

The Reduction of Ethnicity in Myths from the Perspective of Translator's Subjectivity

-- A Case Study of *The Celtic Twilight*

Zhenyu Li

Minzu University of China, China

Abstract: As a treasure of human civilization, myths carry the historical and cultural essence of various ethnic groups. The accurate communication of their ethnicity is particularly important in cross-cultural communication. This study focuses on the challenge in conveying ethnicity elements in the translation of myths, taking William Butler Yeats' book *The Celtic Twilight* as an example, and discusses in depth the important role of translator's subjectivity in the translation process. The study analyses two translation versions, and explores different translators' subjectivity in the translation of myths and its impact on the reduction of ethnicity. The study hypothesizes that the translator's cultural cognition, translation strategies and reader considerations will affect the way he or she handles the culture-loaded words, which in turn affects the effect of the reduction of ethnicity. It is shown that both translators mainly adopt alienation to translate culture-loaded words, but there are differences in their specific strategies. On the whole, both versions are good applications of the translator's subjectivity theory. The culture-loaded words are translated faithfully and accurately, which to a certain extent restore the ethnicity in the myths, and reflect the inheritance of the cultural values of the originals.

Keywords: Translator's subjectivity, myths, ethnicity, Ireland, literature translation.

1. Introduction

Myth, as a treasure of early human civilization, is not only a symbol of the history and culture of each nation, but also a concentrated manifestation of national spirit and wisdom. Since it is the product of the synthesis of various elements of human culture under different historical and cultural conditions, there are many scholars who define it as "a cultural phenomenon" (Zhang Wen'an, 2007, 13-20). How to effectively pass on and promote the myths of various ethnic groups has become an urgent problem. As a bridge of cross-cultural communication, it is especially important for translators to grasp and restore the ethnicity of myths in the process of translation. This study adopts textual analysis and comparative methods to explore the specific performance of translator's subjectivity in myth translation and its influence on the reduction of ethnicity through the comparative analysis of different Chinese translations of *The Celtic Twilight*.

Specifically, from the perspective of translator's subjectivity, this study aims to explore the reduction of ethnicity in myths by taking William Butler Yeats' work *The Celtic Twilight* as an example. The study hypothesizes that the way translators convey culture-loaded words varies according to their knowledge of the target culture, their choice of translation strategies, and their consideration of the readers, which in turn has a significant impact on the reduction of ethnicity in myths.

2. Translator's Reproduction and the Reconstruction of Ethnicity in Myths

The ethnicity of literary works stem from the author's deep immersion in a particular ethnic culture, which is reflected in the language style, narrative structure, symbolic images and ideological connotation. The uniqueness of ethnic culture gives the work distinctive regional color and deep cultural

heritage, making it an important carrier of national culture. A truly general tolerance will most certainly be reached if we respect the particular characteristics (Lefevere, 1992: 24). Therefore, it is vital to preserve and reflect the ethnicity in the work.

Myth, as a special genre in literature, carries the ancient cultural memory of the nation and serves as the historical textbook and root genealogy of the nation. It is the source of the ethnic culture and the living water of contemporary cultural creation (Wang Xianzhao, 2014: 24). However, in the translation of mythological works, the transmission of ethnicity faces many challenges such as lack of background knowledge and insensitivity to cultural knowledge, which often results in the weakening or even loss of ethnicity.

The reproduction ethnicity in mythological translation is crucial to the accurate communication of the original culture and to the target culture's acceptance and understanding of the original culture. Samuel R. Clarke, a British missionary, recorded and translated the Miao myths *Deluge* and *Creation* in Guiyang. Clarke fully preserved the Miao ethnicity in translations such as "sun-hat" and "dust-pan".

Clark's translations truly reflected the Miao ancestors' reliance on and reverence for the natural world. They were greatly admired by the Miao people and later generations, and also paved the way for Western missionaries to translate and disseminate Biblical culture in the Miao region afterwards. However, in order to achieve missionary purposes, Clark consciously linked Miao myths with the contents of the Bible (Wu Longxuan and Li Bingze, 2005:142) and made a great deal of Christian ideology and culture widely spread among Miao people.

Similarly, Wang Huansheng has specialized in ancient Greek, and his translation of Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* is regarded as a classic. His translations of the names of people, places, and gods in ancient Greek mythology were accurately transliterated both phonetically and meaningfully

to avoid cultural misunderstandings caused by improper translations. In addition, he added detailed notes and explanations on the customs, rituals and festivals in the epic, so that Chinese readers can better understand the national cultural connotations of the original.

From this, it is seen that the translator is the subject of translation and participates in the construction of ethnic culture (Zha Jianming and Tian Yu, 2003:21). As Xu Jun(2003:10) stated, the translator present his/her subjectivity in a way which “a conscious personality consciousness is embodied by the translator and a creative consciousness in the process of translation. The presence or absence, strength or weakness of this subject consciousness directly affects the whole translation process and influences the final result of translation, i.e. the value of the translated text”. Tu Guoyuan(2003:12) emphasizes that the translator, under the influence of the external environment and his own field of vision, demonstrates autonomy, mobility, purposefulness and creativity in order to satisfy the cultural needs of the translated language, which reflects the artistic personality self-consciousness and cultural aesthetic creativity. Later, with the deepening of research, scholars such as Liu Yunhong(2024:73) believes that “translation is a kind of creative activity characterized by the presence of the subject, and the subjectivity of the translator is the core driving force of translation generation . The translator’s subjectivity and creativity in translation activities are worth exploring in early or recent studies.

