

The Translation of Slangs in Two English Versions of *Jin Ping Mei**

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The Chinese classical novel *Jin Ping Mei* abounds with a large number of slangs, which correspondingly leads to the difficulty of the novel's English translation and also gives rise to the emergence of diversified English versions. The two English translators, Clement Egerton and David Roy, adopted completely different translation strategies when dealing with Chinese slangs in the novel. Their different translation purposes account for the significant disparity concerning the slang translation. Clement Egerton pays more attention to the novel's plot in his English version *The Golden Lotus*, rather than the unique expressions of the original language, so that in the concrete translation process, a domestication strategy is adopted for the sake of the target language readers' understanding, resulting in distortion and omission of the slang expressions in the translated text. By contrast, the translation purpose which guides David Roy' translation *The Plum in the Golden Vase* is to convey the complexity and literariness of the original Chinese text, and hence the foreignization strategy is employed concerning slang translation, which aims to accurately reproduce the unique expressions of slangs in the original text. Comparatively speaking, David Roy's translation succeeds in preserving the Chinese slangs to the greatest extent both in form and meaning, and can shed light for the slang translation in other Chinese literary works.

Keywords: *Jin Ping Mei*, slangs, domestication and foreignization, translation purpose

Introduction

The Chinese classical novel *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 ranks among the "Four Masterworks" of the Chinese Ming novel, and is also known as the "Number One Masterwork" under the sky at the time, which probably refers to its special status concerning its' authorship, formation process, content, writing techniques, artistic achievements, and so on. It is known to all that *Jin Ping Mei* contains some erotic descriptions so that it has also been dubbed a "pornographic book" by some people and the publication and circulation of the book has been greatly hindered. However, the literary value of *Jin Ping Mei* has also been widely acknowledged by both Chinese and foreign academic circles. The famous Chinese writer and critic Lu Xun classified *Jin Ping Mei* as one of novels of manners by which he extolled the novel's great achievements in the history the Chinese literature. The writer shows the most profound understanding of the life of his time, his descriptions are clear yet subtle, penetrating yet highly suggestive, and for the sake of contrast he sometimes portrays two quite different aspects of life. His writing holds such a variety of human interest that no novel of that period could surpass it (Lu, 2009,

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p. 222). The American sinologist James Robert Hightower came up with another acclamation that in the *Jin Ping Mei* and the *Hung Lou Meng* Chinese literature has novels which, for scope, subtle delineation of character, and elaborate plot, will rank with the greatest novels of the West (Hightower, 1953, p. 120). As one of the greatest novels which portrays the lives of ordinary people from all walks of life, *Jin Ping Mei* is textually characterized by the abundance of slang expressions, which play an important role in showcasing the character images in the novel and at the same time the difficulty of the novel's overseas translation has been increased. By making a comparative study of the slang translations in the two English versions of *Jin Ping Mei*, *The Golden Lotus* and *The Plum in the Golden Vase* respectively by Clement Egerton and David Roy, the present paper aims to demonstrate the differences in slang translations between the two English versions, and that the underlying reasons for this difference can be explored. Furthermore, it will provide reference and reflection for the English translation of Chinese slangs.

Two English Versions of *Jin Ping Mei*

Since *Jin Ping Mei* was first introduced by the British sinologist Herbert A. Giles into English world in his book *A History of Chinese Literature* in 1901, the translation of *Jin Ping Mei* in the English-speaking world has spanned over one hundred years (Giles, 1967, p. 309). From the 1920s to 1960s, a variety of English translations of *Jin Ping Mei* had been published, but most of them were abridged and modified versions, embodied either by the content deletion or the flexible translation methods. There are currently two complete English versions of *Jin Ping Mei*, which have contributed greatly to the overseas dissemination of the work.

