Exploring the traces of translation

A Chinese perspective

Xu Mingwu & Tian Chuanmao
Huazhong University of Science and Technology / Yangtze University

Translation traces embrace a wide range of inheritance forms in cultural production practices. Pseudo-originals disclose a kind of literary creation pattern which is a partial or full cross-lingual plagiarism of a text by a predecessor or a contemporary from another language-culture. Well-known quotations in a foreign language are frequently employed by speakers or writers via impromptu translating or memory-based appropriation from an available translation. These translated quotations may well be imitated by text producers to derive a large number of variations in the target culture. Plagiarisms or borrowings are also seen in retranslations of great world classics. As two largely uncharted territories, indirect translation and back translation make translation traces too weak to be located. The inheritance of translation beliefs indicates various genealogies, such as husband-wife genealogy, father-daughter genealogy and so on. Research on the origins of translative memes, their morphology and typology of transmission as well as their mutative reasons may create a new area for Translation Studies.

Keywords: pseudo-original, quotation, retranslation, meme

1. Introduction

Dawkins (1989: 192) relates memes, units of cultural transmission, to "tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches". In this study, memes are restricted to idea-memes. They are transmitted, replicated, imitated and propagated over space and time particularly with respect to translation which is used here in a broad sense as defined by Jakobson (1959). It is seen through the ages that original or un-translated ideas often spread via translation; translated ideas, in some cases, spread in a non-translational mode; existing translation ideas are sometimes seen in formulation of new translation theories. All these ideas are related to translation in one way or another and thus they are called "translative memes" in the present study. In the paragraphs that follow, we will explore the morphology of the memes, their modes of transmission and mutative reasons in literary creation, retranslating and translation research.

Babel 63:1 (2017), 3–20. © Fédération des Traducteurs (FIT) Revue Babel
DOI 10.1075/babel.63.1.02xu ISSN 0521–9744 E-ISSN 1569–9668

2. Research methodology

The *Oxforddictionaries* defines "trace" as "a mark, object, or other indication of the existence or passing of something".[1] Therefore, in this study the "translation trace" refers to a mark or an object that indicates the existence of a relatively covert transmission of translative memes in production of texts or theories. Focusing on the relations hidden in translative memes as well as their transmission trajectories and mutations, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What is the relationship underlying translative memes in production of texts and theories?
2. How do translative memes spread?
3. Why can some translative memes spread but some others cannot?
4 What are the forms of translative memes and reasons for their mutation?

Based on the above questions, we have proposed the following hypotheses:

1. The relationship contained in translative memes, sometimes, is very vague and complex.
2. Some translative memes spread in a very circuitous way, as in literary creation and indirect translation.
3. The translative memes that are often imitated, quoted and (re)translated are strong ones because they have an inherent literary, artistic or philosophical value.
4. When translative memes spread, they will mutate in various forms, which is, to a large extent, caused by socio-cultural factors in the receiving culture.

Many scholars have explored the transmission of translative memes and their mutations from different perspectives. For example, Chesterman (1997, 2016) describes and summarizes commonly held translation memes in the spread of translation theory in his work Memes of Translation. Catford's (1965) theory on shifts, Toury's (1980, 1995) view on pseudo-translation, Lefevere's (1982, 1992) model of rewriting, Gambier's (1994) discussion of indirect translation, Bastin's (1998) conceptualization of adaptation and Pym's (1998) concept of "pseudo-original" deal with the mutations of translative memes at the linguistic, textual and socio-cultural levels. However, these theoretical models have failed to represent the overall process of memetic transmission, even though they have captured some mutative forms and reasons. This study will mainly deal with the transmission paths of translative memes as well as their specific forms, types and mutative reasons, trying to disclose the obscure connections between different types of ideas. In a word, systematic research on translative memes may create a new area for Translation Studies – Memetic Translatology or Memetics of Translation.

---

[1] See the first definition of "trace" as a noun at http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/trace

3. Pseudo-originals and the mutation of the original

Literary artists sometimes appropriate ideas from their predecessors or contemporaries. Their appropriation may be a complete copying of earlier texts or an imitation of their fragments, and it often undergoes mutations in the overall process of replication or imitation.

3.1 Pseudo-originals

It is not uncommon that writers create their texts via translating or rewriting and these texts are presented as non-translations. Pym (1998: 69) calls them pseudo-originals. The Greek historian Herodotus' *Histories* tells a story that a cunning thief eventually became the son-in-law of the Egyptian king Rhampsinitus. According to Qian Zhongshu (1997: 371–381), the 19th-century German poet Heinrich Heine's *Als der König Rhampsenit/Eintrat in die goldne Halle* is a kind of rewriting based on the above story; the same story was largely adapted in the 16th-century Italian writer Matteo Bandello's *Novellas*, and it was represented in two present-day Italian tales *Cric e Croc* and *L'uomo chi rubò ai banditi*; in fact this story had been extensively circulated in Greece, Italy, France and England.

