

Analyzing the Patriotism of Translators based on the Theory of Natural Selection of Yanfu

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Abstract

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, the national crisis was unprecedentedly serious, and people of insight began to explore ways to save and survive. During this period, Yen Fu's translation of English biologist Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, published in 1897, had a great impact on the Chinese society in the late Qing Dynasty. This paper aims to study the translation means and philosophy of Yen Fu's version of *Evolution and Ethics* in the context of the late Qing Dynasty and the contemporary social background, to explore the country sentiments and the characteristics of Yen Fu's country sentiments and the reasons for its formation, and further point out its contemporary value.

Keywords

Yen Fu; Evolution and Ethics; Country Sentiments; Contemporary Values.

1. Introduction

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, China was defeated in the Jiawu-War. The sovereignty of the country is under serious threat and the national crisis is unprecedented, so the enlightenment of the nation's thinking is imperative. In order to build a strong China, Yan Fu, as a translator, fully adapted to the socio-historical environment of the time. He emphasized "the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the superior" in his translation. The "*Evolution and Ethics*" provided an ideological weapon for the Restoration Movement. It strengthened the Chinese people's sense of urgency to survive and promoted the process of modernization in China. In the course of the Restoration Movement, the success of the national ideological enlightenment was inseparable from Yan Fu's translation. The study of Yan Fu's Patriotism helps us to fully understand the unique role and status of intellectuals in the historical process.

Yan Fu's translation of "*Evolution and Ethics*" is of high research value in the history of Chinese thought, literature and translation. Research on Yan Fu and his translation has been very enthusiastic at home and abroad: thinkers study the great influence of his political and philosophical ideas on modern China; literary critics study the beauty and eloquence, layout and elegant style of his work; translators study his translation standards of "Faithfulness, Expressiveness, Gracefulness", especially for his translation. The study of "*Evolution and Ethics*" has a long history and has been fruitful.

However, most of the studies on the work have been limited to the technical aspects of the translation method and the evaluation of the "Faithfulness, Expressiveness, Gracefulness". In recent years, some scholars have analyzed Yan Fu's translation from new perspectives (e.g., rewriting), but it still lacks comprehensiveness and systematization. Although Yan Fu's translation is not "faithful" to the original text in terms of words, phrases, sentences, and chapters, and even changes some of the original author's views, his treatment and grasp of the original text as a whole is accurate; more importantly, the subject matter of the text after his treatment is more in line with the needs of Chinese society at that time, and more suitable for the Chinese readers at that time, especially for the ideological pioneers of the modern

bourgeoisie and the political leaders of the new democracy. Moreover, Yan Fu used the style of the Tongcheng, which was popular among the scholarly class, and succeeded in conveying the novel and difficult theory of evolution to the general readers in a beautiful and elegant language, which realized his ideal of strengthening the country by educating the people.

This study is based on Feng Zhiyu's (2017) theories and methods of Marxist materialistic view of history, combining the context of the times and Yan Fu's life, summarizing of Yan Fu's paper, translation writings, poems and articles, letters and arguments and other relevant documents and materials. This study examines the penetration of patriotic ideas in various periods of Yan Fu's life, as well as Fu Tianlin et al.'s (2019) study of Yan Fu's translation of "Evolution and Ethics" impact of his translations. This study differs from the majority of previous studies that have focused on the "Faithfulness, Expressiveness, Gracefulness" of Yan Fu's work.

It further explores the influence of the translator Yan Fu's Patriotism embodied in the translation of "Evolution and Ethics" on future generations and the value of this Patriotism for other translators. Today, as human society enters the era of knowledge economy, the country's prosperity and national rejuvenation require us to respect, rely on and give full play to the role of knowledge and intellectuals. We should create a social environment and atmosphere that respects knowledge and talents.

2. Reasons for the Patriotism in Yan Fu's Translation

As a great Enlightenment thinker in modern times, Yan Fu devoted himself to enlightening the people and saving the country. In particular, the concept of "survival of the fittest" in the "Evolution and Ethics" awakened the stubborn "Old people" and enlightened generations of new Chinese youth. (Benjamin, 1964:16) Therefore, it can be said that the influence of Yan Fu's ideas on modern China was extremely far-reaching. This chapter investigates the reasons for the formation of Yan Fu's patriotic ideas embodied in *Evolution and Ethics* through the study of the social context of the late Qing Dynasty and Yan Fu's life.

