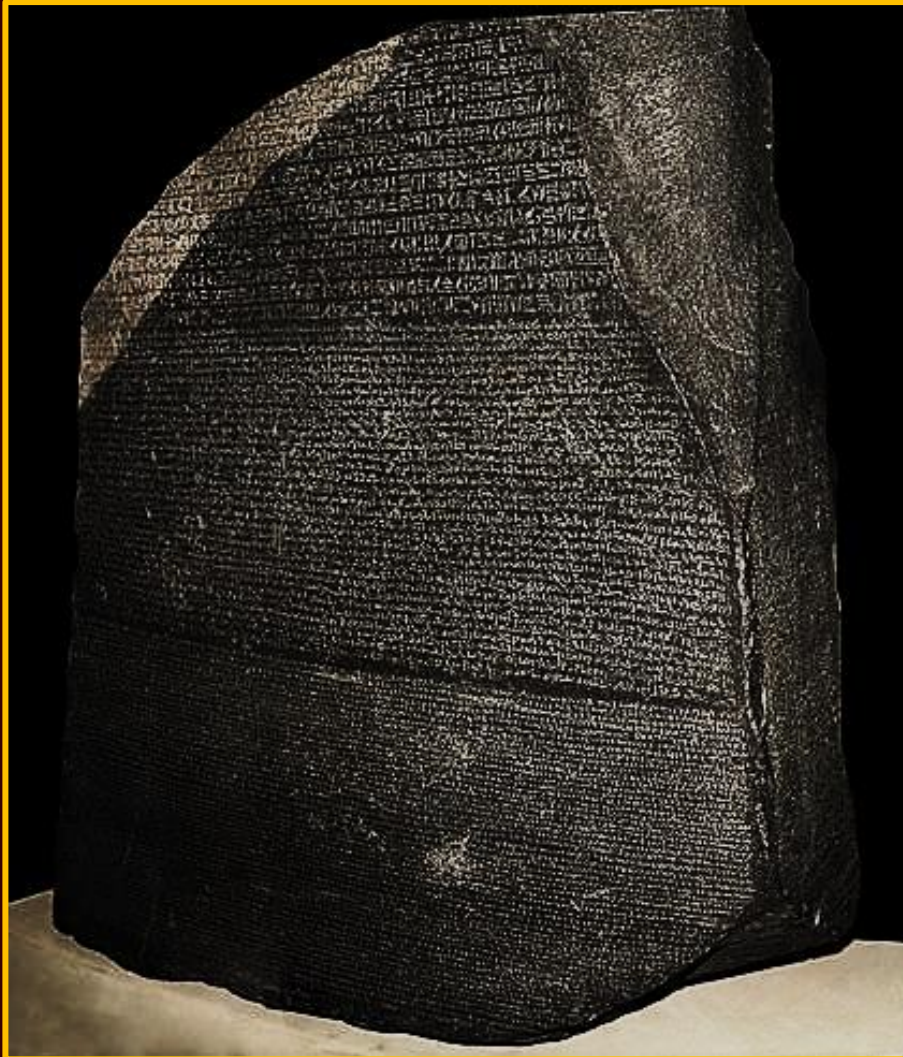


HPEN7022: BUILDING SMALL WORLDS

THE SHORT STORY IN ENGLISH



The curse of mortality is that we get one life, one point of view, at a single point in time at most. If we are lucky, we know a few languages to access the world and understand it. But writing cheats that" Jarred McGinnis

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- To examine the provenance & meaning of the short story in English;
- To understand the significance of the short story as a vehicle of cultural expression in minority cultures within the UK & former colonies;
- To explore the proliferation of short stories in translation;
- To demonstrate this understanding of meaning & technique in the translation of a short story from the students' home language(s) into English, or from close readings of translated short stories.

