*Original Paper*

# Analysis of the Chinese Translation of Metaphorical Expressions from the Perspective of Translator Behavior Criticism

# — A Case Study of the Chinese Translation of *Faith in a Seed* by Guangjun He and Yiren Chen

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*Abstract*

*Faith in a Seed is known as "the pinnacle of Thoreau's work" and its writing technique is influenced by literary tradition and rich rhetorical devices are employed. Based on Translator Behavior Criticism, using specific examples to describe and compare one typical rhetorical device such as metaphorical expressions in the Chinese translations of Faith in a Seed by Guangjun He and Yiren Chen, this paper explores the translators' choices in the process of translation when facing different language environments. It is found that when dealing with two figures of speech, simile and metaphor, the He's and Chen's versions are very flexible in the choice of specific translation strategies, sometimes approaching the "truth-seeking" side, sometimes approaching the "utility-attaining" side; when it comes to metonymy, Chen's version tends to be utility-attaining, while He's version tends to be truth-seeking; When dealing with synecdoche, both the He's and Chen's versions tend to be truth-seeking.*

*Keywords*

*Translator Behavior Criticism, Faith in a Seed, metaphors*

## 1. Introduction

After the publication of his collection of essays, *Walden*, Thoreau returned to Conrad Town to wander in his hometown's forests and fields. Later, he started another unknown journey lasting more than eight

years, and finally created *Faith in a Seed*, a work regarded as a model of natural literature. During the process, Thoreau left behind as many as 9000 pages of original manuscripts. These manuscripts are classic works by Thoreau on the study of nature, with delicate brushstrokes, sincere emotions, and elegant writing style. His meticulous observation of plants and poetic mastery of language are vividly presented in his works. However, his contemporaries and subsequent scholars believed that these manuscripts were dull and had low research value. Therefore, it was not until 125 years later that an American scholar, Bradley Pi Dean, noticed this genius work about nature and carefully organized it for publication (Jiang, 2016, p. 122).

*Faith in a Seed* is a botanical work that delves into the origins of the world. Thoreau traced back to the roots of nature and focused his attention on the tiny seeds. By revealing the pathways through which seeds spread, he explored the ways in which trees changed, and then analyzed the causes of forest formation. Readers can feel Thoreau's longing for independence and freedom during the reading process, and the scientific information and literary value contained in the book are worthy of our in-depth study. 7 scholars in China have translated this book into Chinese so far. While remaining loyal to the original work, they have added their own understanding and creativity, with beautiful language and detailed content, making great contributions to the dissemination of this book in China.

The translation research has developed from "linguistic stage", "cultural stage" to "sociological stage" and its focus has correspondingly shifted from "language-oriented", "culture-oriented" to "people(writer, translator, reader)-oriented". Translators have been given more freedom and autonomy. With the proposal of the theory of translator behavior criticism, the research on the translators has received more attention. Therefore, based on the theory of the translator behavior criticism, this paper discusses the identities, roles, and translation behavior patterns presented by Guangjun He and Yiren Chen in the translation process, in order to provide reference for    the better dissemination of *Faith in a Seed* in China.

## 2. Translator Behavior Criticism Theory

Translator behavior criticism explicitly proposes intra-translation and extra-translation. Intra-translation refers to the internal factors of translation and their research (Zhou, 2021, p. 88), which can be approached from the perspectives of language, rhetoric, and the selection of translation strategies in the translation; extra-translation refers to the study of the relationship between the translation and society (Zhou, 2014a, p. 137). Therefore, the combination of intra-translation and extra-translation can effectively reflect the rationality of the translator's behavior.

