

HPEN7022 BUILDING SMALL WORLDS: THE SHORT STORY IN ENGLISH

CRITICAL COMMENTARY GUIDE

Edwin Gentzler notes the cultural turn of literary translation in 'redefining the object of study as a verbal text within the network of literary and extraliterary signs in both the source and target cultures.' (p.xi) He quotes from Bassnett's essay 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies' which argues that translation

could offer a way of understanding how complex manipulative textual processes take place: how a text is selected for translation ... what role the translator plays in that selection, what the role of an editor , publisher, or patron plays, what criteria determined the strategies that will be employed for the translators, and how a text might be received in the target system.

'Foreword,' to Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays in Literary Translation*, (2001)

A. IF YOU ARE TRANSLATING A SHORT STORY, YOUR COMMENTARY SHOULD INCLUDE

1. *Why you have selected this particular text for translation*

This might include

- form and content: a similarity or dissimilarity to the stories we have looked at in English
- cultural capital: a sense of the cultural importance of this writer or this particular text in China
- poetics: the particular interest of the individual story or writer

2. *What criteria determined the strategies that you employed in your translation*

This might include

- questions of faithfulness to the original text (the Jerome model)
- questions of accessibility to the target reader (the Horatian model)
- an accommodation of the cultural context of the source text (possible expansion of certain details – not footnotes)

3. *any particular problems you encountered and how you managed them*

4. *(Finally) how you hope the text will be received by your target readership.*

- understanding of difference, understanding of similarity, a broader interest in China, pleasure in the story.... (anything else?)

B. IF YOU ARE COMMENTING ON A TRANSLATION OF A SHORT STORY, YOUR COMMENTARY SHOULD DISCUSS

1. *Why you have selected this translation*

you might consider

- form and content: a similarity or dissimilarity to the stories we have looked at in English
- cultural capital: a sense of the cultural importance of this writer or this particular text in China
- poetics: the particular interest of the individual story or writer

2. *The strategies employed by the translator and how they affect the final text*

This might include

- questions of faithfulness to the original text (the Jerome model)
- questions of accessibility to the target reader (the Horatian model)
- an expression of the cultural context of the source text

3. *Any particular problems you see in the translation*

4. *Any particular strengths in the translation*

5. *Anything else of interest*