

Translation Networks and Power: An Archival Research on the English Translation of Mo Yan's *The Garlic Ballads*

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ABSTRACT

While the translator's agency has attracted increasing attention in Translation Studies, it is rarely the translator alone who determines how to shape a translation. Other agents, such as literary agents, editors and publishers, are also involved in the translation production, with underlying power dynamics at various stages throughout the translation process. This article draws on a Bourdieusian framework to examine how the translation network of multiple agents interplayed in Howard Goldblatt's English translation of Mo Yan's *The Garlic Ballads*. By analysing the translator's archival materials, the article shows that although the translation project was initiated by the translator, it was completed for the mutual benefit of different agents, with the publisher having the strongest power in the translation network. Although the translator only played a minor role at the later stages of the translation process, the capital he gained in the translation field provided him with resources with which to play in the publishing field, which in turn enhanced his position in the translation field.

Keywords: Archival materials; Bourdieu; Howard Goldblatt; power; *The Garlic Ballads*; translation network

1. Introduction

With approaches from fields of Cultural Studies and Sociology being increasingly applied to Translation Studies, the scope of the translation process has expanded from a mere linguistic translating activity, to what Toury calls the translation event (1995:249), a process defined by Chesterman (2007:173) as "starting with the client's request for a translation and ending with its reception by other agents on various levels". Since Simeoni's (1995) call for an agent-grounded study of translation, regarding Translation Studies as "human science", many researchers have adopted sociological approaches, such as Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production and Latour's Actor-Network theory (ANT), to analyse the concept of agency within the translation process across a variety of actors, particularly the translator him/herself (e.g. Milton and Bandia 2009; Kinnunen and Koskinen 2010; Khalifa 2014). However, excessive attention to the role played by the translator alone may lead translators to the awkward position where all the possible problems and errors in the translated text are

attributed to them. Howard Goldblatt is a salient example of a translator and his translations having been exposed to public scrutiny, especially after Mo Yan's winning of the Nobel Prize for literature in 2012. On the one hand, he was hailed as the foremost English translator of Chinese literature, on the other he was criticised by Chinese scholars for rewriting and manipulating the original, being market-oriented, holding an orientalist translation philosophy, etc. Goldblatt himself, in a self-interview, made it clear that what he "wish[ed] for in a review of [his] work is a broader critique" (Ge 2011: 99). With this in mind, it is necessary to investigate the broader concept of the translation process in which different agents exert their power. The present article draws on Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital as tried and tested tools to examine the translation network of multiple agents formed around Goldblatt's English translation of Mo Yan's 天堂蒜薹之歌 *The Garlic Ballads* (ST 1988; TT 1995), aiming to view the translator and his translation fairly, to show how different agents negotiated and conflicted with each other, and most importantly, to show who had the power to shape the fate of the translation.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework underpinning this article is provided by Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital and habitus. Bourdieu refers to the field as "a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning, its specific relations of force, within the field of power" (1993:163). A field is internally and externally structured in terms of power relations. To be specific, inside a field, "the agents struggle for the maintenance or change of power relations on the basis of the various types of capital they have" (Wolf 2011: 4). Different forms of capital represent important resources – economic, cultural, social, symbolic – that allow agents to join a field. The volume and types of capital they possess determine whether they can achieve dominance in the field, so that "centers of power and force are created around those agents who dispose of the strongest forms of capitals" (Wolf 2011:6). In other words, the more capital an agent has, the more powerful he/she is in the field. The habitus of different agents, i.e. the dispositions that inform decisions of cultural producers (Bourdieu 1990: 53), generates the strategies which enable them to seek the accumulation of capital. When it comes to the external level, there are many different fields of activities, such as the literary field, the political field, the economic field, etc., located in the field of power, which means the common shared social space. Each practice-specific field can be divided into different subfields, which are driven by specific stakes and interests at a given time. It is worth

mentioning that the boundaries of fields are fuzzy, so different fields tend to interact with each other (Tyulenev 2014:184). The power relations operating between fields mean that the dominant field always tends to impose its rules, values and logic onto other fields.