The theory of translator's behavior criticism focuses on the continuum evaluation model of translator's behavior, which is "truth-seeking-Utility-attaining" evaluative model of continuum. The "truth-seeking" and "utility-attaining" are respectively at the two ends of the evaluation continuum, and the translator's behavior slides between these two ends, and takes a value at some point (Feng & Liu, 2020, p. 88). The pursuit of linguistic truth ensures the foundation of translation, but translators will consider the social

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attributes of translation and tend towards social pragmatism (Zhou & Zhao, 2015, p. 10). Therefore, the evaluation criteria for translator behavior fall above the grasp of the degree of truth seeking and practicality, as well as the balance between the two (Zhou, 2014b, p. 106).

The theory of translator behavior criticism was proposed by Professor Zhou Lingshun and has a history of 13 years to this day. A search was conducted on China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), the largest and most influential journal full-text database in China, with the theme of "Translator Behavior Criticism". All the statistical data in this paper, including the following data, are up to June 26, 2023. It was found that, a total of 254 related articles had been published, including 131 Chinese academic journals, 69 Chinese academic degree articles, and 6 foreign language journals, with an increasing trend year by year. Especially since 2018, the number of published articles has grown rapidly, this indicates that the theory is very popular among scholars and is receiving increasing attention. The applied research on Translator Behavior Criticism is mainly reflected in the following aspects: study on the translator behavior criticism theory, the translation and introduction of Chinese literary classics to foreign countries, and a critical study of English translation of the Chinese folk language, but very few articles combined it with Thoreau's works.
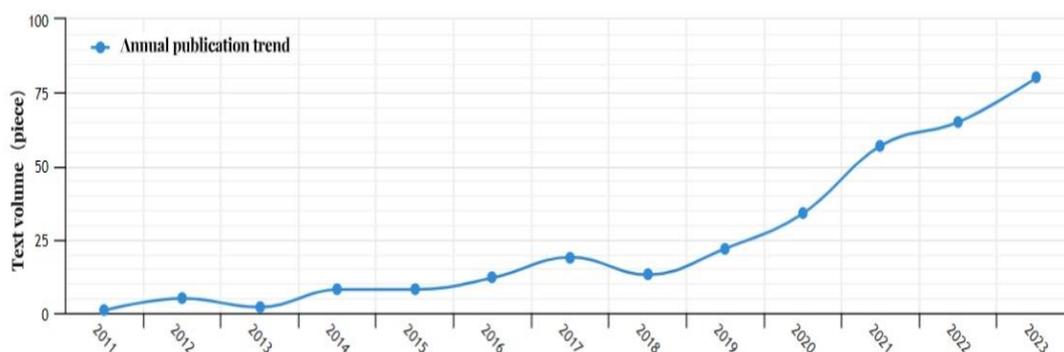


**Figure 1. General Trend Analysis of Translator Behavior Criticism**

There are a total of 4314 articles on Thoreau and his works both domestically and internationally, mainly introducing Thoreau's life and biographies based on this, researching Thoreau's works, and conducting research and understanding of Thoreau from an ecological perspective. Among them, there is very little research on *Faith in a Seed*, with only 4 articles abroad and 5 articles domestically. Previous studies have mostly focused on the ecological concepts reflected in *Faith in a Seed,* but no research has analyzed the rhetorical devices from the perspective of translator behavior criticism.

Therefore, the two Chinese translations of *Faith in a Seed*, namely Guangjun He, Xiaoju Jiao, Xiaolin Gong, and Yiren Chen (hereinafter referred to as' He Translation and Chen Translation), is selected as the research objects. With the help of translator behavior criticism theory, the Chinese translation of metaphorical figures of speech was used as the starting point, in order to compare and analyze the translation effects of the two translations and broaden the research perspective of the translation of'

