

From “Faithfulness, Expressiveness, and Elegance” to “Creative Treason” —A Brief Analysis of Variations in Cross-Languages in Pa Chin’s *Cold Nights*

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Abstract: The phenomenon of variation is common in texts of different literatures and cultures. For the development of Comparative Literature in China, in order to break through the linguistic barriers between Eastern and Western civilizations, the Chinese Professor Cao Shunqing develops the Variation Theory of Comparative Literature in 2005. The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature is a valuable integration of all contemporary disciplines. It ranges from transnational variation studies, cross-language variation studies, cross-cultural variation studies, cross-civilization variation studies, to the images of “otherness” studies, etc. The paper is trying to analyze Pa Chin’s novel *Cold Nights* of bilingual format in Chinese and English from the perspective of creative treason in cross-language variation studies from three aspects: domestication and foreignization translating method of translator’s individualized translation; mistranslation and omissions; abridged translation compilation and adaptation. Based on the original translation principle as “Faithfulness, Expressiveness, and Elegance”, the paper tries to search for the variations in cross-languages in the literary translation and its deep hidden causes from the aspects of language, culture, history, and local custom in Pa Chin’s *Cold Nights*.

Key Words: *Cold Nights*, variation study, literary translation, creative treason

I. Introduction:

The era of globalization creates a totally brand new context for the study of Comparative Literature. The phenomenon of variation is common in texts of different literatures and cultures. Among the literary translation and translation literature all over the world, the variation phenomenon in languages exists all the time. Translation is a communicating activity between different languages and cultures, in which the transmission of information is inescapably varying as the distinction lying in language, time, space, and culture in the process of literary translation. As a result, the translation has varied comparing with the original text in the aspects of language style and language content, which is the representative of Creative Treason. Therefore, it is important to analyze the variation of literary translation and

explore its hidden reasons, which is of great value of research for the Comparative Literature study.

The paper is trying to analyze Pa Chin’s novel *Cold Nights* of bilingual format in Chinese and English from the perspective of creative treason of cross-language variation studies from three aspects: domestication and foreignization translating method of translator’s individualized translation; mistranslation and omissions; abridged translation compilation and adaptation. Based on the original translation principle as “Faithfulness, Expressiveness, and Elegance”, the paper tries to search for the variations in cross-languages in the literary translation and its deep hidden causes from the aspects of language, culture, history, and local custom in Pa Chin’s *Cold Nights*.

II. Cross-language Variation Studies of Comparative Literature

Cross-language variation study is not only an important concept in the civilization communication, but also the most valuable content in the Comparative Literature. One basis of Comparative Literature is cross-country, the other is cross-language. The variation study is common in the process of communication between different literatures and cultures, where translation will inevitably happen.

For the traditional principle of translation, the modern Chinese scholar Yan Fu proposes in the preface to *Evolution and Ethics*: there are three principles to make translation “faithful, expressive, elegant”, which has become the highest pursuit in the field of translation and the important standard to evaluate translation in China. According to Yan Fu, being faithful means the translation should base on the original meaning in the source language. Being expressive means the translation should be fluent. Being elegant means the translation should be perfect in aesthetics. That is to say only on the basis of loyalty and fluency, can the style of the translation be improved. To some extent, the principles of “Faithfulness”, “Expressiveness”, and “Elegance” guide the general translation. While the translation mentioned in the theory of variation, is the literary translation, which is also a kind of common translation, but its own features differ from the “literal translation”, which is the word-for-word translation without the consideration of differences between different cultures. And it is also the basic of the translation. Besides, a good translation is

the integration of the cultures of the source text and the target language. In detail, it is the variation study in the cross-language context.