In order to reshape the ethnicity in myths, the translator should consciously assume the triple identity of receiver, interpreter, and creator.As a receiver, the translator needs to study and understand the ethnic cultural background of the original text, including history, religion, customs, values, etc., in order to ensure an accurate interpretation of the original text. As an interpreter, the translator needs to utilize his or her linguistic ability and cultural literacy to explain the national elements in the original text to the target language readers in an appropriate way, so as to promote cultural exchange and understanding. As a creator, the translator needs to maintain the spirit of the original text, creatively use the cultural expression means of the target language, so that the translated work is not only faithful to the original text, but also in line with the aesthetic habits and cultural acceptability of the target language readers.

Translation is “a dynamic development process characterized by generative nature”(Liu Yunhong, 2017:617). In this process, the translator not only needs to convert the language, but also needs to disseminate the culture and construct the restoration of its back. Only when the translators appropriately balances these three identities can they give full play to the translator’s subjectivity in the translation and reconstruct the ethnicity in the myth.

3. Text Analysis and Discussion

This study takes William Butler Yeats's work *The Celtic Twilight* as an example to compare the translation strategies of different translations and further analyze the significance of culture-loaded words in translation to restore the ethnicity of myths.

3.1. Research Objects and Research Questions

The Celtic Twilight is a collection of 39,356 words of prose written by William Butler Yeats, blending Irish folklore and literary imagination in the style of poetic prose. Yeats, a poet

with strong nationalist ideals, led the Irish Renaissance movement and dedicated himself to the restoration and promotion of Irish culture and tradition. He declared, “There is no great literature without nationality, no great nationality without literature” (Yeats, Letters to the New Island 30)

The Celtic Twilight is one of the manifestations of Yeats' commitment to the Irish literary revival movement. The book is a collection of myths and legends from the Irish coastal regions of Sligo and Galway. Yeats went to the villages in the coastal region of northwestern Ireland and made friends with all sorts of local people. He organized these conversations and notes, and then incorporated his own unique feelings and ideas into this collection published in 1893. As a result, the work is full of the characters, music culture, and architectural features of Irish mythology and literature. It is an important vehicle for the author to construct a sense of identity with Irish folk culture. By emphasizing the traditional culture of his people, Yeats tried to evoke a sense of national identity and unite the Irish nation.

In the process of translating this book, it is extremely challenging to restore its deep ethnicity, especially to accurately translate the culture-loaded words. Xu Guozhang (1988: 21) defines culture-loaded words, pointing out that such words are forms of expression with unique cultural connotations in a language. They reflect the unique ways of activities of a particular ethnic group that have been gradually accumulated over the course of a long period of history and are distinct from those of other ethnic groups. The culture-loaded words in ethnic myths are the concentrated manifestation of their culture and the most central form of expression. Therefore, the accuracy of translations of culture-loaded words directly affects the degree of restoration of ethnicity in myths.

At present, Yin Gao's translation (2007) and Tian Weihua's translation (2011) are widely popular in China, which have high representativeness and research value. This study takes Yin and Tian's translations as the main objects of research, and explores the issue that accurate translation of culture-loaded words helps to restore ethnicity in myths, with a view to obtaining appropriate translation strategies or means to convey ethnicity in myths.

3.2. Representation of Irish Culture in Translations

Nida has categorized culture into five kinds: ecological culture, linguistic culture, religious culture, material culture and social culture (Nida, 1945:194-208). Based on Nida's classification, this paper extracts the culture-loaded words in *The Celtic Twilight*, compares Yin's translation and Tian's translation, and analyzes the translation strategies and translation effects of the two.

3.2.1. Ecological Culture and Translation

Ecological culture-loaded words refer to the phrases and idioms that a certain ethnic or cultural group names and uses for things and concepts with biological attributes and natural elements in the process of living with nature (管邦迪, 向明友 2024:95-100). *The Celtic Twilight* contains a wide range of eco-cultural words, showing flora and fauna that are well adapted to meadow, peat bog and coastal ecosystems. It also truly reflects the mountainous nature of the north-western part of Ireland, with its tortuous coastline and humid and rainy climate.

(1) Headland

ST: There is no more ready shortcut to the dim kingdom than this ploverly **headland**.

(Yeats: 149)

TT1: 而且, 也再没有哪个地方, 能比这个鸟头形状的海岬更容易充当通往幽冥王国的捷径了。

(殷杲, 2007: 160)

TT2: 这块鸟头形状的土地是通往幽冥王国的捷径, 除此之外别无另处。

(田伟华, 2011: 193)

A headland is an angular point of land protruding seaward, often part of a mountainous area that has been submerged by the sea or has not yet been eroded by the sea. Headlands are often formed where there is a sharp change in the direction of the coast, mostly across the mouth of estuaries and bays, and develop from every headland in a harbor. The backward curving hooks of headlands are often formed by waves refracting around the end of the headland. Ireland was subjected to igneous intrusion in the Cambrian or Ordovician period, and many headlands were formed, such as Cape Donpatrick, Giant's Causeway etc. (T.W. Freeman, 1972: 43). Yin Gao's translation of "headland" as "海岬" more accurately conveys its meaning as the tip of the land that reaches into the sea, and echoes Ireland's unique geomorphological features. However, Tian Weihua's translation of "headland" as "土地" refers to the land part of the earth's surface and all the environmental elements within a certain range of space above and below it, which is wider in scope than cape. Tian's translation blurs the unique geographic features of the Irish cape.

