



**Studies in Literature and Language**  
Vol. 8, No. 3, 2014, pp. 75-78  
DOI:10.3968/5008

ISSN 1923-1555[Print]  
ISSN 1923-1563[Online]  
[www.cscanada.net](http://www.cscanada.net)  
[www.cscanada.org](http://www.cscanada.org)

## A Comparative Study of the Jerome Model and the Horace Model

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**Supported by** the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities (SWU1309243).

Received 15 February 2014; accepted 29 April 2014  
Published online 25 June 2014

### Abstract

This article explores two translation models circling around the key issue “equivalence” in translation studies. They are the Jerome Model and the Horace Model. They differentiate from each other in the aspects of the translating priorities and purposes, etc. Moreover, through illustrative examples, the article points out there are intrinsic relationship between the two models, so appropriate application and combination of the two models will not only solve the problem of “equivalence”, but also build up a bridge between source language culture and target language culture.

**Key words:** Equivalence; The Jerome Model; The Horace Model; Differences; Relationship

Zheng, C. (2014). A Comparative Study of the Jerome Model and the Horace Model. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 8(3), 75-78. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/5008> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/5008>

### INTRODUCTION

Translating is a complex process involving a variety of factors, and the first key point in translation studies is the standard of a piece of good translation, and this is usually centered upon the idea “faithfulness” or how we can attain “equivalence” between the original text and the reproduced one.

Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere proposed (2001) three translation models: the Jerome Model, the Horace Model and the Schleiermacher Model. The first one emphasizes on the word-for-word translation or being faithful to the source text. The second one takes the customers or readers as the most important factors, thus a translator ought to negotiate between the two languages. The second one carries the first one further by suggesting the reservation of original cultural elements of the source language for the purpose of adding exotic flavor to the translation. In this comparison, the first two really encounter with each other, because they are in opposite directions, regarding the issue of “faithfulness”. Further comparative analysis is needed to be done before we can apply them appropriately in translating practices.

The Jerome Model originated from Saint Jerome, dated back to the fifth BC and prevalent in the West up until the nineteenth century. In the beginning, it was targeted at the Bible translation and emphasized “faithful to the text” (Liao, 2000, p.4), “stick to the word-for-word translation” (Liao, 2000, p.4), and elevated faithfulness to the central position, to the exclusion of many other factors. With the help of a dictionary, it sought for the equivalence between meaning and form, though we know today that the absolute equivalence could not be realized in translating practice, but it enjoyed a monumental significance. If we re-examine it in its historical background, we can get an idea why St. Jerome advocated “faithful to the text” and “word-for-word translation”.

There are three reasons: (a) the Bible was the voice of God, thus no translator dare raise a challenge to His ultimate authority; (b) The capability of rendering the Bible into different languages was bestowed upon the translators by God; (c) The Bible was first translated from Hebrew to Greek, then to Latin, then to English, in this process, the Western society paid homage to it through the facility of translations, therefore, the only way to keep coherence of the meanings of God was to follow every

word exactly. The enlightenment we can get from St. Jerome Model is that the options of translation methods must be adapted to specific historical background and the ideological dominance.

The other one is the Horace Model, which is associated with the name of the Roman poet Horace (65BC-8BC). Although it predated the Jerome model, it had been overshadowed by it for about fourteen centuries. Influenced by Cicero, Horace insisted on the flexibility of translation, against the word-for-word translation. He advocated that translation should be done based on the idea of “sense for sense”. Furthermore, he suggested that when necessary, a translator can create new coined words or import foreign words to his translation to enrich the target language and enhance the effectiveness of the translated works to target language readers.

According to Horace, A ‘fidus’ translator/interpreter was one who could be used, who got the job done on time and to the satisfaction of both parties. To do so, he had to negotiate between two clients and two languages (Bassnett & Lefevere, 2001, p.5). Later on, the idea of Horace’s translation methodology—it is not proper for a translator to render the text word-for word into target language is always used by translators to attack word for word translations (Tan, 1991, p.26).

## 1. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE JEROME MODEL AND THE HORACE MODEL

The two models differentiate from each other in two main aspects: the purpose of translation and the priority a translator chooses while using the two models respectively. The Jerome Model functions as the religious tool based on a society dominated by a certain ideology, therefore, a translator need stay faithful to every word of God, for the original message must not be misinterpreted, in contrast, the Horace model is orientated towards the customers, or in a broad sense, the readers, therefore, a translator need fulfill customers’ requirements, provided that he can still rightly translate the original message into the target language, but not stick to every word exactly.