French scholar Guyard develops that “standing on the edge of the language and nation, researchers of comparative literature gaze at the interpenetration between two of several literatures in terms of their themes, thoughts and emotions”.¹ Standing at the edges of languages could be regarded as a study of cross-language. And the Chinese scholar Qian Zhongshu proposes that “as a discipline, comparative literature emphasizes on the comparison cross countries and languages”. That is to say, if we compare different literatures from different countries, we would study the interrelations on literary theory, literary schools, authors, books between them. Scholars all over the world have confronted with conflicts and shocks between Eastern and Western civilizations, which belong to the study of Comparative Literature, also belong to cross-cultural research or cross-language study as a matter of fact. Therefore, in 2005 the Chinese scholar Professor Cao Shunqing developed The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature in the book *The Study of Comparative Literature*, on the basis of the theory of Comparative Literature and aesthetics, which accepts the impact of aesthetic on Comparative Literature studies in the context of globalization, surpassing disputes of French and American School. The Variation Study of Comparative Literature refers to the research on the variation status of the exchanges of the literary phenomena and the mutual interpretation between different countries and civilizations. And it is through the variation of the exchanges of literary phenomena and the mutual interpretation to explore the law of the Variation Study of Comparative Literature. The key of the study lies in the sameness (universality) and otherness (heterogeneity) of civilization. It seeks the otherness from universality as well as the sameness from heterogeneity. Moreover, the core of the Variation Theory is heterogeneity and comparability. The Variation Study of Comparative Literature not only pays attention to homology and universality, but more to variability and heterogeneity. Thus, it ranges from transnational variation studies, cross-language variation studies, cross-cultural variation studies, cross-civilization variation studies, to the images of “otherness” studies, etc.

Cross-language variation study is a research in Comparative Literature study as the language level. It focuses on the variation occurred in the process of literary translation and mainly refers to the phenomenon of literature through translation, across language barriers, and ultimately accepted by recipients. From the language point of view, any foreign literary works, as long as translators and readers add “reproduction” or “reproduction” of the text in the target language, it will inevitably produce variation within the limit of the specification of the target language and the reading habits of readers consciously or unconsciously. The “reproduction” or “reproduction” of the text in the target language also belongs to “creative treason”, which should be paid enough attention to. Interlingual translation has always

been considered to be difficult. And even many Chinese and foreign scholars think that one language could not be translated into another language. By the end of the 18th century, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), the famous German linguist said “in my view all translations were only trying to accomplish a task that cannot be completed. Each translator was bound to be stumbled by either of the obstacles in his way in the process of translation: he was either too close to the original text at the expense of the nation’s style and language, or too close to national characteristics at the expense of the original text. The middle road between the two is not difficult but impossible to be found.”² This is nothing more than to say there is little commonality between the various languages and there cannot exist the fusion between the original and the translated.

III. Pa Chin and his *Cold Nights*

Pa Chin is considered as one of the most influential Chinese writers since the May Fourth Movement. His novel *Cold Nights* is the last novel finished before the founding of People’s Republic of China, portraying the real domesticity in Kuomintang-controlled areas during the Second World War. The story is mainly about a refugee family from a coastal city of China. It portrays a series of tragedies happened to the family before the surrender of Japan, reflecting the tragic fate and coward of intellectuals. *Cold Nights* is a continuation of Liang’s writing style in the May Fourth Movement: reflecting on the individual emancipation via writing love stories. It has delved into the intellectuals’ fate in the days of May Fourth Movement and has reconsidered the New Culture tradition of the May Fourth Movement by a profound depiction of the human nature. By doing so, *Cold Nights* stands for the inheritance as well as transcendence of literary works in the days of the May Fourth Movement. The English version of *Cold Nights* is published by the Chinese University Press in Hong Kong. Adhering to the mission to promote cultural exchanges between China and Western countries, the famous translators Nathan K. Mao and Liu Ts’un-yan work together, exhibiting the masterpiece intact to western readers. Thus *Cold Nights* (Bilingual) is with not just time and geographical differences, but also with culture and language differences. It is with more value for Variation Studies in Comparative Literature seeing from the perspective of recipients’ subjectivity.

□. Analysis of Creative Treason in *Cold Nights*

The Creative Treason has been generally accepted in academic field, and “no longer regarded the final aim as establishing translation regulation and guiding the practical translation”³. In recent years, the research and practice of translation studies began a two-way analysis of literary and culture, “leave the research subject to different cultures, examine conflict and mixture in literary communication, and study the cultural distort and deformation caused by mutual

¹ Guyard, Marius-Francois. *La Littérature Comparée*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969, P. 4.