2.1. The Social Reality of National Crisis and Self-strengthening

The late Qing Dynasty was on the eve of the complete collapse of China's great feudal dynasty, an era of progress and regression, hope and disappointment, light and darkness, and a time of rapid transformation of modern Chinese society with the heavy domestic conflicts and surrounding by the foreign enemies. (Since the Opium War in 1840, the ancient agricultural civilization was forced to open its gates under the powerful guns of the Western industrial civilization, and was forced into the abyss of humiliation and misfortune. China was repeatedly oppressed by the powers, and the national crisis was unprecedentedly serious. The stubborn insisted on "preserving religion and protecting the country" (Benjamin, 1964:16), the educated began to "open their eyes to the world", and the foreign affairs faction put forward the slogan of "self-improvement and wealth". . The country was in a dangerous situation, facing a great change never seen in a thousand years, and the Chinese people's sense of nation was gradually awakened, thus starting a lasting national salvation movement, and patriotism and ideological enlightenment became the main theme of the times.

At the turning point of the nation, modern patriotic aspirants began to take the initiative to learn from the West in order to save the nation from crisis and seek the truth of national salvation. As the first person to open his eyes to the world, Lin Zexu began to introduce Western literature, and the government-led foreign affairs movement was prevailing, and Chinese and Western cultures experienced an unprecedented exchange and collision from artifacts to institutions to culture. It became the ideal of every educated person to explore the way of China's prosperity and strength.

2.2. Education of the Knowledge Combines East and West, The Past and the Present

Yan Fu (1854.1.8 - 1921.10.27), a native of Houguan (present-day Fuzhou), Fujian Province, was born into a family of traditional Chinese medicine. At the age of 14, he was admitted to the Fuzhou Shipbuilding Academy with the first ranking. After graduation, he was sent to England to study in 1877 and received a lot of western culture. In 1879 Yan Fu graduated and returned to China, where he taught at the Fuzhou Shipbuilding Academy. The following year he was transferred to the Beiyang Marine Division, where he stayed for 20 years until the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. In 1906, he became the president of Fudan Public School, and in 1910, he was awarded a bachelor's degree in Arts by the Qing court, and in 1912, he became the first president of Peking University. In 1916, he was punished by the National Assembly for participating in the restoration of Yuan Shikai and escaped to Tianjin. He died on October 27, 1921, in Langguan Lane, Fuzhou.

Born in Fujian, Yan Fu was deeply influenced by the Min culture. Fujian is located in the southeastern coast and has been invaded by foreign enemies for a long time, so the idea of Patriotism was developed earlier; the Confucian loyalty and righteousness propagated by the Min school was deeply rooted in people's hearts, which led to the early patriotism culture in Fujian; coupled with the widespread worship of anti-Yuan heroes and Japanese generals in Fujian, Yan Fu was deeply influenced by the tradition of patriotism. The Min learning emphasizes the practical concept of "combination of knowledge and practice" and the cultural atmosphere of inclusiveness, and the experience of studying under the master of Min learning, Huang Shaoyan, is inseparable from Yan Fu's spirit of worrying about the country and the people, seeking truth and pragmatism, and keep practicing the world (Feng Zhiyu, 2017).

At the age of 13, Yan Fu entered the Fuzhou Shipbuilding Academy founded by Zuo Zongtang, the governor of Fujian and Zhejiang, which was the earliest naval school in China. The academy was taught in all English and taught geometry, algebra, optics, geology, astronomy, navigation, and other most advanced Western subjects of the time, which had an extremely significant impact on Yan Fu's life. The western knowledge and rigorous training Yan Fu received at the Fuzhou Shipbuilding Academy cultivated his initial scientific and rational thinking, while the patriotic education and naval defense education at the academy strengthened Yan Fu's patriotism and initially formed his idea of naval defense and strengthening the country.