Places we love exist only through us,
Space destroyed is only illusion in the constancy of time,
Places we love we can never leave,
Places we love together, together, together,

And is this room really a room, or an embrace,
And what is beneath the window: a street or years?
And the window is only the imprint left by
The first rain we understood, returning endlessly,

And this wall does not define the room, but perhaps the night
Your son began to move in your sleeping blood,
A son like a butterfly of flame in your hall of mirrors,
The night you were frightened by your own light,

And this door leads into any afternoon
Which outlives it, forever peopled
With your casual movements, as you stepped,
Like fire into copper, into my only memory;

When you go, space closes over like water behind you,
Do not look back: there is nothing outside you,
Space is only time visible in a different way,
Places we love we can never leave.

PLACES WE LOVE

Ivan V. Lalic

(*tr* Francis R. Jones)

WHAT HAPPENS IN LITERARY TRANSLATION?

Lin Shu (1852-1924) was one of the most influential translators in China. Not knowing the ABC of any foreign language, Lin Shu, in collaboration with those who were well versed in foreign languages, translated more than one hundred and eighty works by ninety-eight writers from eleven countries. Among one hundred and sixty-three fictions he translated, approximately forty ones were world classics. It was Lin Shu who first introduced Dickens, Shakespeare, Scott, Irving and other literary legends into China.

Lin Shu's Chinese translations of foreign novels at the turn of the twentieth century, contributing partly to the emergence of modern Chinese language and literature, have been criticized for their unfaithfulness and rewriting of the source texts. However, from the perspective of intercultural communication, his rewriting strategies, presenting certain patterns, become valuable clues of cultural mediation and ideological manipulation in his time.

Lin Zhu, 'Rewritings in translation as clues of cultural mediation and ideological manipulation: a case study of Lin Shu's translation of *David Copperfield*,' *Neohelicon* vol. 45 (2018), 351–366

RETHINKING TRANSLATION STUDIES

... translation studies scholars were beginning to show that translations rather than being a secondary and derivative genre, were instead one of the *primary* literary tools that larger social institutions - educational systems, arts councils, publishing firms, and even governments - had at their disposal to 'manipulate' a given society in order to 'construct' the kind of 'culture' desired. Churches would commission Bible translation; governments would support national epic translations; schools would teach great book translations; kings would be patrons for heroic conquests translation; socialist regimes would underwrite socialist realism translations. [...]

A real breakthrough for the field of translation studies came in the 1990s with the collection of essays titled *Translation, History, and Culture*, co-edited by Bassnett and Lefevere. ... the authors redefining the object of study as a verbal text within the network of literary and extraliterary signs in both the source and target cultures. ...

[they suggest such a redefinition]

could offer a way of understanding how complex manipulative textual process is 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.

Edwin Gentzler, 'Foreword,' to Bassnett & Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays in Literary Translation*, 2001

Supporting a thesis posited by poet and translator Frederick Will (1993) in *Translation, Theory and Practise: Reassembling the Tower*, Bassnett argues that texts consist of language - nouns, verbs, grammatical patterns - the very material with which translators work to construct their translations. Citing famous translators such as Ezra Pound, Augusto de Campos , Yves Bonnefoy, and Octavio Paz, Bassnett argues the task of the translator is to dismantle the raw linguistic material of the poet, and to reassemble the signs in a new language. The task is less to copy an original but to compose an analogous text. Paz suggests we think in terms of transmutation; Bassnett suggests that we think in terms of transplanting a seed. ...

Quoting Homi Babha's citation of Paul de Man from *The Location of Culture* ((1994), Bassnett argues that translations provided the scholar with actual situations of cultural transfer rather than hypothetical situations: translation, de Man notes, 'puts the original in motion to decanonise it, giving it movement of fragmentation , a wandering or errance , a kind of permanent exile.' For Bassnett, this image of translation as a sign of fragmentation, wondering, and exile, characterises the new internationalist phase of cultural studies in the late 20th century.