Bourdieu's theory has been widely applied to Translation Studies (e.g., Simeoni 1998; Gouanvic 2002; *The Translator* 2005; Sela-Sheffy 2005; Meylaerts 2010; Hanna 2016). However, researchers mainly examine the agency of an individual agent or the relationship between agency and structure, rather than the interaction and negotiation between different agents. The persuasiveness of Bourdieu's framework for an analysis of the interplay between different translation agents lies in that it enables researchers to explore how power relations between and within fields have structured agents' behaviour, how a translation was produced and who had the decisive power to shape it. For Bourdieu, "[t]o enter a field ... means 'investing' one's (academic, cultural, symbolic) capital in [the most advantageous way] as to derive maximum benefit or 'profit' from participation" (1993:8). As a socially-situated activity, the translation practice is located in several fields. Although some of the agents operating in the translation field come from its adjacent fields and may have different standpoints, for example, the editor and publisher from the publishing field, the reviewer from the reviewing field, they have a common goal based on mutual interest – to invest in this translation project, publish the translated text and all gain benefit from it. Meanwhile, when encountering the external social, economic, cultural and political constraints and norms, the translation field also interacts with its adjacent fields, particularly the publishing field. After a translation project is commissioned, the translation network of multiple agents is formed at the intersection of the translation field and the publishing field. Each translation project functions as a web, with different agents interacting with each other, aiming to bring the translated text to market.

The completion of each translation project depends on "multiple translatorship" (Jansen and Wegener 2013:1) or the "agential network" (Qi 2016:42), which means the translator is not the sole decision-maker in the translation process, but rather his/her agency is inextricably intertwined with that of other agents in multiple ways. However, the role played by other agents like the literary agent, the editor and the publisher are easily overlooked and the power differentials between various agents also remain largely invisible in the published final products. In order to trace their presence and produce a bigger picture of translation and translation history, researchers have shifted their focus to archives (e.g., Munday 2013, 2014;

Qi 2016, 2018; Summers 2017; Paloposki 2017). Archival materials, such as a translator's papers or a publisher's record, can not only "provide information on [the translator's] past working conditions, practices, personal networks and decision-making as well as on the professional hybridity on individual translation persons", but also "further unveil a broader framework of a translation event with its dynamic power relations as well as economic and commercial constraints" (Kujamäki 2018:247).

In the case of Howard Goldblatt, the last decade witnessed a sharp increase in the number of studies on him and his translation, particularly after Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2012. Most of these studies are product-oriented, some of which use ST-TT comparison in terms of narratology or some linguistic features to examine how the translator deals with the source text, while others use corpus-based methodologies to analyse the translator's style. A considerable number of researchers examine Goldblatt's translation philosophy, or conduct an overview of his translation career, aiming to see what we can learn from his success in order to promote Chinese literature abroad. Only a limited number of researchers approach the translator and his translations from a sociological perspective, using Bourdieu's sociology or Latour's ANT to examine the translator's habitus and trajectory, the translation production process of a certain project or the accumulation of the translator's capital (e.g., Yan 2013; Wang 2014; Xie 2016). Although there are perhaps already too many studies focusing on Goldblatt's translation of Mo Yan, the agential network in the translation process is still underexplored. For this article, I systematically analyse the correspondence between the translator Howard Goldblatt, the author Mo Yan, the literary agent Sandra Dijkstra, the editors Nan Graham and Courtney Hodell, as well as other representatives of the publisher Viking Press, which were collected from the Howard Goldblatt Collection at the Chinese Literature Translation Archive¹ (University of Oklahoma, USA). So far, only two researchers have conducted research on the archival materials in the Howard Goldblatt Collection, either exploring the broader sense of translation process in Goldblatt's translation career (Xu 2016a, 2016b), or the multiple authorship in translating contemporary Chinese novels into the American publishing industry (Yan forthcoming). Based on a socio-archival analysis of the translator's papers in the archive, this article aims to sketch the translation network of agents from different fields in the translation process and uncover the power differentials between them.

¹ For more information about the archive, please see: <https://libraries.ou.edu/content/chinese-literature-translation-archive>, accessed on 21 January 2019.

3. Power dynamics underlying the translation network in *The Garlic Ballads*

The publication of *The Garlic Ballads* (hereafter *Garlic*) was the outcome of a translation network formed at the intersection of the translation field and publishing field. At that time, the field of translating Chinese literature to the US (the translation field) and the field of publishing translated Chinese literary works in the US (the publishing field) were not strong enough to be stand-alone fields, but rather were regarded as the subfields of the American literary field.