Clement Egerton: *The Golden Lotus*

In 1939, Clement Egerton's four-volume translation of *Jin Ping Mei*, the first complete English version with the title *The Golden Lotus*, was released. Egerton's translation was based on the Chinese version of Zhang Zhupo's *Number One Masterwork*. Some of the sexual descriptions were translated into Latin under the pressure of censorship at the time (Egerton, 1939). Clement Egerton was born in 1890 and served as an officer in the military during World War I. After having retired, he studied social psychology in London and was proficient in foreign languages such as Latin, Greek, German, and French. From 1925 to 1928, Egerton and Chinese writer Lao She (pen name for Chun Ching Shu) shared a place at 31 St James' Park in London. Lao She taught him Chinese and assisted him in translating *Jin Ping Mei* while he taught Lao She English as a reward. On the title page of the English translation of *The Golden Lotus*, Egerton wrote "To C. C. Shu My Friend", and in the preface of the translation, he also added,

Without the untiring and generously given help of Mr. C. C. Shu, who, when I made the first draft of this translation, was at the School of Oriental Studies, I should never have dared to undertake such a task. I shall always be grateful to him. (Egerton, 1939, p. xi)

For the first time, the English version of *Jin Ping Mei* by Egerton fully presents the plot of the work to English readers, breaking the circulation of fragmented and episodic translations of *Jin Ping Mei* and providing readers in the English-speaking world with a comprehensive understanding of the novel. However, strictly speaking, there is still room for improvement. Firstly, Egerton's translation is based on Zhang Zhupo's commentaries of *Number One Masterwork*, and therefore fails to reflect the original novel of the lyrical version of *Jin Ping Mei* (*Jin Ping Mei Cihua*) 金瓶梅词话; secondly, most of the poems in the work have been omitted and untranslated. Given the role of poetry in the narrative structure and artistic value of *Jin Ping Mei*, its

disadvantages are self-evident; thirdly, in the initial version of the Egerton's translation, the erotic descriptions in the novel were translated into Latin, which is difficult for ordinary readers to understand. It was not until the reprint by Grove Publishing in New York, USA in 1972 that it was changed back into English. In addition, there are still a certain number of omissions and mistranslations in the specific wording of the Egerton's translation (Zhou, 2022). Nevertheless, the translation by Egerton has undoubtedly been a milestone in the dissemination of *Jin Ping Mei* in the English-speaking world. It is just through the Egerton's English translation that many English readers have acquired access to an overall understanding of *Jin Ping Mei*. What's more, Egerton's version is characterized by its' fluent and plain language style, so it has gained much popularity among most readers up to nowadays.

David Roy: *The Plum in the Golden Vase*

In 1985, the first chapter of *Jin Ping Mei* translated by David Roy made the debut in the Hong Kong magazine *Renditions* (Roy, 1985). In 1993, the first volume of David Roy's English translation of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* was released by Princeton University Press. Since then the Princeton University Press published the other four volumes of David Roy's English translation of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* respectively in 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2013.

David Roy was born in Nanjing, China and later he returned to the United States to obtain a master's and doctoral degree at Harvard University. He has made significant achievements in the study of Chinese literature and culture. The main differences between Roy's translation of *Jin Ping Mei* and previous translations are as follows: Firstly, David Roy chose the lyrical version of *Jin Ping Mei* (*Jin Ping Mei Cihua*) as the source text, because he himself had a special fondness for the lyrical version, believing that the Chinese version of Zhang Zhupo's *Number One Masterwork* on which the Egerton's translation was based was "inferior", while the lyrical version was the earliest and closest to the original author's writing, and also the version that fully reflected the author's novel rhetorical skills; secondly, in addition to the main text, there are translator's preface, character lists, supplementary materials, literature catalogs, indexes, illustrations, and other supplied parts, aiming to facilitate the English readers' understanding. At the same time, in order to demonstrate the intertextuality and complexity of linguistic features in the original novel, detailed annotations are attached at the back of each volume, providing a detailed and minute explanation of the sources of some allusions in the Chinese text; thirdly, some special expressions including poetry, proverbs, idioms, slang, and descriptive couplets in the original book are indented in order to attract readers' attention to these "unfamiliar" expressions; fourthly, according to the story development, the five volumes are given different titles: "The Gathering", "The Rivals", "The Aphrodisiac", "The Climax", and "The Dissolution" in order for readers to grasp the overall development of the storyline of *Jin Ping Mei*. The characteristics of the Roy's English translation are due to the translator's unique perspective on the novel. He once made a special reference to the novel by saying that this work is a landmark in the development of narrative art, not only from a specifically Chinese perspective, but in a world-historical context. With the possible exceptions of *The Tale of Genji* (1010) and *Don Quixote* (1615), neither of which it resembles, but with both of which it can bear comparison, there is no earlier work of prose fiction of equal sophistication in world literature. Although its importance in the history of Chinese fiction has long been acknowledged, the comprehensiveness and seriousness of its indictment of the Chinese society of its time and the innovative quality of its experimental literary technique have not yet been adequately appreciated (Roy, 1993, p. xviii).