² Tan Zaixi: *A Brief History of Western Translation*. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2004, P.109

³ Cao Shunqing: *The Study of Comparative Literature*, Chengdu: Si Chuan University Press, 2005, P.184-196

misreading, misinterpretation and mistranslation, mistakenly read distorted by misinterpretation and mistranslation so as to find out the cultural reasons behind.”⁴ As part of Variation Theory of the Comparative Literature, Creative Treason was first put forward by the French scholar Robert Escarpit. He once referred to Creative Treason as: “If willing to admit translation is a kind of Creative Treason, so, the annoyed problem of translation may be solved. Regarding translation as treason is because translation gives a brand new face to the original text and an opportunity for wider readers to communicate literature. Translation makes the original text abundant and live for a new life.”⁵ Creative Treason, the creative translation completed by medium (translator) in a certain explicit motivation of recreation, is a dynamic interpretation and construction of the original text positively applying the subjectivity initiative in the process of translation. “Being a critical concept of medio-translatology, Creative Treason represents the understanding, translation and interpretation of the original text, which betrays the original meaning set up by the author in the course of the spread of the original text in the context of receptor language.”⁶ The essential feature of Creative Treason of literary translation is to introduce the original text to an unexpected receiving environment for original author, and change its original form. As always associated with the translator’s creative thinking pattern based on his or her own style, translation is an inevitable dynamic recreation to represent, intensify and annotate the translator’s feelings for the original text. And the Chinese scholar Professor Xie Tianzhen has done some research into the medio-translatology: “Different from the general translation study, if you want to make a concise definition for it, that is, medio-translatology originally starts from the media perspective of Comparative Literature and nowadays, doing the research on translation and literary translation from the perspective of comparative culture.”⁷ Focusing on the variation phenomenon such as loss, deformation, addition, extension of literature information, medio-translatology tries to dig out the deeper questions as literary spread, communication, influence and reception, help to reach mutual understanding and complementary between different literatures and cultures. Medio-translatology regards translation as the researching object of literary study, and explores how the variation phenomenon reflects through translation. And the misreading, mistranslation and “Creative Treason” caused by the translator’s cultural awareness and valuable orientation can be categorized into the Translation Studies or Medio-Translatology. Creative Treason inevitably happens when translator is processing the literary translation, giving prominence to the following three aspects: domestication and foreignization of translator’s individualized translation;

translator’s mistranslation and omission; translator’s abridged translation compilation and adaptation.

1. Domestication and Foreignization in Individualized Translation

The nature of literary translation lies in its creativity. In the cross-cultural and cross-civilization literary exchange, translation is closely linked with the variation and creation. Some scholars have pointed out that translation is the interlocution of the consciousness between translator and the original author. And translation is the communication of two distinguished cultures and a recreation of the original text. Translator cannot commit the interlocution without highlighting its own subjectivity, expanding creative work in literary translation, even showing a strong treason. “Since entering a new language, translation will add not only new factors, but also the inevitable comprehension style and personal color of translator’s. Therefore, it is an art of recreation in a certain sense.”⁸ The translator, especially the qualified translator, obeys its own translation principles and pursues its own goal when engaged in literary translation, which leads to its creative individuality in translation.

1.1) Domestication of Individualized Translation

A main feature of individualized translation is “domestication”, which means expressing the original text in an extremely natural and fluent language on the surface, but deep inside, reflecting an “annexation” of original culture in the target language as the distinction of cultural values, ideology, translator’s personality, talent, aesthetic, moral value between the original culture and target culture. In *Cold Nights*, the “domesticate translation” is adopted to translate the title in the novel. Taking the target language as the standard, the target-language cultural background is fully taken into account in the translation of the title, while the Chinese traditional culture elements in the original text is ignored somehow. For example, the protagonist in the novel “Wang Wenxuan” is called “老兄”⁹ by his colleague Uncle Chung. “老” (old) here stands for a kind of intimacy and respect, which is quite common in traditional Chinese culture. Giving full consideration to the differences between Chinese and western culture lying in language expressions, translator translates “老兄” as “my dear friend”¹⁰, to meet the western title habit of calling a colleague. Another example is the translation of the title for Wang’s wife “尊夫人”¹¹, in which “尊” here stands for belittle oneself, drive up others to show respect and modesty. In order to highlight the respect in the title of the elder, and also