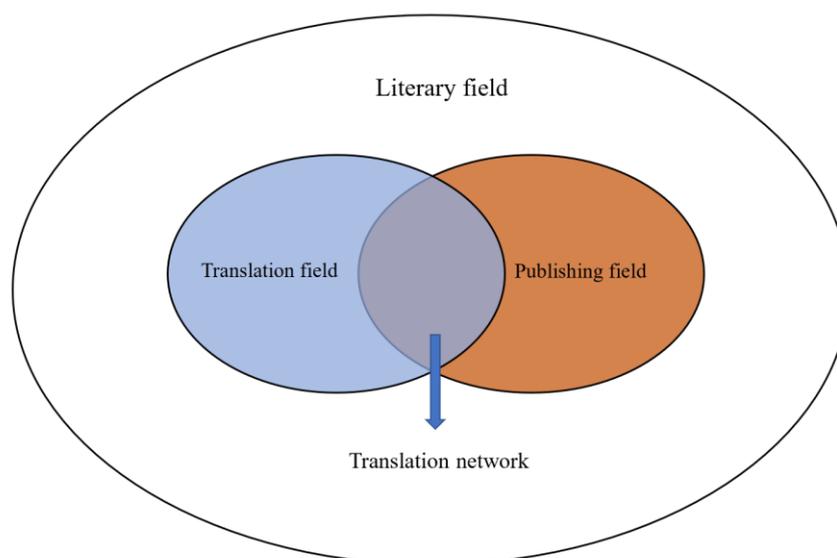


Figure1. The translation network of multiple agents situated at the intersection of the translation field and the publishing field.

This network was initiated by Goldblatt (the translator in capital letters) and functioned as follows: Author ← TRANSLATOR → Literary Agent → Publisher. The author and translator came from the translation field, while the literary agent and publisher came from the publishing field. Goldblatt, the translator, was the key player in this network, who decided to translate Mo Yan because of his literary taste and judgment. His literary agent was responsible for seeking potential publishers who were willing to publish this book.

3.1 *Selecting the original*

The power relations in the translation process are inherent from the beginning, in the selection

of texts to be translated into the target language. *Garlic* was selected mainly because of Goldblatt's social capital, cultural capital and habitus. The author-translator relationship between Mo Yan and Goldblatt started in 1988 when one of Goldblatt's friends in Hong Kong, William Tay sent him a copy of the Chinese magazine *Shiyue* (十月, *October*), in which *Garlic* appeared in the first issue of 1988. After reading this novel, Goldblatt said he was absolutely knocked out, and had never been so stunned by a piece of literature (Goldblatt and Eftimiadou 11 December 2012). He immediately wrote to Mo Yan to ask for permission to translate it and find a publisher, and Mo Yan agreed (Sparks and Goldblatt 26 May 2013). At the time that *Garlic* was published in China, Chinese literature was gradually being liberated from political and ideological constraints, with different types of literature emerging, such as scar literature, root-seeking literature and avant-garde literature, all of which attracted great attention from Western sinologists and researchers (Zhao 1993; Goldblatt 1995). Around the 1980s, there was hardly any market for modern and contemporary Chinese literature in English, and translated Chinese literary works were mostly published by university presses (Hung 1991). These translation projects were mainly initiated by translators "who were mostly academics teach[ing] Chinese at various universities in the West" (Hung 1991:39). The reason behind their translation was usually because of "a shortage of available up-to-date teaching material, or in many cases from the translator's own enthusiasm for a certain writer's works" (ibid.). Translation activities at that time were not strong and systematic enough to form an independent translation field. In this sense, when analysing the production of *Garlic*, the field of translating Chinese literature into the US is regarded as a subfield of the American literary field.

In order to analyse the power interplay between different agents, it is necessary to investigate their positions and trajectories in the related fields. Before writing to Mo Yan in 1988, Goldblatt's translations, including single volumes and short stories, were largely related to his academic research and published by university presses in the US or literary magazines in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Although Goldblatt did not receive any formal training as a translator, his habitus in the translation field was converted from his habitus attained as a research-active professor in Chinese literature, and indirectly gained from his education and past translation activities. These early translations earned him social capital (connection with many famous Chinese authors), cultural capital (published translations, translation competence, literary taste) and symbolic capital (expert in Chinese literature, famous English translator of Chinese literature) in the translation field. As for the author, before Goldblatt wrote to him in 1988,

Mo Yan was an emerging writer who not only explored experimentation in terms of content but also in the narrative form and structure of his own work. He began to make a name for himself in the Chinese literary scene because of the publication of his two important works, 透明的红萝卜 *Radish* (ST 1985; TT 2016) and 红高粱 *Red Sorghum*² (ST 1987; TT 1993). Although there had been some translations of Mo Yan's works into English, these translations were mainly short stories and did not arouse so much reaction in the global readership. What is more, Mo Yan cannot speak English and did not have knowledge of the translation procedures and publishing procedures in the USA, so he lacked the field-specific capital. Goldblatt claims that when he wrote to ask for Mo Yan's permission, Mo Yan was "a bit of nobody" (Goldblatt 12 October 2012). Goldblatt's social connection with his Hong Kong friend William Tay provided the conditions for his discovery of Mo Yan's great novel. His cultural capital in the form of artistic evaluation skills and scholarship in Chinese literature enabled him to spot Mo Yan's literary merit and potential. To a certain extent, Mo Yan was passively introduced into the American literary market and the translator had more power than the author in the translation field.

