

## ON CULTURAL LOSSES IN THE RECEPTIVE PROCESS OF THE CHINESE TRANSLATION OF YU.M. POLYAKOV'S NOVEL *I PLANNED AN ESCAPE*

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**Abstract:** The paper deals with the issue of cultural losses in the receptive process of Yu. M. Polyakov's novel *I Planned an Escape*. Cultural differences and language barriers complicate translator's work. Although there are many key cultural losses in the receptive process of the Chinese translation of the novel, the translation was generally successful. The reason for the success is the topical relevance, since great works of literature touch on issues that concern all of humanity, issues that know no boundaries. Secondly, the translator's skill in preserving the idiosyncrasies of the original author while referring the reader to parallels in his native culture, as brilliantly demonstrated by Zhang Jianhua's translation, can convey the hidden cultural meanings of a foreign-language work of fiction to the masses as much as possible. Thirdly, the Chinese reader, probably, is close to the type of hero who aspires to a happy and wealthy life, who manages to realize his desires, but never becomes truly happy. Everyone, even for a minute, if not for several minutes, has been or is becoming an Escapist.

**Keywords:** literary translation; receptive process; cultural losses; the hidden cultural meanings; idiosyncrasies

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## К ВОПРОСУ О КУЛЬТУРНЫХ ПОТЕРЯХ В РЕЦЕПТИВНОМ ПРОЦЕССЕ КИТАЙСКОГО ПЕРЕВОДА РОМАНА Ю.М. ПОЛЯКОВА «ЗАМЫСЛИЛ Я ПОБЕГ»

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**Аннотация:** В работе рассматривается вопрос о культурных потерях в рецептивном процессе романа Ю.М. Полякова «Замыслил я побег». Культурные различия и языковой барьер осложняют работу переводчика. Хотя



в рецептивном процессе китайского перевода романа происходит много ключевых культурных потерь, перевод в целом был удачным. Причиной успеха является злободневная актуальность, обусловленная тем, что великие произведения литературы затрагивают вопросы, волнующие все человечество, вопросы, которые не знают границ. Во-вторых, скрытые культурные смыслы художественного произведения на иностранном языке могут быть в максимально возможной мере донесены до массового читателя благодаря мастерству переводчика, сохраняющему идиостиль автора оригинала и при этом отсылающего читателя к аналогам в его родной культуре, что блистательно доказал перевод Чжан Цзяньхуа. В-третьих, китайскому читателю, вероятно, оказался близок тип героя, стремившегося к счастливой и богатой жизни, сумевшего реализовать свои желания, но так и не ставшего счастливым. Всякий хоть на минуту, если не на несколько минут, делался или делается Эскейпером.

**Ключевые слова:** художественный перевод; рецептивный процесс; культурные потери; скрытые культурные смыслы; идиостиль

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This article, based on the material of the novel *I Planned an Escape* and its Chinese translation, examines the issue of cultural losses in the receptive process of Chinese translation. From the point of view of receptive aesthetics, there is always a danger of readers misunderstanding literary works, and this cannot be avoided, especially when reading translations of literary works by authors belonging to distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Cultural differences and language barriers complicate the translator's task. But a professional translator does not always reproduce the very images of the original work, and sometimes recreates them, relying on the cultural and figurative models of his language.

Yu. M. Polyakov is known in China as “the last Soviet writer” [张建华 2020: 53]. Yuri Polyakov's novel *I Planned an Escape* was first published in Chinese in 2002. It was translated by the famous Russian scholar, professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University Zhang Jianhua and became the first novel by Yu. Polyakov translated into Chinese. The novel *I Planned an Escape* received the “Best Foreign Novel of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” award, established by the Chinese People's Literature Publishing House in 2001, and Yu. Polyakov became the first modern Russian writer, who received this award. The publication of this book also brought the author fame in China and directly contributed to the translation of several novels and stories, such as *Little Goat in Milk*, *The Mushroom King*, *One Hundred Days Before the Order*, *Apophyge*, *The Sky of the Fallen*, *Demtown*, etc.

