

Cultural Diaspora and Foreignising Translation

Sun Yifeng

Abstract

The strategy of foreignising translation is effective for curtailing interference or manipulation so as to allow the target reader to experience the original text somewhat “directly” in its “authentic” form. However, foreignisation is not unconditionally workable, given the constraints of the target language with its linguistic and cultural norms and conventions, which are directly related to the general acceptability of translations. For an eventual resolution of the age-old impasse of foreignisation versus domestication, I propose to introduce the concept of cultural diaspora, and suggest an alternative perception of translation activity, with a proper consideration of the historical and social circumstances of reception regarding translation and foreign otherness. Cultural diaspora in respect to translation means rethinking cultural identity and moving towards a diasporic register as a remedy for insufficient connections between the source and target texts by strategically relocating the cultural home of the target reader into a “third space”, which is supposed to be culturally neutral and thus provides a site for cultural hybridisation so as to avoid reducing the richness and complexity of the original in the created replica that represents not merely salient foreign features but also most of the essential qualities of the source text. Meanwhile, an otherwise utterly alien experience can be avoided, since the target reader will not be forced to abandon their homeland so as to avoid being estranged from their cultural tradition.