It is important to note that in the process of translating and publishing *Garlic*, Goldblatt, as a translator, already had his own literary agent Sandra Dijkstra. The literary agent's agency cannot be easily overlooked because her participation in the translation process highlights its "networked and economic dimensions ... which can help explain the commercialization of translations as cultural commodities in literary markets" (Meng 2018:212). Having a literary agent gave access to the trade market for publishing translations of Chinese literature in the US, and Goldblatt's translation projects began to connect more closely with the publishing industry. Since commercial trade houses in the US were reluctant to publish translations because of production cost and economic risks, relatively few translated Chinese literary works were published by the commercial presses. In this sense, the field of publishing translated Chinese literature in the US is also regarded as a subfield of the American literary field. Goldblatt's social capital was instrumental in forming the partnership between him and Dijkstra. When Goldblatt was contacting publishers by himself to sell his translation of another of Mo Yan's novels, *Red Sorghum*, his friend Amy Tan, the Chinese American author of the bestseller *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), introduced her agent Dijkstra to Goldblatt. Before the collaboration with Goldblatt, Dijkstra did not have any experience of promoting translated

² Although *The Garlic Ballads* was the first novel of Mo Yan that Goldblatt began to translate, *Red Sorghum* was the first one that was published in English.

Chinese literature and there was no Chinese author on her client list. Although Dijkstra did not know Chinese, she had “a literary taste honed by a Ph.D. in French literature, a keen editorial eye trained during a decade of university teaching, and selling smarts ... on the business front”³. Dijkstra’s cultural capital in the form of literary taste and her Ph.D. in literature, as well as her habitus attained from education and past working experience granted her a high position in the publishing field, being regarded as “the most powerful literary agent on the West Coast”⁴. Their partnership reflects the fact that Dijkstra shared the same ‘feel’ as Goldblatt, namely that Mo Yan is a great writer with remarkable literary merit. Having a literary agent was also a demonstration of Goldblatt’s power and influence, since relatively few translators had agents. The capital Goldblatt had accumulated in the translation field could be converted into important resources for him to deploy in the publishing field, which, in turn, made the literary agent trust Goldblatt’s expertise in translation and Chinese literature. In Mo Yan’s authorisation letter dated November 15, 1991, he gave permission to Dijkstra to sign any and all agreements on his behalf with publication and royalty issues for his present and future works translated by Goldblatt (Stalling forthcoming). Dijkstra began to represent Mo Yan and dealt with the overseas copyrights for his works.

Although Goldblatt had more power in the translation field, when the translation field was interacting with the publishing field, he was no longer in a dominant status. The literary agent acts in the interests of the author (and the translator), hoping to sell the content to the most appropriate publisher who offers the best price and contract, whereas the publisher has the final say in determining the pace of promoting and publishing a foreign author. As a risky business, “to publish a book in translation will always cost more than one originally written in English” (Schulte 1990: 1), which requires “a significant initial outlay for translation rights, the translator’s fee, and marketing” (Venuti 1998:124). The economic factor contributes to the reluctance of publishers to publish translation and the marginality of translation in the US literary market. In a letter of December 16, 1992 from Nan Graham to Sandra Dijkstra, Graham responded to several of Dijkstra’s concerns in her previous letter of December 9 (Folder 2 Correspondence, Box 7 Mo Yan, Author Series). Dijkstra believed that it was necessary to negotiate a contract for Mo Yan’s *Song of Garlic in Paradise County*⁵ before publishing *Red Sorghum*, if they did not do so, in her words, they would hurt Mo Yan (ibid.).

³ Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency: <https://dijkstraagency.com/sandra-dijkstra.php>, accessed on 21 January 2019.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The original English title of *The Garlic Ballads*.

But Graham responded that they should

stall publication of SONG OF GARLIC until the paperback of RED SORGHUM has been available for at least six months. The idea is, especially in introducing a challenging new international writer, to expand the readership with paperback publication and then to convert some of those readers to hardcover the next time around (ibid.).

Graham's words reflect that when bringing a "challenging new" foreign author into the American literary market, the publishers would weigh the balance to see whether they could make a profit. Before signing a contract with Mo Yan on *Garlic*, they needed time to see whether the first novel *Red Sorghum* would be well received or not. As Graham claimed, Viking had paid "an unearned advance" on *Red Sorghum* and did not want to pay another (ibid.). Even though she believed that Mo Yan "is a writer we all feel will earn a place on the stage of world literature", "it may take as long as it took Vargas Llosa or Rushdie or even Gordimer" (ibid.).

