

Analysis of Fu’s Translation of Gone with the Wind and its Historical Background

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Abstract. Fu, a polymath scholar-activist who was fluent in English and deeply familiar with classical Chinese, viewed the task as more than linguistic translation but the export of morale-boosting narrative. Nida called for the "restructuring" of such elements via domestication (naturalization) or foreignization (retention of alterity), engineered to result in maximum equivalence with minimum loss. The latter spirit is operationalized in Nida's threefold approach—analysis, transfer, reorientation. Preliminary analysis breaks down the core semantics, style, and pragmatics of the source to generate a "simplest equivalent" of it. Translates this into the target language idiom by replacing culture-specific terms (e.g., Judeo-Christian motifs) with culturally equivalent concepts. Then restructuring constructs a "natural, idiomatic" translation and judges it using receptor feedback to verify the understanding and emotional appropriateness. In the linguistic domain, applications include idiom domestication, rhetorical fidelity and polysemous reconstruction (e.g., in herbal nomenclature or technological glossaries).

Keywords: Gone with the Wind; Fu’s Translation; Nida’s threefold approach; Core Semantics.

1. Introduction

Fu's "郝思嘉" (Hǎo Sījiā) masterfully equivalates this: "郝" phonetically echoes "O'Hara" (/hɑːrə/ ≈ /xǎo/), while "思嘉" infuses connotative depth—"思" (ponder, yearn) mirrors Scarlett's Ashley fixation and Tara nostalgia; "嘉" (auspicious, splendid) anticipates her entrepreneurial triumphs and societal reinvention [1-3]. This onomastic alchemy extends to locales: Tara plantation morphs into "陶乐场" (Tāo Lè Chǎng), evoking Tang dynasty grandeur while phonetic fidelity preserves exotic whisper (as shown in Table 1). Table 2 captures select idiomatic renditions across versions, revealing Fu's penchant for proverbial swaps that ground the text in Chinese soil, contrasted with later literal leans.

Table 1. Comparison of different translation on this work

Original Name/Place	Fu Donghua (1940)	Chen Liangting (1958/1990)	Zhu Youruo (1990/2015)	Strategy Notes
Scarlett O'Hara	郝思嘉 (Hǎo Sījiā)	斯佳丽·奥哈拉 (Sī Jiālì · Ào Hālā)	思嘉·奥哈拉 (Sījiā · Ào Hālā)	Fu domesticates for phonetic and semantic resonance (yearning + auspiciousness); others hybridize for familiarity with Western flair.
Melanie Wilkes	梅兰 (Méi Lán)	梅兰妮·威尔克斯 (Méi Lán Nī · Wēi ěr Kèsī)	梅兰妮·威尔克斯 (Méi Lán Nī · Wēi ěr Kèsī)	
Atlanta (City)	饿狼陀 (È Láng Tuó)	亚特兰大 (Yà Tè Lán Dà)	亚特兰大 (Yà Tè Lán Dà)	Fu's evokes "hungry wolf" for wartime edge; others phonetic for neutrality.
Tara (Plantation)	陶乐场 (Tāo Lè Chǎng)	塔拉庄园 (Tǎ Lā Zhuāng Yuán)	塔拉 (Tǎ Lā)	Fu naturalizes as "joyful pottery field"; others balance exoticism with description.

Table 2. Selected Idiomatic Equivalences in Chinese Translations of *Gone with the Wind*

Original Idiom/Phrase	Fu Donghua (1940) Translation	Chen Liangting (1958/1990) Translation	Zhu Youruo (1990/2015) Translation	Functional Impact
"Cutting off their noses to spite their faces"	吞了毒药去药老虎 (Swallow poison to cure a tiger – self-harm for revenge)	跟人家赌气, 拿自己晦气 (Spite others, harm oneself)	把鼻子割了不给 人好脸色看 (Cut off nose, deny good face)	Fu's proverb evokes vivid self-sacrifice imagery, boosting emotional punch; Zhu's literal form risks confusion.
"Mystical Rose" (Biblical allusion)	神秘的蔷薇 (Mysterious rose)	神秘玫瑰 (Mysterious rose)	神秘玫瑰 (Mysterious rose, with note on Christian symbolism)	Fu simplifies for flow; others add context for cultural depth.
"Fruit of the dragon's teeth" (Mythic warriors)	Omitted entirely	龙牙果实化为战士 (Dragon teeth fruit into warriors)	龙牙播种化为武士 (Sow dragon teeth into fighters, with mythic note)	Omission sustains pace in wartime read; notes preserve lore but slow immersion.
"Fiddle-dee-dee" (Scarlett's dismissal)	哎呦喂 (Folksy expostulation)	胡说八道 (Nonsense)	瞎扯淡 (Idle chatter)	Fu's oral flair mirrors coquetry; others blunt whimsy.