Edwin Gentzler,

The days of **the Jerome model** are now numbered, at least in the West. The model is characterised by the presence of a central, sacred text, that of the Bible which must be translated with the utmost fidelity, ... Precisely because it could never be realised, the ideal continued to haunt translators and those who thought about translation over the centuries. ... **To be able to elevate faithfulness to this central position, to the exclusion of many other factors, the Jerome model had to reduce thinking about translation to the linguistic level only.**

because The Bible no longer exerts such powerful influence as a sacred text in the West ... thinking about translation has been able to move away from the increasingly sterile faithful/free opposition, and that it has been able to redefine equivalence, which is no longer seen as the mechanical matching of words in dictionaries, but rather as a strategic choice made by translators. ... **they are free to opt for the kind of faithfulness that will ensure, in their opinion , that a given text is received by the target audience in optimal conditions.**

In **the Horatian model** there is no sacred text, but **there definitely is a privileged language**, namely Latin. This implies that negotiation is, in the end, always slanted towards the privileged language, ...the parallels between the position of Latin in Horace's time and English today or interestingly close. ... Translations into English, particularly from third world languages, are almost invariably slanted towards English: ...everything foreign and exotic is standardised to a greater extent. At least this is the case **with texts that can be considered to build the cultural capital of a civilization.**

Bassnett & Lefevere, 'Where are we in Translation Studies;' *Constructing Cultures*,

LIN SHU: THE CULTURAL PROBLEM OF FIDELITY

Despite much infidelity to the original, Lin Shu's versions in classical Chinese opened a window of foreign literature to Chinese and imported new ideas, literary concepts, styles and techniques from the West. These, in turn, played a significant role in the development of Chinese society and the modernization of Chinese literature in particular. It's Lin Shu's translation like a grinder to the original that widened Chinese horizon and resulted in the turbulent tidewater of literary translation since the *New Culture Movement* (1915-1919). It can be said that Lin Shu initiated regular literary translation in China.

Nevertheless, the criticism of Lin Shu's translation has usually been negative, highlighting its unfaithfulness to the original. Moreover, many a research has focused on the analysis of distortion in his translation to the source text and the discussion has rested upon whether he is worthy of the honor a "translator". In this kind of research, the traditional notion of "faithfulness" is adopted as the criterion to evaluate Lin Shu's translated works. So his translated works were often criticized. The concise classical language Lin Shu adopted to produce his versions is also one focus of the debate.

Xu Jianzhong, 'Re-Evaluation of Lin Shu (the Chinese Translator): A Systemic Approach to Literary Translation' *Translation Today* Vol. 2 No. 2 Oct. 2005

NICHOLAI GOGOL, 'THE NOSE' (Extracts)

Kovaloff, the member of the Municipal Committee, awoke fairly early that morning, and made a droning noise—"Brr! Brr!"—through his lips, as he always did, though he could not say why. He stretched himself, and told his valet to give him a little mirror which was on the table. He wished to look at the heat-boil which had appeared on his nose the previous evening; but to his great astonishment, he saw that instead of his nose he had a perfectly smooth vacancy in his face. Thoroughly alarmed, he ordered some water to be brought, and rubbed his eyes with a towel. Sure enough, he had no longer a nose! Then he sprang out of bed, and shook himself violently! No, no nose any more! He dressed himself and went at once to the police superintendent.

But before proceeding further, we must certainly give the reader some information about Kovaloff, so that he may know what sort of a man this member of the Municipal Committee really was. These committee-men, who obtain that title by means of certificates of learning, must not be compared with the committee-men appointed for the Caucasus district, who are of quite a different kind. The learned committee-man—but Russia is such a wonderful country that when one committee-man is spoken of all the others from Riga to Kamschatka refer it to themselves. The same is also true of all other titled officials. Kovaloff had been a Caucasian committee-man two years previously, and could not forget that he had occupied that position; but in order to enhance his own importance, he never called himself "committee-man" but "Major."

..A carriage drew up at the entrance; the carriage door was opened, and a gentleman in uniform came out and hurried up the steps. How great was Kovaloff's terror and astonishment when he saw that it was his own nose!