Roy's translation of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* has received widespread attention since its publication, as it not only presents the complete picture of the novel to western readers for the first time, but also provides a useful reference for general readers and researchers who hope to have a deeper understanding of the novel. Although various English translations have played a positive role in the dissemination of *Jin Ping Mei* in the English-speaking world at different times and met the needs of different readers, from the perspective of comprehensively reflecting the original book's overall thematic ideas, artistic value, and historical literature, Roy's English translation of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* undoubtedly plays an irreplaceable and important role. Roy's translation of the novel is not only linguistic, but also stylistic, rhetorical, and cultural (Zhang, 2017). Undoubtedly such an "encyclopedia" style classical Chinese work enables western researchers and readers in general to have a panoramic view of traditional Chinese culture. David Roy even reminds readers that the moral corruption and stories concerning money worship he feels while reading are constantly happening on Wall Street in the United States. This is a story not only belonging to traditional China, but also to the whole world today (Zheng, 2016).

Comparison of Slang Translation Between Two English Versions of *Jin Ping Mei*

The slang occupies a very important place in any language and it is impossible to acquire a thorough knowledge of the language without being familiar with the slang. Due to the special characteristics of the slang, it has been defined in variety of ways. *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Pearson, E. A. Ltd., 2014, p. 2377) defines slang as "very informal, sometimes offensive language that is used especially by people who belong to a particular group, such as young people or criminals". *Merriam-Webster's Advanced Learner's English Dictionary* (Merriam—W. Inco., 2017, p. 1534) defines slang as "words that are not considered part of the standard vocabulary of a language and that are used very informally in speech especially by a particular group of people". Another Chinese scholar thinks that a slang mainly consists of three parts: dialect, social, and vulgar catchphrases (Yan, 2010). Although a slang has been given different definitions, its basic quality can be summarized as: vulgar, dialectal, colloquial, etc. This is also the significant feature that distinguishes the slang from other Chinese idioms, proverbs, and allegorical sayings.

Chinese slangs have obviously deviated from standard expressions and often violate language conventions, making the translation of Chinese slangs a very challenging and tricky issue. The research achievements on slang translation in China mostly focus on the Chinese translation of English slangs, while there is less attention paid to the English translation of Chinese slangs. The number of slangs in *Jin Ping Mei* is exceptionally abundant, which is in line with the stylistic characteristics of the original book's "language used by ordinary men". The present paper is based on the translation of several slang expressions in the Egerton's and Roy's translation of *Jin Ping Mei*, which compares and analyzes the similarities and differences in semantic and stylistic information reproduction in slang translation between the two, and attempts to probe into the deep reasons for their different translations and also summarize the general principles that translators should abide by in slang translation. The vulgar and dialectal nature of a slang limit its circulation, so the meaning of slang is not as transparent and visible as other language forms, which causes considerable trouble for readers to understand and translators to translate. Therefore, the first task in the process of slang translation is to determine the basic semantic information of a slang, which is termed as the referential meaning of slang expression. American translation theorist Eugene Nida interprets referential meaning as the meaning obtained by language when words are used to refer to an objective

thing or a certain ideological concept (Tan, 2000). If the slang translation deviates from the basic semantic information of the original text, a qualified translation cannot be guaranteed.

Example 1: 我是个不带头巾的男子汉，叮叮当当响的婆娘，拳头上也立得住人，胳膊上走得马，人面上行的人。不是那脓血搨不出来鳖老婆！（第二回）

Egerton's version:

I have to wear a woman's clothes, it is true, but I am as good as any man. I am always steady and reliable. A man might stand upon my fist or a horse ride over my arm. *I am not a turtle to be wounded without bloodshed.*

Roy's version:

I may not wear a turban, but I'm a match

for any man;

I may be only a woman, but I'm a real

dingdong dame.

