities gradually determine the status of translated works in the target language translation field. Due to the interacts of the English translator- Howard Goldblatt's habitus and his translation in the target language translation field, Mo Yan's novels were given an important position in the western system of translation literature as world literature. Therefore, Mo Yan's novel can be said to have had an effective life of the world literature, and it can also be said that Mo Yan's novels benefit from translation.

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