The absolute equivalence was not only the ultimate goal sought by St. Jerome, but also many early Chinese translators in their translating of Buddhist Scriptures. As early as in the Eastern Han Dynasty Zhi Qian (支谦) pointed out in 《法句经序》, “佛言, 依其义不用其饰, 取其法不以严。其传经者, 当令其晓, 勿式厥义, 是则为善”, emphasizing the conveyance of the original meaning and expressiveness of the translation. Dao An (道安) of the Eastern Jin also warned translators on guard against 五失本 (five ways of losing the original essence in translation) in 《摩诃钵罗若波罗蜜经钞序》 (Chen, 1992). The “five losses” in improper translation he mentioned are: (a) unnecessary reversion of word

order, (b) added description (which does not exist in the original), (c) cutting of repeated wording (necessary as religious scriptures for prayers), (d) omission of repetition of certain conclusive message; (e) cutting of contents repeated as introduction to a new topic (Chen, 2005, p.5). We can see the requirements for translators are nearly the same as the Jerome Model.

To some extent, the Jerome Model is applicable in translation practices, because in each language, there is a core vocabulary standing for the most common things of the world, or people’s actions or ideas. For example, there are in English and Chinese basically corresponding words such as sun (太阳), moon (月亮), sky (天空), mountain (山), river (河流), animal (动物), walk (行走), etc. So in theory there should be no difficulties to find “corresponding” words between English and Chinese, at least for words referring to concrete objects. But, as a matter of fact, many words in English do not have exactly corresponding words in Chinese or vice versa. For example, there are words like ox (公牛、黄牛), cow (母牛、奶牛), buffalo (水牛) and yak (牦牛) in English, but there is no word in English corresponding to the Chinese superordinate word 牛, though there is an adjective “bovine” in English basically corresponding to the Chinese adjective 牛的. Such lexical gaps between English and Chinese often give rise to difficulties in translation, thus the Jerome Model is always being challenged.

As translators find so many difficulties in adopting the Jerome Model, due to the great disparity between two languages, then they need think about the absolute faithfulness to the text or word-for-word translation impossible in many ways, and re-adjust the standard of equivalence.

The Horace Model suggests that translators find the touchstone in orienting the translation towards the needs of readers or customers, because the actual purpose of translation, the target readership, and the demand of the designator of translation, etc., may all affect the standard of translation required. There are two terms concerning this point, one is domestication, first raised by Lawrence Venuti in 1995 (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2005, p.59). It means a translation strategy for a transparent, fluent style in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for readers of the translation. Opposed to domestication is the term foreignization (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2005, p.79) or alienation, which aims at a translation deliberately breaking target conventions by retaining some foreignness or exotic flavor of the original.

Domestication can be regarded as the product of the Horace Model, taking into consideration of the need, while foreignization as the production of the Jerome Model. The two most famous English translations of Hong Lou Meng (《红楼梦》) can be thought to have followed the two opposite principles. David Hawkes intended to make his translation *The Story of the Stone*, easier for

native English speakers, so he made many emendations, thus his translation is more of domestication, while the translation *A Dream of Red Mansions* by Yang Hsien-yi (杨宪益) and Gladys Yang (戴乃迭) follows the principle of foreignization in order to introduce to the West not only the story but also Chinese culture. There is a poem by a character named Shi Xiangyun (史湘云), translated on the basis of two principles, in another word, different models.

对菊  
史湘云(枕霞旧友)  
别圃移来贵比金，一从浅淡一从深。  
萧疏篱畔科头坐，清冷香中抱膝吟。  
数去更无君傲世，看来唯有我知音！  
秋光荏苒休辜负，相对原宜惜寸阴。  
(Hou, 2001, p.50)

**Facing the Chrysanthemum**  
Brought from another pot, more precious than gold,  
One clump is pale, one dark;  
Sitting bareheaded by the fence,  
In the cold clean scent I hug my knees and chant.  
None, surely, in the word as proud as you;  
I alone, it seems, know your worth.  
We should make the most of autumn, gone so soon,  
And facing you I treasure every moment.  
One Friend of Pillowed Iridescence  
(Translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang)  
(Hou, 2001, p.50)

**Admiring the Chrysanthemums**  
Transplanted treasures, dear to me as gold,  
Both the pale clumps and those of darker hue!  
Bare-headed by your wintry bed I sit,  
And, musing, hug my knees and sing to you.  
None more than you the villain world disdains;  
None understands your proud heart as I do.  
The precious hours of autumn I'll not waste,  
But bide with you and savor their full taste.  
Cloud Maiden  
(translated by David Hawkes)  
(Hou, 2001, p.50)

By comparing the two versions, we can see Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang use the Jerome Model by nearly rendering the poem into English version word-for-word, and they keep the structures of translated version as similar as possible to the original one, in this way, they want to preserve the original flavor of the poem to the fullest extent. For example, they translated “枕霞旧友” according to its denotative meaning as “Old Friend of Pillowed Iridescence”. The word “Iridescence” means showing colors that seem to change in different lights. Though the native English speakers might be puzzled by the translation, but they can feel the beautiful image here and associate “Pillowed Iridescence” with the changing colors of clouds, and find out the author of the poem must be a very pure and lovely young lady.