Literary translation is a very difficult and responsible job. The translation of the novel *I Planned an Escape* was, of course, generally successful. The translation text retained the author's individual subtle humor, which aroused interest in this novel among Chinese readers. Most Chinese readers lack basic knowledge about Russian history, culture and literature, as well as the social situation, the mentality of the Russian people. Therefore, it is impossible for them to understand all the hidden quotes, myths, metaphors, allusions, and references to real cultural and historical figures that create a parody or ironic effect, which inevitably leads to cultural losses in the receptive process of Chinese translation of the novel.

In the translation community, there is a great debate about whether the translation of the title of a literary work should duplicate the original title of the work or should not be literal but take into account the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the audience's country; when translating the title of the novel *I Planned an Escape*, Zhang Jianhua chose the second approach. The epigraph with which the book begins: "I often thought about this terrible family romance... (Часто думал я об этом ужасном семейственном романе...)" immediately points to a quote from A. Pushkin, but the hidden quotation in the title "I Planned an Escape" is not known to Chinese readers. The title is literally translated into Chinese as *Hopeless Escape* (《无望的逃离》). Although the original title of the novel, which is significant, is a quotation from Pushkin's poem "It's time, my friend, it's time! My heart begs for rest..." («Пора, мой друг, пора! покоя сердце просит...»), Chinese readers unfamiliar with Russian literature cannot appreciate the cultural connotation of the quotation *I Planned an Escape*. On the contrary, the interpretation of the title proposed by the translator is more in line with the rules of naming works of fiction in Chinese, and more clearly indicates the final of the protagonist's escape, forming an echo of the novel's ending. The translator here has perfectly made up for the cultural loss with the equivalence of the exact expression in Chinese. A significant disadvantage is the absence of a comment explaining that *I Planned an Escape* expresses the subjective desire of the main character to escape from his current life and the characterization of the hero hidden by the author of the novel, nevertheless clear to the Russian reader ("tired slave"), since the Pushkin phrase used by Yu. Polyakov when creating the title of the novel sounds entirely like this: "I've long, a tired slave, planned out my desperate flight // Towards distant realms of labor and simplified delight" («Давно, усталый раб, замыслил я побег // В обитель дальнюю трудов и чистых нег»). Unfortunately, the Chinese translation has lost one of the components of meaning in this regard. The translation of *Hopeless Escape* shows mainly the objective

state and result of the escape without indicating the subjective desire to escape and the dissatisfaction of the main character with his current life.

According to A. Bolshakova, Yu. Polyakov “remains predominantly a realist, although not in the traditional sense of the word (остается по преимуществу реалистом, хотя и не в традиционном смысле слова)” [Bolshakova 2009]. The work of a distinguished writer must necessarily be rooted in the great traditions of their outstanding predecessors. Polyakov continues the traditions of N. Gogol (Н. Гоголь), M. Saltykov-Shchedrin (М. Салтыков-Щедрин), A. Chekhov (А. Чехов), M. Zoshchenko (М. Зощенко), M. Bulgakov (М. Булгаков) in Russian literature. Like his predecessors, Yu. Polyakov conveys with the help of proper names not only substantive-factual, but also subtextual information, which in turn contributes to the disclosure of the ideological and aesthetic content of the text, often exposing its hidden meanings. The main character’s name is Oleg Trudovich Bashmakov (Олег Трудович Башмаков). The author himself writes in his work: “*This strange patronymic inherited Oleg, of course, from his father — Trud (means labour) Valentinovich, who was born at the height of the domestic avant-garde, when children were called Marxes (Маркс, means Marx), and Socialins (Социалина, means socialist), and Perekorps (Перекоп, means canal)... (Странное это отчество досталось Олегу, понятное дело, от отца — Труда Валентиновича, родившегося в самый разгул бытового авангарда, когда ребятишек называли и Марксами, и Социалинами, и Перекопами...)*” [Polyakov 2021: 20]. The patronymic of the hero suggests the temporal features of what is happening in the work. The surname *Bashmakov* resembles the surname of the hero of Gogol’s story *The Overcoat (Шинель)* Bashmachkin, and also denotes shoes. Bashmakov is to a certain extent also a ‘little man’, like Bashmachkin, and the thread of his fate is in other people’s hands. As a professional translator who realizes the important role of anthroponyms in the work, Zhang Jianhua explained the meaning of the main character’s anthroponym in a footnote. However, in the work, based on the protagonist’s surname and patronymic, his wife, friends, and colleagues also give him a few nicknames, and in different contexts, these different variants have specific denotative meanings. For example, after Bashmakov lost his job, he stayed at home for a long time without doing anything. His wife was very sympathetic to him and consoled him by saying: “*Don’t worry, okay? Everything will be fine. I have a job. There is still enough money... Okay, Tunesyadych (Туняядыч, means parasite)? (Ты не переживай, ладно? Все будет нормально. У меня работа есть. Денег пока хватает... Хорошо, Туняядыч?)*” The author further pointed out that “*Automatically using this nickname, which had long ago become a semi-lascivious nickname, she suddenly faltered, realizing its new, humiliating meaning (Автоматически употребив это давно уже ставшее*