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*Faith in a Seed.*

Both He and Chen translations retain the original content to the greatest extent possible, making the translation easy to understand and the language plain. Compared with the original text, both translators have to some extent exerted their subjectivity. He's translation has added titles to the table of contents, which are meticulous, rigorous, and logical. Readers can quickly understand the structure of the book and streamline the author's writing ideas; Chen's translation is more specific, and some section titles have also been added to the table of contents, such as "The Life Treasure Box of Marilyn", "The Thistle Flying Over the Sea", and "The Wild Fire Grass That Can't Burn Out" below the chapter "Grass Plants: The Fury Away", which is interesting and attractive. In addition, on the title page of Thoreau's original manuscript, there is a small poem, which was translated by Chen's translation, but omitted by He's translation. The poem has beautiful sentences, meaningful meanings, and reflects the perseverance of the seed, which is very suitable for the theme of the original text and should be translated. In terms of language style, Chen's translation tends to be literal, with easy to understand, simple and natural translations, but often pursuing the richness of words, plain and profound meaning; He's translation leans towards free translation, with concise and clear language, fresh and bright, and full of interest and beauty when read.

## 3. A Comparative Study on the Chinese Translation of Rhetoric Figures

Through close reading of the text, it can be found that *Faith in a Seed* employs rhetorical devices such as citation, metaphor, exaggeration, and personification, which have dual functions of artistic aesthetics and emotional expression. Among them, metaphor, a typical positive figure of speech, carries the experiential nature of the writer, thus triggering readers' associations and imagination . The following text will conduct a quantitative study to compare the distribution of metaphorical figures of speech in the text, in order to compare and study the truth-seeking or utility-attaining orientation of the Jiang and Wang versions towards similes, metaphors, metonymy, and metonymy.

*3.1 Simile*

A simile is a metaphor that compares something to another. Between the two components of the main text and metaphor, metaphorical words are commonly used to connect, such as "hao xiang" "si" "ru", and so on (Chen, 2016, pp. 59-60). The commonly used metaphors in English, such as "like", "as", and "as...as", are frequently used in *Faith in a Seed*. From this, it can be seen that Thoreau's discourse on the growth and reproduction process of seeds is not a dry and objective one, but rather a large number of easy to understand metaphors (Wang & Xu, 2020, p. 110). Consider the following example:

> Example 1: Thus, he strips it as easily as if the scales were chaff, and so rapidly, twirling it as he advances, that you cannot tell how he does it till you drive him off and inspect his unfinished work (Thoreau, 1993, p. 40).

> He's version: Zai bao qi pi lai, jiu hao xiang shi bao kang pi yi yang xun su le, ta bian chi hai yao bian zhuan dong guo qiu. Yao xiang zhi dao zhe yi qie dou shi zen mo jin xing de jiu dei ba ta

gan pao, ran hou jian cha chi sheng xia de guo qiu (He, Jiao, & Gong, 2005, p. 37).

Chen's version: Ta jiu zhe yang qing song bao zhe qiu guo, fang fu guo ling zhi shi yi ceng fu pi yi yang, er qie bao de hen kuai, bian bao bian zhuan dong, kuai de rang ni kan bu chu ta de bao fa, chu fei ni gan zou ta, qian qu jian shi ta wei wan cheng de zuo pin (Chen, 2019, p. 15).

Analysis: This sentence provides a detailed description of the process of a squirrel picking pine nuts and peeling pine nuts. The sentence employs the rhetorical device of simile, using "as if" to connect the noumenon "scales" and the vehicle "chaff", with vivid and distinctive language expression (Meng & Yuan, 2016, p. 86). He translated "as if" into "hao xiang", while Chen translated "as if" into "fang fu". Both translations have translated the metaphorical word "as if", indicating that they emphasize the pursuit of truth in the form of the original text. The pursuit of truth in the simile of the original text is to some extent a pragmatic approach towards the target language readers (Zhou & Gao, 2021, p. 106). Chen's translation adopts a literal translation approach to this sentence, translating it as "fang fu guo ling zhi shi yi ceng fu pi yi yang". The content and form of the original text are preserved, and the translation is easy to understand, achieving the maximum truth seeking of the original text; He's translation tends to be free translation, accurately conveying the semantic connotations of the original text, omitting the ontology "scales" of the translation, standardizing and simplifying translation, and achieving high social practicality. Overall, Chen's translation meticulously describes the process of the squirrel peeling pine nuts, faithfully restoring the textual basis and semantic connotations of the original text, and the translation has a high degree of authenticity; He's translation is more concise. After translating the original content, he added the action of "chi guo qiu" to make the context coherent and pragmatic.