As far as the storyline is concerned, *Journey to the West*, one of the Four Great Classics in China's literary history, has a close relation to the *Ramayana*, one of the great Hindu epics. Chapter 61 of the Chinese classic depicts the battle between Monkey King and the Bull Demon King, while the *Book of War*, the 6th book of the Hindu epic, also narrates a battle in Lanka between the monkey and the demon armies of Rama and Ravana. Ji Xianlin, a well-known Chinese Indologist and the translator of the Ramayana, believes that the Chinese story is an imitation of the Hindu one (Huang 2009: 212). Lu Xun, one of the greatest writers in modern China, borrowed many things from the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol's *Diary of a Madman* in the process of writing his masterpiece *A Madman's Diary*. Lu admitted that he loved Gogol best and there was an intimate relationship between his work and Gogol's (Li 2002: 114). The similarities between the Chinese and Russian stories lie in the following aspects: the similar title, the similar fate of the heroes who were maddened by the society, the same diary style with first-person narrative, the similar structure based on "my" perspective and awareness, the same image of "dog" and the same ending that uses the same words "Save the child". This kind of literary inheritance and artistic borrowing is in agreement with Lu's so-called "borrow-ism" which holds that "we should snatch the fire from other countries like Prometheus and benefit our countrymen" (Wu 1995: 102).

3.2 Cross-lingual quotations

Unlike pseudo-originals which try to hide their identity as a translation, cross-lingual quotations tend to indicate their foreign identity by directly offering the author's name. One type of such quotations is that the writer appropriates a foreigner's idea via impromptu translating. Let us take *Thus Friends Absent Speak* by Yu Guangzhong, a Taiwan-based poet (Tian 2010: 57–59). The essay contains two quotations from W. H. Auden and Oscar Wilde respectively, which are as follows:

(1) 英国诗人奥登曾说, 他常常搁下重要的信件不回,
躲在家里看他的侦探小说。 (Yu 2001: 72–74)

yīngguó shīrén àodēng céng shuō, tā chángcháng gēxià zhòngyào de xìnjiàn bù huí, duǒzài jiālǐ kàn tā de zhēntàn xiǎoshuō.

W. H. Auden once admitted that he was in the habit of shelving important letters, preferring instead to curl up with a detective novel. (Yu 2001: 72–74)

(2) 王尔德有一次对韩黎说: "我认得不少人, 满怀光明的远景来到伦敦,
但是几 个月后就整个崩溃了, 因为他们有回信的习惯。" (Yu 2001: 72–74)

wángěrdé yǒuyīcì duì hánlí shuō: "wǒ rènde bùshǎo rén, mǎnhuái guāngmíng de yuǎnjǐng láidào lúndūn, dànshì jǐgèyuè hòu jiù zhěnggè bēngkuì le, yīnwéi tāmen yǒu huíxìn de xíguàn."

…while Oscar Wilde remarked to Henley: "I have known men come to London full of bright prospects and seen them complete wrecks in a few months through a habit of answering letters". (Yu 2001: 72–74)

Example (1) is an indirect quote, while example (2) is a direct one. Both quotes were rendered by Yu Guangzhong himself from English to Chinese because he is also an English-Chinese translator. In cases where writers do not know the foreign language, they tend to borrow fragments from a familiar translation in their native language. The Russian novel *How the Steel Was Tempered* by Nikolai Ostrovsky was rendered into Chinese by Mei Yi in 1942. Mei's Chinese version of the novel became very popular after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949: a total of 2.5 million copies had been printed from 1952 to 1995 (Yuan 2009: 31). Pavel Korchagin, the protagonist of the novel, uttered the following words according to the Chinese version:

(3) “人最宝贵的东西是生命。生命对于我们只有一次。一个人的生命应当这样度过: 当他回首往事的时候, 他不因虚度年华而悔恨, 也不因碌碌无为而羞愧。” (Ostrovsky 1996: 248)

“rén zuì bǎoguì de dōngxī shì shēngmìng. shēngmìng duìyú wǒmen zhǐyǒu yīcì. yígèrén de shēngmìng yīngdāng zhèyàng dùguò: dāng tā huíshǒu wǎngshì de shíhou, tā bùyīn xūdù niánhuá ér huǐhèn, yě bùyīn lùlùwúwéi ér xiūkuì.”

“Man’s dearest possession is life, and it is given to him to live but once. He must live so as to feel no torturing regrets for years without purpose, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past.” (Ostrovsky 2002: 73)

The above words, which reveal a positive philosophy of life, almost became a household quote in China’s planned-economy period, especially in the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). It was widely seen and heard in Chinese novels, films, plays, speeches and even diaries, such as *Lei Feng’s Diary* (1963) by Lei Feng and *Autumn Thoughts* (1986) by Liang Heng. According to Dawkins’ (1989) classification of memes, it can be regarded as a strong meme spreading widely and winning the victory over other memes.

3.3 The mutation of the original

As mutations are common to genes, idea-memes tend to undergo changes in the process of transmission from brain to brain. For example, Heine adds the following episode at the end of his poem in question: Rhampsinitus’ son-in-law who had been a thief succeeded to the throne and thefts rarely happened during his reign (Qian 1997: 373). As far as Lu Xun’s *A Madman’s Diary* is concerned, it can be assumed that it is globally a localization of Gogol’s *Diary of a Madman* because the Russian story was recontextualized in Lu’s work: Gogol’s “Madman” struggled in the Russian hierarchical bureaucracy and Lu’s “Madman” fought against the Chinese feudal ethics. Well-known quotations or textual fragments, such as William Shakespeare’s “To be, or not to be, that is the question”, are frequently imitated and adapted by text producers via impromptu translating or memory-based appropriation from an available translation, resulting in the derivation of a large number of variations in the target culture. For instance, the structure of Hamlet’s above utterance is employed but the content is replaced in both a cigarette advertisement and a sports news title:

(4) 吸烟, 还是不吸, 这是个问题。 (Liu 1998: 427)
xīyān, háishì bùxī, zhè shì gè wèntí.
To smoke, or not to smoke, that is the question. (Liu 1998: 427)

(5) 去!不去?这是个问题? (Tian 2003: 39)
qù! bùqù? zhè shì gè wèntí?
To go, or not to go, that is the question. (Our translation)

Replacements often happen with the first part of Hamlet's formula, and its second part always remains unchanged. The widespread parody of the formula in spoken and written texts across cultures might be due to the fact that life is full of dilemmas, and it offers a concise and powerful way to express them. The formula can be viewed as a strong meme containing a profound philosophy of life.

4. The haunting of earlier translations in retranslating

If we view the source text (ST) as a meme, then it can spread over space and time. Translating achieves the cross-border transmission of the meme, while retranslating sustains its diachronic transmission. Translative memes replicate, propagate and mutate via borrowing, (re)translating and rewriting across languages and cultures.

4.1 Borrowing of earlier translations

A retranslation is the translation "for which the same ST has been rendered into the same target language at least once before" (Pym 2011: 90). The text that is frequently (re)translated generally has some kind of literary, artistic or cultural appeal with respect to the target culture and thus it can be viewed as a strong meme which can spread across space and time. Stewart (2009) points out that new translations enjoy advantages that old ones do not have: retranslations after first translations will more or less receive benefits from old translations. In the 1990s retranslation upsurge in mainland China, borrowings or plagiarisms were widely seen in retranslations (Xu and Tian 2014: 251–254). A case in point is the translation of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. By focusing on the footnotes, Tengyuan Liulijun (2007) compared four translations of the novel published by Shanghai Translation Publishing House (Yiwen 1955), Yilin Publishing House (Yilin 1990), People's Literature Publishing House (Renwen 1993) and Yanshan Publishing House (Yanshan 1995). He sampled some footnotes from 13 chapters of the novel and found that the Yanshan version produced its footnotes by combining those of the Renwen and Yilin versions. Its text proper in which the footnotes appear is essentially the same as that of the Renwen version. Let us look at the following fragment of Tengyuan's analysis in which he uses A, B, C and D to stand for the Renwen, Yiwen, Yilin and Yanshan versions:

(6) D 燕山版 P9, 综合A, C两版, 该注释正文与A版非常相似。P37, 完全同A版, 该注释正文与A版非常相似。P91, 完全同A版, 该注释正文与A版非常相似。P119, 完全同A版, 注释正文仅比A版多一 “去”字。P125, 完全同A版。P182, 完全同A版, 注释正文与A版约有三分之二文字相同。P183, 完全同A版, 注释正文与A版约一半文字相同。P207, 完全同A版。P234, 除一无关紧要的 “若”字不同于A版, 其余皆同; 更为奇特的是, 该注释的正文与A版相比, 仅句末四字从A版的 “津津乐道”改为 “说三道四”, 其余句式, 结构, 措词皆相同。 (Xu and Tian 2014: 252)

D yānshān bǎn P9, zōnghé A, C liǎng bǎn, gāi zhùshì zhèngwén yǔ A bǎn fēicháng xiāngsì. P37, wánquán tóng A bǎn, gāi zhùshì zhèngwén yǔ A bǎn fēicháng xiāngsì. P91, wánquán tóng A bǎn. gāi zhùshì zhèngwén yǔ A bǎn fēicháng xiāngsì. P119, wánquán tóng A bǎn, zhùshì zhèngwén jǐn bǐ A bǎn duō yī “qù” zì. P125, wánquán tóng A bǎn. P182, wánquán tóng A bǎn, zhùshì zhèngwén yǔ A bǎn yuē yǒu sānfēnzhīèr wénzì xiāngtóng. P183, wánquán tóng A bǎn. zhùshì zhèngwén yǔ A bǎn yuē yíbàn wénzì xiāngtóng. P207, wánquán tóng A bǎn. P234, chú yī wúguānjǐnyào de “ruò” zì bùtóng yú A bǎn, qíyú jiē tóng; gèngwéi qítè de shì, gāi zhùshì de zhèngwén yǔ A bǎn xiāngbǐ, jǐn jùmò sì zì cóng A bǎn de “jīnjīnlèdào” gǎiwéi “shuōsāndàosì”, qíyú jùshì, jiégòu, cuòcí, jiē xiāngtóng.

D The Yanshan version. On p. 9 its footnote combines the footnotes of Versions A and C. The text in which the footnote appears is very similar to that of Version A. On p. 37 the footnote is exactly the same as that of Version A and the relevant main text is very similar to that of Version A. On p. 91 the footnote is the same as that of Version A and the main text is very similar to that of Version A. On p. 119 the footnote is the same as that of Version A and the main text is almost the same as Version A with only one character “qu” [go] added. On p. 125 the footnote is the same as that of Version A. On p. 182 the footnote is the same as Version A and about two-thirds of the main text is the same as Version A. On p. 183 the footnote is the same as Version A and about half of the main text remains the same as Version A. On p. 207 the footnote is the same as Version A. On p. 234 the footnote is the same as Version A with only one character “ruo” [if] added and strangely enough, the main text is the same as Version A, with only the last four characters “jin jin le dao” [talk with great relish] in the sentence replaced with “shuo san dao si” [gossip] and the sentence pattern, structure and diction remain the same.