полуласкательным прозвище, она вдруг осеклась, осознав его новый, унижительный смысл)” [Polyakov 2021: 156]. At the first occurrence of this nickname, the translator gave an explanation in a footnote, so that Chinese readers could understand the irony. Another example: when his wife is in a good mood, she addresses Bashmakov as *Tapochkin* (*Тапочкин, means Slippers*). Slippers as household shoes bring people cosiness and mental ease, so *Tapochkin* expresses the wife’s love for Bashmakov and family harmony. In the Chinese translation, the translator gave this explanation in a footnote: “Both *Bashmakov* and *Tapochkin* in Russian mean shoes, the wife deliberately addresses her husband in this humorous way” [张建华 2002: 11]. Obviously, the intimacy, warmth contained in this nickname is not reflected in the commentary. Bashmakov’s friends, as well as his wife, change his patronymic in different situations: “*Oleg Tugodumych* (*Олег Тугодумыч*)”, “*Oleg Tolerandovich* (*Олег Толерандович*)”, “*Oleg Drugovich* (*Олег Другович*)”, “*Oleg Triumfovich* (*Олег Триумфович*)”, “*Oleg Trusovich* (*Олег Трусович*)”, “*Oleg Trapezundovich* (*Олег Трапезундович*)”, etc. Among the above nicknames, the translator did not give an explanation in the footnotes for “*Oleg Tugodumych*” and “*Oleg Drugovich*”. ‘Tugodum’ (тугодум), from which *Tugodumych* is formed, means a person who does not know how to think and think quickly; tolerance, from which *Tolerandovich* is formed, is a sociological term denoting tolerance for a different worldview, lifestyle, behavior, and customs. Without an explanation, Chinese readers will not understand the humor and irony of such nicknames. And the patronymic *Trapezondovich* (*Трапезундович*) is explained in a footnote as “a variant of the patronymic *Trudovich*, denotes a public Canteen” [张建华 2002: 160]. This erroneous explanation does not help Chinese readers to understand the solemnity of this nickname, and why “*Karakozin* (Каракозин) (by the way, this surname is very similar to the surname of the revolutionary *Karakozov* (Каракозов), who committed the first revolutionary terrorist act in the history of Russia on April 4, 1866 — the assassination of Emperor Alexander II — extraordinary situation) congratulating the new leader on behalf of the collective, called him respectfully *Oleg Trapezondovich* (*Каракозин, поздравляя нового руководителя от имени коллектива, назвал его уважительно Олегом Трапезундовичем*)” [Polyakov 2021: 110]. But *Trapezond* (Трапезунд) is the old Byzantine name for the city of Trabzon, now located on the territory of modern Turkey, once the capital of the deceased Southern Byzantine empire of the Komnenos, who ruled there from 1204 to 1461. There are many similar nicknames in the novel, but not all of them are commented on by the translator, and also not all cultural nuances are always indicated in the explanations, and the translator has not fully understood and interpreted certain nicknames correctly. It can be said that the untranslatability of the subcultural and

countercultural meanings of these nicknames, in a sense, leads to the inevitable loss of cultural meaning in translation.