(2) Ash-trees

ST: There is the old square castle, Ballylee, inhabited by a farmer and his wife, and a cottage where their daughter and their son-in-law live, and a little mill with an old miller, and old **ash-trees** throwing green shadows upon a little river and great stepping-stones.

(Yeats, 1893: 88)

TT1: 那里有座古老的巴里利方堡, 一个农夫和他老婆住在里面, 他们的女儿和女婿住在另一间小屋里, 附近还有个磨坊, 里面住着老磨坊主, 许多古老的柳树将浓绿色树荫投在小河和宽大的台阶上。

(殷杲, 2007: 32)

TT2: 那里还有一座巴里郦方形古堡, 里面住着一位农夫和他的妻子, 另外的一座小房子里住着他们的女儿和女婿, 还有一座小磨坊, 里面住着一位老磨坊主, 古老的白蜡树在一条小河和大石阶上投下了绿色的阴影。

(田伟华, 2011: 54)

Ash tree belongs to the genus *Fraxinus* genus of the family Oleaceae, which is widely distributed in Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America (Khela, S., and S. Oldfield, 2018). Ash is the most common species of tree in Irish hedgerows, and it has a rich symbolic meaning in Irish culture. In Celtic mythology, Ash symbolizes strength, resilience, and regeneration; in Irish spirituality, it is believed to be a bridge which has the magical power to bestow blessings and eliminate calamities between the heavenly realm and the earthly realm (Jiang, D. Yuan, 2008: 90). In Tian's translation, "ash tree" is translated as "白蜡树", the Asian subclass of *Fraxinus* (Flora of China, 1993). However, Yin's translation as

"柳树" is inappropriate because it belongs to a completely different category from the above two. In order to more accurately recreate the native flora of Ireland, translators can refer to the Latin scientific name of Ash tree "*Fraxinus excelsior*", and the Chinese Botanical Library's translation "欧栎".

3.2.2. Linguistic Culture and Translation

Linguistic culture-loaded words reflect the distinctive features of a language in a particular culture and language system, including phonetics, vocabulary, grammar and rhetoric, etc. They are a kind of words in the language system that best reflect its cultural characteristics, such as harmonies, homophones, polysemous words, superlatives, idioms, fables, allusions, proverbs, slang, metaphors, etc. They are also used in the language system as the basis for the language's cultural characteristics. (Guan Bangdi and Xiang Mingyou, 2024:95-100)

The Celtic Twilight flexibly utilizes phonetics, semantics, pragmatics and other linguist tools, and preserves the ancient Celtic chanting tradition that is rich in rhythm, symbols, personae, and dialogues, which creates a vivid and mysterious mythological world for the readers.

(1) Hy Brazel

ST: Some few seasons ago a fisherman saw, far on the horizon, renowned **Hy Brazel**, where he who touches shall find no more labour or care, nor cynic laughter, but shall go walking about under shadiest boscage, and enjoy the conversation of Cuchullin and his heroes.

(Yeats, 1893: 155,156)

TT1: 几年以前, 有个渔夫看到远方的地平线上冒出大名鼎鼎的海·布拉泽尔*, 那里没有劳动或烦恼, 也不再有嘲讽的笑声, 在那里, 人们可以在最浓密的树丛中徘徊, 听库楚兰和他的英雄们交谈。

传说中坐落在爱尔兰西面大海中的一个神秘岛屿, 据说它平时无影无踪, 但每隔许多年会出现一次。——译注

(殷杲, 2007: 169)

TT2: 几年前, 一位渔人在远方的地平线上看见了著名的海布雷泽尔岛, 这里的人们没有苦劳和担忧, 没有嘲讽的笑声, 却能在成荫的树丛里, 听库楚兰和他的英雄们交谈。

(田伟华, 2011: 196)

Hy Brazel takes its name from the High King Breasal of ancient Irish history, meaning "high king of the world". Stories of this mysterious island have been circulating in Europe since it first appeared on ancient maps in 1325 (Morse, J., 2020). Legend had it that Hy Brazel is an island shrouded in magic that only appeared briefly off the coast of Ireland every seven years, but even then it was difficult for people to get close to it (Higginson, T. W., 2016).

According to the legend, Hy Brazel is a place full of wonders, where one can talk to mythological heroes such as Cuchulain and his companions. There is no more labor, exhaustion and sorrow (France John, 2017). In addition, the island has been associated with Atlantis, symbolizing lost civilizations and mysterious sea legends (France John, 2017). Both translators use phonetic translations, but Yin follows the structure of Hy Brazel, while Tian translates Hy Brazel as "海布雷泽尔". Besides, Yin's translation adds an additional paratextual explanation, using a phonetic translation with a

note.

Hy Brazel is an important imagery in Irish myths and legends, and should be annotated with background information.

(2) By the cross of Jesus

ST: A man was once heard complaining, “By the cross of Jesus! how shall I go?”

(Yeats, 1893: 25)

TT1: 以前曾有人抱怨, “上帝啊! 我该怎么走呢?”

(殷杲, 2007: 20)

TT2: 有次一个人抱怨道, “天老爷, 我怎么走才好呢?”