The opposing standpoints between the literary agent and the publisher in this letter demonstrate their conflicts of interest. It is important to note that what the literary agent aimed to promote was not a single volume of the author's book, but rather the author himself. Dijkstra's concern was to maximise the benefits of the author (and the translator) because if they could have the translations of two of Mo Yan's strong novels together, this author would leave a deep impression on American readers. She wanted to accelerate the pace of promoting Mo Yan into the US market, and in turn, she could get commissions from advances and royalties. As for the publisher, although Viking intended to publish Mo Yan's *Garlic*, the publisher had to consider the market and sales figures because everyone enters the field to play the 'game' not to lose but to get a stake in it.

Even after the publication of *Red Sorghum*, the publication of *Garlic* was still delayed because of economic considerations. In a letter of October 20, 1993 from Nan Graham to Howard Goldblatt (Folder 2 Correspondence, Box 7 Mo Yan, Author Series), Graham stated

The sales reps (and, in fact, publicity, too) feel that we should wait on hardcover publication of GARLIC until we've given RED SORGHUM a chance to expand Mo Yan's reputation through the paperback. They just think that some months of course adoption will help the next book a lot. Hence, they would like to publish GARLIC in the spring of 95 (ibid.).

Because there is no follow-up correspondence or translation contract for this book available in the archive, we cannot know when the contract for *Garlic* was signed. This book was published in May 1995 as stipulated in Graham's letter mentioned above, and the final say about when to publish the translated product lay in the publisher's hands. The publisher had more power than other agents in the translation network. Before having a literary agent, Goldblatt had to contact the publisher himself in order to sell the translation. After Goldblatt and Dijkstra agreed on translating and promoting Mo Yan into English, the literary agent, on behalf of the author and the translator, was responsible for the job of selling the content, and negotiating contracts and terms with the publisher. Sitting on opposite sides of the table in promoting Mo Yan and *Garlic*, what the literary agent and the publisher competed for was the economic capital, which could then be converted into other forms of capital, like symbolic capital and the cultural capital. The economic capital was important for the literary agent Dijkstra because the capital she gained in this translation project could be applied to future projects and used to spot and sign more writers with literary talent based on her own tastes and evaluation. Economic capital was important for Viking because they needed to finance the translation and publication of books at different stages. In the early stages, they had paid a large advance to the author and were unsure whether they could make a profit from it. Later, the publisher also needed to invest in producing, editing, packaging and marketing the translated book. At this early stage of initiating the translation project, it is obvious that the publisher had more control over the translation process.

3.2 Translating and editing

In a publishing house, the most valuable editor is one who has “the right combination of judgement, taste, social flair and financial nous” (Thompson 2010:6). In the translation process, the editor is potentially an influential presence, whose views on linguistic, stylistic or narrative issues, as well as readers' expectation in the target culture will affect the transfer from the source text to the target text. As their agency is usually invisible to the public, archival materials such as the correspondence between the translator and editor, as well as the translation drafts can provide substantial evidence for researchers to explore the role played by editors. The translator's practices are influenced by the constraints or norms that the editor/publisher imposed in the process of editing the manuscript. In order to make a well-received translation, the translator has to follow the norms that govern the translation market, bearing the target readers and market in mind.

The editorial job of *Garlic* was mainly done by Courtney Hodell, and Goldblatt also expressed his thanks to Hodell in the “Translator’s Note” for her “editorial insight and unflagging enthusiasm” (Mo 1995). In a letter of May 5, 1994 from Hodell to Goldblatt (Folder 2 Correspondence, Box 7 Mo Yan, Author Series), she gave very detailed suggestions on how to edit and adapt the translated text, including several aspects listed below.

- Title
- Occasional jarring translation of idiomatic language
- Inconsistency in expressing currency and translating names
- Dealing with the repetition in Mo Yan’s “scenic” writing
- Mo Yan is lost in “his intricate series of flashbacks with flashbacks” and “the chronology seems a bit bizarre at times”.
- The biggest issue is with the end of the manuscript, ask Mo Yan to rewrite it.