I can lift a man on my fist,

Carry a horse on my arm, and

Trample on anyone else's face.

I'm not the sort of:

Blood-sucking tick that buries itself in the skin

so you can't dig it out.

As the leading female character in *Jin Ping Mei*, Pan Jinlian is portrayed as having a distinct personality characterized by her sharp and acid speech. In the second chapter of the novel, Pan Jinlian tries to seduce Wu Song her brother-in-law in all possible ways, forcing him to move away from his elder brother Wu Zhi. Before Wu Song was going to leave, he went to his brother's house to bid farewell to his brother and advised Wu Zhi to be careful in his actions. His insinuations, such as "being strong outwardly is not as important as being strong inwardly" and "a solid fence will not allow dogs to enter", completely angered Pan Jinlian. However, Pan Jinlian did not want to make Wu Song feel embarrassed so she refrained herself from refuting him at the scene. She only pointed at Wu Zhi and cursed him to vent her annoy and anger caused by the attempted seduction.

In her speech, there is cursing, boasting, refuting, and threatening, with four layers of meaning that are both conditional and in-depth. The cursing is grandiose and aggressive, which can well demonstrate Pan Jinlian's unique personality of being sharp, quick to react, eloquent, and shameless. (Li, 2013, p. 73)

In the Chinese slang 脓血搨不出来鳖 *wei nong xue jue bu chu lai bie*, some images are vividly employed in which the term 脓血 *wei nong xue* is a dialect slang, meaning "the big pustule", while 搨不出来鳖 *jue bu chu lai bie* means "the turtle would not stretch out its' head no matter how hard you try to pierce it". When the two parts are put together, the slang itself conveys the literal meaning that she is not kind of the dumb turtle which is like a big pustule, while the figurative and contextual meaning is that she herself is not a cowardly woman so that nobody should dare to bully her.

Egerton's translation "I am not a turtle to be wounded without bloodshed" partially conveys the meaning of the original slang with the merit of keeping the image "turtle", but the image of "pustule" is lost so that the meaning of the English version differs from the original Chinese slang. Roy's translation "I'm not the sort of blood-sucking tick that buries itself in the skin so you can't dig it out" adopts the literal translation method in an

attempt to keep the original syntactic structure but only substitutes the Chinese image of “turtle” with English word “tick”. Taken as a whole, although Roy’s translation fails to keep the exact semantic information of the original slang, it succeeds in retaining the closest stylistic information. Moreover, by borrowing the vulgar English slang “tick”, it reproduces to some extent the vulgar style in Chinese slang and succeeds in highlighting Pan Jinlian’s sharp personality.

Example 2: 不瞒大官人说，他娘家姓孟，排行三姐，就住在臭水巷。又会弹了一手好月琴。大官人若见了，管情一箭就上垛。（第七回）

Egerton’s version:

There is nothing to hide. The lady’s name is Měng, and she is the third of her family. She lives in Stinking Water Lane. I forgot to mention that she can play the guitar too. *You will certainly fall in love with her the moment you see her.*

Roy’s version:

There’s no reason for me to deceive you, sir. Her maiden name is Meng, she’s the third sibling in her generation, and she lives on Stinkwater Lane. Also, she’s an expert performer on the moon guitar. If you consent to see her, sir, I guarantee you’ll:

Hit the bull’s-eye with the first arrow.

The Chinese slang 一箭就上垛 *yì jiàn jiù shàng duò* in *Jin Ping Mei* appears a number of times and can be found in Chapters 7, 34, 73, 87. The literal meaning of this phrase is “to hit the target with just one arrow”, which later evolves into the Chinese idiom 一箭上垛 *yì jiàn shàng duò*. One Chinese scholar believes that this term has two meanings: One is “you will achieve success as soon as you try to do it”; the other is “you will fall in love with the thing the moment you see it at a glance” (Li, 1992, p. 18). Another scholar thinks that the meaning of the slang in the above context is “to achieve the goal in one go” (Fu, 1993, p. 168). Egerton employs free translation and translates it into “You will certainly fall in love with her the moment you see her”, which only conveys the figurative meaning, but fails to retain the vivid images 箭 *jiàn* (arrow) and 垛 *duò* (target), so that the stylistic meaning in the original sentence was not fully reproduced. Roy borrows the corresponding English idiom and translates it into “hit the bull’s eye with the first arrow”, which succeeds in retaining the vivid image in the original expression. While achieving the similar effects of the Chinese slang, Roy also tried to reproduce the unique stylistic features of original expression to a certain extent.