In 1877, Yan Fu became one of the first group of students who went to England to study naval military technology. During his study in England, Yan Fu kept eagerly examining the political, economic and social systems of England, trying to find out the secrets of wealth and power from the social model of British. During this period, he became acquainted with the ambassador to Britain, Guo Songtao, whose experience and experience in observing the Western political system, values and legal system had a great influence on the young Yan Fu, who deeply rooted his belief in self-strengthening, seeking wealth and saving the country. Yan Fu's comprehensive observation of Western society, represented by England, never focused on one purpose: wealth and power, which never lost himself and helped him find what he believed to be the truth in the bewildering Western studies. Yan Fu was well versed in Darwin's Origin of Species and was particularly interested in Spencer's social Darwinism, which analogized society to biological organisms. While Spencer considered himself to have calmly and objectively expounded the process of social evolution in his work "The Study of Sociology," While, Yan Fu found in Spencer's ideas a recipe for salvation that was applicable to Chinese society, and he concentrated on applying the principles of social science to the ambitious goal of achieving wealth and power, and conceived his own ideological system of "the survival of the fittest". "It became the most powerful weapon for Yan Fu to express his patriotism and achieve national independence.

3. Characteristics of the Patriotism Embodied in the "Evolution and Ethics"

3.1. The Style of Tongcheng : "Keeping Practicing "

"Keeping practicing" is one of the ideological foundations of Confucianism, and it is also the guideline that Confucian scholars have followed in their studies for more than 1,300 years since the imperial examination system. At the same time, Confucianism has always attached importance to the practice of morality, and has formed a tradition of seeking truth and pragmatism, pursuing the purpose of "correctness of mind, sincerity, and cultivation", and pursuing "To cultivate one's moral character, to regulate one's family, to rule one's country, to bring peace to the world". Confucianism requires Confucians to face reality, affirm it, accept it, and develop a workable approach to reality on this basis.

"Tongcheng School" is about respecting "Cheng-Zhu Theory", and the main feature of writing is concise, clear, clear and elegant, not seeking for the splendor of rhetoric and the piling up of words. In modern times, the literati of the "Tongcheng School", while maintaining their consistent stylistic characteristics, also added the pursuit of "worldly application", making their essays more Emphasis on evidence while reasoning.

As a representative figure of the modernization school, Yan Fu's identity was dual. First, as a disciple of Wu Rulun, the great master of the "Tongcheng School", Yan Fu knew well the "moral law" and the literary pursuit of the "Tongcheng School". As a disciple of Wu Rulun, the "Tongcheng" literacy attached great importance to the style of human beings, the elegance of aspirations and the indifference to fame and fortune, and at the same time, paid great attention to the concept of patriotism. Secondly, as the first person who "opened his eyes to the world", Yan Fu's experience of studying abroad enabled him to see the gap between China and the world at that time. Thus, for the dispute of following which way, Chinese or Western? we can see the answer from the correspondence between Yan Fu and Wu Rulun that he believed "the old and the new should co-exist, we should learn from the strengths of both" This also laid the foundation for the ancient style of translation Yan Fu adopted afterwards.

3.2. Self-strengthening and Preservation the Culture, We Should Reform

3.2.1. Deliberate Abridgement and Emphasis on the Theory of Evolution

The original text of Evolution and Ethics was a pamphlet distributed during a popular lecture given by the British biologist and philosopher Tor Huxley on May 18, 1893 at the Sheldonian Theatre of Oxford University, England, for the second lecture of the Romanesque Lectures, originally titled Evolution and Ethics. Yan Fu's translation selected the first two parts of the second edition of this book, Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, issued in 1894: Evolution and Ethics: Introduction, 1894 and Evolution and Ethics, 1893, while in the original work of Huxley's 1894 reprint of Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, in addition to the preface made by the author in 1894, the whole book is divided into 5 parts. The first part, "Evolution and Ethics: Introduction, 1894," the second part, "Evolution and Ethics, 1893," the third part, "Science and Morality, 1890," the fourth part, "Capital, the Mother of Labor, 1896," and the fifth part, "Social Diseases and Bad Remedies, 1891,"

From the parts selected for translation, Yan Fu consciously focused on the part of "the Evolution" and neglected the part of "the Human Nature", linking Darwinism with human society and expecting to play an important role in Chinese society.