(Xu and Tian 2014: 252–253)

The Renwen version was published before the Yanshan version. Tengyuan's analysis shows that the latter is indeed a plagiarism of the former. Stewart (2009) argues that it is reasonable for retranslators to consult earlier translations but the key is "to redo it" rather than "merely to improve upon a predecessor's work". Plagiarism is a complex issue relating to the concept of "authorship" and in this study we just focus on the transmission of some translated idea from an earlier translation to the retranslation. In other words, such a retranslation is indeed a work done by two or more translators, including the earlier translator(s) and the retranslator. Therefore, some retranslations contain multiple translatorship.[2]

4.2 Indirect translation

Retranslation is sometimes called indirect translation which refers to "the procedure whereby a text is not translated directly from an original ST, but via an intermediate translation in another language" (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997: 76). Indirect translation witnesses the circuitous journey of the ST in target cultures. For example, Mei Yi's rendering of *How the Steel Was Tempered* was not based on the Russian original but on the English translation *The Making of a Hero* by Alex Brown (see Chinese Translators Journal 1983: 21). Lu Xun points out that Chinese translations of Greek, Latin, Danish, Spanish and even Russian classics were generally produced via English instead of the source language before the 1930s because few Chinese knew the source languages and many of them knew English well (Wu 1995: 531). Kong Huiyi (2005: 24–25) discovers an interesting phenomenon on indirect translation in feudal China. Ancient Chinese literatures, such as Sima Qian's *Historical Records*, Ban Gu's *History of the Han Dynasty* and Fan Ye's *History of the Later Han*, used "retranslation" to mean indirect translation. Chinese classics had been introduced to other cultures via third-hand, fourth-hand or even ninth-hand retranslating in which three, four or nine languages were involved. Kong's research indicates that the feudal emperors did not give attention to the translating affairs which were nothing but the task of foreign cultures, and ancient Chinese culture assumed that the more languages the retranslating involved, the farther the target culture was, the greater influence the Chinese culture had and the prouder the Chinese felt. Therefore, indirect translation is sometimes very "indirect" and a meme spreads via retranslating in a very indirect way. Multiple translatorship is also seen in indirect translation because it is based on a translated version or multiple translated versions of the ultimate ST. Although it is often regarded as "a poor copy of a copy", indirect translation played a crucial role in history in disseminating some literary works from distant or peripheral cultures and consecrating them as world literature classics.[3] In other words, indirect translation helped achieve the goal of "transplanting the seed" (Bassnett 2001: 57).

---

[2] To our knowledge, the concept of "multiple translatorship" was first put forward by the research group of "Voice in Translation": http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/groups/Voice-in-Translation/

4.3 Special forms of retranslation

"Retranslate" or "re-translate" may be interpreted as "to translate back", so back translation can be incorporated into the concept of retranslation. In literary history, an original may prove to be a pseudo-original and the translation of such a pseudo-original may be a back translation (Moyal 2009). A good case in point is Balzac's *L'Auberge rouge*. The June 1834 issue of the Dublin University Magazine published a novel entitled *The Red Inn at Andernach*, giving neither the author's name nor the text's identity as a translation. Actually it was an English version of *L'Auberge rouge*, even though it contained some additions and omissions.

Coincidentally, L'Écho britannique, a French magazine, took *The Red Inn at Andernach* for an original work and translated it back into French, modifying the original name as *L'Auberge rouge d'Andernach* and changing the original tragic ending into a comic one. This example shows that a first translation is nothing but a retranslation if a pseudo-original is taken for an original.

Pym (1998: 60) observes weakly marked translations which relate to all kinds of transformations, "from major genre and media shifts to radical rewriting and significant parody". Translation in its broad sense can be seen in production of audiovisual products. Disney's *Mulan* is basically an adaptation of the ancient Chinese poem *The Mulan Ballad* with additions, omissions and alterations (Xu and Tian 2013). The animated film came back home when it was dubbed into Chinese in 1999. If we view Disney's production of the film as the first translation, a kind of intersemiotic translation, then the Chinese dubbing is a retranslation. Disney kept the basic image of Mulan as a filial and brave girl in the ballad, while changing the original gentle girl into a rebellious one and adding a few distinctive Chinese cultural traits, such as the Great Wall, the Chinese dragon and the Tiananmen Square. It is noteworthy that some cultural deformations in the film were kept in the Chinese dubbing, such as the added Chinese icons, while some others were restored as the original form, such as the rendering of Yao's seemingly meaningless formula for help "Ya Mi Ah To Fu Da" into the Buddhist formula "Nan Wu Ah Mi Tuo Fo" (ibid: 197).