Example 3: 这西门庆是头上打一下脚底板响的人，积年风月中走，什么事不知道。（第十三回）

Egerton’s version:

There never was a man more clever in the ways of women than Hsi-mên Ch’ing. He had spent many years pursuing them, and there was very little about such matters he did not know.

Roy’s version:

Now this Hsi-men Ch’ing was the sort of man of whom it is said:

If you hit him on the top of his head,

The soles of his feet will ring.

He has been a habitué of the world of breeze and moonlight for so many years that there wasn’t much he didn’t know about anything.

The Chinese slang 头上打一下脚底板响 *tóu shàng dà yí xià jiǎo dǐ bǎn xiǎng* is used to describe a person’s quick reaction to one’s call under certain circumstance, in which 头 *tóu* (head) and 脚 *jiǎo* (feet) are

only used metaphorically to denote one's ready-to-go behavior. More specifically, in the above context it refers to Ximen Qing, who is well versed in the affairs of men and women, fully understood Li Pinger's intentions, and made a very cooperative action, so that the two of them hit it off and the adultery between them naturally followed. Egerton's version adopts free translation method and translates it as "*There never was a man more clever in the ways of women than Hsimen Ch'ing*", which transformed the original vivid image into a general expression for the sake of enhancing the readability of the English translation, but the slang's vivid image in the original expression is discarded. On the contrary, Roy's translation attempts to preserve the metaphorical device of the original text by turning to a word-for-word translation, even at the risk of causing difficulty on the part of the English readers. It is fully acknowledged that the meaning in semantics and form are more appropriate to the original text, and although it is difficult for English readers to grasp the meaning of the slang at one glance, with the help of the context English readers can easily understand the pragmatic meaning of the Chinese slang.

Example 4: 孟玉楼道：“我就说他不来，李大姐只顾强去请他。可是他对着人说的：‘你每有钱的，都吃十轮酒，没的拿俺每去赤脚绊驴蹄。’似他这等说，俺每罢了，把大姐姐都当驴蹄子看成。”（第二十三回）

Egerton's version:

"I told you she wouldn't come," Tower of Jade said, "There is no use asking her. She always tries to make out that we have all the money and she is *as poor as an unshod donkey*. Since she chooses to take that attitude, we'd better leave her alone."

Roy's version:

"Just as I said, I didn't think she would come," remarked Yü-lou, "but Sister Li keeps insisting on inviting her. She actually said to someone, 'You people with the money can take turns standing each other treat for ten days if you like. But don't expect the likes of me to:

Chase barefoot after the donkeys' hooves.'

The way she put it, leaving aside the insult to the rest of us, would seem to imply that she takes our elder sister to be a donkey's hoof."

In Chapter 23 of *Jin Ping Mei* Wu Yueniang and other concubines took turns to treat each other to drink wine, but only Sun Xue'e refused to participate. The above example is Meng Yulou's report to Wu Yueniang about Sun Xue'e, which quoted a passage from Sun Xue'e herself stating her reasons for refusing to participate, with the phrase 赤脚绊驴蹄 *chi jiao ban lv ti* being particularly prominent. The semantic connotation of this slang varies among different reference sources. One Chinese reference book explained it as metaphorically referring to that those who walk cannot follow those riding donkeys (Bai, 2000). In other words, it refers to that the person who walks barefoot is powerless to someone who rides a donkey, so that Sun Xue'e is powerless to compete with other concubines in taking turns to treat each other. Another Chinese scholar explains that "Being barefoot is soft, while donkey hooves are hard. *Ban* means blocking and knocking. This phrase refers to taking the soft to hit the hard, and being the weak to compete with the strong" (Li, 1992, p. 291). Does the "donkey hoof" actually refer to the person who rides a donkey? Or the donkey hooves themselves? In fact, the answer can be found in Meng Yulou's mouth in the original text in which she continued to say that "she takes our elder sister to be a donkey's hoof". This indicates "donkey hooves" as a derogatory term cannot refer to people riding donkeys, but rather donkey hooves themselves, so in the original text Sun Xue'e compares Wu Yueniang and other people to sturdy donkey hooves, while she is only barefoot and very weak. The Chinese slang carries a