3.2.2. Translation of the Spirit, Using Western Knowledge for Chinese Reality

From the original text of Evolution and Ethics, the whole text is full of purely Western words, terms and allusions, for example, the original text quotes stories from the Bible and ancient Greco-Roman mythology many times, so if we translate it directly, it will not only fail to spread

the ideas but also be counterproductive, so according to Mr. Yu Zheng. Therefore, according to Mr. Yu Zheng, the translation is divided into: 1. basic translation, 2. general translation, 3. general translation, 4. writing according to the main idea of Hirsch, 5. adding this act, 6. expanding and playing, 7. changing examples, 8. precise translation, 9. brief translation, 10. no translation, 11. omission of translation, 12. distorted translation, 13. tampering. In the process of translation, the audience of the translation is taken into consideration, and full reader awareness is possessed, so that Yan Fu's personal intention can be fully conveyed.

From the viewpoint of the *Evolution and Ethics* translation, it fully reflects Yan Fu's personal reflection on Huxley's doctrine and his consideration for the Chinese readers.

Chinese words, names, and stories do not appear in the original work appeared in the translation, Yan Fu quotes Chinese stories several times in order to make the translation more vivid and make Chinese reader understanding. For example, the "Introduction 1: 是犹螻蛄不知春秋，朝菌不知晦朔" which is from Zhuangzi's "Xiaoyaoyou", and the "Introduction 12: 古人有言，人之性恶" is from Xunzi's "The human nature of evil". Yan Fu's use of reflects his thoughtfulness and good intentions when translating.

At the same time, Yan Fu used a two-character phrase in each translation (except for the introduction eight) to compose the title, which laid the foundation of direction for each translation. The eighteen introductory essays are: "Cha-chang", "Guang-yi", "Quyì", "Renwei", "Huzheng", "Renze", "Shanbai", "Utopia", "Tai-fan", "Zenan", "Fengqun", "Zhesi", "Shubai", "Zuizhi", "Neng Shi", "Worry", "Teaching Source", "Yen Yi", "Heavenly Punishment", "Buddha's Interpretation", "Seed Industry", "Meditation", "True Illusion", "Dharma", "School", "Heavenly Difficulties", "On Nature", "Correction", "Evolution of Evil", "Group Rule", and "Evolution". The above twenty-five titles, summarized for each translation, condensly reflect the social issues and realistic topics to be discussed in each translation, not only unify the direction of the whole text, making the readers more purposeful, but also more in line with the reading habits of Chinese readers, achieving the effect of intention.

Moreover, among the thirty-five translations, Yan Fu added case studies after the twenty-nine translations to add to what was not mentioned in the translations or to his own reflections and understanding of the original text. The case studies are mainly divided into three kinds: first, the translator Yan Fu's personal opinions and reflections; second, background knowledge in the original text that Chinese readers do not understand; and third, explanations, clarifications, and introductions to the ideas of Spencer and Huxley. Those twenty-nine case studies not only greatly enrich the content of the translation, but also make the reader empathize with Yan Fu himself, think about the future and fate of the country, and clarify the importance of "self-improvement" and "seed preservation".

4. The Contemporary Significance of the Translation Concept in the *Evolution and Ethics*

4.1. Applying the Idea of Integration of the East and the West to Translation, Establishing a Chinese Translation Style

Yan Fu did not translate the *Evolution and Ethics* directly, but intentionally integrated the original work with Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in Chinese traditional culture, so that the Chinese people who did not know much about the West at that time could understand the work more easily and arouse their consciousness of peril, so as to achieve the purpose of self-improvement and seed preservation. (Lu, 2008) Although Yan Fu combined Huxley's scientific monograph with the traditional Chinese culture of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism for special political purposes, it was this bold innovation that allowed the people of that time to understand the progress of Western natural science and to promote cultural exchange between

China and the West. That translation is not a simple process of language conversion also enlightens today's translation community. we should cultivate our own solid Chinese language skills, export China's excellent traditional culture in the process of translation activities, and improve Chinese translation to a new level .

Yan Fu's idea of the integration of Chinese and Western can be seen in the preface of his translation of the *Evolution and Ethics*: He said “翕以合质，辟以出力，始简易而终杂糅” And “Yi” says: “坤其静也翕，其动也辟.” This is not only to facilitate the understanding of the Chinese people, but also as a counter-evidence to the excellent traditional Chinese culture based on the similarity between Chinese and Western culture, with the help of the translation of *Evolution and Ethics*. (Yan Liangliang & Zhu Jianping, 2010) Although Yan Fu was motivated by the special political purpose of saving the country and at that time to mix traditional Chinese thought and culture such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in his *Theory of Evolution*, there is no doubt that his practice has set an example for today's translators to some extent, so that they understand the importance and necessity of integrating Chinese and Western cultures in the translation process.

