

A Socio-political Perspective on Lu Xun's Indirect Translation

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Lu Xun (1881-1936), hailed by Chairman Mao in 1940 as “the commander-in-chief of China’s cultural revolution, [who] was not only a great man of letters but a great thinker and revolutionary,” helped to revitalize the age-old tradition of indirect translation (ITr) in China. Against the background of his homeland being partitioned by Western powers from the Boxer Movement of 1900 onward, Lu Xun took the initiative with his brother Zhou Zuoren (1885-1967) in introducing literature of the oppressed and disenfranchised nations through indirect translation from German and English. Their two volumes of translation under the title of *A Collection of Foreign Short Stories*, first published in Tokyo, Japan in 1909, and then enlarged, revised and reprinted in Shanghai in 1921, include thirty-seven stories by writers from Poland, Bosnia, Finland, Greece, and Denmark, as well as from Russia, Britain, France, and USA.

Lu Xun's work demonstrates various socio-political dimensions of ITr that deserve special attention within the current neo/post-colonial context. From Bourdieu's sociological (especially his theory of capital and habitus) and postcolonial (particularly the theory of power structure and power play) perspectives, this presentation examines Lu Xun's translational intention, choice of source texts, target language employed, and methods of translation adopted, as well as circulation of and public response to his translations. It attempts to bring to light various forms of colonial power struggle behind Lu Xun's translations that speak to the socio-political nature, patterns and consequences of ITr in China.