Contrary to the Jerome Model followed by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, David Hawkes adopted the Horace Model by translating this poem into English sense for sense, as we can prove this by pointing out the

translation of “枕霞旧友” into “Cloud Maiden”. Another aspect worth noticing is that Hawkes doesn't keep his structure of translation similar to the original; instead, he uses some structures the native authors may use, if they wrote this poem. The typical example is the use of two “noness” to construct a parallel structure “None more than you the villain world disdains; None understands your proud heart as I do.”

## 2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE JEROME MODEL AND THE HORACE MODEL

“Equivalence” is the yardstick judging good or bad translations. The Jerome Model sticks to “absolute equivalence”, but as a matter of fact, “absolute equivalence” only remains an ideal. How can we re-define “equivalence” concerns the effectiveness of our translating works. The Horace Model, though seems to be a bit far away from the standard of equivalence “faithfulness to text”, it paves a new path for us to find equivalence through translating works sense for sense. Some examples are cited to illustrate how we combine the Jerome Model and the Horace Model to keep the original form of the source language as well as adding some necessary changes to it, in order to get sound translations.

A: Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;  
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

(From a sonnet by George Peele)

美貌、体力、年轻，就象花朵，终将衰尽；  
义务、信念、爱情，就象树根，万古长青。  
(Feng, 2001, p.167)

The Chinese version is a good one because the translator uses the Jerome Model to keep the sentence structure similar to the original one, therefore, creating a couple of sentences in the format of Antithesis, but the translator changes the word class of some words in the original in order to make the version sound smooth and natural in Chinese, for example, by changing “fading green” into verb phrase “终将衰尽” and “ever green” into “万古长青”。

B: 秦时明月汉时关，  
万里长征人未还。（王昌龄：《从军行<之三>》）  
The age-old moon still shines o'er the ancient Great Wall,  
But our frontier guardsmen have not come back at all.  
(Feng, 2001, p.168)

The translator notices that “关” and “还” constructs “rhyme”, so he or she tries to keep this form (using the Jerome Model) to create a rhyme pattern in English version “wall” and “all”. But we can still see some words have been omitted by the translator, for example, “万里长征”, because readers can get the reference from contextual clues. The necessary omission can be regarded as the application of the Horace Model.

C 潘月亭：顾八奶奶是天下最多情的女人。  
顾八奶奶（很自负地：）所以我顶悲剧，顶痛苦，顶热烈，顶没有法子办。  
(曹禺：《日出》，第二幕)

PAN: Mrs. Gu, you're the most sentimental woman in the world!  
GU: (gratified): That's the reason why I'm most tragic, most  
distressed, most passionate, most helpless.  
(Feng, 2001, p.168)

We have noticed that the parallel structure “顶悲  
剧，顶痛苦，顶热烈，顶没有办法办” in the original  
version, but it is difficult to create the similar structure in  
target version, because in the original Chinese version,  
the four constituents of the parallel structure are all  
verbal phrases. But the translator seeks for the formal  
equivalence (the Jerome Model) and finds out a clever  
way by using four “most” to construct a similar structure  
by changing the verbal phrases into adjective phrases.

D寻寻觅觅  
冷冷清清  
凄凄惨惨戚戚  
I see but seek in vain,  
I search and search again:  
I feel so sad, so dreary,  
So lonely, without cheer.(Hou, 2001, p.206)

The translator wants to retain the formal equivalence  
(the Jerome Model) to the fullest extent, but because of  
the differences between two languages, he can partly stick  
to the formal equivalence by choosing words with the  
initial letter “s” to reinforce the sorrowful effect of the  
original version- one seeks in vain.

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## CONCLUSION

By comparison, we have known that the Jerome Model,  
targeted at the Bible translation for ideological purposes,  
emphasizes “faithful to the text”, “stick to the word-for-  
word translation”, while the Horace Model goes against  
“word-for word” translation, and puts priority on the  
needs of readers or customers, trying to negotiate between  
two languages. The two popular trends in contemporary  
translation studies- foreignization and domestication  
can be regarded as following the Jerome Model and the  
Horace Model respectively, as we can find the most telling  
example from the comparative study of two versions of  
Hong Long Meng by Yang-Hsien Yi & Gladys Yang and  
David Hawkes.

Though the Jerome Model and the Horace Model  
seem to be at two extremes, there is an intrinsic link  
between them. St. Jerome raises the standard of “absolute  
equivalence” which can be regarded as the ideal for all  
translators. But translating practices tell us “absolute  
equivalence” cannot be achieved, so the problem is how  
we can re-define the term “equivalence”. Definitely,  
all translators bear the task of finding the equivalence  
between SL and TL, otherwise, translating practices all  
come in vain, in this regard, the Horace Model solves  
the problem by requiring us to attain “equivalence”  
by negotiating between the languages, thus, when we

translate an article, we need not follow word by word,  
when necessary, we can import some new terms to  
enrich the target language cultures as we can find their  
application in the translation of some articles with  
rhetorical methods: antithesis, rhyme, repetition, etc..

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