Translating as transculturating: a study of Dai Wangshu's translation of Lorca's poetry from an integrated sociological-cultural perspective
Sayols Lara, Jesus

Date of Award: 2015

General rights
Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication
ABSTRACT

Dai Wangshu 戴望舒 (1905-1950) was a prolific translator, working on both French and Hispanic literature. However, his translation work has often been considered relevant only to the extent that it helped him to develop a self-fashioned modernist style in his own poetic writing. Moreover, no systematic study has been conducted on his interest in Hispanic literature, particularly on his translation of Federico García Lorca’s poetry, a project to which he dedicated over half of his professional career but left unfinished. In addition, investigations on Dai have been generally approached from a narrow theoretical perspective that has risked overlooking the social factors that affected his literary activities. This thesis, therefore, aims to reveal the extent and the way in which translating Lorca into Chinese contributed to the establishment and consolidation of Dai’s position as a social agent in the field of literary production in China.

The methodology is constructed in an attempt to reconcile a sociological perspective on translation drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory with a more interpretive understanding of literary writing based on the notion of transculturation inherited from Latin American cultural studies. Examining Dai’s translation of Lorca’s poetry from this integrated perspective allows foregrounding the heterogeneity and multiplicity of Dai’s literary dispositions, at both a macroscopic and a microscopic level, without ignoring the social factors involved in his translation practice.

By embedding Lorca’s poetry in the field of literary production in China, Dai privileged a particular set of possibilities over the others, both literary and ideological at the same time. This kind of behaviour in Dai can be interpreted in terms of transculturation and observed in various textual domains, involving formal literary elements, discourses and worldviews. Furthermore, Dai’s project of translating Lorca’s poetry, which expanded over a three-decade period, allows establishing striking connections among literary journals and groups at various temporal and spatial locations, each of them associated with different and often competing views on translation, literature and politics. In sum, Dai’s translation project of Lorca played a pivotal role in establishing and consolidating Dai’s position in the literary scene to the extent that his status as a literary figure was more determined by his translation work than by his own poetic writing. Dai’s translation of Lorca involved not only transculturating a specific text-type, the romance, but also a particular view on the role of literature in society that, unexpectedly, positioned him as an author opportunistically committed to the Communist cause.

This investigation contributes new evidence that helps to question some long-standing assumptions both in studies on Dai and in reflections on the role of translation in Chinese literature. In addition, it allows arguing for a study of such a role at large without the need to subsume translation to any other sort of practice.
# Table of Contents

Declaration...................................................................................................................... i  
Abstract......................................................................................................................... iii  
Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................... v  
Table of Contents......................................................................................................... vii  
List of Tables ................................................................................................................ xi  
List of Figures .............................................................................................................. xii  

Chapter I – Introduction................................................................................................. 1  
1.1. Aim of Research........................................................................................ 1  
1.2. General View of Dai Wangshu and His Translational Activity ........ 2  
1.3. Research Questions ........................................................................... 7  
1.4. Scope of Research .......................................................................... 8  
1.5. Methodological Considerations ..................................................... 10  
1.6. Organization of the Thesis ............................................................. 14  

Chapter II – Review of Studies on Dai Wangshu and of Sociological Approaches  
to Literary Translation ................................................................................................ 16  
2.1. Studies on Dai and His Works.............................................................. 16  
2.2. Bourdieusian Approaches to the Study of Literary Translation Through  
History ............................................................................................................... 30  
2.2.1. The ‘Social’ and the ‘Cultural’ Factors: A Dynamic Relationship .... 31  
2.2.2. The Position of Bourdieu’s Sociology in Translation Studies........... 35  
2.2.3. Studies of Literary Translation Applying Bourdieu’s Sociology ...... 38  
2.3. Hockx’s Sociologically-Inspired Approach to the Study of Literary  
Activities in the Chinese Context ............................................................... 56  

Chapter III – Translating as Transculturating.............................................................. 60  
3.1. Transculturating as a Superordinate Conceptual Category................. 61  
3.1.2. The Origin of Transculturation .................................................... 61  
3.1.2. Interpretations of Transculturation .............................................. 65  
3.1.3. Transculturating as a Frame of Reference for Literary Translation  
Practices ............................................................................................................ 67
Chapter IV – Dai’s Translations of Lorca within Dai’s Translational Activity .......... 98

4.1. Federico García Lorca: the Poet and his Poetry ........................................ 99

4.2. The Pivotal Status of Dai’s Translational Activity in Dai’s Social Trajectory ...................................................................................................................... 106

4.2.1. The Importance of a Socio-biographical Knowledge of Dai .................. 106

4.2.2. Dai’s First Steps in the Literary Space ................................................. 108

4.2.3. Dai’s Literary Activities in Shanghai .................................................. 111

4.2.4. Dai’s Pilgrimage to Spain ................................................................... 116

4.3. Dai’s Translation Project of Lorca ............................................................ 126

4.3.1. Overview of Dai’s Translations of Spanish Modern Poetry .................. 126

4.3.2. A Description of Dai’s Translation Project of Lorca ............................. 133

4.4. Conclusion .............................................................................................. 139

Chapter V – Transculturating Lorca .......................................................................... 142

5.1. Dai the Transculturator ............................................................................ 142

5.1.1. Dai’s Polarization Strategy to Enter the Literary Field ......................... 143

5.1.2. Dai’s Impressionistic Remarks on Translation and Poetic Writing ....... 147

5.1.3. The Evolution of the Dispositions of Dai as a Transculturator ........... 151

5.2. The Transculturating Spaces of Dai’s Translations .................................. 154

5.2.1. The Inaugural Moment of Dai’s Translation Project of Lorca: Wenfan Xiaopin ......................................................................................................................... 154

5.2.2. The Expansion of Dai’s Translation Project of Lorca: from Xin Shi to Xingzuo ..................................................................................................................... 158