Example 2: You may often see amid or beside a pine grove, though it may be thirty or forty years old, a few yet larger and older trees from which their seed came, rising above them like patriarchs surrounded by their children, while a third generation shows itself yet further off (Thoreau, 1993, p. 43).

He's version: You yi pian song lin yi zhang le san si shi nian le, jin guan shu mu dou hen cu da, dan zuo wei zhong zi lai yuan de na xie shu ze geng cu da, shu ling ye geng chang, jiu hao xiang nian gao de shao de zhang zhe, xi qian zi nv huan rao, si zhou sun bei cheng qun (He et al., 2005, p. 42).

Chen's version: Ni chang hui kan dao yi zuo yi you san si shi nian li shi de song lin, zai ta de qi zhong huo pang bian que chu li zhe yi xie geng da, geng lao de song shu, na shi song lin zhong zi de lai yuan. Na xie gao gao song li de lao song shu, jiu xiang bei hai zi wei rao zhe de fu mu, er ta men de di san dai ye yi xian shen zai geng yuan chu (Chen, 2019, p. 19).

Analysis: This sentence mainly describes the growth and reproduction process of Pinus sylvestris on the grassland. The original text adopts a metaphorical rhetorical device, comparing "larger and older trees" to "patriarchs". Both translations have translated the main content of the original text with a certain degree of attaining utility, but there are slight differences in the translation of "patriarchs". He

translated it as "nian gao de shao de zhang zhe", while Chen translated it as "fu mu". The definition of "patriarchs" in the dictionary is "an old man that people have a lot of respect for", which means "de gao wang zhong de nan zhang zhe". He's translation accurately translated the rhetorical charm of the original text, reflecting the author's admiration for the old tree. How many winters have passed and spring has come, with scorching heat and cold, and the old trees have been growing silently and alone. They have withstood the erosion of natural wind and rain, giving birth to young life, and now they also experience the joy of children and grandchildren walking around their knees. Obviously, the He translation is closer to the original content and has the best semantic fidelity. Overall, the translated version of He is more concise and literary, with "xi qian zi nv huan rao" and "si zhou sun bei cheng qun". The two short sentences are catchy and visually appealing, creating a vivid image of lush pine forests.

The rhetorical device of simile appears in a total of 98 places in the original text, with a relatively concentrated use in the first half of the book, totaling 85 places, and only 13 places in the second half of the book, with a significant difference. When describing the three plants of birch, willow, and milkweed, there are 34 uses of similes; When describing things such as cherry trees, goldenrod, and cattle herds, there is less use of similes. Analysis shows that when dealing with the rhetorical device of simile, the two translations have their own strengths in terms of the degree of "truth-seeking" and "utility-attaining", sometimes approaching the "truth-seeking" end and sometimes approaching the "utility-attaining" end.

*3.2 Metaphor*

Metaphor is the process of establishing a semantic mapping relationship between two concepts belonging to different domains, in order to achieve the goal of speaking from one domain to the other. The use of metaphor can concretize things and convey novel cognitive experiences (Su, Li, Wang, & Chen, 2022, p. 571). On the basis of being familiar with the similarities between the ontology and the vehicle, the author will use metaphor as a rhetorical device, and the cultural connotations of the vehicle will undoubtedly leave a deep impression on readers (Zhou & Gao, 2021, p. 106). Consider the following example:

> Example 3: As for willows and poplars, their downy seeds fill the air in May and June and also form a thick scum on the surface of water (Thoreau, 1993, p. 63).
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> He's version: Wu liu yue li, mao rong rong de zhong zi cong liu shu he yang shu san luochu lai, fei man le zheng ge tian kong, ruo shi luo dao le shui mian shang bian xing cheng hou hou de yi ceng, hao xiang pao mo (He et al., 2005, p. 78).
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> Chen's version: Wu, liu yue fen de tian kong, piao man le liu shu he yang shu de dai maozhong zi, shui mian shang, ye xing cheng le hou hou yi ceng fu zha (Chen, 2019, p. 49).