Another complexity lies in the civilizational-cultural code, which manifests itself in a wide variety of situations, sometimes completely unexpected for the translator. For example, there is the famous debate about which path of development is most organic for Russia — eastern or western. Russian intellectuals have been arguing about this topic for centuries. Westerners would like to join Europe and eventually merge with European civilization. And the Slavophiles insist on preserving their national-historical identity. In the novel *I Planned an Escape*, “The West is the subject of intense polemics, clashes of opinions, worldviews (Запад — предмет обостренной полемики, столкновения мнений, мировоззренческих установок)” [Bolshakova 2005: 107]. Yu. Polyakov is also concerned about how this problem was solved in the minds of people during perestroika times. The conversation between the protagonist and his companions on the train from Moscow to Warsaw is a continuation of just such a long-standing dispute. The discussion began with philosophical questions and was associated with the appearance of a philosopher along the way. During the conversation, after Bashmakov’s question, the discussion turned to the topic of ‘the West.’ At first glance, we are talking about railway tracks in Europe and Russia. “*Our track will always be wider (Наша колея всегда будет шире)*” [Polyakov 2021: 185], and “*bird-like troika is forever doomed to change wheels in order to enter Europe (птица-тройка навсегда обречена менять колеса, чтобы въехать в Европу)*” [Polyakov 2021: 185]. As you know, the most common international standard for railway gauge is 1435 mm. It is accepted in Western Europe, the USA, Canada, and including China. In Russia and the CIS countries the track width is different — 1520 mm. In order to travel to Europe, passengers must wait until the carriages are transferred to wheeled bogies that comply with European standards. This is a very real technological problem. But the image of a bird-like troika is, as you know, the symbolic image of Russia in N. Gogol’s poem *Dead Souls*. Thus, the character of Yu. Polyakov emphasizes the historical contradiction: in order to join Western civilization, Russia always needs to change its habits and traditions, and its very way of life, which began already during the reforms of Peter the Great. But European standards are too narrow and cramped for Russia. The hero asks an interesting question in response to the remark about the bird-like troika: “*Why do we have to change the wheels? (А почему мы должны делать колеса уже?)*” [Polyakov 2021: 185]. This approach coincides with the position of those who believed that Russia should follow its own path, preserving its identity. In addition to the two traditional approaches, Yu. Polyakov, through the mouth of Bashmakov, offers a third option — a compromise solution to this prob-

lem: Russia and the West must move closer, yield to each other, adapt to each other. Three hundred years of experience have proven that one-way movement and change have not led to unification. Without the appropriate fundamental knowledge of Russian history, Chinese readers will only perceive this conversation as an ordinary episode in the novel, without connecting it with the deep meaning of the work and the writer's thoughts about the future of his country, which can be considered one of the main cultural losses in the receptive process.

It should be noted that another cultural loss is related to the place of escapism, which was not defined in Cyprus at all by chance, but as a result of the author's conscious choice. Russians consider Cyprus to be a place of bliss, a pagan paradise, because it is in Cyprus, according to Greek mythology, that Aphrodite emerged from the foam of the sea. Therefore, the escape to Cyprus seems to the protagonist to be an escape to an ideal world, to a paradise life, but paradise in a purely material sense. The protagonist wants to escape to Cyprus (to the West) for happiness and prosperous life, just like those Russian Westerners who hope to find and/or recreate an ideal state according to the Western model. At the same time, all sources of Old Russian literature indicate that the spiritual, Christian paradise is located in the East. It is through these metaphorical moments that the novel displays the deep cultural meaning of the work. Such serious philosophical motifs in the novel are generally not perceived by Chinese readers unfamiliar with this long-standing Russian controversy and Russian history.

In the novel *I Planned an Escape* Yu. Polyakov used a variety of techniques, in particular reminiscences as a way of establishing intertextual connections between texts. Understanding the meaning of reminiscences, as well as literary quotations, characters from the classics and inserted microstories in the text of the work, is inseparable from the knowledge of the source text, and this requires previously accumulated literary knowledge. In a brilliant way, Yu. Polyakov juxtaposed in his novel the main issue of Nikolai Gogol's poem *Dead Souls* with the problems of post-Soviet society, as well as the manifestations of typical character traits of the protagonist of Goncharov's novel *Oblomov* with the traits of a former Soviet intellectual. Thus, all the signatures in the list collected by "Vox populi (*Вокс понули*)" are mostly "dead people and people who never lived at the indicated addresses (*покойники и люди, никогда не жившие по указанным адресам*)" [Polyakov 2021: 224]. The comic situation and humorous language do not make the novel cheerful and light, nor do they offer hope for the resolution of problems. Yuri Polyakov in this respect is a continuer of Gogol's tradition of "laughter through tears". However, if one does not know the plot of Chichikov's purchase of dead serfs in *Dead Souls*, the meaning of Polyakov's novel inevitably loses the depth of per-