contemptuous and insulting tone, which made Meng Yulou stir up trouble on the part of other people. Egerton translates it as “as poor as an unshod donkey” in which “unshod donkey” is inaccurate and the metaphorical image of “barefoot” is lost. Therefore, the meaning of the entire sentence in English translation deviates from the original text and fails to convey the semantic information of the Chinese slang, while in Roy’s translation both the images of “barefoot” and “donkey hooves” have been preserved so that a faithful translation is achieved.

Example 5: 郑爱香儿道：“怪行货子，拉的人手脚儿不着地！”伯爵道：“我实和你说，小淫妇儿，时光有限了，不久青刀马过，递了酒罢，我等不的了。”谢希大便问：“怎么是青马刀？”伯爵道：“寒鸦儿过了，就是青刀马。”众人都笑了。（第三十二回）

Egerton’s version:

“Or, you scamp,” Perfume cried, “you have lifted me right off the ground.” “Listen!” Po-ch üeh cried, “we have not all the time in the world. Serve us with wine at once. I will wait no longer.”

Roy’s version:

“You crazy good-for –nothing!” protested Cheng Ai-hsiang. “You’re dragging me so fast:

My limbs can hardly touch the ground.

“You little whore!” said Ying Po-ch üeh. “The truth of the matter is

Time is running out.

At any moment:

The ‘blue-bladed horse’ may ‘come.’

Serve the wine. I can’t hold out any longer.”

“What do you mean by *the ‘blue-bladed horse’*?” asked Hsieh Hsi-ta.

“*When you wind up with a ‘shiver like a cold crow,’*” said Ying Po-ch üeh,

“the ‘blue-bladed horse’ always ‘come.’”

Everyone laughed at this sally.

The Chinese slang 青刀马 *qing dao ma* is quite puzzling, even Xie Xida himself was confused so that he asked about its’ meaning. However, when used in combination with 寒鸦儿过了 *han ya’er guo le*, a scene of “everyone laughing” appeared, indicating that the term 寒鸦儿过了 *han ya’er guo le* was very popular at that time and was also the key to understanding the entire slang.

According to one Chinese reference book the slang 寒鸦儿 *han ya’er* is known as the vulgar expression, which probably means 寒凛 *han jin* (shaking with cold), and there is a common saying in Chinese that goes like 寒鸦儿抖翎 *han ya’er dou ling* (Han Ya’er shakes her feathers). 青刀马 *qing dao ma* means semen (Yao, 1989). Another Chinese scholar thinks that 寒鸦 *han ya* has a harmonic sound of 含鸦 *han ya* (to suck a penis in a woman’s mouth), while 青刀马 *qing dao ma* refers to male and female genitalia. Therefore, when the two parts are combined, it means that oral sex causes the penis to ejaculate (Li, 1992, p. 656). This explanation may seem reasonable, but it can only be considered as one of the diversified interpretations. When we take the opinions of the several sources mentioned above into account, especially given the status of the Ying Bojue and the atmosphere at the table at that time, this slang is most likely to be related to sexual intercourse between men and women.

Egerton omitted the slang translation in the above example. Roy basically adheres to the literal translation method, but with some flexibility. 寒鸦儿 *han ya’er* is translated as “When you wind up with a shiver like a cold crow”, and 青刀马 *qing dao ma* is translated as “blue-bladed horse”. What’s more, Roy adds an annotation at the end of the text to illustrate:

Commentators do not agree on the interpretation of the line *ch'ing tao ma kuo*, which is made up of four characters the literal meanings of which are “blue”, “blade”, “horse”, “pass”. My rendering is based on the fact that the first two characters are the phonetic elements in the two characters *ching tao*, which could mean “sperm arrives.” The character of “horse” may be a pun for the character *ma*, which can be used to describe the tingling or melting sensation immediately prior to a sexual climax. The last character has the well-attested slang meaning of “sexual climax,” either male or female, and therefore corresponds conveniently with the analogous usage of the term “come” in English. In this interpretation, the expression as a whole would mean something like “when the arrival of the sperm induces a tingling sensation, one will experience a climax.” I have translated this passage in such a way as to suggest this interpretation while retaining some of the ambiguity of the original. (Roy, 2001, pp. 539-540)