⁸ Chen Dun, Liu Xiangyu, *The Introduction of Comparative Literature*, Beijing: Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, 2000, P.210

⁹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.43

¹⁰ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.42

¹¹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.43

⁴ Cao Shunqing: *The Study of Comparative Literature*, Chengdu: Si Chuan University Press, 2005, P.184-196

⁵ Escarpit Robert: *The Sociology of Literature*, Fu Jingyong translates, Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1988, P.136

⁶ Liu Xiaogang: *Creative Treason: Definition, Theory and Historical Description*, Fudan University, 2006, P.3

⁷ Xie Tianzhen: *Translatology*, Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1999, P.1

meet the western appellation habits, “尊夫人” is translated into “your honorable wife”¹² following the method of “domestication”, where “honorable” is just a respectful title for the wife of close-related colleagues’. These examples stand for the embodiment of translator’s individualized translation, which is just perfect for “domesticated translation”.

In *Cold Nights*, the translation of Chinese common expressions also requires for the “domesticated translation”, especially for some traditional expressions in the early stage of China. They often appears in the works relating to the period of the May 4th Movement in 1919. But they are not commonly used now. The protagonist in *Cold Nights* complained that “总有一天会闹出花样来的。”¹³ Here, the expression “花样”, rarely used now, is the traditional Chinese metonymy referring to be humiliated. Translator translates it as “there will be further developments to this story”¹⁴ intentionally in line with the western culture background so as to make the meaning clear to the western readers. In the novel, the description of the leaving scene of protagonist’s wife goes to “屋子里寒冷的空气中还留着她的脂粉香,可是他带走了笑和清脆的语音。”¹⁵ The expression “脂粉” intended for ancient Chinese women’s cosmetics such as the rouge and powder, later extended to beautiful women. As the distinction of women’s cosmetics used in old China and western world, westerners make themselves smell good by perfume, while the old Chinese women by rouge and powder. Therefore, the expression “脂粉” here should be translated as “perfume”¹⁶. This translation method of variation is consistent with the western culture and language habits of “domestication” translation, aiming at the target language culture for the purpose to help the readers understand. Moreover, in this novel, there is a sentence as “只怪我当初瞎了眼”。¹⁷ Here the expression “瞎了眼”, as a proprietary vocabulary in oral Chinese, refers to someone has been blinded not to realize something important. However, the western culture does not accept this kind of saying. “瞎了眼” in English is “to be blind”. So in the novel, translator has to avoid the word itself to vary it to “made the wrong choice”¹⁸, which is easier for

westerners to accept and understand the behavior instead of doubt. This method of translation of variation abandoned the traditional culture in China, but stood with the culture of the target language, with the only aim to make the target language readers understand the meaning of the original text.

1.2). Foreignization of Individualized Translation

“Foreignization”, the target language culture “submit to” the original culture indicates that translator intends to keep some original expressions, which have no corresponding translation by phonetic, literal translation or annotation way. It is an individualized translation method aiming to inherit and carry forward primitive culture. The translator’s “foreignization” of translation reflects in his selection of translation objects as well as the translation methods, which show his own originality such as his values, ideology, personality, talents, aesthetic, moral values and so on.

The translator usually focuses “foreignization translation” on some specific traditional expression in the original text. In *Cold Nights*, mother-in-law and Hsuan talk about Shu-Sheng’s entertainment. They mention: “她倒并不打牌” ... “不打牌? 她不是打外国纸牌吗?”¹⁹ Speaking of playing cards, different cultures have different forms. For example, westerners are fond of bridge, the Japanese love chess, while the Chinese like mahjong. Translator intends to translate it as “playing mah-jong” ... “play cards”²⁰ for some reasons. The translator should not only consider that the background of the novel is Sichuan, where people like playing mahjong, but also consider that mahjong, as the most attractive forms of gambling in Chinese history, has raised its reputation all over the world nowadays. Focusing on the original language culture, translator uses its unique personality and aesthetic to deal with the translation of the original text.

Moreover, the original text refers to the expression “肝火旺”²¹, which is a traditional Chinese medicine terminology. It means some problem of human visceral adjustment causing irritability. Therefore, when translating, the translator never doubts avoiding such obscure terms, but translates it as “element of fire emitted from his liver”²², which is not easy for western readers to catch up with. Although the variation on translation is consciously adopted by translators, the essential intention is to retain the primitive culture in the original text and wide spreads it in the target culture. This kind of translation intention and method are closely linked with the valuable idea and consciousness of translators.

