

# A Comparison of Landscape Architecture Translation Between Yang's and Hou's Versions of Dream of Red Mansions--Take the Grand View Garden as an Example

Dandan Zhang

Shandong Jianzhu University Jinan, Shandong Province 250100

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the ecological garden industry under the guidance of ecological civilization construction has a strong momentum of development. The construction industry has paid more and more attention to the design and construction of architectural gardens. In recent years, many green buildings with the characteristics of ancient architectural gardens have emerged. As one of the greatest literary works in China, the description of architectural gardens in *A Dream of Red Mansions* is vivid and lifelike, among which the Grand View Garden is known to all, and is a model for later generations to imitate and build. From the perspective of cultural communication, this paper applies the foreignization and domestication translation theory of Lawrence Venuti who is an American translation theorist, to analyze the architectural landscape translation in Yang's and Hou's translations, aiming to provide reference for architectural landscape translation methods, so as to promote the external communication of Chinese ancient architecture. Through comparative analysis, this paper comes to the following conclusion: Foreignization and domestication are not completely opposite. When translating works, translators should integrate the two strategies of domestication and foreignization with the actual situation to achieve the dual role of transmitting the information of the original text and the source language and culture.

**Keywords:** English translation of *A Dream of Red Mansions*; Architectural Landscape Translation; Foreignization and Domestication

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## Introduction

As the first of China's four masterpieces, the language and literature value, human history and social phenomena, as well as food, clothing, housing and transportation included in *A Dream of Red Mansions* have had a profound impact on later generations. In the past 200 years, many famous "Redology" scholars have analyzed this classic work from different aspects. With the emergence of environmental problems, people are increasingly paying attention to environmental issues. The concept of ecological civilization construction and sustainable development has been deeply rooted in people's minds. Therefore, under the guidance of these concepts, the ecological landscape industry has been developing continuously. Especially in recent two years, the construction industry has paid more and more attention to the design and construction of architectural gardens. Therefore, the comparative study of the English versions of architectural gardens in *A Dream of Red Mansions* is becoming more and more important. In addition, *A Dream of Red Mansions* has been translated into more than ten different languages, including English, French and Russian. This paper selects two of the most famous English translations, namely, *The Story of the Stone* by David Hawkes, *A Dream of Red Mansions* by the couple of Yang Xianyi and of Diana.

This paper uses the translation theories of foreignization and domestication to make a comparative analysis of the translation of architectural gardens in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. In recent years, as people continue to upgrade translation from the linguistic level to the cultural level, more and more people regard cultural communication as an important purpose of translation. "In the West, the discussion of foreignization and domestication has extended the traditional western translation studies from literal translation and free translation, which focus on the meaning of meaning, content and style, to the cultural, poetic and political

aspects of translation. So that translation studies can move from the inside of the text to the outside of the text. It greatly expands the extension of translation studies and enriches the connotation of translation studies. In China, the discussion of foreignization and domestication mainly extends the debate between literal translation and free translation in traditional Chinese translation studies to the cultural level of translation” (Xiao Qin, 2017: 229). To enable translation to faithfully express the original text and enable target language readers to better understand the original text while retaining the information of the original text, translators should skillfully use the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization to achieve the role of transmitting culture through the translation. From the original literal translation and free translation methods to the foreignization and domestication translation strategies proposed by Venuti in *The Invisibility of the Translator*, we can learn from them in translating Chinese classical architectural gardens. According to Venuti, the domestication method is to “bring the original author into the target language culture”, while the alienation method is to “accept the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign language text and bring the reader into a foreign situation”. (Venuti, 1995:20) .

The main forms of Chinese classical garden architecture are, pavilions, corridors, pavilions, pavilions, towers, platforms, boats, halls, etc. Different forms have different functions and functions. In general, buildings for people to rest and watch through the construction of places in gardens have various forms and complete functions. As mentioned in the 16th chapter of *A Dream of Red Mansions*: “The Emperor issued a special decree in which he said that, apart from allowing the families of court ladies to visit their daughters in the Palace on the twelfth day of each month, he would allow any family which had a separate house or annexed capable of being maintained in the degree of security specified for a temporary Imperial Residence to make written application for permission to receive a Visitation in their own home, where the pleasures of reunion could be enjoyed in an atmosphere of intimacy and affection. The proclamation of this decree has created quite a stir. ‘They have measured off an area just over a quarter of a mile square which takes in a part of our grounds, including the All-scents Garden, on the east side, and the north-west corner of your grounds on the west, to be turned into a Separate Residence for the Visitation’.”(Huo) Chinese ancient garden architecture pursues artistic conception, mainly based on natural landscapes. All kinds of buildings in the garden have their own characteristics and are integrated with nature. They are a great example of Chinese ancient garden architecture and are worthy of our appreciation, exploration and research. The seventeenth chapter of *A Dream of Red Mansions* focuses on the description of the scenery of the Grand View Garden, so this paper chooses the English translation of architectural gardens in the seventeenth to eighteenth chapters for analysis.