Editorial interventions are very common in translating Chinese literature into the US, which is mainly because of the absence of editing and low status of editors in China’s publishing houses, and the quality of the original Chinese writing (Jenner, 1990; Goldblatt 2000; Goldblatt 2004). The general rule in editing translated Chinese literature is that the translated texts “need to be polished till we forget that they are translations, like a window so clean that we are not aware that it stands between us and what we are looking at” (Jenner 1990: 193). From among the six aspects listed above, Hodell’s aim was to deal with flaws in the translated text and make it acceptable to target receivers. For example, the original English title of *Garlic* was *Song of Garlic in Paradise County*, which was translated literally from the Chinese title *Tiantang Suantai Zhi Ge*. In correspondence among themselves, they had been calling it *Song of Garlic* for short. Hodell thought this short title “might be a more palatable title for Western tongues than SONG OF GARLIC IN PARADISE COUNTY” which “also echoes nicely the rhythm of RED SORGHUM” (Letter from Hodell to Goldblatt, May 5, 1994). The title of a book is the first thing readers see when choosing among a number of books. It is important to choose a title that catches the reader’s eye and is easy to remember and pronounce. Although the final title of this book is not *Song of Garlic*, the published title *The Garlic Ballads* is presumably adapted from *Song of Garlic*.

Hodell’s aim of dealing with the translations of idiomatic terms and proverbs is also to make the translation acceptable and readable. However, her suggestions seem to contradict the

fluent and invisible translation strategy that is prevalent in the Anglo-American context. For example, Hodell mentioned that the translation of some “relational terms like pal, daddy, gramps, and so on ... sound too American to come out of rural China”. In terms of Chinese proverbs, she claimed that “they are a powerful window onto a completely alien body of tradition and thought”, so she suggested if Goldblatt could try for translations that were not greatly influenced by the American culture (Letter from Hodell to Goldblatt, May 5, 1994). As for the translation of currency, she proposed “sticking with the Chinese units”, and “put[ting] an appendix at the back giving a rough equivalence in U.S. money, along with any endnote-type explanations you (Goldblatt) may feel necessary” (ibid.). As for names, her suggestion was to “leav[e] all the names in Chinese and translat[e] them at back” (ibid.). From Hodell’s perspective, it was important to keep the exoticness of the original. Her efforts were designed to ensure the quality of the translated text, making it reliable and trustworthy for domestic readers. When dealing with the repetition in Mo Yan’s “scenic” writing - which means the scene itself is also a character, a prominent feature of Mo Yan’s writing style - Hodell believed that this kind of description of environment and circumstances “slows the pace to the point where the narrative drive is lost”, so she tried to “cut judiciously so none of the atmosphere is lost but the story also moves briskly enough to keep the reader’s eyes from making great jumps down the page” (ibid.). Hodell also edited some chronologically bizarre details and inconsistency in the author’s description, “for clarity and consistence. ... [and] did the minimal alterations necessary to make it read smoothly” (ibid.).

When it comes to the original end of the novel, Hodell and Graham both felt that “it didn’t have the same power as the rest of the novel: Mo Yan seems to lay down all the threads he’s tied together so carefully, and relies on the trick of the courtroom speech and newspaper article to make a tidy conclusion” (Letter from Hodell to Goldblatt, May 5, 1994). Hodell thought they would have to ask Mo Yan to fix it. What she and Graham wanted to see was “an account of what judgement the garlic protesters do get ... [to] let the characters show us what to feel, instead of having a speech tell us” (ibid.; emphasis original). In a letter of May 9, 1994, from Graham to Goldblatt, Graham also expressed her attitude towards the questions proposed by Hodell. She agreed with Hodell that “sometimes the language just seems too idiomatic or (American) cliched”, it is necessary to find out “whether there is any other alternative to the original Chinese”. She pointed out the same problems as Hodell had mentioned, such as “landscape is itself a character” which can be cut to speed up the pace of the plot, the occasional details which were lost in the flashbacks within flashbacks; the

chronological confusion and, most importantly, the “last 25 pages”. Graham said that they really wanted to know what happened to the main characters of the novel and they felt “totally cheated and ... betrayed”. She asked Goldblatt if he could convince Mo Yan to “end with the story a bit more”. In a letter of June 15, 1994 from Mo Yan to Goldblatt (Folder 2 Correspondence, Box 7 Mo Yan, Author Series), Mo Yan stated that,

我重写了第二十章……毫无疑问现在的第 20 章比原先的结局要圆满的多了，要漂亮的多了。希望您能不辞辛苦，把这一部分全译出来。个别地方，如您认为不合适，请尽管修改。

I rewrote Chapter 20 ... There is no doubt that the current ending is much more complete and beautiful than the original one. I hope that you could spare no effort to translate this part. In some places, if you think it is inappropriate, please do not hesitate to modify it. (my translation)

Mo Yan rewrote Chapter 20 of this novel and asked Goldblatt to translate it into English. All the Chinese reprinted versions of this novel issued after the publication of the English translation adopted this new ending.