(田伟华, 2011: 37)

For Christianity, God is an absolutely universal, omniscient and omnipotent being. For believers, in desperate situations, it is easy to pray to God to show them the way. However, “天老爷” is not a definite reference to the Christian “God”. In classical Chinese literature, there are references to the “天老爷”, such as “Even the maids say, “连丫头们都说: “天老爷有眼, 仔细雷要紧!” Here, the “Master of Heaven” is the deity who rules everything in the sky and is the embodiment of justice, fairness and goodness. For example, in *Dou'E's Tragedy*, Dou'E has scolded “地也, 你不分好歹何为地。天也, 你错勘贤愚枉做天!”

God in the Catholic faith is a triune God including the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit (Cooper, Adam, 2014). For believers, God is the source of their spiritual support and guidance. In the face of difficulties, challenges and dilemmas, believers can gain strength and courage through faith in God. It is through this self-talking exclamation that Yeats demonstrated that belief in God was equally widely shared among the Celts. In contrast, Tian Weihua's “天老爷” fails to accurately convey the Catholic character of the language. In contrast, Yin Gao's “上帝啊” better reflects Celtic belief in the Almighty.

(3) Sidhe

ST: When you are walking in the valley picking nuts and blackberries, there is music of the birds in it and music of the Sidhe.

(Yeats: 40)

TT1: 要是你在山谷里摘坚果和黑莓,
会听到鸟儿歌唱, 还有仙乐盈耳。

(殷杲, 2007: 38)

TT2: 当你在山谷中漫步,
摘取坚果和黑莓, 会听到鸟儿和希神的歌声。

(田伟华, 2011: 57)

“Sidhe” is an Irish folklore image derived from the Irish. In Irish folklore, Sidhe refers to a Fairy Mound, a place inhabited by the inhabitants of the otherworld or the remnants or descendants of the ancient Tuatha Dé Danann (Monaghan, 2004). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Irish revivalists borrowed the Sidhe legend to give Ireland a separate national identity (Purkiss, 2000: 294). In this context, “Sidhe” is paired with “music”, referring to a supernatural being. However, Yin Gao's translation as “仙” is more often associated with concepts such as Taoism, cultivation, and immortality in Chinese culture, weakening the mystical image of “Sidhe” in Irish mythology. Tian Weihua chose the character “希” as part of the phonetic translation, and restores the pronunciation of “Sidhe”. The phonetic strategy of Tian's

translation retains the Irish pronunciation, and effectively conveys the mythological connotation and cultural characteristics. However, the phonetic translation alone is not enough to fully convey the meaning of the Irish myths, and therefore “Sidhe” should be annotated and supplemented for different contexts in order to better convey the national characteristics of the language.

3.2.3. Religious Culture and Translation

Religious culture-loaded words generally relate to religious structures, religious relations, religious norms, religious phenomena, etc. (Guan Bangdi and Xiang Mingyou, 2024: 95-100). *The Celtic Twilight* has integrated elements of Catholicism and Druidism, including religious places, people, characteristic cultural vocabulary, etc., which reflects both the Irish people's devout belief in God and their reverence for nature and human beings.

Ireland is a traditionally Catholic country. Catholicism has occupied an extraordinary political position since Ireland's departure from British colonial rule. Catholic teachings have been written into the law and the constitution and have become the code of conduct for Irish life (Sui Qingqing, 2016). While Catholicism, as one of the three branches of Christianity, also inherited the core beliefs of Christianity: belief in God, fear of hell, and devotional prayers, which was richly reflected in Yeats' works.

The Celtic beliefs of the pre-Christian era were called “Druidism”. (Ye Shuxian, 2003) The flourishing of Catholicism in Ireland did not lead to the disappearance of the ancient Druidic beliefs. The Celts worshiped all natural things such as mountains and lakes, and believed in the transmigration of souls. This belief had a profound effect on Yeats's work, as seen in *Celtic Twilight*.

(1) The Darkness

ST: You will make no terms with the spirits of fire and earth and air and water. You have made **the Darkness** your enemy. We exchange civilities with the world beyond.

(Yeats, 1893: 182)

TT1: 你们永远不会和火、土、空气和水的精灵们达成协议。你们已经令**黑暗**成为你们的敌人。而我们——我们却能够和另一个世界彼此以礼相待。

(殷杲, 2007: 196)

TT2: 你们不与火、土、气、水的精灵妥协, 将**幽冥王国**视作敌人。我们——我们却同另一个世界礼尚往来。

(田伟华, 2011: 229)

In the Bible, Acts 26:18, it is described as a realm under the power of Satan, filled with sinners awaiting salvation: “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” In the Druidic worldview, death is not the end, but the entrance to “Elysium”, which is known to the Celts as “the land of immortality” (叶舒宪, 2003). One of the core doctrines of Druidism is the reincarnation of the soul, which advocates the immortality of the soul and its reincarnation in different bodies (Dirk Schuster, 2021: 641). Druidic priests communicated with the underworld through rituals and divination to gain power to protect or punish. Through its depiction of the darkness, Druidism helped the Celts understand and accept death while holding out hope for the world after death. From the words “We exchange civilities with the world beyond”, it can be seen that Yeats expressed his longing and respect for “the

Darkness”, rather than mere fear and loathing. In Chinese culture, “幽冥” as the boundary between life and death, is both the end of life and the beginning of a new life. Thus, Tian Weihua’s translation as“幽冥王国” better preserves the religious characteristics of the Irish nation - both reverence and longing; while Yin Gao’s “黑暗” focuses too much on its negative connotations.