As a western researcher and translator, Roy is particularly sensitive to the phonetic pun in *Jin Ping Mei*. His explanation of the title 金瓶梅 *Jin Ping Mei* as “the charm of entering the vagina” serves as one good example. Here in this context he also aims to rely on phonetic puns to explain the slang, but it can only be seen as another perspective for interpreting the meaning of the slang, and it is difficult to make an objective judgment on its accuracy and reasonability.

Example 6: 伯爵骂道：“贼小淫妇儿，你又少死得，我不缠你念佛。”李桂姐道：“香姐，你替我骂这花子两句。”郑爱香儿道：“不要理这望江南巴山虎儿，汗东山斜纹布！”（第三十二回）

Egerton's version:

Po-ch'ieh cursed her. “You little whore! Do you wish to die? Wait till I start on you, and then you'd better say your prayers.” “Curse him for me, Sister Perfume,” Cassia said, “Don't worry about that *looking towards-Chiang-nan tiger from the Pa Mountain, be-shitten pants from the Eastern Hills.*”

Roy's version:

“You lousy little whore!” railed Ying Po-ch'ieh. “You're nothing but a dead duck. I'll stop giving you a hard time about as soon as you start reciting Buddha's name.”

“Sister Ai-hsiang,” said Li Kuei-chieh, “Why don't you tell off this beggar for me?”

“Don't pay any attention to him,” said Cheng Ai-hsiang. “To cite a few familiar phrases, he's just a:

Cock' a doodle doo,

Hold' onto your hat;

Who's:

A 'dillar', a dollar, a ten o'clock scholar,

'Yes,' my darling daughter.”

The Chinese slang 望江南巴山虎儿，汗东山斜纹布 *wang jiang nan ba shan hu'er, han dong shan xie wen bu* in *Jin Ping Mei* has caused much controversy due to different understandings. The fact that Zheng Aixiang quoted it at the banquet offered sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it was not a rare expression at that time, but today's readers are relatively unfamiliar with it. As a matter of fact, the slang contains the hidden initial expressions 望巴 *wang ba* and 汗斜 *han xie*, with the former containing the phonetic element 王八 *wang ba* (turtle) and the latter *han xie* (sweating), and when *wang ba* and *han xie* are combined, the expression forms a curse to people 王八汗邪 *wang ba han xie*, which means “*The turtle is sweating*”. And this coincides with another Chinese scholar's definition on 汗邪 *han xie* in which it refers to people who sweat profusely during high fever often talk nonsense, so it is hard for them to refrain from their continuous cursing (Li, 1992). It is extremely difficulty to translate the Chinese slangs in which wordplay plays an important role, so the translator has to employ various techniques to match the meaning in the original text.

Egerton's version only brings out the slang's surface meaning: "*looking towards Chiang nan tiger from the Pa Mountain, be shitten pants from the Eastern Hills*". The semantic information obtained by English readers is very limited, and it must be noted that seemingly faithful translation is actually insufficient translation. Roy's translation has made significant changes in textual expression: "*Cock' a doodle doo, Hold' onto your hat; Who's: A 'dillar', a doll, a ten o'clock school, 'Yes,' my darling daughter*". If English readers take the translated expression alone in the English version, they may have felt confused. Thanks to the annotation offered by Roy himself, we may have a much clearer understanding about the meaning of the Chinese slang and his translation method.

The first characters of these four phrases, *wang pa han hsieh*, mean nothing in combination with each other but pun with the expression *wang-pa han-hsieh*, which means "the cuckold is delirious". I have tried to render something of the effect of this example of wordplay by choosing four familiar English phrases the first words of which, "cock" and "dillar" "yes", sound something like "cuckold" and "delirious". (Roy, 2001, p. 540)

In conclusion, for the Chinese slangs that rely on phonetic puns, sometimes only by adding annotations can the semantic and stylistic information of the original expression be translated to a certain degree.