These three letters reflect the translation product as the output of multiple agents, and even the potential influence of international editors/publisher on the writing of the original author. The editor negotiated with the translator in terms of the structure, style and register of the translated text in order to reduce its flaws and sweep away the obstacles for the target receivers' understanding. The norms that governed translators to render Chinese literary works into English were to rewrite the original and make it read like a work originally produced in English (Duke 1990; Jenner 1990; Balcom 2008). While Goldblatt rewrote the original and remained invisible behind the text, the editors thought some of Goldblatt's translations were too American for a foreign literary work. The editor and the publisher knew well what kind of novel could attract the readers' attention and sell well, so they imposed their rules and norms on the translator. Mo Yan and Goldblatt agreed to change the end of this novel, because only by complying with the norms imposed by the publisher, could this translation project be continued. In this way, they can acquire capital from participation and improve their positions in the network. The editor, who normally at the request of the publisher, attempted to render the translation into a readable and marketable product, ensuring that the cultural capital can be successfully converted into economic capital. Although the translator is the only one who had the bilingual ability and bicultural knowledge to do the translating job, it is the publisher who shaped the production of the translation from the

outside.

3.3 Packaging and marketing

When the translated text was ready to be published, what the literary agent and the publisher competed for was how to package and market the translated text. “Marketing comprises a range of activities concerned with informing potential customers of the availability of a book and encouraging them to buy it” (Thompson 2010: 21). The paratext, specifically the peritext like the book cover, preface and afterword, is “the zone that is the direct and principal ... responsibility of the publisher” (Genette 1997:16), which can function as a marketing tool to help sell the cultural product. If target readers are not familiar with the source language, text and culture; paratexts – which are intentionally crafted by the publisher, can guide the readers’ perception and understanding of the translated text.

Even after *Garlic* was published, there were conflicts between the literary agent and the publisher about how to package and market this book. Two major problems that Dijkstra concerned about were how Viking could make use of 1) the fact that Mo Yan could not get out of China to visit the US, 2) the praise “If I were to choose a Nobel Laureate, it would be Mo Yan” bestowed by the Japanese Nobel Laureate Kenzaburo Oe (Letter from Dijkstra to Paul Sovak, May 16, 1995; Letter from Dijkstra to Grossman, July 5, 1995; Folder 2 Correspondence, Box 7 Mo Yan, Author Series). As for the first point, Dijkstra considered the fact that Mo Yan could not travel to the US as a selling point, suggesting Viking to “pitch a profile of an author whose [sic] unable to stand on American soil for his portrait”, or alternatively that Barbara Grossman and Goldblatt could “craft such a profile and sent it out to the booksellers nationwide, with the word WANTED plastered across the top” (Letter from Dijkstra to Paul Sovak, May 16, 1995). As for the second point, Dijkstra suggested that Viking should spend money on getting “the Oe quote into even small ads in the NYT daily” (ibid.). She claimed that “Mo Yan IS the most likely candidate for the Nobel”, so she felt “amazing that Viking elected to hide [the Oe] quote INSIDE the jacket” (Letter from Dijkstra to Grossman, July 5, 1995, emphasis original) of *Garlic* rather than on the book cover of it. She questioned Viking’s seriousness and interest in continuing to publish Mo Yan. She made a list of reviews on Mo Yan from *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, Kenzaburo Oe, etc., insisting Viking to “make use of these amazing quotes in a series of ads which announce to the American public the international importance of this writer” (ibid.). At last Dijkstra

expressed her attitude towards the future plans to publish Mo Yan, saying that Goldblatt was working on a synopsis of Mo Yan's next novel, which was "considered to be Mo Yan's most important novel, but you need to give him and us a reason to stay at Viking" (ibid.). In a letter of July 5, 1995 (Folder 2 Correspondence, Box 7 Mo Yan, Author Series), Grossman replied to Dijkstra, claiming that they were serious about publishing Mo Yan, but she did not think more advertising would help sell more copies in hardcover and paperback either at that time or in the future.

These three letters illustrate that the literary agent and the publisher were motivated by different interests when making the translated text circulate in the literary market. The literary agent believed that by using various marketing tools and strategies, they could raise the sales figures of the book and make the author known to the American general reading public. However, the publisher did not want to invest in the translation project any longer because they did not believe the book could sell well through more marketing strategies. In the end, it was the publisher who had the power to shape the fate of the translation. What the literary agent and the publisher competed for was still the economic capital, because the capital generated from (potential) literary success could be converted into an accumulation of capital in the future. The conflicts, struggle and divergence between the translator, literary agent, and the publisher suggest that it became difficult for them to find mutual interests and goals. In the translation project of Mo Yan's next novel *The Republic of Wine*, although it was originally sold to Viking, the contract was terminated and sold to the Arcade Publishing House. The translation network of agents was formed because of their common interests, but it only existed temporarily. If agreement between the different parties could not be achieved, the network would be dissolved and a new translation network would be formed.