¹² Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.42

¹³ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.381

¹⁴ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.380

¹⁵ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.353

¹⁶ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.352

¹⁷ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.157

¹⁸ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.156

¹⁹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.113

²⁰ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.112

²¹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.179

²² Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.178

In addition, the individualized “foreignization” translation is widely used in translating the specific language items, such as traditional local dialects. In *Cold Nights*, there often occurs such a scene Shu-sheng steps out of the old house the family used to live in, walking on the sidewalk, and the speaking of street vendors come into her ears: “想办法吧, 当黄鱼总行”²³ Its English translation is “Try to find a way; be a stowaway.”²⁴ The words “黄鱼 (Huang Yu)/stowaway” is from Sichuan dialect as well, with a literal meaning of a person who hides in a ship, aeroplane, or other vehicle in order to make a journey secretly or without paying. Meanwhile, it can unfold the Chinese snacks to foreign readers to show the diversity of Chinese traditional culture. For instance, “嘉定怪味鸡”²⁵, translated as “spicy chicken from exotic Chia-ting”²⁶. “Chia-ting”(Leshan), is a place name in the ancient time in Sichuan Province, where is famous for the snack “怪味鸡”. It is the traditional food in Sichuan, with a tart taste of hot, spicy and sweet, which we called “strange”. The translator keeps “Chia-ting” in the original name and varies “strange” to “spicy”, to stress “spicy” taste of traditional food in Sichuan, which is fond of by foreigners And it is not likely to misunderstand the true flavor of the snack by foreigners. Translator preserves its traditional name in ancient time, and actively caters to the target language cultural background.

2. Mistranslation and Omission

When doing the literary translation from one culture to the other, the target language text requires treason. As the Distinction between Chinese and Western languages, sometimes translator is required to have a thorough transformation done with the original text in the process of translation. Generally speaking, when doing translation between languages with insurmountable differences and unfitted to literal translation, translators should be brave enough to break through the shackles of original language and conduct a translation closest to the specification of target languages. Creative reflects a subjective effort that translator makes to get close to and reproduces the original text with his own artistic creating ability. While treason reflects an objective deviate from the original text in order to achieve a certain individual desire in the process of translation.

Either mistranslation or omission, whether translator does it deliberately or not, has the characteristics of treason. The vast majority of mistranslation and omission is classified into unconscious Creative Treason. Mistranslation, violating from the requirements of translation definitely, has always

²³ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts'un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.511

²⁴ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts'un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.510

²⁵ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts'un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.15

²⁶ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts'un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.14

been avoided by any serious translators. Nevertheless, mistranslation is inevitable for translation, especially for the translation of poetry or voluminous literary works. “For Comparative Literature, mistranslation and omission somehow have a precious value for literature researches. As a block in cultures and literature exchange, they reflect not only misunderstanding and misinterpretation for another culture, but also collision, distort and deformation between cultures prominently and distinctively.”²⁷

2.1). Mistranslation

As the inevitable differences in the cultures and expressions, any translation is destined to rebel the original text to some degree. Mistranslation refers to the distortion of original meaning intentionally or unintentionally in process of translation. Unintentional mistranslation represents the cultural and linguistic differences and contradictions between translator’s background and the original background. As for the study of Comparative Literature, the intentional mistranslation wins more values for researches. Because in the intentional mistranslation, there exists an enormous tension between target culture and original culture, which results in the partiality of translation for one side: either catering to the cultural mentality of target culture to greatly change the original text; or forcing to introduce alien culture mode and disregard the esthetic interest and possible acceptance of original culture. The valuable pursuit of Creative Treason determines that the translator must consider the main cultural norms and constraints of environmental acceptance in the process of translation, in the premise of which the literary work can hold a profound and lasting impact on the main culture with target language.