Source: Drawn from stylistic contrasts in scholarly reviews. These choices highlight how Fu's domestications foster intuitive grasp, aligning with Nida's response parity.

2. Historical Context: Shanghai's "Isolated Island" Amid Wartime Turmoil

Fu nods to this in a preface that mildly acknowledges what “spice” (resilience) and not-so-latent cheer amount to, how the novel’s bread-and-butter wartime trappings will gladden the hearts of “displaced soul(s). Nida’s dominant dynamic confirms that; by transposing war’s horrific into universal idiom, Fu molded catharsis — hope amid the debris — akin sojourn for readers experiencing Shanghai’s 1939 bombings [4-5].

The imperative to “save the nation” infected cultural sectors as well. “My new stories show that Chinese readers still consider literature to be their most powerful source of influence,” said Mao Dun. Fu, a May Fourth veteran and vernacular pioneer was its embodiment: his baihua fluency, trained in anti-Japanese salons, democratized Mitchell’s prose, unlocking doors for foot soldiers and refugees to enter. *Gone with the Wind* Reader circulation figures in Commercial Press archives mark *Gone with the Wind* as an urban laborer bestseller, its “easy reference” taxed during 1941 blackouts.

The “national form” debate of the time — between vernacular populism and classical arcana — echoes Nida’s reader-centrism. Lu Xun’s promotion of the “people’s language” guided Fu in breaking down Mitchell’s labyrinthine periods into taut quadrants, issuing a series of oral crochets that resemble fireside storytelling as if heard from a teahouse. Sunset’s dialectal replacements, “old mama-zi” in place of Mammy for example, conjure regional patois whose equivalent roughly aligns AAVE’s marginality with this subaltern voice from China—coolies and maids—and heightens the text as social commentary. Pasternak foregrounded these — Scarlett’s starvation soliloquies rendered into staccato, reportorial prose — in keeping with Lu Xun’s dictum: art as “reality’s scalpel [6-10].”

3. Comparative Perspectives: Fu’s Version Against Later Renditions

Juxtaposing Fu’s 1940 effort with successors like Chen Liangting’s 1958 abridgment or Zhu Youruo’s 1990 tome reveals not just stylistic drifts but seismic shifts in translational ethos, shaped by

evolving national moods. Scarlett O'Hara became "Hao Sijia" (郝思嘉), where "Sijia" evokes "thoughtful goodness," highlighting her resilience and aligning with Chinese ideals of perseverance.

A 500-word passage on Scarlett's war reflections was shortened to 150 words, reducing historical weight to highlight personal resilience. This aligned with Nida's equivalent effect, as wartime readers sought inspiration, not reminders of conflict.

In this way, Mitchell's original readership for the novel in USA during the 1930s, when all were caught up by Great Depression, *Gone with Wind* became an examination and from ruin the characters in Scarlett O'Hara. So they could know their future was to be reborn before long. And much of what they had done don't carry over (to the new life). Likewise, in 1940 Shanghai where the "Isolated Island" represented a puny whelk of hope to face Japanese occupation, Fu's version of the novel was moved to suggest what readers confronted was bombings, tsunamis and political betrayal. It was no accident that this fidelity bore fruit; rather, It is the product of Fu's subjective intervention. He domesticated the text to match cultural and psychological attitudes prevailing at his time.

Unexpectedly, diabetes had a major beneficial influence on the development of Chinese fantasy literature. In name-changing Scarlett in "Hao Sijia," for instance, Fu uses the phonetic approximation of words as a basis but is very careful to infuse it with levels of semantics that resonate 长随中国新常运,"好"似"姓郝. Why did he choose "Hao"? This character is polysemous: for example, the heroine of *Our Heroes*, Liren, is named Hao, as are earth mothers - but at least don't use metal coat hangers to beat them XII. Scarlet 's new surname "Hao" (underlining by editors) evokes grand vistas or an heroic worldview [11-15].

