

Translation and Ideological Reformation:
Comparing Lu Xun and Venuti's Thinking on Translation

Xuefei Bai

This paper traces the thinking of Venuti and Lu Xun on translation, specifically the goals, effects, and the strategies that they adopted. As illuminated by their goals, we find the core element of their philosophy is that translation can bring about reformation when it takes as its priority the ideologically revolutionary effect it exerts on its readers. Once their strategies and goals are made clear, we understand why their translations tend to be ignored while their thinking has been much debated, hailed by some, criticized by others. It appears that the most direct connection that Lu Xun and Venuti share is their consensus on the adoption of foreignization in their translation. Yet, the two have different motives and goals as well as different political stances. Venuti criticizes the traditional practice of transparent and readable translation and passionately advocates for the visibility of the translators by the foreignizing strategy, while Lu Xun's translation activity was unconditionally devoted to his political engagement of fighting for the majority of the oppressed Chinese people.