At this extraordinary sight, everything seemed to turn round with him. He felt as though he could hardly keep upright on his legs; but, though trembling all over as though with fever, he resolved to wait till the nose should return to the carriage. After about two minutes the nose actually came out again. It wore a gold-embroidered uniform with a stiff, high collar, trousers of chamois leather, and a sword hung at its side. The hat, adorned with a plume, showed that it held the rank of a state-councillor. It was obvious that it was paying "duty-calls." It looked round on both sides, called to the coachman "Drive on," and got into the carriage, which drove away.

Poor Kovaloff nearly lost his reason. He did not know what to think of this extraordinary procedure. And indeed how was it possible that the nose, which only yesterday he had on his face, and which could neither walk nor drive, should wear a uniform. He ran after the carriage, which fortunately had stopped a short way off before the Grand Bazar of Moscow. He hurried towards it and pressed through a crowd of beggar-women with their faces bound up, leaving only two openings for the eyes, over whom he had formerly so often made merry.

There were only a few people in front of the Bazar. Kovaloff was so agitated that he could decide on nothing, and looked for the nose everywhere. At last he saw it standing before a shop. It seemed half buried in its stiff collar, and was attentively inspecting the wares displayed.

"How can I get at it?" thought Kovaloff. "Everything—the uniform, the hat, and so on—show that it is a state-councillor. How the deuce has that happened?"

He began to cough discreetly near it, but the nose paid him not the least attention.

“Honourable sir,” said Kovaloff at last, plucking up courage, “honourable sir.”

“What do you want?” asked the nose, and turned round.

“It seems to me strange, most respected sir—you should know where you belong—and I find you all of a sudden—where? Judge yourself.”

“Pardon me, I do not understand what you are talking about. Explain yourself more distinctly.”

“How shall I make my meaning plainer to him?” Then plucking up fresh courage, he continued, “Naturally—besides I am a Major. You must admit it is not befitting that I should go about without a nose. An old apple-woman on the Ascension Bridge may carry on her business without one, but since I am on the look out for a post; besides in many houses I am acquainted with ladies of high position—Madame Tchektyriev, wife of a state-councillor, and many others. So you see—I do not know, honourable sir, what you——” (here the Major shrugged his shoulders). “Pardon me; if one regards the matter from the point of view of duty and honour—you will yourself understand——”

“I understand nothing,” answered the nose. “I repeat, please explain yourself more distinctly.”

“Honourable sir,” said Kovaloff with dignity, “I do not know how I am to understand your words. It seems to me the matter is as clear as possible. Or do you wish—but you are after all my own nose!”

The nose looked at the Major and wrinkled its forehead. “There you are wrong, respected sir; I am myself. Besides, there can be no close relations between us. To judge by the buttons of your uniform, you must be in quite a different department to mine.” So saying, the nose turned away.

DISCUSSION

1. What are the characteristics of Gogol's text ?
2. How would you translate it into Chinese?
3. How to accommodate it to Chinese grids of expectations but not lose its sense of cultural difference?

HOW TO ACCOMMODATE CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

Traditional Chinese literature is characteristic of lineal and chronological narration. The narration in chronological order can tell a story from the beginning to the end, to which Chinese readers were accustomed in early modern China. On the contrary, flashback and insertion are often used in Western fictions. Lin Shu dealt with flashback or insertion in Western novels by adding some information to indicate the narrative time for readers.

