

Translational Footnotes and the Positioning of Unfamiliar Literature: Capital Flow in Translations of Angela Carter's Fiction in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of the use of footnotes in the translations of the English writer Angela Carter's fiction published by Flâneur in Taiwan. Working on both qualitative and quantitative data, this thesis describes the growth of translated fiction in the contemporary Taiwanese publishing scenario and identifies the use of translational footnotes as a dominant yet under-researched translating apparatus. Seeking to contextualize translated fiction through explanatory annotations, the practice of "thick translation" is investigated from a sociological perspective, in order to better describe other influential forces, including publishers, editors and translators. Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of "capital," "agent" and "field" permit detailed consideration of the production of translational footnotes. The analysis of footnotes serves two major functions: first, it allows for the reconstruction of the editing and translating process, revealing how the narrative around a translated fiction is elaborated by various forces. Second, it enables examination of the strategies used to introduce readers to Carter's fiction which extend beyond the main texts. The study suggests that translational footnotes are more than an explanatory apparatus that facilitates readers' comprehension, functioning as signals of the negotiation of various forms of capital and power.

Three types of footnotes are studied in Taiwanese translations of Carter's fiction. The first concerns linguistic issues. Carter's linguistic capital is sometimes manifested in ways which rarely lend themselves to "domesticated" translation, and results in footnotes performing a dictionary function. This traditional hierarchy in linguistic power is reversed when "remote" languages are used, where the translator's linguistic capital may overpower that of the author. The second type of footnotes addresses intertextual features. References supplied in these footnotes confirm both the author's and the translator's literary capital. Carter's authorial notes visibly encourage the practice of thick translation, introducing intertextual layers into the translations. The selected information in the footnotes determines what the target agents decide to communicate through the translations. The third type attends to socio-cultural background details. Footnotes on these items give target readers a shortcut to decipher the material world in Carter's works. Ideological understanding introduces strong coherence to the narrative, while factual information embodies the author's cultural capital. Both are presented through a mixture of textual and contextual techniques, which blurs the boundary between forms of capital and types of footnotes, and hence indicates the intertwined nature and the mediating function of translational footnotes.

KEYWORDS: Angela Carter, capital, paratext, thick translation, translational footnote

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