In *Cold Nights*, the description goes that“时局好了。”²⁸ In this sentence, judging from the expression “时局”, we can never related to its translation “Once the Japanese are defeated”²⁹, which is easy to be regarded as unintentional mistranslation by the readers of target language. However, when having knowledge of the original author and the writing background of the original novel, it is not difficult to find the special intention of translator. In the latter part of the Japanese invasion of China, the areas in Chongqing and Sichuan have been long suffering from the bombing, where people used the excavations to shelter from the aid raid. Therefore, situation here indicates the Japanese are defeated. Intentional mistranslation of the translator not only caters to the cultural mentality of original culture, but also considers the linguistic and cultural habits of target language to make the translation readable.

In the original novel, when the Japanese are approaching to Sichuan, Chief Chueng said: “这样不行, 日本人来, 会

²⁷ Xie Tianzhen: *Translatology*, Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1999, P.1

²⁸ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts'un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.191

²⁹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts'un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.192

到乡下找花姑娘的。”³⁰ In “Chinese Dictionary”, “花姑娘” is defined as: “Japanese invaders called the Chinese women being raped and insulted by them” and “prostitute”. However, this word is a native Chinese word, and originated as “prostitute” in ancient China. The wide use of “花姑娘” stands for the women related to Japanese invaders, and the expression shows desecration and irreverence of Chinese women from Japanese invaders. The translation in the English version “women in the countryside”³¹ is definitely a mistranslation. No matter intentionally or unintentionally, this variability reflects the enormous distinctions between the source language and target language on understanding the damages and misfortunes on Chinese people since the Japanese war of aggression against China. If translating literally, it increases difficulties for readers on reading and understanding the content. It is reasonable to translate the expression “花姑娘” in this way to fully consider the acceptance of target readers and culture.

In the original text, the fixed Chinese expression also appears a kind of mistranslation. For example, the protagonist said: “安分的老好人”³² should be translated as “a good person who tries never to offend anyone else”. However, why does the translator mistranslate them as “an ordinary law-abiding citizen”³³? Here are some reasons. Firstly, according to the original context and Chinese idiomatic expressions, the expression “老好人” here does not mean good or bad person but the mood people have during the environment of war. Considering the original context and Chinese habitual expressions, not rigidly adhere to the literal meaning of the text, translator intentionally mistranslates the original text and vividly expresses the true feelings of the protagonist.

Moreover, “不到黄河心不死”³⁴, an idiom once mentioned in *Cold Nights* that from Li Baojia’s Officialdom in the late Qing Dynasty, metaphor of a determination of never giving up until meet the deadline. Translator mistranslates it as “you’re a complete silly ass”³⁵ instead of “not stop until one reaches one’s goal” to blame silly people. The intentional mistranslation considers main cultural norms and constraints of environmental acceptance in order to introduce into the alien culture and ignores the esthetic interest and acceptance.

³⁰ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.209

³¹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.208

³² Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.489

³³ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.488

³⁴ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.261

³⁵ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.260

2.2). Omission

Omission, classified into unintentional omission and intentional omission, has an extraordinary value of research on Comparative Literature, which reflecting the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of translator to another culture. Omission, acting as a block in literature communication, is also clearly representing the collision between different cultures. Intentional omission is designed to suit for cultural attitude of the target language, with deleting the original content conflicted with the target culture so as to make the translation introduced into target language culture more smoothly and meet the readers’ reading habits, as well as expand the influence and visibility of the original text.

In *Cold Nights*, description of the protagonist Wang’s drunkenness goes as “仿佛未吐尽的饭菜都塞在他的喉管里，他心里又烧得难过。”³⁶ The translation is “Some” of the food seemed to have stuck in his windpipe and he could not dislodge it³⁷ In English, “烧” is “burn/fever”, which is a professional medical vocabulary less commonly used daily life. But for Chinese people, when “烧” is used for a kind of feeling, it often means being suffocated. When translating these diseases in view of the cultural distinction, the translator avoids using this confusing word in order to make sentences more easily accepted by the target language culture.

Similarly, there is another sentence: “给他们做了两年牛马，病倒了就一脚踢开。”³⁸ Originated from the ancient Chinese farming society, “牛”(cattle), “马”(horse) are accustomed to compare to hard-working people or toil in Chinese. The reason is that Chinese people have been raising cattle to plow the land and horse to herd till now. However, the western countries had agriculture industrialized and mechanized a long time ago. Thus the cattle are used only for milking. Under the condition, there is no concept of hardworking sayings related to cattle. The translation is “Hsuan has slaved for Chou like a horse for two years.”³⁹ Translator takes account of the cultural differences, choosing to omit intentionally the “cattle” not conforming to the western cultural background and makes the translation more easily to be accepted by readers.