---

[3] For a detailed introduction, see the Wikipedia entry of "indirect translation": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indirect_translation

5. Genealogies in dissemination of translation theory

Translation ideas are created by people from all walks of life and spread through various channels. They may be inherited within one and the same family. For example, Qian Zhongshu's "ultimate realm of transformation" was practiced by his wife Yang Jiang in translating Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Yang (1986: 23) claims that the translator should keep everything in the ST as it is, including the tone and undertone, which coincides with Qian's belief that the original flavor must be completely kept and that there should be no translationese in the target text which may result from the difference between the source and target language habits (Luo 1984: 696). Another couple Xiao Qian and Wen Jieruo co-translated James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Xiao's wife Wen held fast to her husband's principle of keeping everything in the original in her own translation of Japanese literature (Wen 2013). This kind of transmission may be labelled the husband-wife genealogy. Another kind of familial transmission is the father-daughter genealogy. For instance, the famous translator Zhang Guruo followed the philosophy of "idiomatic English, idiomatic Chinese" in his rendering of English novels, such as *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *The Return of the Native* and *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy, and this philosophy had been cherished and practiced by his daughter Zhang Ling in translating Jane Austen's novels, such as *Pride and Prejudice* (Tian 2014: 247).

As a great writer, Lu Xun was seen as the "revolutionary teacher" by the young students in the 1920s and 1930s. The famous translator Dong Qiusi was one of them. According to Ling Shan (2004: 82–83), Dong's second wife, he used to go with his fellow students to Lu Xun's home to talk with him in the 1930s, and his selection of *Cement* by the former Soviet writer Fyodor Gladkov as the first work to translate was recommended by Lu Xun. Lu was a pure literalist, claiming that he would rather be faithful than smooth (Tian 2014: 245). Tian's (2014) case study of Dong's rendering of *David Copperfield* indicates that Dong's translation is so literal that it lacks smoothness in some places. It may be asserted that Dong imitated Lu Xun's translating style. This kind of influence can be viewed as the teacher-student or writer-translator genealogy.

In modern and contemporary China, Yan Fu's translation principle of "Xin (信, xìn, faithfulness), Da (达, dá, intelligibility) and Ya (雅, yǎ, elegance)" ("XDY" for short), namely the principle of faithfulness, intelligibility and elegance, may be most well-known and familiar to researchers in the circles of translation, literature and even social sciences. The XDY-meme was first modified by Lin Yutang as "faithfulness, smoothness and beauty" and then by Liu Zhongde as "faithfulness, expressiveness and closeness". A retrieval of the China National Knowledge Infrastructure on December 7, 2014 indicates that there are 1964 articles and theses which have examined the XDY meme from different perspectives. Some Chinese scholars have explored the origin of Yan's XDY principle. Qian Zhongshu holds that Yan borrowed the three Chinese characters from "Ya (雅, yǎ, elegance), Yan (严, yán, rigorousness), Xin (信, xìn, faithfulness) and Da (达, dá, intelligibility)" of Zhiqian, a translator of Buddhist Scriptures in the 3rd century AD, while Wu Lifu believes that his XDY-meme comes from the Scottish jurist Alexander F. Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (Shen 1998: 15–16, 119). The controversies on the XDY meme imply that translation ideas may spread across centuries and cultures, but not necessarily between people of the same generation or from one generation to the next within a certain culture, and the assumed origins of the meme embody a translator-translator or scholar-translator genealogy.

6. Discussion and implications

Cultural inheritance, dissemination, and development have a direct or indirect relation to translating. Memes travel intraculturally and interculturally in various forms, exhibiting different transmission mechanisms and mutative reasons.

6.1 The morphology of memes

It is assumed that the meme at the destination of transmission is not necessarily the same thing as the one at the outset. If this is the case, we call the former the end meme (EM) and the latter the start meme (SM). For example, Gogol's *Diary of a Madman* is the SM and Lu Xun's *A Madman's Diary* is the EM. The SM may not be the whole text, but it is a textual fragment, such as Hamlet's famous utterance. In the process of transmission, the SM may derive not just one but many EMs which are specified as "EM_1, EM_2… EM_n". For instance, Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* has more than 60 Chinese translations (Xu and Tian 2014). In a broad sense, all first translations and retranslations of an ST in all target cultures constitute the meme pool of the ST.

In some cases, an EM may convert into an SM, act as an intermediary meme (IM) and derive its own EMs. Cross-lingual quotation and retranslation witness numerous EMs of this kind. Some quotations, such as those Chinese variations of Hamlet's formula, are actually an imitation of a well-known fragment in a translation in the target culture which serves as the IM of the ST. Retranslations may be plagiarisms of an earlier translation of the same ST, and in the model of indirect translation, the intermediate translation is nothing but an IM. For an SM, there may be numerous IMs in that indirect translation may involve quite a few intermediary languages and intermediate translations, as illustrated in the retranslations concerning ancient Chinese classics.

For an EM, there may be numerous SMs. For example, Lu Xun and his brother Zhou Zuoren's *An Anthology of Foreign Novels* (1909) is a collection of 16 translated novels from England, America, France, Russia and Denmark. It is commonly held that "writers do not create their own texts but borrow and combine elements from others" (Chesterman 1997: 14). This can be seen more clearly in Huang Zhonglian's (2000) translation-variation categories of review, edited translation and summarized translation. The texts produced via the above translation strategies are a combination of relevant or important ideas selected from some articles and books in foreign languages. The strategies are frequently seen in the bird's-eye reporting of international latest findings in a particular field or research highlights of natural and social sciences. For example, Lu Shilun and Sun Wenkai's article "Review of American Ethnic Critical Jurisprudence" was written on the basis of 15 English articles and books as well as four translated books in Chinese (Huang 2000: 239–241). This shows the heterogeneity of the SMs and the hybridity of the EM (see Figure 1).

$$\xrightarrow[\text{transmission process}]{SM_1, SM_2 \ldots SM_n \to IM_1, IM_2 \ldots IM_n \to EM_1, EM_2, \ldots EM_n}$$

Figure 1. The morphology of translative memes

6.2 The typology of transmission

As far as the relationships between SM, IM and EM are concerned, there are generally two modes of transmission: direct transmission and roundabout transmission. Direct transmission means that a meme sometimes goes straight to the destination, which is visualized as "SM→EM". Due to the varied forms of SMs and EMs, their corresponding relations may be of one-to-one, one-to-many or many-to-one transmission. Roundabout transmission can also be called "relay" or indirect transmission in which the SM converts into the EM via an IM, which is shown in "SM→IM→EM". The addition of IM makes the potential relationships between the three memes as complex as indicated in Figure 1: one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one and many-to-many transmission paths are all possible.