Analysis: This sentence specifically describes the situation of poplar and willow trees opening their catkins in May and June. The snow-white willow catkins rise and fall with the wind, slender, light and carefree. The original text uses metaphorical rhetorical devices, using "a thick scum" to describe

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"downy seeds", vividly portraying the characteristics of thick, dense, white, and soft floating flocs. He's translation made some adjustments during translation, adding the metaphorical word "hao xiang" to transform metaphors into similes, conveying the meaning well and facilitating readers' understanding; Chen's translation retains the metaphorical form of the original text and maximizes the reproduction of its style. The two versions are slightly different in the translation of the metaphor "scum". The dictionary defines "scum" as "a layer of bubbles or an unpleasant distance that forms on the surface of a liquid", that is, "fu mo; fu gao; fu zha". He translated it as "pao mo", and Chen translated it as "fu zha". Foam is soft and white, while scum will bring uncomfortable feelings, The He's translation better reflects the author's love for catkins, which is consistent with the emotional tone of the original text and has a high degree of semantic truth seeking. The Chen's translation pays more attention to the expression habits of the target language, and the translation is concise, in line with Chinese word order, and has a high degree of utility-attaining.

> Example 4: A single catkin consists of from twenty-five to one hundred little pods, more or less ovate and beaked, each of which is closely packed with cotton, in which are numerous seeds so small that they can scarcely be discerned by ordinary eyes (Thoreau, 1993, p. 63).
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> He's version: Yi tiao liu xu shang neng you 25 dao 100 ge wei xiao de zi jia, meige zi jia dou cheng luan zhuang, dai hui, li mian zai liu mian de jin jin bao guo zhi xia, bie shi na wu shu de zhong zi, shi fen miao xiao, rou ye gen ben wu fa bian ren (He et al., 2005, p. 78).
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> Chen's version: Yi chuan ci hua xu hui fa yu chu er shi wu dao yi bai ge xiao guo shi, zhe xie guo shi lue cheng luan zhuang qie zhuang si niao hui, li tou jin jin sai man mian xu, bao cang wu shu rou yan nan jian de wei xiao zhong zi (Chen, 2019, p. 50).

Analysis: This sentence provides a detailed description of the shape of seed pods on willow catkins. Two metaphors are used in the sentence, with the main body being "little pods" and the vehicle being "ovate" and "beaten". For the word "ovate", both He and Chen translated metaphor into simile, which have similarities and differences in translation; A slight difference lies in the translation of the word "beaked". The translation of "dai hui" in He's version does not convey the rhetorical connotation of the original text, and "hui" specifically refers to the beak of birds and beasts. The translation of He's version can easily lead to misunderstandings among the target language readers, leading to reading difficulties. The translation has a low level of authenticity and is generally pragmatic; The translation by Chen is translated as "zhuang si niao hui", transforming metaphor into simile. The translation is concise and clear, in line with Chinese expression habits. Moreover, the two metaphorical bodies of the original text are juxtaposed with "and", and the translation also uses the word "qie" accordingly, which corresponds to the original text in form, enhancing the logical coherence of the translation and making it easy for readers to understand. Therefore, the translator basically pursues a high degree of truth in the translation of the original text, Considering the practicality of the translation to society, the translator's behavior is highly reasonable.