(2) Red-hot

ST: But the edges were not trimmed with box, but with **red-hot** metal, And inside the wall there were cross-walks, and I'm not sure what there was to the right, but to the left there were five great furnaces, and they full of souls kept therewith great chains.

(Yeats, 1893: 77)

TT1: 只是，它周围不是围栏，而是**火红**的金属墙。墙里面都是交叉的小路，我不知道右边有什么，但我看到左边有五个大炉子，装满拴在大铁链上的灵魂。

(殷杲, 2007: 77)

TT2: 不过，地狱的四周不是围栏，而是**烧得发红**的金属墙。墙内都是纵横交错的小路，我不知道右边是什么，但左边有五个锅炉，里面尽是拴着铁链的灵魂。

(田伟华, 2011: 96)

The traditional Christian concept of hell is mainly derived from the narratives in the *New Testament* and the *Book of Revelation*. For example, Mark 9:43-50 describes the hell as “a bottomless pit of darkness, where immortal worms and unquenchable fire burn, so that people will be tormented day and night for all eternity” (Liang Gong, 2001: 108). The fire of hell symbolizes extreme pain and suffering, and is an eternal punishment for sinners. However, “火红” refers more to a color as bright and vivid as fire, and is often used as a color adjective or as a complementary phrase in a sentence. It not only visually conveys the reddish character of an object's appearance, but also often implies deeper emotional connotations such as enthusiasm, warmth, and vitality. The Yin translation translates “red-hot” as “火红”, reflecting only the color dimension of the meaning. While “烧得发红” in Tian Weihua's translation allows readers to intuitively feel the environmental characteristics of hell, restoring the feature of “fire”, and better restoring the connotation of the religious teachings of the Celtic nation.

(3) The last day

ST: He was fond too of telling how the Judge smiles at **the last day** alike when he rewards the good and condemns the lost to unceasing flames.

(Yeats, 1893: 5)

TT1: 芬林还喜欢讲，等到**末日**那天，审判者将给好人赏赐，把坏蛋丢进永不熄灭的烈火中煎熬，做这些的时候，他脸上将始终挂着笑容。

(殷杲, 2007: 2)

TT2: 他还热衷于讲述上帝在**最后的审判日**奖励善者和把恶者抛入永不熄灭的烈火中时如何露出同样的笑容。

(田伟华, 2011:10)

Judgment Day is the day when the world will end and the fate of mankind will be decided. The dead will rise from their graves, all people will be summoned to God's judgment seat, and each person's final destiny will be determined by his or her relationship with Jesus Christ. Judgment Day has the meanings of both “summary” and “final judgment” (Xue

Xiping, 2021). Compared to “审判日”, “末日” has a broader meaning and can summarize the day when everything ends or dies, such as the hypothetical state of mankind where all of humanity is in a state of distress due to the depletion of energy sources.(Liu Hai, 2010).

In the original text, Yeats also described the different judgments of God on the good and the evil when “the last day” arrives, and its religious meaning can be seen. It expresses Christianity's ultimate concern and expectation for the fate of all mankind. In contrast, Tian Weihua's treatment of the “审判日” is more specific, which immediately reminds the reader of the religious characteristics behind it, and is preferable.

3.2.4. Material Culture and Translation

Material culture-loaded word refers to the material products invented and created by human beings and the technology and tools they use. (Guan Bangdi and Xiang Mingyou, 2024:95-10) The material culture created by people in different regions for the sake of survival and living needs is different, and the culture it carries is also different. The Celtic Twilight contains a variety of material words, such as ritual objects, living objects, living places, etc., which fully reflect the penetration of Irish religious beliefs into their daily lives.

(1) The Lily and the Rose

ST: Perhaps he may have found and gathered, ragamuffin though he be, **the Lily** of High Truth, **the Rose** of Far-sought Beauty, for whose lack so many of the writers of Ireland, whether famous or forgotten, have been futile as the blown froth upon the shore.

(Yeats, 1893: 90)

TT1: 也许，他尽管只是个流浪儿，却找到了崇高真理的**百合**和绝世之美的**玫瑰**，把她们召唤到身边。因内缺少这两位佳人陪伴，爱尔兰那么多有名和无名的作家，都像拍岸浪花一样徒劳地虚度一生。

(殷杲, 2007: 87)

TT2: 也许，他只是个衣衫褴褛的流浪汉，却找到了至高真理之**玫瑰**和绝世美丽之**玫瑰**。爱尔兰的作家，或名闻天下，或默默无闻，因为缺少这两朵花的相伴，便只能像岸头的浪花一样，度过荒废的一生。

(田伟华, 2011: 111)

Lily's scientific name is *Lilium brownii* var. *viridulum* Baker, and it is a member of the lily family. Rose's scientific name is *Rosa rugosa*, which is a plant of the Rosaceae family. Symbolically, the lily is a symbol of holiness, sanctity, and beauty in Christianity. In Christian theology, the lily first became a symbol of Jesus Christ, and then of the Virgin Mary. In the original Yeats text, “Lily” is also associated with “High Truth”. The Irish, being Catholic, also regarded the lily as the embodiment of purity and holiness. However, the rose was regarded by Christians as a symbol of ultimate beauty, and in the mid-9th century, Walafrid Strabo, abbot of the cloister of Reichenau, praised the rose as “the flower of flowers,” and honored it for its beauty and fragrance. In the Middle Ages, lilies, roses, and other flowers were often placed on altars to highlight the prayers of the faithful for healing. (Susan, 2012)

Lilies and roses are not equivalent, either in terms of plant physiology or religious meaning. Tian Weihua's translation treats both equally as “玫瑰”, ignoring the differences between the two plants. However, Yin's version of “百合” and “玫瑰” better preserves the different religious meanings of

the two, and accurately restores the religious meanings of the two. The Yin version, on the other hand, better preserves the different religious meanings of the two plants and accurately restores the characteristics of the two plants as ritual objects.