## 1. A Comparative of Landscape Architecture Translation

In the 17th chapter of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Jia Zheng and his party first came to the entrance of the Grand View Garden.

### Example 1

Source text: 只见正门五间，上面桶瓦泥鳅脊；那门栏窗楣，皆是细雕新鲜花样，并无朱粉涂饰；一色水磨群墙，下面白石台矶，凿成西番草花样。

Yang’ translation: a building in five sections with an arched roof of semi-circular tiles. The lintels and lattices, finely carved with ingenious designs, were neither painted nor gilded; the walls were of polished bricks of a uniform colour, and the white marble steps were carved with passion-flowers.

Huo’s translation: It was a five-frame gate-building with a hump-backed roof of half-cylinder tiles. The wooden lattice-work of the doors and windows was finely carved and ingeniously patterned. The whole gatehouse was quite unadorned by colour or gilding, yet all was of the most exquisite workmanship. Its walls stood on a terrace of white marble carved with a pattern of passion-flowers in relief.

The main idea here is that the gate has five walls, most of which are bucket tiles and loach ridges. Although the door frames and windows are meticulously carved with different patterns, they have not been specially painted. Below the walls of the walls are white stone steps, which are carved with continuous western patterns. Among them, the architectural terms are: “bucket tile” -- semicircular bucket tile, “loach ridge” -- the bucket tile ridge on the two slopes of the roof presents a rolling shed style when crossing the ridge, which is as strong as a loach, “water mill” -- using the method of grinding bricks to build joints, “group walls” -- the wall below the windowsill and the waistline stone.

First of all, for the translation of “泥鳅脊”, Yang and Huo both adopted the domestication strategy, avoiding the word “泥鳅” and adopting “arched” and “hump backed”, with the main purpose of letting the reader immediately understand the shape of the tile. Second, Yang translated the words “lintels” and “lattices” in the translation of “门栏窗楣”, which accurately conveyed the information of the original text, reflected the characteristics of Chinese classical architecture, and belonged to the

strategy of alienation; Huo translated it as “The wooden lattice work of the doors and windows”. It is not difficult to see that Huo Yi chose free translation and explained the two terms respectively, so that the target language readers can better accept, but at the same time, he lost the conciseness and poetic flavor of the original text. Third, “并无朱粉涂饰” here expresses that the front door is carved in various and detailed styles, so it does not need to be painted and decorated specially. Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidi translated “were neither painted nor gilded”, which means “无需粉刷或镀金”. Hawkes further explained that “The whole gatehouse was quite unadorned by colour or gilding, yet all was of the most exquisite workmanship “. It is obvious that Yang’s translation tends to adopt foreignization strategy, which is close to the original information as much as possible, while Huo’s translation focuses on the reader’s understanding and tends to adopt domestication strategy. In addition, for the translation of the architectural term “水磨群墙”, neither of the two versions translated the professional meaning. Yang Yi used “the walls were of polished bricks”, which was easy to understand, while Huo Yi directly used the omitted translation techniques, and summarized the “水磨群墙” with the word “walls”, both of which used the domestication strategy. Further analysis shows that whether Yang’s translation keeps the original information and conveys the characteristics of Chinese classical garden architecture, it makes it difficult for the target language readers who are not familiar with the A Dream of Red Mansions or ancient architectural terminology to understand, or Huo’s translation tries to help the target language readers better understand the original text by interpreting the terms and adjectives in the classical garden through free translation, at the same time, it also loses the information and classical beauty of the original text.

After crossing Qinfang Bridge, Jia Zheng and his party came to Xiaoxiang Hall, where Lin Daiyu lived. Mr. Cao Xueqin presented it to Xiaoxiang Hall in a few words.