Transmission of memes may also be divided into intracultural and intercultural transmission. Intracultural transmission means that a translation or a fragment of the translation may be borrowed or imitated by a retranslator, or a translation idea spreads from one mind to another within one and the same culture. A type of intracultural transmission takes place in a family: husband-wife or father-daughter transmission. It has been observed that a certain translation view is handed on from the husband to the wife or handed down from the father to the daughter. This kind of transmission pattern can seek an answer from the feudal ethical code of the Three Cardinal Guides and the Five Constant Virtues in traditional Chinese culture. The Three Cardinal Guides are as follows: the ruler guides the subject, the father guides the son or daughter and the husband guides the wife. They were so powerful that they strongly influenced the thought and behavior of the Chinese in all aspects. The second and third guides were the basic guideline of Chinese family culture and they can explain why translation ideas spread from father to daughter or from husband to wife, but not vice versa.

Intracultural transmission sometimes becomes a kind of intercultural transmission in cases where a retranslator imitates an earlier translation of the same ST or a writer/speaker borrows or adapts a translation fragment available in the target culture. Here the translation is in nature an IM but not an SM and the SM is the ST in another culture. Memetic transmission across cultures may relate to one's life experience. For example, Yan Fu was sent to England by the Qing Government to study naval technologies at the Royal Naval College from 1877 to 1879, which presumably offered him an opportunity to read Tytler's translation masterpiece. The famous modern writer Zheng Zhenduo toured England and France for asylum from 1927 to 1928 and directly copied and translated Tytler's three principles in his article "On How to Translate Literary Works" (Luo 1984: 370). Therefore, it can be argued that he must have read Tytler's work. Compared with Zheng's evident evidence, Yan's case indicates that sometimes the traces of transmission are too weak to locate them because Yan just orally told his student Wu Guangjian that his XDY principle had come from the West (Shen 1998: 119). The teacher-student transmission of memes is generally by word of mouth and thus it is very hard to trace them (see Figure 2).

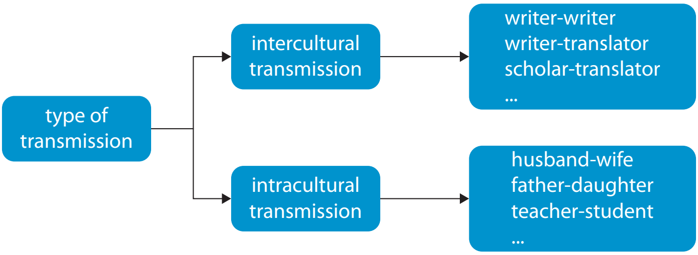

Figure 2. Types of transmission

6.3 Mutative categories and reasons

Mutations give rise to the difference between the SM and the EM which determines the types of mutated memes. Heine's poem in question shows that the EM changes part of the SM content by adding some plots to the original, while those Chinese derivatives of Hamlet's dictum indicate a similar mutation of the SM content as well as the imitators' method of replacing some elements of the original. Memetic mutation is sometimes a kind of grafting of several SMs/IMs or parts of them. For instance, the Yanshan version of *Pride and Prejudice* is basically a combination of the Renwen and Yilin versions. Mutation sometimes relates to the genre of the SM. A typical example is Homer's Odyssey which was transformed into hexameters, the dominant Latin medium of epic in ancient Rome in the 2nd century BC (Armstrong 2008).

The mutative reasons are complex. Cultural recontextualization or localization is a major reason for the mutation of memes. As the ancient Chinese saying goes, when tangerine grows to the south of the Huai River, it is tangerine; when it grows to the north of the Huai River, it becomes trifoliate orange. When a meme spreads from one culture to another, it often needs to be adapted so as to improve its survivability in the target culture. There are various motives for the introduction of a meme from source to target culture. Lu Xun's imitation of Gogol's *Diary of a Madman* is to fight against the feudal Chinese ethics. Therefore, he reconstructed the cultural context and redesigned the characters and plots in order to achieve his purpose. The 1990s witnessed a large number of grafted retranslations which are nothing but a patchwork of earlier translations of the same ST. The reason for this kind of plagiarism is the retranslators' commercial considerations (Xu and Tian 2014). In the case of intercultural imitation of a well-known quotation, writers or speakers have a special purpose to achieve: the ingenious imitation can make their viewpoint more impressive and convincing. According to Berman (1995: 57), first translations are full of flaws. Therefore, mutations may also come from first-translators' misunderstandings. In the context of indirect translation, a translation based on an intermediate translation can be seen as a first translation because it is the first time for the original ST to be introduced to the target culture. It can be argued that a translation via two intermediary languages may contain more mutations than the translation via just one "bridge language". In other words, the more intermediary languages a retranslation involves, the more mutations it will have; the mutations themselves in first translations may undergo changes in retranslating. The mutability and cumulativeness of mutated memes seem to be an important question in research on retranslation as indirect translation.