(2) Chapel

ST: I know of an old man too, on the slopes of Ben Bulbin, who found the devil ringing a bell under his bed, and he went off and stole the **chapel** bell and rang him out.

(Yeats, 1893: 70)

TT1: 我还认识一个住在本布尔宾山坡上的老人。一天,他发现恶魔正在他床底下摇铃铛。他溜出门去,偷来教堂的钟,把魔鬼给轰了出来。

(殷杲, 2007: 69)

TT2: 我还认识一位住在本布尔山坡上的老人,他发现魔鬼在他的床底下正咬着一个铃铛,于是,他出门把教堂的钟偷回来,用钟声把魔鬼赶了出去。

(田伟华, 2011: 86)

A chapel is a room in a church or hospital, prison, etc., for Christians to pray and conduct religious services, providing a quiet sanctuary for prayers while giving the surroundings a unique sculptural feel (Will Crocker, Frank Methe, 2024). As a place of spiritual purification for believers, the chapel helps to free them from worldly distractions through prayer and meditation. Churches, on the other hand, are places where the three main schools of Christianity (Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy) hold mass and other religious activities, and can be categorized into cathedrals, churches, and chapels according to their rank. Yeats mentioned the importance of prayer for salvation many times in his book. For example, "Help the dead with prayer" (Yeats, 1893: 78), which reflects the Irish people's devotion to their faith and their belief in prayer. Churches are not equivalent to chapels, as they are larger and have a wider range of religious affairs. The two translators' translation of "chapel" as "教堂" is inaccurate, not only blurring the religious function of the chapel, but also failing to reflect the religious characteristics of Ireland. It is recommended to translate it as "礼拜堂".

3.2.5. Social Culture and Translation

Social culture-loaded words refer to cultural vocabulary involving social structure, social relations, social norms, social phenomena, etc., including political system, customs, family relations, social order, social titles, etc. (Guan Bangdi and Xiang Mingyou, 2024:95-100) The depiction of social characters, social customs and social life in *The Celtic Twilight* reflects the Irish Catholic society and its reservation and affirmation of Druidism's love of nature.

(1) Martyr

ST: He had not, however, MacConglinne's hatred of the Church and clergy, for when the fruit of his meditations did not ripen well, or when the crowd called for something more solid, he would recite or sing a metrical tale or ballad of saint or martyr or of Biblical adventure.

(Yeats, 1893: 81)

TT1: 不过,他并不像迈克科林那样憎恨教会和僧侣。当他的思索之果尚未成熟,或者当人们要求听更出色的东西时,他就会背诵或者演唱一首关于殉教者或者《圣经》历险记的带韵脚的故事或歌谣。

(殷杲, 2007: 80)

TT2: 不过,莫兰并不像麦孔格林那样憎恨教堂和教士,因为如果他的思想果实尚未熟透,或是人们希望听到更好的作品,那他便会背诵歌唱有关圣人或是殉难者的故

事诗和歌谣,或是念诵《圣经》上的历险。

(田伟华, 2011: 106)

The act of martyrdom is often seen as a religious act of violence (Catlos, 2020). In Chinese, a "殉教者" refers to a devout person who gives his or her life in order to uphold the faith. For example, in Carthage, many Christians flocked to the marketplace to buy sacrifices and quickly offered them as an expression of their loyalty to God (Zheng Kai, 2011). These martyrs guarded the glory of Jesus Christ with fearlessness and tenacity, demonstrating a noble model of Christian faith. However, the term "殉难者" has a broader meaning, not only referring to those who sacrificed their lives for religion, but also those who were killed in natural disasters and other accidents. For example, the victims of the Tangshan earthquake were also called martyrs. The memorializers form a sense of connection through the common experience of tragedy, thus relieving the loneliness of losing loved ones and soothing the trauma of the soul (Wang Xiaokui, 2008). From this, it can be seen that "殉教者" specifically refer to those who dedicate their lives to religious beliefs, which is usually associated with religious contexts such as Christianity and reflects the faithful beliefs of the followers; whereas "殉难者" are more likely to send their condolences to those who have been killed. Therefore, Tian's translation is too broad and fails to accurately reflect the religious connotations of Catholic martyrs, while Yin's translation of "殉教者" better preserves Irish society's respect for and belief in Christian culture.

(2) A man in a monk's habit/Sorcerers

ST: The two sorcerers now began to see black and white columns moving about the room, and finally a **man in a monk's habit**.