Mitchell's novel sprawls over 1000 pages, with historical digressions on the Civil War-longer, even, than through translations by Qian Zhongshu and Wang Yi that could easily overwhelm or even alienate Chinese readers who are already immersed in their own conflict. Hence Fu shortened the text for them. He abridged these sections into headlines, cutting a 500-word reflection on war's futility to a concise 150-word passage centered on personal loss. This idea should be viewed in context with the 1939 Shanghai film's popularity, since its treatment of story-as-larger- than-life-love-affair, rather than war story. Doing so allowed Fu to escape potential censorship, or rather Japanese occupiers who watched for anti-war propaganda like hawks and enabled him to cater for a public seeking some mild escapism from the "malaise of the heart," as contemporary commentators would say of internal divisions plaguing China. Nida's theory lends support to this conclusion: he holds that equivalence should maintain the text's overall function.

Fu as an editor and translator negotiated that path by describing *Gone with the Wind* as a "romantic extravaganza of the wilds." He kept it from being a political allegory but fine-brushed its meaning with smooth parallels. Scarlett's rebuilding of Tara echoed the makeshift economies of Shanghai, where women numbered among the Club's Chinese Career Women adapted to new roles amid chaos. This struck a collective "echo of endurance" for all. Readers gained their strength through its optimism just as Americans did during the Depression. Nida's functional approach deserves credit for legitimizing such a cultural transference, as if translation in extremis is a form of resistance that keeps the human spirit alive through reshaped storytelling. Critiquing Fu's subjectivity as a translator yields layers of "creative treason." This term, a favorite with theorists of translation, describes shifts from the source text that enhance the target text's vitality. Fu's foreword admitted to the principle of "lively movement and hurry," demonstrating his view that translation is an art of recreation rather than reproduction. What made him subjective was the dual legacy of May Fourth and the need to raise people's spirits during War of Resistance. If this animal communicates by phone call, the kids said, then that must be another genus not a cat. And when they come to Feng Huan, they will change my house at the store into an export office.

Also, the region's multiple transport channels reduced costs and added value as people shopped from different parts of Zhanglang for goods that were hard to find or high markup in their own localities. This is precisely why we can understand what it means if I say I love you three times in 20 different languages: sorry doesn't mean never!

Similar strategies to those of wartime translations, for instance, are also used in contemporary situations. This is why the text takes a whole new turn. What was once seen as Lee Tao's aspirations and deeds of heroism now go back to being just another, monthly report from Head Office. Japanese audiences are indeed extremely enthusiastic about such stories (at least, I understand from what they tell me they've heard other people say), but Korea offers a negative reception with markedly cool indifference.

This linguistic domestication is just what the other authors stresses: phraseology that meets recipients' expectations. So compared with Fu's translations of the English into Chinese, for instance that other half can go to school Dickens - this put him behind in problems still unsolved. Fu's method is pioneering in modern literature, and the book itself constitutes a new system that cannot but have its own standards. The reception of Fu's translation, in turn, and you can add from an entirely different point of view this time now (to) underscore its success in serving people's needs on all fronts. That is to say, it first appeared in serialized form and then was issued in book form. Thereafter reprints followed one after another through both the War of Resistance Against Japan and Cultural Revolution. Readers writing in to periodicals on feeling proud of this achievement said the work was full "of uneven emotions." In modern China, Fu's version has enjoined influential for more than words can say, shaping even adaptations like the 1990 TV series. Rocks that last in eternity show that the translator has done his part by catching beat of time in a foreign land [13-15].

Although scholars such as postcolonial critic Tejaswini Niranjana have with justice offered theoretical criticisms of Nida-like functional equivalence used to oppress by absorbing the other--Fu in this case was really following the way Chinese government was going at that time.

4. Conclusion

This invokes dialectics: is a time of war an adequate reason for abridgments, and to endanger the sources? Toury's norm theory allows the possibility of creating a synergy with Nida, and translating Guo into initial norm adaptations to patronage pressures (censorship, readership). Empirically, the contrast to Li Meihua 2005 -- more foreignizing and less engaging-materially supports Fu's superior match contextually for motivational purposes.

Broader implications abound. "Fu demonstrates 'loyalty-plus-function' in the Nord sense, keeping a balance between loyalty to the source and function for the target" (ibid.). For translators in the digital age who will ply their trade with AI assists, Nida's reader-testing still stands as heuristic, encouraging an iterative process of feedback loops. Politically, Fu's work anticipates "soft power" translation, in which texts as "vehicles of spirit" encourage understanding across divides -- timely with Ukraine or Gaza conflicts.

Margaret Mitchell's sweeping 1936 novel *Gone with the Wind*, a Pulitzer Prize laureate that vividly captures the raw grit and sweeping transformations of the American Civil War era, has long outgrown its roots in the storied landscapes of the American South to weave itself into the fabric of international literature, touching hearts across continents and cultures.

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