7. Conclusion

The generation, transmission and multiplication of memes are inseparable from translation whose signs and hints are found in text production, retranslation and transmission of translation theory. As for pseudo-originals, the translators are disguised as writers who spread merely the ideas of the original through intercultural cribbing. Writers or speakers who use cross-lingual quotes in their texts appropriate foreigners' ideas via impromptu translating or borrowing an available translation in their native language. Pseudo-originals share a border with cross-lingual quotations in that both of them are a replication of the original thought or an imitation of the original structure, but the former are a global intercultural borrowing and the latter a local intercultural or intracultural appropriation. Retranslations help achieve the diachronic transmission of the ST as the SM and together with first translations, make up the global meme pool of the ST which consists of subsets of meme pool in target-language cultures. The retranslation, as a plagiarism of earlier translations of the same ST, is a complete or fragmentary inheritance of earlier translators' interpretations from a positive point of view. Indirect translation, as a special type of retranslation, facilitates a unilinear spread of the ST across at least three cultures. Translation ideas spread, following some patterns. They may be handed on within a family, a coterie, a culture or between cultures.

Translative memes manifest themselves in a rich variety of forms and they are transmitted with striking characteristics. Mutations seem a constant in memetic transmission and there are various reasons or motives underlying them. In fact, translation traces offer fertile ground for us to study the origins of translative memes, their morphology and typology of transmission as well as their effects on literary, artistic, academic and other activities. The study of these traces might help create a new area for Translation Studies.

References

Anonymous. 1983. "An Interview with Mei Yi". *Chinese Translators Journal* 5 (1): 21–23.

Armstrong, Richard H. 2008. "Classical Translations of the Classics: The Dynamics of Literary Tradition in Retranslating Epic Poetry". In *Translation and the Classic: Identity as Change in the History of Culture*, ed. by Alexandra Lianeri, and Vanda Zajko, 169–202. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199288076.003.0009

Bassnett, Susan. 2001. "Transplanting the Seed: Poetry and Translation". In *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett, and Andrè Lefevere, 57–75. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Bastin, Georges L. 1998. *Traducir o adaptar ?: estudio de la adaptación puntual y global de obras didácticas*. Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, Consejo de Desarrollo Científico y Humanístico : Facultad de Humanidades y Educación.

Catford, John C. 1965. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press.

Berman, Antoine. 1995. *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*. Paris: Gallimard.

Chesterman, Andrew. 1997, 2016. *Memes of Translation: The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. doi:10.1075/btl.22

Dawkins, Charles. 1989. *The Selfish Gene* (2nd Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press,

Gambier, Yves. 1994. "La retraduction, retour et détour". *Meta* 39 (3): 413–417. doi:10.7202/002799ar

Huang, Zhonglian, et al. 2009. *The Methodology of Translation*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.

Huang, Zhonglian. 2000. *Research on Translation Variations*. Beijing: China Translation & Publishing Corporation.

Jakobson, Roman. 1959, 2000. "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation". In *On Translation*, ed. by Reuben A. Brower, 113–118. London and New York: Routledge. doi:10.4159/harvard.9780674731615.c18

Kong, Huiyi. 2005. *Rewriting a History of Translation*. Hong Kong: Research Center for Translation of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Lefevere, Andrè. 1992. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London and New York: Routledge.

Lefevere, Andrè. 1982, 2000. "Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature". In *Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 233–249. London: Routledge.

Li, Jingguo. 2002. "Revisiting Lu Xun's *A Madman's Diary*". *Literary Review* 44 (4): 111–115.

Ling, Shan. 2004. "The Footprint of a Translator: On Dong Qiusi's Translation". *Shanghai Literature* 52 (3): 82–86.

Liu, Miqing. 1998. *Style and Translation*. Beijing: China Translation & Publishing Corporation.

Luo, Xinzhang (ed.). 1984. *A Collection of Papers on Translation*. Beijing: The Commercial Press.

Moyal, Gabriel L. 2009. "Retranslation and Ideological Unraveling: Balzac's conte philosophique Takes a Return Trip". [http://www.umass.edu/french/people/profiles/documents/Moyal.pdf] consulted February 2016.

Ostrovsky, Nikolai. 2002. *How the Steel Was Tempered*, transl. by R. Prokofieva (Original: Как закалялась сталь, 1933). Sydney: Communist Party of Australia.

Ostrovsky, Nikolai. 1995. 钢铁是怎样炼成的 gāngtiě shì zěnyàng liànchéng de [How the Steel Was Tempered], transl. by Yi Mei (Original: Как закалялась сталь, 1933). Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House.

Pym, Anthony. 2011. "Translation Research Terms: A Tentative Glossary for Moments of Perplexity and Dispute". In *Translation Research Projects 3*, ed. by Anthony Pym, 75–110. Tarragona: Intercultural Studies Group.

Pym, Anthony. 1998. *Method in Translation History*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing Ltd.

Qian, Zhongshu. 1997. *A Collection of Essays by Qian Zhongshu*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Literature and Art Publishing House.