The narrative structure of Chinese classical novels basically focuses on characters and plots, but the narrative structure of Western fictions emphasizes not only characters and plots but also settings. Chinese readers in early modern China were fond of reading novels with cleverly structured and complicated plots. They paid little or no attention to descriptions of natural environment or the characters' psychology (ibid: 109). Considering readers' reading habit, translators at that time including Lin Shu usually deleted descriptions of settings which Chinese readers did not expect to read

BREAK

DIFFERENT TRANSLATION MODES

In Lefevere's concept, literary systems do not occur in a void, but in the ideological milieu of an era (Gentzler, 2004: 136). This system is one of society, a constellation of systems. The literary system is under the control of two mechanisms. One is from the inside of the literary system to keep order within the system. Here the determinant factor is poetics. The other is from the outside of the literary system to “secure the relations between literature and its environment” (Hermans, 2004: 126). Here the key term is ideology. Lefevere defined ideology as “the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time and through which readers and translators approach texts” (ibid: 126-127). By patronage, Lefevere means “something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature” (Lefevere, 2004: 15). Ideology is the main concern of patronage (ibid.). Poetics is “the dominant concept of what literature should be, or can be allowed to be, in a given society” (Hermans, 2004: 127). Lefevere claimed that “rewritings” including translations “are of crucial social and cultural relevance because they determine the ‘image’ of a literary work when direct access to that work is limited or nonexistent” and “all rewritings, then, take place under the constraints of patronage, ideology and poetics” (ibid: 128).

Xu Jianzhong,

When we started betting there wasn't anything yet that might lead you to foresee anything, except for a few particles spinning around, some electrons scattered here and there at random, and protons all more or less on their own. I started feeling a bit strange, as if there was going to be a change of weather (in fact, it had grown slightly cold), and so I said: "You want to bet we're heading for atoms today?" And Dean (k)yK said: "Oh, cut it out. Atoms! Nothing of the sort, and I'll bet you anything you say."

So I said: "Would you even bet ix?"

The Dean answered: "Ix raised to en!"

He had no sooner finished saying this than around each proton its electron started whirling and buzzing. An enormous hydrogen cloud was condensing in space. "You see? Full of atoms!"

"Oh, if you call that stuff atoms!" (k)yK said; he had the bad habit of putting up an argument, instead of admitting he had lost a bet.

We were always betting, the Dean and I, because there was really nothing else to do, and also because the only proof I existed was that I bet with him, and the only proof he existed was that he bet with me. We bet on what events would or would not take place; the choice was virtually unlimited, because up till then absolutely nothing had happened. But since there wasn't even a way to imagine how an event might be, we designated it in a kind of code: Event A, Event B, Event C, and so on, just to distinguish one from the other. What I mean is: since there were no alphabets in existence then or any other series of accepted signs, first we bet on how a series of signs might be and then we matched these possible signs with various possible events, in order to identify with sufficient precision matters that we still didn't know a thing about.

Italo Calvino, 'Cosmicomics' (extract 1)

As a rule, I bet on the possibility of a certain event's taking place, whereas the Dean almost always bet against it. He had a static sense of reality, old (k)yK, if I may express myself in these terms, since between static and dynamic at that time there wasn't the difference there is nowadays, or in any case you had to be very careful in grasping it, that difference.

For example, the stars began to swell, and I said: "How much?" I tried to lead our predictions into the field of numbers, where he would have less to argue about.

At that time there were only two numbers: the number e and the number π . The Dean did some figuring, by and large, and answered: "They'll grow to e raised to π ." Trying to act smart! Any fool could have told that much. But matters weren't so simple, as I had realized. "You want to bet they stop, at a certain point?"

"All right. When are they going to stop?"

And with my usual bravado, I came out with my π . He swallowed it. The Dean was dumbfounded.

From that moment on we began to bet on the basis of e and π .

" π !" the Dean shouted, in the midst of the darkness and the scattered flashes. But instead that was the time it was e . We did it all for fun, obviously; because there was nothing in it for us, as far as earning went.

When the elements began to be formed, we started evaluating our bets in atoms of the rarer elements, and this is where I made a mistake. I had seen that the rarest of all was technetium, so I started betting technetium and winning, and hoarding: I built up a capital of technetium. I hadn't foreseen it was an unstable element that dissolved in radiations: suddenly I had to start all over again, from zero.