4.2. Translation Should Take into Full Consideration the Safety of the Culture, That is to Ensure Chinese Culture Safely "Goes Out" and Foreign Culture Safely "Comes in"

When Yan Fu translated *Evolution and Ethics*, he left the second part of the original book, which discusses morality and ethics, untranslated, and only chose the introduction and the first part of the book, which is based on "the survival of the fittest", for translation. This is because Yan Fu considered that the feudal ethics advocated by the stubborn and the moral and ethical issues in the second part of the book could be easily confused and might hinder the innovation of the national concept. Therefore, Yan Fu transplanted the biological evolutionary doctrine of "survival of the fittest" in the first part to the context of China's invasion by the foreign powers under the Qing government at that time, in order to warn the nation of the reality of the predicament of being beaten for being backward. (Li Wanghua, 2016) Thus, Yan Fu consciously selected the parts of the original work that were suitable for the social environment of China at that time and discarded the contents that were not conducive to salvation and survival in the process of translating the *Evolution and Ethics*. Therefore, when translators introduce foreign cultures through translation practice today, they should also be open and tolerant, and at the same time carefully select and choose the foreign cultures to be introduced, so that foreign cultures can "come in" safely. (Wang Ling & Luo Jingxian, 2020)

Moreover, Yan Fu also constructed the narrative of "survival of the fittest" and "self-strengthening and national preservation" in his translation of the *Evolution and Ethics* through translation and re-narrative, which broke through the narrative of "the way of heaven remains unchanged" and "the three principles and five rules" propagated by the scholars of the late Qing Dynasty, which had been the official narrative of the whole feudal rule, allowed the idea of salvation and survival to be widely disseminated in society, and accordingly promoted the legitimization of social change. We can conclude from the constructive effect of translation and re-narrativization that, under the macro strategy of Chinese culture going abroad today, translators can also appropriately rewrite the original narratives through translation re-narratives in order to serve the national needs when translating materials that are related to national dignity and national foreign propaganda. (Yu Jiangxia & Feng Ying, 2020)

4.3. Factors Such as Communication Audience and Communication Message Should be Well Controlled in the Process of Cultural Communication, So That Chinese Culture Can be More Effectively Disseminated to the Outside World

When Yan Fu translated the *Evolution and Ethics*, he first made an analysis of the social situation in the late Qing Dynasty and positioned his target readers as the scholarly class because this group had greater political influence at that time and could influence them first and then they would spread these new ideas as a way to awaken the national consciousness of self-strengthening and national preservation. It is not difficult to understand why Yan Fu translated in literary Chinese language throughout the book, and also used the old examples to arrange the entire book which is to cater to the tastes of the Chinese scholars with the literary tradition of the time. In addition, Yan Fu, as a disseminator of information, filtered and processed the content of the original work for the sake of dissemination and propaganda strategies. (Zhang Huaiyu, 2009) He eliminated the biological knowledge from the book that was not related to his political aspirations, while he elaborated on the content that was reminiscent of the current political situation in China and added several textual phrases to facilitate readers' understanding. (Nan Zhou & Ke Xie, 2018)

As China's comprehensive power continues to rise today, Chinese culture is spreading faster and faster to the outside world, and translation is one of the important means of communication. However, we are faced with an awkward problem: the number of Chinese cultural works in foreign translation is large, but not many of them have really achieved effective dissemination and made an impact. Yan Fu's *The Evolution and Ethics* has had a far-reaching impact in China and achieved excellent communication effects. The key point is that Yan Fu polished his translations according to the two factors of communication audience and communication message in the process of communication. Therefore, Chinese culture should also take into account the audience's expectations when translating into foreign languages, and fully examine their cultural characteristics and habits in order to improve the communication effect. In addition, it is also necessary to realize that Chinese culture is not simply a one-to-one translation at the linguistic level, but a purposeful cultural translation process. Therefore, to a certain extent, in order to achieve better communication effects, it is necessary to appropriately reprocess the communication information according to the target language culture.

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