Shen, Suru. 1998. *On Xin, Da and Ya: Research on Yan Fu's Translation Theory*. Beijing: The Commercial Press.

Shuttleworth, Mark, and Moira Cowie. 1997. *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing Ltd.

Stewart, Philip. 2009. "*The Persian Letters* in Seven English Translations". [http://www.umass.edu/french/people/profiles/documents/Persian.pdf] consulted February 2016.

Tengyuan, Liulijun. 2007. "A Comparison of the Chinese Translations of *Pride and Prejudice*". [http://www.douban.com/review/1111695/] consulted December 2015.

Tian, Chuanmao. 2014. *A Sociocultural Analysis of Retranslations of Classic English Novels in Mainland China 1949–2009*. PhD Dissertation. Tarragona: Universitat Rovira i Virgili.

Tian, Chuanmao. 2010. "On Composite Interrelationship in Literary Translation". *Across Languages and Cultures* 11 (1): 51–65. doi:10.1556/Acr.11.2010.1.3

Tian, Chuanmao. 2003. "The Ingenious Use of Parody in News". *News Research* 20 (5): 39–40.

Toury, Gideon. 1995. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. doi:10.1075/btl.4

Toury, Gideon. 1980. In *Search of a Theory of Translation*. Tel Aviv: Porter Institute.

Wen, Jieruo. 2013. "My Reflections on *Finnegans Wake*". *Guangming Daily*, January 27.

Wu, Longhui (ed.). 1995. *The Complete Works of Lu Xun* (Vol. 2). Urumqi: Xinjiang People's Publishing House.

Xu, Mingwu, and Chuanmao Tian. 2014. "Commercial Considerations: A Reason for Retranslating – An Exploration of the Retranslation Boom in the 1990s Mainland China". *Across Languages and Cultures* 15 (2): 243–259. doi:10.1556/Acr.2014.001

Xu, Mingwu, and Chuanmao Tian. 2013. "Cultural Deformations and Reformulations: A Case Study of Disney's *Mulan* in English and Chinese". *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* 27 (2): 182–210. doi:10.1080/02560046.2013.783956

Yang, Jiang. 1986. "My Experience on Defeat". *Chinese Translators Journal* 8 (5): 23–29.

Yu, Guangzhong. 2001. *Thus Friends Absent Speak*, transl. by David Pollard (Original: 尺素寸心, chǐsù cùnxīn, *Thus Friends Absent Speak*, 1968). *Chinese Translators Journal* 23 (1): 72–74.

Yuan, Aiguo. 2009. "An Entry into the Masterpieces: *How the Steel Was Tempered* Chooses Adamancy". *New Chinese Study* 6 (3): 31–35.

Résumé

Les traces traductives englobent toute une série de formes d'héritage dans les pratiques de production culturelle. Les pseudo-originaux dévoilent une sorte de schéma de création littéraire qui est un plagiat interlinguistique partiel ou total d'un texte d'un prédécesseur ou d'un contemporain d'une autre culture linguistique. Les citations célèbres dans une langue étrangère sont fréquemment utilisées par des orateurs ou des auteurs via une traduction impromptue ou une appropriation, basée sur la mémoire, d'une traduction disponible. Ces citations traduites peuvent être imitées par des producteurs de textes pour obtenir un grand nombre de variations dans la culture cible. On observe également des plagiats ou des emprunts dans les retraductions de grands classiques mondiaux. Étant donné qu'elles sont toutes deux des territoires largement inexplorés, la traduction indirecte et la traduction inverse rendent les traces traductives trop faibles pour qu'on les repère. L'héritage des croyances en matière de traduction indique différentes généalogies, telles que la généalogie mari-femme, père-fille, etc. La recherche sur les origines des mèmes translatifs, leur morphologie et la typologie de leur transmission, ainsi que les raisons de leur mutation, pourrait créer un nouveau domaine dans la traductologie.

Mots-clés: pseudo-original, citation, retraduction, mème

About the authors

Xu Mingwu is a professor of translation and interpreting at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST). His major research interests lie in translation studies, teaching interpreting

and foreign language education. He has been teaching translation and interpreting for 25 years. And he has published extensively in the forms of books, book chapters and journal articles such as *Chinese Translators Journal*, *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* and *Across Languages and Cultures*.
Address: Huazhong University of Science and Technology School of Foreign Languages, 1037# Luoyu Road, Wuhan, P. R. China, 430074, China
E-mail: xumingwu@mail.hust.edu.cn

Tian Chuanmao (corresponding author) is a professor of translation at Yangtze University with a PhD degree in Translation and Intercultural Studies. He is an advanced member of the Translators Association of China. His area of interest is translation theory and practice. He has published over ten articles concerning translation in major scholarly journals at home and abroad, such as *Chinese Translators Journal, Across Languages and Cultures*, *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, and *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*.
Address: Yangtze University, School of Foreign Studies, No. 1 Nanhuan Road, Jingzhou City, Hubei Province, P. R. China, 434023, China
E-mail: tcm_316@163.com

FIT2017
XXI WORLD CONGRESS
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF TRANSLATORS
XXI CONGRÈS MONDIAL
FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE
DES TRADUCTEURS
DISRUPTION AND
DIVERSIFICATION
3–5 AUGUST 2017 | 3–5 AOÛT 2017
BRISBANE CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE
BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA | www.fit2017.org