In this novel, there are some descriptions about the heroine: “一天打扮得妖形怪状，又不是去做女招待”⁴⁰ As the divergence of cultures and religions between the eastern and western world, the expressions of “妖怪”(monster or

³⁶ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.83

³⁷ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.82

³⁸ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.303

³⁹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.302

⁴⁰ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.107

demon) are also quite different. The “妖怪” in mass of Chinese ancient literature works, such as *Strange Story from China Studio*, *The Legend of White Snake*, and *Story of Immortals*, is always described as a beautiful young woman. Therefore, in Chinese culture, the idiom “妖形怪状” is meant to describe the flirtatious women. While western culture is deeply influenced by Bible culture. The “妖怪” there which meant to be “monster” and “demon”, is an ugly and evil exemplification. In view of the differences, when translating the translator intentionally omits “妖形怪状” and translates the original text as “dress up like a socialite every day”⁴¹, more in line with the target language culture.

Cold Nights, originally written by Pa Chin, who was born in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in the old Chinese society, contains a couple of Sichuan dialects and old Chinese expressions. For example, Uncle Chung answered: “不过我和汪兄平日还谈得拢...”⁴². In this sentence, “拢” is a typical dialect in Sichuan, which refers to hold/take. If adopting literal translation here, the foreign readers must be bothered so much. Therefore, translator intentionally omits this kind of words: “But he is always pleasant to talk to...”⁴³ That maybe lack some local atmosphere of the original novel, but it caters to the taste of target language readers.

Another example is “方太太，你不要客气，我不口渴，’树生连忙欠身阻止道”⁴⁴. Among that, “欠身” is rarely used in modern Chinese language. But it is an ancient Chinese manners referring to the slightly upward movement of upper part of the body of a sitting people in order to show respect or friendship to those who come to sit or pass by. As this kind of courtesy and etiquette differ from western culture, the translator intentionally omits it to “Shu-sheng stopped her”⁴⁵. Although it loses a record for Chinese courtesy in the original novel, this brief expression conforms to the straight mode of the expression in western society.

2.3). Abridged translation, compilation, and adaptation

Abridged translation, compilation, and adaptation all belong to Creative Treason. There are many reasons causing abridged translation, compilation, and adaptation which means to be consistent with the habits and customs in the target cultures, or caters to the reader’s interest; for the communication between cultures, or moral, political reasons. To some extent, these four types of translation is equivalent to each other. As they all mean to clear the plot of original novel,

and delete sentences or paragraphs or even texts relating little with the main plot in order to rewrite the original text briefly and understandably.

The biggest difference between abridged and compiled translation lies in that: all the sentences of abridged translation are literal translation on the basis of the original text, while the sentences of compile translation are mixed with literal translation, adaptation or addition by the translators according to the need. Therefore, compiled translation has a more tremendous variation to the original text than abridged translation. Adaptation and paraphrasing mean to vary the literature style of the original text, such as varying novel into poetry or drama, which is not obvious in *Cold Nights*.

Showing a mass amount of variation and treason to the original text, compiled translation and adaptation combine cultures and reading habits in source language and target language through some translation skills, such as addition, abbreviation, adaptation and description. For example, in the novel, the sentence “我们奉公守法，别人升官发财。”⁴⁶ In the translation, the translator translates “奉公守法” into “law-abiding and suffer”⁴⁷ The additional word “suffer” makes the background of the original novel clear at the beginning—the Japanese war of aggression against China, which makes it easier for readers to understand the story. Another example for a person who is extremely sad: “他几乎要祷告了，留下他吧，用科学的力量救活他吧”⁴⁸ is translated as “he almost prayed for him, asking either the divine powers to spare his friend or medical science to save him”⁴⁹. The additional phrase “the divine powers” is the local expression in English which explains the religious belief of a character in the novel to the target readers.