The rhetorical device of metaphor appears in a total of 50 places in the original text, with a relatively uniform distribution. Among them, the author uses less metaphors when describing the three plants of lysimachia, pine, and oak, with a total of one place. However, when describing the plant of white pine, there are relatively more metaphors, with three places. Analysis reveals that when dealing with metaphors as rhetorical devices, the two translations have their own strengths in terms of the degree of truth-seeking and utility-attaining, sometimes approaching the truth-seeking end and sometimes approaching the utility-attaining end.

*3.3 Metonymy*

Metonymy refers to the use of something to represent a general but closely related thing (Ruse & Hopton, 1992, p. 180). Its characteristic is that it does not directly express the thing to be expressed, but rather uses a certain connection between two things to evoke others' associations. It is vivid but not rigid, and can effectively help readers understand. Consider the following example:

> Example 5: Having sheared off the twigs and needles that may be in his way, he neatly cuts off the stout stem of the cone with a few strokes of his chisels, and it is his (Thoreau, 1993, p. 39).
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> He's version: Shu lian de ban diao ai shi de nen song zhi, ran hou rong na zao zi ban de li chi yao shang ji kou, guo bing yi duan, guo qiu jiu dao shou le (He et al., 2005, p. 37).
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> Chen's version: Xian qu chu ke neng ai shi de shu zhi hesong zhen hou, zai yongya chi zao ji xia, zheng qi qie duan cu zhuang de guo bing, song guo jiu shi ta de le (Chen, 2019, p. 15).

Analysis: This sentence provides a detailed description of the process of squirrel picking pine nuts. The original text used metonymy, only the word "a few strokes of his chisels" appeared, vividly depicting the hard and sharp teeth of a squirrel. He translated metonymy into simile and translated it as "zao zi ban de li chi", adding the ontology "li chi" and the metaphorical word "ban". The translation is clear, which is conducive to readers' understanding. The translator's behavior tends to be "seeking-truth", and through faithful reproduction, ensures the semantic and formal truth seeking, and maximizes the reproduction of the original information; Chen's translation takes into account the context of the target language and, through free translation techniques, abandons the formal correspondence of the original text's metonymy. It is translated as "yong ya chi zao ji xia" and adds the ontology "ya chi". Although the vehicle is not directly translated, the verb "zao" is also added to reflect the hardness of the squirrel's teeth. Based on a deep understanding of the original meaning and the author's intention, the translator has translated the main content of the original text, taking into account the understanding of the target language readers, Having achieved the same prominent effect and a high level of social pragmatism, Chen's translation has undergone significant changes, and the rhetorical beauty of the original text has been lost during the translation process, resulting in a decrease in fidelity.

> Example 6: I have been surprised when the owner, as if he had never noticed this godsend, has concluded that he will skim that pasture once more, get one more crop of rye from it, before he lets it lie fallow and so destroyed some such two-year-old birch wood (Thoreau, 1993, p. 55).
>
> He's version: Dan wo gan dao na men de shi, dui zhe xie tian ci zhi wu, zhe xie tu di de zhu ren

> jiu hao xiang dui ci shi er bu jian, fan er jue ding chong xin qing zheng yi xia zhe kuai mu chang, hao hao zhong yi cha hei mai, ran hou jiu xiu geng. You yu ta de wu zhi, yi xie yi zhang le 2 nian de hua shu miao jiu zhe yang bei hui diao le, shi zai ling ren gan dao tong xin (He et al., 2005, p. 65).
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> Chen's version: Dan rang wo jing ya de shi, di zhu si hu wei ceng zhu yi guo zhe fen en ci, jing chang jue ding ba na pian tu di zai du qing kong, yi zai shou yi cha hei mai, ran hou bian xiu geng le—cong er hui le zhe mo yi pian liang sui da de hua shu lin (Chen, 2019, p. 39).