Naturally, I made some wrong bets, too, but then I got ahead again and I could allow myself a few risky prognostications.

Italo Calvino, 'Cosmicomics' (extract 2)

These bets, obviously, were long-term affairs, more than the others; not like some cases, where the result was immediately known. "You see that Sun over there, the one being formed with an ellipsoid all around it? Quick before the planets are formed: how far will the orbits be from one another?"

The words were hardly out of my mouth when, in the space of eight or nine--what am I saying?--six or seven hundred million years, the planets started revolving each in its orbit, not a whit more narrow nor a whit wider.

I got much more satisfaction, however, from the bets we had to bear in mind for billions and billions of years, without forgetting what we had bet on, and remembering the shorter-term bets at the same time, and the number (the era of whole numbers had begun, and this complicated matters a bit) of bets each of us had won, the sum of the stakes (my advantage kept growing; the Dean was up to his ears in debt). And in addition to all this I had to dream up new bets, further and further ahead in the chain of my deductions.

"On February 8, 1926, at Santhia, in the Province of Vercelli--got that? At number 18 in Via Garibaldi--you follow me? Signorina Giuseppina Pensotti, aged twenty-two, leaves her home at quarter to six in the afternoon: does she turn right or left?"

"Mmmmm . . . " (k)yK said.

"Come on, quickly. I say she turns right . . . " And through the dust nebulae, furrowed by the orbits of the constellations, I could already see the wispy evening mist rise in the streets of Santhia, the faint light of a street lamp barely outlining the sidewalk in the snow, illuminating for a moment the slim shadow of Giuseppina Pensotti as she turned the corner past the Customs House and disappeared.

Italo Calvino, 'Cosmicomics' (extract 3)

MAUPASSANT, 'TWO FRIENDS' (Extracts)

Besieged Paris was in the throes of famine. Even the sparrows on the roofs and the rats in the sewers were growing scarce. People were eating anything they could get. As Monsieur Morissot, watchmaker by profession and idler for the nonce, was strolling along the boulevard one bright January morning, his hands in his trousers pockets and stomach empty, he suddenly came face to face with an acquaintance—Monsieur Sauvage, a fishing chum.

Before the war broke out Morissot had been in the habit, every Sunday morning, of setting forth with a bamboo rod in his hand and a tin box on his back. He took the Argenteuil train, got out at Colombes, and walked thence to the Ile Marante. The moment he arrived at this place of his dreams he began fishing, and fished till nightfall.

Every Sunday he met in this very spot Monsieur Sauvage, a stout, jolly, little man, a draper in the Rue Notre Dame de Lorette, and also an ardent fisherman. They often spent half the day side by side, rod in hand and feet dangling over the water, and a warm friendship had sprung up between the two.

Some days they did not speak; at other times they chatted; but they understood each other perfectly without the aid of words, having similar tastes and feelings.

(BEGINNING)

.....

Two soldiers took Morissot by the head and the feet; two others did the same with Sauvage. The bodies, swung lustily by strong hands, were cast to a distance, and, describing a curve, fell feet foremost into the stream.

The water splashed high, foamed, eddied, then grew calm; tiny waves lapped the shore.

A few streaks of blood flecked the surface of the river.

The officer, calm throughout, remarked, with grim humor:

“It's the fishes' turn now!”

Then he retraced his way to the house.

Suddenly he caught sight of the net full of gudgeons, lying forgotten in the grass. He picked it up, examined it, smiled, and called:

“Wilhelm!”

A white-aproned soldier responded to the summons, and the Prussian, tossing him the catch of the two murdered men, said:

“Have these fish fried for me at once, while they are still alive; they'll make a tasty dish.”

Then he resumed his pipe.

(END)

DISCUSSION

1. What are the characteristics of Calvino's/Maupassant's texts ?
2. How would you translate them into Chinese?
3. How to accommodate them to Chinese grids of expectations but not lose its sense of cultural difference?
4. Why translate?
5. Questions of cultural capital