As is known to all, Chinese expression and description seem to be more redundant and delicate. While English expression is concise and brief, which make the abbreviation needed in the translation of Chinese literature works. In the *Cold Nights*, there are many a descriptions about characters’ feelings. For example: “他觉得一根针往心上刺，他低下头来，自言自语地说。”⁵⁰ In the sentence, “一根针”, and “低下头”, are all delicately describing the painful mood of the protagonist. Aiming to suit the target language expression, translator abbreviates the original text into “He felt a stab of

⁴¹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.106

⁴² Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.305

⁴³ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.304

⁴⁴ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.501

⁴⁵ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.500

⁴⁶ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.79

⁴⁷ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.78

⁴⁸ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.465

⁴⁹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.464

⁵⁰ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition)*, Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.53

pain and murmured”⁵¹ Although these simple expressions cannot describe the delicate feelings as the original text does, it definitely summarized its grief briefly, avoiding the redundant impression to the target readers. Another example, “母亲在床沿上坐了一会，又站起来，望了他一两分钟，见他闭上眼不出声息，以为他睡熟了，便轻手轻脚地走出去。”⁵² In this sentence, the author represents the deep love to son through a series of mother’s actions. “坐”“站”“望”“轻手轻脚”. In view of the expressing differences between Chinese and English, the translator shortens it as “His mother sat by him until she assumed that he was asleep.”⁵³ for the sake of briefly expressing the original text. With this method of the variation, the distinction between the western and oriental is shrunk.

Adaptation is also commonly used in the novel, aiming at consisting with the customs and habits in target language nations, catering to the reader’s interest, and wide-spreading the original novel in the target culture. In the novel, mother scolds his son, saying: “你现在还替她辩护，真不中用。她背着你交男朋友，写情书，还有什么苦衷可说！”⁵⁴ The expression “真不中用” in the sentence should be translated literally as “you’re useless”, while translator conducts as “you are weakling.”⁵⁵ which is more straight to analyze the intention of the author to show the protagonist’s cowardice. Another example goes as “你说她是不是还把我们放在眼里。”⁵⁶ In traditional Chinese culture, the “in one’s eyes” directly refers to “take one seriously”. The translator adapts it as “would you say she has us on her mind”⁵⁷ to meet both of the need of original content and the habitual expression of target language. Once the mother-in-law said “你一个穷读书人哪里留得住她”⁵⁸. “读书人” stands for the intellectuals and smart people in western culture. But in old China, the “nerd”, alluded to educated people for their pure pedantic or inflexible personality. Therefore, the translator also translates it to “you are a poor, simple, honest man, how can you expect to keep

her?”⁵⁹ which is more readable and clearer for foreign readers to understand.

□. Conclusion:

In contemporary cultural context, the communication of literal heterogeneity occurs in a conflicting and tense cultural relationship in which makes the variation inevitable. The traditional principle of “Faithfulness, Expressiveness, and Elegance” does not apply for literary translation. Therefore, the traditional faithful concept should be interpreted again. From the perspective of the variation study of Comparative Literature, the thesis analyzes part of Creative Treason facts in *Cold Nights* bilingual format not only on the language transmissions between original text and translation but also the deeper reasons behind the linguistic variations. In the study of Comparative Literature, the linguistic variation is renewed from the perspective of the Variation Theory, which provides a new perspective for translation studies, and contributes to update the subject of Comparative Literature research. All these studies are helpful to explore the new aspects of literature development and are beneficial to promote constructions of the Comparative Literature theory, which will give the vital significance to the development of Comparative Literature.

When studying the Creative Treason of literary translation, we should, on the one hand, we should explore the constructive way for the mixture of Chinese and Western culture according to the needs of Chinese social culture and the development of literature itself, which should not deny or reject Chinese traditional culture and literature because of the translation activities. Knowing features of both cultures, we should combine the alien cultures and thoughts with Chinese traditional literature in a best way. On the other hand, flexibly using creativity of translation, we should keep the valuable part of traditional culture and literature, never losing our nature and direction in the process of integrating into the global literatures and cultures so as to effectively promote communication and integration with foreign literatures and cultures, and develop the Chinese literature with the aid of the global literature.

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⁵⁹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.352

⁵¹ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.52

⁵² Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.117

⁵³ Pa Chin: *Cold Nights* (Chinese-English Bilingual Edition), Nathan K. Mao, Liu Ts’un-yan translate, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002, P.116

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