Analysis: This sentence provides a detailed description of the growth and reproduction of birch seedlings. Birch trees have numerous and lightweight seeds, and when encountering suitable growth conditions, they quickly take root and sprout, forming a dense birch forest. The sentence employs a rhetorical device of metonymy, comparing "birch forest" to "godsend". Although the ontology does not appear, its specific reference can be inferred from the context. Both He's and Chen's translations choose to be faithful to the original text and directly translate the vehicle. Although the noumenon is not clearly indicated, readers can easily find the noumenon in the previous text by using the demonstrative pronouns "zhe xie" and "zhe fen". The translation is concise, while not affecting the reader's reading experience, and has a certain degree of utility-attaining. There is a slight difference in the translation of the metaphor. He translated it as "tian ci zhi wu", while Chen translated it as "en ci". A gift from heaven refers to unexpected luck, with a sense of joy. In the dictionary, a gift means "yin lian min er shi she". In the original text, the author intended to express the meaning that the rapidly growing birch forest is precious, but now it has to be cleared by the landlord at will, so he is extremely heartbroken. Compared to the original text, He's translation is more in line with the original meaning, conveying the author's love for the birch forest, and the translation is more truth-seeking.

The rhetorical device of metonymy appears in a total of 24 places in the original text. Among them, when describing plants such as dandelion, thistle, and bidens bipinnata, metonymy is more concentrated in 9 places. However, when describing chestnut and hickory plants, metonymy is not used, and other chapters are more evenly distributed. Analysis shows that when dealing with the rhetorical device of metonymy, Chen's translation tends to be utility-attaining, while He's translation generally tends to be truth-seeking.

*3.4 Synecdoche*

Synecdoche refers to a rhetorical device that, when describing something, does not directly mention the object it refers to, but replaces it with something closely related to it (Zhou & Xu, 2013, p. 140). It reflects a subordinate relationship between the ontology and the vehicle. By using synecdoche, language expression becomes more concise and ideological expression becomes more profound. Consider the following example:

> Example 7: While the farmer is digging his potatoes and gathering his corn, he little thinks of this harvest of pine cones which the squirrel is gathering in the neighboring woods still more sedulously than himself (Thoreau, 1993, p. 38).

He's version: Nong min men zhi zhi dao zi ji mang zhe wa tu dou, bai yu mi, dan si hu hen shao you ren xiang dao, song shu zai bu yuan chu de lin zi li mang mang lu lu de zhai zhe guo qiu, jing bi ren lei hai yao mang (He et al., 2005, p. 35).

Chen's version: Dang nong ren zai wa jue ma ling shu he shou ge yu mi de shi hou, bu hui xiang dao song shu jing zai lin jin de shu lin li bi ta men geng qin fen de shou huo qiu guo (Chen, 2019, p. 14).

Analysis: This paragraph specifically describes the scene of squirrels picking pine nuts and preparing for winter. In the golden autumn season, busy squirrels begin to pick and store pine cones, creating a lively scene in the forest. The original text uses two rhetorical devices of synecdoche. The first is to replace the entire category with the individual, that is, "the farmer" instead of the farmers. He translated it as "nong min men" and Chen translated it as "nong ren". Both translators understood the author's intention and accurately translated the meaning of the original text; The second is to replace the abstract with the concrete, that is, "digging his potatoes and gathering his corn" instead of the farmers' harvest in autumn. Digging potatoes and breaking corn. These two examples are typical and concrete, which makes the contrast more obvious and highlights the diligence and ability of squirrels. Both He's and Chen's translations have chosen to translate specific images and adopted a contrasting approach, which not only expresses the information of the original text but also achieves formal equivalence. Both translations have a high degree of truth seeking, and although the rhetorical device of metaphor is not reflected in the translation, if translated as a general sentence, it will actually cause readers to lose interest in reading. Under the principle of loyalty, the two translators promote the translator's subjectivity, highlight their role as social beings, consider the readers' reading experience, and consider market sales. Therefore, the He's and Chen's translations have a certain degree of utility attaining.