The biggest difficulty in translating the Chinese slangs lies in determining its referential meaning, which can be attributed to the special features of the slangs themselves. The above examples all contain some vividly-expressed metaphorical images so that it is difficult to keep both the meaning and form of the original slangs. As for Egerton's version, there exist different degrees of mistranslation and omission, leading to the loss of some semantic and stylistic information in the translation. On the contrary, Roy's translation strives to identify and reproduce its true referential meaning in order to ensure the reproduction of the semantic information of the original slang in the target language. The translation process should not be only limited to the transmission of semantic information, but also requires the complete reproduction of style information, that is, the transfer of emotional colors attached to the slang in use. The translator has the obligation to reproduce the style information of the original text during the translation process. Nida said that translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style (Nida & Taber, 1969). Wang Zuoliang stated in his article "Meaning, Style, and Translation" that "the style of an essay is only the author's personal way of using language to express specific content, and its' relation with content is just like flesh and blood, rather than an external element" (Wang, 1984, p. 835). British translation theorist Alexander Tytler also proposed Three Principles in his book *On the Principles of Translation*:

A translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; the style and manner of writing should be of the same character as that of the original; a translation should have all the ease of the original composition. (Liao, 2001, p. 15)

The expression of semantic information in Chinese slangs largely depends on its unique stylistic features and rhetorical devices. If the translator only stays at the transmission of basic semantic information of slang, but fails to fully reproduce the style information, it is difficult to say that the translation task is successfully completed. The translation of the vulgar slangs involves not only two different cultural backgrounds but also the expression habits of two languages. When a translator proceeds to translate the slang, it is necessary to accurately understand the pragmatic meaning of vulgar words in specific contexts, especially to correctly grasp the scale of emotional expression and the vulgarity of language style colors. This is the key to translating vulgar slang well (Bao, 2001). The success of the translator in translating slang directly affects various aspects of the entire translation of *Jin*

Ping Mei. In other words, the importance of the stylistic information cannot be neglected and it is especially true of the translation of other Chinese slang.

Conclusion

Translation is a difficult and creative process that involves both the conversion of two languages and the exchange of two cultures; and it requires translators to be proficient in both languages, as well as to have rich knowledge in history, geography, national conditions, folklore, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics. In order to render the Chinese slang into English accurately and vividly, the translator should meet two basic requirements: firstly, to convey the semantic connotations of the original Chinese slang, which serves as the most fundamental prerequisite. The translator is supposed to make correct judgments on the meaning of the slang, relying mainly on the context or relevant reference materials; secondly, to fully transfer the stylistic features of the Chinese slang, which is determined by the intrinsic nature and function of the Chinese slang. In other words, a successful translation must take both meaning and taste into consideration, and translating taste is much more complicated, and taste includes different shades of meaning, senses, and emotions (Jin, 1983, p. 368). With regard to the translation of the Chinese slang, the translator should try all means to fully reflect the syntactic form, rhetorical features, emotional color, and other stylistic information of the Chinese slang during the process of the translation. It is a higher requirement on the basis of semantic information transmission, so the translator should take responsibility to have a clear and thorough understanding of the Chinese slang in the first place, which undoubtedly constitutes the initial step before the translator embarks on any slang translation. Egerton's translation of *Jin Ping Mei* has a very obvious pragmatic tendency, which is "to study the application of modern psychology in sociology" (Egerton, 1939, p. viii). Therefore, its main purpose in translation is to show the complex interpersonal relationships of *Jin Ping Mei* to readers in the English-speaking world, rather than the original author's intricate writing techniques. Consequently, there is distortion or omission in terms of slang translation in his English version. By comparison, Roy adheres to the translation strategy of "translating everything" in the whole translation of *Jin Ping Mei*, attempting to reproduce the formal structure, rhetorical devices, writing skills, language features, etc., of the original work to the greatest extent possible, with the purpose of restoring the deep textual features of the work as a literary classic. It can be easily seen that during the whole process of slang translation, great efforts have been made to balance the multi-layered meanings expressed by the original Chinese slang. Comparatively speaking, Roy's *The Plum in the Golden Vase* succeeds in preserving the formal characteristics and semantic connotations of the Chinese slang in the original text, and can be regarded as a model translation of Chinese slang in literary works.

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