Another point suggested by these letters is that the translator also became a kind of promotional capital for the marketing of the author and the translated book. In Dijkstra's letters, she mentioned several times that Goldblatt should become involved in marketing activities promoting Mo Yan, for example, designing posters and leaflets. Although there are not many details of the specific role Goldblatt played in marketing, we can speculate that the capital he gained in the translation field would increase Mo Yan's visibility in the US literary market. For example, as a famous literary translator, his translation could become an endorsement of the translated book (his symbolic capital would be transferred into the translated product and author); he could write book reviews or critical essays to guide the

readers' perception of the translated book (cultural capital); as a research professor in Chinese literature, he could set courses on the works and authors he has translated (academic capital). With Goldblatt becoming more famous, he could play an increasingly important role in the publishing field. In turn, the resources he gained from the published field may bring him more translation projects, reputation and influence in the translation field. Goldblatt's current position as the best-known brand in the field of Chinese-English literary translation is the explicit outcome of the accumulation of various forms of capital. This powerful and influential status contrasts with the translator's traditional invisible, secondary and subordinate status.

4. Findings and Conclusion

Based on a socio-archival analysis of the translator's correspondence, this article has illustrated that the power conflicts in the translation project of *The Garlic Ballads* existed not only between different agents, but also between different fields, namely, the translation field and the publishing field. The translation norms and the economic aspect of the publishing business were two important factors that caused the power conflicts among different agents. Goldblatt's social capital, cultural capital and habitus played an important role in the selection of *Garlic*, and brought the literary agent Dijkstra into the translation network. It can be speculated that based on a trust of Goldblatt's reputation (symbolic capital) and translation expertise (cultural capital), Dijkstra decided to promote and represent Mo Yan. Dijkstra was instrumental in facilitating the commission of the translational project. Based on her professional judgement and sales expertise, she later tried to negotiate a contract for the author (and the translator) and urge the publisher to employ various strategies to market the foreign author. The involvement of the literary agent in the translation network means that the translation practice was closely linked to the publishing business, highlighting the economic aspect of the translation practice. Although both the literary agent and the publisher recognized the literary merit of Mo Yan and his works, the competition for different forms of capital, particularly the economic capital, led to conflict over when to publish the book and how to market the book. While the suggestions given by the editors seem to contradict the universal invisible and fluent strategy discussed by Venuti (1995), their aim was to sweep away the obstacles that would hinder the readers' perception. In other words, the editing process was to make the translated text meet the readers' expectations and well-received in the target culture. It is obvious that the publisher was the most powerful agent in the network,

while the translator only played a minor role and occupied a peripheral status in the later stages of the translation process. It is also evident that the translation field was still very weak within the literary field. In cases of conflict with the adjacent publishing field, the translation field had to be subservient to it. The power conflicts and struggles between different agents show that it is not always easy and smooth to publish a literary translation in the US market. The translation network is formed based on the shared interests and purpose of various agents at the intersection of the translation field and the publishing field, but if agreement cannot be reached, the translation network will be broken.

At the time of translating and publishing *Garlic*, the translation field and the publishing field were not strong enough to be independent fields themselves. Since the publication of *Garlic* was only a single translational event, it seems difficult to investigate the development of different fields or changes of agents' positions. However, this case suggests that with more agents getting involved in the translation activities - for example, more authors seeking global reputation and readership, more commercial publishers being willing to publish translated Chinese literature and realising its market potential, more institutional agents providing funding and subsidies to translators - both the translation field and publishing field may grow into stand-alone fields. As for the interaction between the translation field and the publishing field, the capital gained by the translator in the translation field enabled him to pursue his interests and his dominance in the publishing field, which may in turn enhance his position in the translation field. In comparison to the translator's traditional invisible and submissive status, Goldblatt's trajectory shows that the translator can also become a powerful and influential brand. As for the literary agent, her collaboration with Goldblatt opened up new opportunities for her, with translated Chinese literature as an underexplored market. The potential success of the authors and the works she represented strengthened her partnership with the author, translator and publisher (social capital); earned her more contracts and translation projects (economic capital), and a reputation as an expert in spotting and marketing Chinese authors and literary works (symbolic capital). The publisher Viking's choices told a different story. Before the project of *Garlic*, Viking has already possessed a dominant position in the publishing field. Although publishing works of a (potential) brand-name author can earn them symbolic capital, they paid more attention to the economic costs. Different from existing research which only focused on the textual aspects of Goldblatt's translation, this article shows that the translation is shaped through the collaboration and competition between multiple agents and archival materials are essential

sources to unravel the underlying factors that influence the agents' behaviour and decision-making.

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