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REVIEW

**Klaus Kaindl, Waltraud Kolb
and Daniela Schlager (eds.):
*Literary Translator Studies***

(Amsterdam and Philadelphia:
John Benjamins, 2021. 313 pages)

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Due to the fact that “there are indeed translators behind the translation, people behind the texts” (Chesterman, 2009: 14), the volume *Literary Translator Studies*, edited by Klaus Kaindl, Waltraud Kolb and Daniela Schlager, echoes with the statements of Chesterman and positions the literary translator “as a subject of research in the theoretical and conceptual landscape of Translator Studies” (Kaindl, 2021: 23). The volume shifts the focus of literary translation studies from translated texts to translators, and investigates the identities, roles, habitus, voices and personalities of literary translators from the translator-centered approaches including historical-biographical approaches, social-scientific and process-oriented methods, paratexts-based methods and the methods combining paratexts with translations. That is to say, all studies of this volume present a dynamic dimension about literary translators in terms of research methodology which is different from the static dimension in traditional translation studies on texts. In this regard, the book *Literary Translator Studies* is a commendable endeavor in helping people have a holistic understanding of literary translators and their translation activities.

Apart from an introduction, “(Literary) Translator Studies: Shaping the field”, this book is comprised of sixteen chapters which are divided into four parts according to the research methodology. Part 1 (chapters 1-4) exhibits the research process that the microhistorical approach and the biographical approach are well adopted including translator manuscripts, translator archives, translator biographies and bibliographical catalogs. Those approaches attach great importance to the primary sources in translation activities because researchers could describe and analyze the living and working conditions (Munday, 2014), the translating behaviors, the translatorial identities, the self-images and the professional ethics of translators, especially the unknown ones, through the primary sources. Besides, as for the factual source materials and the path of linking translators to historical culture at a given time, those approaches share similar grounds with the research methods of sociology. Thus, they are not only beneficial to translator studies, but also are conducive to the theoretical construction of the sociology of translation.

Part 2 (chapters 5-7) elucidates how to probe into the translators’ self-concepts, translatorship and institutional consecration in empirical social and process research. With the help of verbal report data, a translator’s working self-concept is directly traced so as to better understand what the translator thought and why s/he chose the way to translate. The empirical study reveals that “author-orientation” and “self-orientation” of self-concepts have a significant influence on the alignment between author’s and translator’s voices. Narrative approaches such as interview are also supposed to be widely used to investigate the trans-

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latorship and professional narrative identity behind the translated texts. The narratives and ways to construct professional identities mainly depend on translators' love for reading, literature and native language, how they see themselves as literary translators and how they perceive literary translation as an activity. Besides, the accumulated individual translation capital of Swedish literary translators are also examined from the framework of Bourdieu's theory so as to demonstrate the institutional consecration processes of literary translators in Sweden. Those research objects mentioned above are all in Northern American and European countries; whether the research findings are suitable for explaining the relevant questions in the translation field of China and other Asian countries remains to be verified.

The concept "paratexts" was coined by Genette (1997) to depict the materials and devices mediating between book, author and reader, which can be further categorized into "peritext" (within the book) and "epitext" (outside the book) (Genette, 1997: 5). Due to the fact that paratexts and translation are compatible and interactive (Batchelor, 2018), part 3 (chapters 8-11) moves to the paratexts-based approach to investigate translator's motivations, self-image, multipositionality and goals, and translator-author posture because these paratexts within and outside translated works are all made by translators. Although the different details in translator's note are greatly influenced by age, gender, status and identity, most translators believe that translator's note will bring self-esteem and occupational prestige for themselves. In a similar vein, personal information, translation views, choices of the original text and translation strategies are also expressed in translator's preface. Interestingly, some case studies reveal that male translators are more inclined to write translator's note and preface than female translators, but this issue still needs to be further proved and explained. In addition, with the help of translator's preface and interview, the multiple lives of individual translators can be deeply categorized and analyzed to explain the special motives including deletion on a large scale and subversion in translation activities.