Example 8: These which we see springing up thus in distant and neglected meadows and by fences show what would happen over all the intervening space if it were not for our cultivation - that there is nothing to prevent their springing up all over the village in a few years but our plows and spades and scythes (Thoreau, 1993, p. 44).

He's version: Wei le bu rang ta men zai ji nian hou che di qin zhan ren men de jia yuan, wo men ye zhi hao na qi li, chan yu lian dao zi wei (He et al., 2005, p. 44).

Chen's version: Na xie zai pian yuan cao di huo wei qiang bian mao chu lai de song shu, rang wo men zhi dao qi jian de da pian tu di ruo shi wu ren geng zuo, jiang hui you he fa zhan—chu le li, qiao he lian dao zhi wai, mei you ren he dong xi neng zu zhi bai song zai ji nian nei zhang bian quan cun (Chen, 2019, p. 20).

Analysis: This sentence specifically describes the growth and spread of white pine. White pine is cold and drought resistant, with strong vitality and high adaptability to climate, making it suitable for large-scale cultivation. The original text used metaphorical rhetorical devices to replace abstraction with concrete ones, using three parallel tools "our plots and spades and scythes" instead of human intervention in the spread of white pine. The plow, shovel, and sickle are commonly used farming tools

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by farmers in agricultural production, but now they need to be used to remove white pine seedlings. In comparison, the rapid growth, wide spread range, and strong adaptability to the environment of white pine are more prominent, The characteristic of easy growth. Both He's and Chen's translations choose to be faithful to the original text and directly translate the names of these three tools. The translation has a high degree of authenticity, but there is a slight difference. Chen's translation adjusts the word order and places "chu le li, qiao he lian dao zhi wai" in front of the main sentence, which is more in line with the expression habits of the target language, takes into account the reading preferences of the readers, and has a certain degree of utility attaining, reflecting the translator's subjectivity.

The rhetorical device of metaphor appears in a total of 22 places in the original text. Among them, in the three chapters of wild Fruit, Wild Grass and Pasture, and Trees in the Forest, the use of metaphors is more concentrated, with a total of 15 places, while in other chapters of the book, the use is less, with only 7 places appearing. Analysis shows that when dealing with the rhetorical device of synecdoche, both He's and Chen's translations tend to seek truth.

## 4. Conclusion

*Faith in a Seed* has extremely high research value. This study selects two Chinese translations of *Faith in a Seed* to objectively analyze the translator's behavior in metaphorical rhetoric from two aspects: truth seeking and utility attaining, and explores how to more perfectly present the ideas contained in Thoreau's works. Research has found that, influenced by personal social background and translation perspectives, different translators make different choices when facing the same text (Bai & He, 2019, p. 73). The translations of He's and Chen's indicate that their choices of specific translation strategies are very flexible. When dealing with the two rhetorical devices of simile and metaphor, the truth-seeking and utility-attaining of the two translations have their own strengths, sometimes close to the truth-seeking end, sometimes close to the utility-attaining end, and sometimes achieving an effective balance between the two; When dealing with metonymy, Chen's translation tends to be utility-attaining, while He's translation tends to seek more truth from the original meaning, and overall tends to seek truth; When dealing with synecdoche, both He's and Chen's translations tend to seek truth. Therefore, when translating, it is necessary to consider the overall situation and cultural context. Whether to choose "truth-seeking" or "utility-attaining" depends on the specific situation, and strive to achieve a balance between "truth-seeking" and "utility-attaining" (Wang, 2021, p. 7).

The Chinese translation of the book *Faith in a Seed* should not only respect the culture of the target language, consider the language style of the original work, but also try to take into account the reading preferences of the target language readers, and deeply explore the literary and artistic value contained in the work, in order to provide reference for future scholars studying *Faith in a Seed* and its translations. Analyzing the translator's internal and external behaviors can deepen our understanding of the theory of translator behavior criticism, and we can also conduct comparative studies from different perspectives in the future to make the results more convincing.

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