#### Example 2

Source text: 只见面入门便是曲折游廊，阶下石子漫成甬路。上面小小两三间房舍，一明两暗，里面都是合着地步打就的床几椅案。

Yang’s translation: From the gate porch a zigzag covered walk with a cobbled path below and parallel to it wound up to a little cottage of three rooms, with the cottage door in the middle one and furniture made to fit the measurements of the rooms.

Huo’s translation: A cloister-like covered walk ran round the walls from the entrance to the back of the forecourt and a cobbled pathway up to the steps of the terrace. The house was a tiny three-frame one, two parts latticed, the third part windowless. The tables, chairs and couches which furnished it seemed to have been specially made to fit the interior.

The main idea here is that the entrance is a zigzag passage, and the road is made of stone after stepping down. There are three rooms in the museum, one is bright and the other is dark. The furniture is configured according to the size and orientation of the room, including the number of beds, chairs and tables.

In the first sentence of the original text, Yang added “parallel to” to explain that the location of the house is parallel to the corridor, and translated “游廊”, one of the ancient architectural channels, into “walk”, reflecting the meaning of a narrow path, totaling 17 words; Huo’s translation has changed a lot, adding “from the entrance to the back of the forecourt” to explain the spatial layout of the corridor, “up to the steps of the terrace” to explain the spatial layout of the corridor, and translating “游廊” into “cloister like covered walk”, The domestication strategy of replacing the source language culture with the target language culture is obvious here. Due to the addition of many explanations, Huo’s translation shares 29 words, significantly more than Yang’s. In the second sentence of the original text, Yang Yi omitted “一明两暗” and Huo Yi treated it as “the third part windowless”; In both versions, the term “合着地步” is interpreted as meaning that the arrangement of furniture adapts to the space in the house. To sum up, the two versions of this part both adopt the translation techniques of addition, omission and domestication, so that readers can better understand the internal space of Xiaoxiang Hall, which is conducive to the readers’ construction of Lin Daiyu’s living environment in their minds, and help readers feel the characters in their own places.

#### Example 3

Source text: 只见上面五间清厦连着卷棚

Yang’s translation: ...these to a cool five-section gallery with roofed verandahs on four sides...

Huo’s translation: It was a cool, five-frame gallery with a low, roofed verandah running round it on all sides.

Five Qing mansions are connected with rolling sheds -- “卷棚” is an architectural term, which refers to a roof practice without a straight ridge, that is, the joint of the two slopes of the roof is not covered by the straight ridge, but presents an arc transition. Here, the “连着卷棚” should be to be “连搭卷棚”. “连搭” is also an architectural term, which refers to the connection of two or more roll shed roofs. “五间清连着卷棚” can be interpreted as “五开间的两卷钩连搭屋面的建筑形式”(Cao

Xueqin, 2005: 227). If we translate according to specific architectural terms, we can see the difficulty of the first sentence. However, we can see that there is a rare agreement between the two translations, which means that each side of the five rooms has a veranda with a roof. Neither of the two translations has translated the roof building form of “rolling shed”, which belongs to a domestication strategy. The purpose is to let the target language readers who have not seen this kind of architecture understand the house frame directly.

## 2. Conclusion

This paper uses the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization to compare the translations of Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidi with Hawkes from the perspective of cultural communication. Through the above analysis, we can see that neither of the two versions can absolutely say that any of the only translation strategies of domestication or foreignization is used, but each version is translated by using literal or free translation methods, as well as translation techniques of conversion and omission. The difference is that Yang’s version pays more attention to retaining the information of the original text. Preserve the classical beauty of garden buildings in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, the characteristics of ancient garden buildings, and architectural terminology. Huo’s translation pays more attention to conveying the meaning of the sentences in the original text, and makes the target language readers understand the spatial structure and house features of the garden buildings in *A Dream of Red Mansions* more directly through translation techniques such as addition. In the above examples, the author analyzes the translation strategies of domestication or foreignization used in different versions one by one, from which it can be concluded that the two translation strategies of domestication and foreignization are not only contradictory, but also unified. It is impossible for a translator to translate a text from beginning to end using only one of domestication or foreignization. It is necessary to use different strategies in combination with specific situations to achieve the function of transmitting the information of the original text or the source language and culture. In the process of translation, both translators use different translation techniques and methods, and use the translation strategy of combining domestication and foreignization to achieve their translation goals. To a certain extent, it will help people better understand the garden architecture of Grand View Garden in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, help target language readers to build a spatial structure, and better understand the work of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and the implication behind it.

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