In the fourth part (chapters 12-16), translations together with paratexts including translator's academic articles, interviews, prefaces, footnotes and comments are the main source for translator-centered research. Drawing on the multiperspective analytical approach (translation, paratext and translations by other translators), it is found that translator's own experiences and views are often subversively incorporated in the translation choices such as personal addition, deletion and substitution, that is to say, the translator adds his/her own attitudes and voices to the translation. In addition, translator's stylistic decisions related to personal habitus can also be traced and checked in paratexts, so the translator's unique personality is to some extent reflected in his/her own translation.

Two striking features of the book are particularly worth mentioning. Firstly, all the articles in the book are categorized into four sections by research methods. Different from the static and single analysis between original text and translated text, the multiperspective analytical approach is widely used to precisely resolve the research questions about literary translator

in many case studies. Hence, the data of different methods in one case study can be mutually verified so as to guarantee the reliability and validity of research conclusions. Readers will observe and enjoy the flexible application of research methods in many articles such as “‘Hemingway’s priorities were just different’: Self-concepts of literary translators”, “The Translator’s Note revisited” and “The voices of James Stratton Holmes”.

Secondly, the diversity of research topics is another feature of the book. In traditional translation studies, much attention is paid to the view “translation as a product”; however, the view “translation as a social activity” is importantly taken into consideration in *Literary Translator Studies*, which focuses on all aspects of the literary translator in the process of translating in social-historical context rather than simply summarizing the life experience, the published translations and the translation views of the literary translator. In the book, for instance, several research topics should be addressed, including “translator’s multipositionality, telos and particular behaviors”, “the interaction between translating and writing”, “how translators themselves see literary translation as an activity”, “translator’s self-concepts underlying translations”.

Despite the obvious merits, there is still some room for improvement in the volume. On the one hand, readers would get a deeper knowledge of the present achievements, the drawbacks and the general direction of future development of (literary) translator studies if there were a conclusion part in the end. On the other hand, particular attention is given in this book to various theoretical concepts and translator-centered approaches, while a theoretical model or a theoretical system seems not to be constructed in any given case study. Perhaps many of the studies are not designed to construct a theoretical model or system through empirical description but aimed to solve the practical issues arising in (literary) translator studies; nevertheless, the systematical theories comprising major concepts and core terms are required to provide theoretical guidance for the own development of (literary) translator studies rather than often resorting to theories of other disciplines such as Bourdieu’s theory of sociology and actor-network theory. The theoretical construction of an internal and external system about translator studies is conducive to clarify the boundary and the position of (literary) translator studies as an emerging research field or subdiscipline in descriptive translation studies.

In addition, the studies on literary translator have also been prosperous in China. It is worth mentioning that translator behavior studies (TBS) is a new field developed by the Chinese scholar Zhou (2014) and it can also be regarded as a new direction of China’s translator studies. Unlike the text-oriented translation studies, TBS focus on the complex translating activities including translator as a body of willpower and his/her behaviors. In his monograph, the theory of translator behavior criticism is constructed to investigate the interactions among translator’s volition, translator’s behavior and the quality of translated text (Zhou, 2014: 1). Practical concepts and key terms are contained and explained in the theory

such as continuum of translator behavior, socialization of translator behavior, intratranslation behavior, extratranslation behavior, translator identity and translator role, which can be directly applied to analyze issues in case studies.

The value of this book lies in the fact that it is the first one to intensively demonstrate the latest research progress on well-known, less-known and forgotten literary translators. Scholars, practitioners, graduate students and general readers who are interested in translator studies will find this book prominently valuable not only for its discussion of many concepts such as identity, role, translatorship, multipositionality, self-image, posture and voice of literary translators with the help of translator-centered approaches, but also for its dynamic transition of research object in descriptive translation studies. In the end, the reliable methods introduced in the book, such as “ethnography” and “paratexts-based method”, are pretty suggestive to China’s translator studies.

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