(Yeats, 1893: 66)

TT1: 两个术士现在开始看到黑色和白色的柱子在屋里移动,然后是一个穿了僧袍的男人。

(殷杲, 2007: 67)

TT2: 此时,两位巫师发现黑白的柱子正在屋里移动,最后出现了一个修士模样的男人。

(田伟华, 2011: 83)

Over the course of its development, Irish Christianity evolved a distinctive monastic model (Raftery, 2020: 139). There were two main stages in its monastic development. Monasteries were lived and inhabited by a number of monks whose lives and work were closely intertwined and centered around prayer, study, manual labor, missionary and charitable activities. In Chinese, "僧侣" are better known as converts to Buddhism. "僧袍" is a special garment worn by "僧侣" in different sects of Buddhism and in different regions of the world. However, it is undeniable that "僧袍" is an important symbol in Buddhist culture, which is to maintain the prosperity of the temple and to establish the identity of the monk. Therefore, the translation of "a man in a monk's habit" as "修士模样的男人" better reflects the distinctive Christian model of Irish society. -having a network of monasteries. Compared with the accurate expression in Tian Weihua's translation, "穿了僧袍的男人" in Yin Gao's version can hardly make the Irish ethnic character clear to the readers, and may even lead to the misunderstanding that this is a Buddhist belief.

Similarly, the choice between "术士" and "巫师" reflects the translator's understandings as below.

ST: The two **sorcerers** now began to see black and white columns moving about the room, and finally a man in a monk's habit.

(Yeats, 1893: 66)

TT1: 两个**术士**现在开始看到黑色和白色的柱子在屋里移动, 然后是一个穿了僧袍的男人。

(殷杲, 2007: 67)

TT2: 此时, 两位**巫师**发现黑白的柱子正在屋里移动, 最后出现了一个修士模样的男人。

(田伟华, 2011: 83)

In Celtic mythology, sorcerers often played the role of seers and prophets. At the heart of their beliefs was nature worship, in which they revered the power of nature and worshipped natural elements such as the sun, moon, stars, wind, fire, water, trees such as oaks and pines, and animals such as wolves, snakes, and eagles. However, sorcerers were more than just limited to the use of witchcraft. In addition to that, they also functioned as doctors, poets, priests, philosophers, judges, soothsayers, and wise advisors to the king (叶舒宪, 2003).

“术士” refer to Confucian scholars, Taoist priests, square priests, charlatans, magicians, etc. Nowadays, they are mostly referred to those who take divination and astrology as their occupations. They are commonly found in classical Chinese novels, mainly referring to those who practiced divination and astrology, but also including some feng shui masters. Their common characteristic is that they can foretell people's future and destiny through some kind of appearance (face, font, astrology, situation, etc.). Here, the meaning of Tian translation “巫师” is more comprehensive, and has the color of Celtic “Druidism”. However, Yin's translation of “术士” has a narrower scope in the cultural environment familiar to Chinese readers, and is often associated with Taoism and Buddhism, which does not accurately express the meaning of “sorcerers”.

4. Conclusion

This study deeply recognizes the translator's subjective position in translation activities and divides the responsibilities he or she assumes into the triple identities of receiver, interpreter and creator. Based on the two classic translations of *The Celtic Twilight* in China, this study compares their different treatments of culture-loaded words, explores the projection of the above three identities in specific translation practices. Thus, this study concludes that it is crucial for the translator to give full play to his or her subjective position and accurately recreate and reinvent the cultural connotations behind the culture-loaded words in order to restore the ethnicity in the myths.

The analysis reveals that the two translators mainly adopt the means of alienation for the translation of culture-loaded words. In the translation practice, Yin Gao has provided detailed and necessary explanations of the deeper cultural information, such as the background of the myths and the details of religious beliefs, through the strategy of adding translation notes. She effectively helped the Chinese readers to cross the barrier of cultural differences and to get close to the cultural kernel and spiritual essence of the original text. However, although Yin's translation is excellent in many aspects, it still lacks a precise understanding of certain aspects of Irish culture, resulting in a number of inaccuracies in the translation that need to be further discussed and improved. Compared with Yin Gao's translation, Tian Weihua's

translation is more inclined to adopt the phonetic translation method, focusing on the direct conveyance of literal meaning. For the culture-loaded words in the book, Tian's translation is mostly literal, which enables readers to have an intuitive and clear reading experience. However, due to the lack of corresponding explanatory notes, Tian's translation lacks the depth of ethnic cultural information and fails to fully show the rich cultural connotation and ethnic characteristics of the original text. On the whole, Yin Gao and Tian Weihua's translations show the translator's subjectivity to a great extent. They both translated the culture-loaded words more faithfully and accurately, restoring the ethnicity of the myths. Their translations respect and pass on the cultural values of the originals, which provide valuable references and lessons for the subsequent translation research and practice.

For translators, the correct handling of culture-loaded words should be based on fully assuming the triple identities of receiver, interpreter and creator - understanding the cultural background, choosing the appropriate translation strategy, and using creativity. Translators should be clear about their responsibilities as the subject of translation, actively fulfill their obligations. Besides, they should also fully consider the cultural differences between the source language and the target language, and strive to restore the ethnicity of the target language culture.

References

- [1] Catlos Brian A.. "CHRISTIAN MARTYRS UNDER ISLAM. RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND THE MAKING OF THE MUSLIM WORLD." *RELIGIOUS STUDIES REVIEW* 46.3(2020): 427-427.
- [2] Cooper, Adam G. *Naturally Human, Supernaturally God: Deification in Pre-Conciliar Catholicism*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014.
- [3] Chan Sin-wai, E. David. *Translations of the Bible In An Encyclopedia of Translation*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1995. 102-102.
- [4] Deirdre Raftery. "The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853–1973." London: Cambridge Press: 2020. *British Catholic History* :138-140.
- [5] Dirk Schuster. "RETHINKING THE ANCIENT DRUIDS: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE." By Miranda Aldhouse-Green. *New Approaches to Celtic Religion and Mythology*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2021. *Religious Studies Review*: 641-642.
- [6] Eugene Nida (1945) *Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation-Problems*, *WORD*, 1:2, 194-208.
- [7] Fimi, Dimitra. *The Creative Uses of Scholarly Knowledge in the Writing of J.R.R. Tolkien*. PhD. Dissertation. Cardiff University, 2005.
- [8] France John, (2017, December 31). *Some Reflections on Delius's Song "I-Brasil"*. *The Delius Society Journal*.
- [9] Higginson, T. W. (2016). *Tales of the enchanted islands of the Atlantic*. Simon and Schuster.
- [10] McKee, Eliza. *Non-Elite Clothing Acquisition in Post-Famine Ulster, c. 1850–1914*. PhD thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 2022.
- [11] Megan Khela, S., and S. Oldfield. 2018. "Fraxinus Excelsior." *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2018*. Accessed 14 December 2024
- [12] Monaghan, Patricia. *The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore*. New York, NY: Facts on File, 2004.

- [13] Morse, J. (2020, June 12). Hy-Brasil: the legendary phantom island of Ireland. *The Event Chronicle*.
- [14] Singh David Emmanuel. *Jesus and the Resurrection: Reflections of Christians from Islamic Contexts*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. 7-7.
- [15] Susan de Sola. "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose." *Ambit* 207 (2012): 82-82.
- [16] Lefevere, A. (Ed.). (1992). *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203417607>, 24-24.
- [17] Will Crocker, and Frank Methe. "The Chapel of St. Pius and the Prayer Garden, New Orleans, USA." *World Architecture Report* 39.01 (2024): 101-103.
- [18] Yeats, W. B. "The Celtic Twilight." 1981. Accessed [December 10, 2024]. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/30095144.pdf>.
- [19] Zha Mingjian, Tian Yu. "On the Subjectivity of Translators: From the Marginalization of Translators' Cultural Status." *Chinese Translators Journal*, 2003, (01): 21-26.
- [20] Freeman, T.W. *The Geography of Ireland*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1977.
- [21] Guan Bangdi and Xiang Mingyou. "A New Interpretation of Conceptual Integration in the Translation Process: Taking the English Translation of Culturally Loaded Words in 'Dream of the Red Chamber' as an Example." *Foreign Language Education*, 2024, 45(01): 95-100.
- [22] Jiang Dongyuan. "The Harmonious Unity of God, Man, and Nature: A Cultural Interpretation of Sacred Tree Worship." *Journal of Southwest Agricultural University (Social Science Edition)*, 2008, 6(1): 87-91.
- [23] Xu Guozhang. "Culturally Loaded Words and English Language Teaching." *Modern Foreign Languages*, 1980, (04): 21-27.
- [24] Liu Hai. "The Anxiety of Modernity and Cultural Reconstruction: From 'The Day After Tomorrow' to '2012'—The 'End of the World' Landscape in Movies." *Movie Literature*, 14 (2010): 33-36.
- [25] Liu Yunhong. "On the Generativity of Literary Translation." *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 2017, 49(04): 608-618+641.
- [26] Liu Yunhong. "Choice, Adaptation, Influence: Translator Subjectivity and Translation Criticism." *Foreign Language Teaching Theory and Practice*, 2012, (04): 48-54.
- [27] Liu Yunhong. "Consciousness, Position, and Action: An Examination of Liang Zongdai's Literary Translation from the Perspective of Translator Subjectivity." *Chinese Translators Journal*, 2024, 45(05): 73-80.
- [28] Sui Jingjing. "The 1996 Divorce Act and Its Reflection on the Relationship Between Church and State in Ireland." 2016. Beijing Foreign Studies University, MA thesis.
- [29] Tu Guoyuan, Zhu Xianlong. "Translator Subjectivity: A Hermeneutic Interpretation." *Chinese Translators Journal*, 2003, (06): 10-16.
- [30] W.B. Yeats; Translated by Tian Weihua. *The Celtic Twilight*. Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 2011.
- [31] W.B. Yeats; Translated by Yin Gao. *The Celtic Twilight*. Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2014.
- [32] Wang Xianzhao. "A Brief Discussion on the Ethnicity of Mythology." *Ethnic Literature Studies*, 2014, (06): 21-25.
- [33] Wang Xiaokui. "State Power, Funeral Customs, and Public Memory Space: Taking the Burial and Sacrifice of the Victims of the Tangshan Earthquake as an Example." *Folklore Studies*, 02 (2008): 5-25.
- [34] Wu Longxuan, Li Bingze. "A Review of 'Miao Ancient Songs and Miao Historical and Cultural Research'." *Journal of Minzu University of China*, 2005, (04): 142-144.
- [35] Xu Jun. "Creative Treason and the Establishment of Translator Subjectivity." *Chinese Translators Journal*, 2003, (01): 8-13.
- [36] Xue Xiping. "Messiah or Sovereign: On Agamben's Messianic Legal Thought." *Journal of Christian Culture*, 01 (2021): 21-58.
- [37] Ye Shuxian. "The 'Celtic Revival' in the Search for Western Cultural Roots." *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 01 (2003): 110-121.
- [38] Zhang Wen'an. "Revisiting the Definition of Mythology: Reflections on Basic Propositions of Mythology." *Social Science Review*, 2007, (01): 13-20.
- [39] Zheng Kai. "Early Christian Martyrs under Imperial Rule." *Journal of Hebei Polytechnic University (Social Science Edition)*, 11. 02 (2011): 214-216.