ception. Professor Zhang Jianhua noticed this problem, so he explained the double focus of this plot in the translator's introduction. Even if the Chinese reader has not read *Dead Souls* before, they have the opportunity to understand that, in the writer's opinion, the process of "deadening" of souls in Russia has not been overcome in 160 years, or gets an additional stimulus to read *Dead Souls*, thus achieving the translator's goal as an educator. The second example is a comparison of Bashmakov's character and lifestyle with Oblomov, which refers to the period after the hero's dismissal from his job at Start. Bashmakov with Oblomov's steadfastness rested on the sofa day after day. Oblomov as a typical image of the past, gradually disappearing from the social environment, occupies a very important place in Russian literature as a 'superfluous person'. The comparison of the images of Bashmakov and Oblomov enriches the image of the protagonist and puts him on a row with other images of 'superfluous people', as an image of a 'superfluous person' of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. But, creating the image of a modern 'superfluous person', Yuri Polyakov will necessarily emphasize the differences between his hero and the characters of the classics: Bashmakov is not at all like the official Bashmachkin, incapable of anything but rewriting, and certainly not as the noble Oblomov, unable to labour at all. Bashmakov is a talented Soviet design engineer. However, after the collapse of the USSR, dozens, if not hundreds, of research institutes were closed and thousands of engineers like Bashmakov found themselves out of work, i.e. they suddenly became 'superfluous people' and not all of them could survive such a life catastrophe. The writer both sympathizes with his character and makes fun of him at the same time. This juxtaposition greatly enhances both the comic and dramatic effects of the plot of the work. Chinese readers, not possessing such a background of accumulated knowledge about Russian literature, will be lost in understanding the deeper meaning of the work.

If there are so many key cultural losses in the receptive process of Chinese translation of the novel, an interesting question arises: what attracted Chinese readers, who do not perceive the above cultural points, to this novel? First of all, this interest is due to the fascination of the novel itself. Yu. Polyakov is an excellent narrator. Yuri Polyakov's works always start with a very simple beginning, then the plot develops, which delights and excites the readers, that is why Yuri Polyakov's works are so pleasant to read. And the novel *I Planned an Escape* is also no exception. The author always strives to ensure that the plot is attractive and that the story he tells grips the reader. In the 1990s, when grand narrative was questioned in the creative circles of Russian literati and critics, Yu. Polyakov continued to adhere to its principles and renew them with his work. In his unique literary style, the author writes about the themes that concern him: the public mood, the fate of the individual, the spiritual quests and



psychological transformations of Russians in the Soviet and post-Soviet era, the understanding and perception of 'Russianness' (русскость) and 'Sovietness' (советскость). At the same time, he reveals the 'double gap' between time and personality through the description of the everyday life of his characters, especially the details of their emotional and spiritual life. Yuri Polyakov's novels are not only an inheritance of the grand narrative of Russian literature, but also an innovation of the poetics of realistic prose, based on the poetic experience of the new time. The author himself is a fine continuer of the humorous and satirical tradition of N. Gogol, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin and M. Zoshchenko. Comic situations and humorous language make the novel entertaining. Of course, in order to convey the author's genius to Chinese readers, the work of an outstanding translator is essential. Professor Zhang Jianghua, who has extensive experience in translating literary works, as a friend and admirer of Yu. Polyakov's works, knows his idiosyncrasies well, which enabled him to translate this novel remarkably well.

In addition to the interesting plot and excellent work of the translator, the interest of modern Chinese readers in Yu. Polyakov's novel *I Planned an Escape* arose thanks to the author's appeal to the most actual social problems of modern society, such as homosexuality, pedophilia, financial fraud.

The novel *I Planned an Escape* is significant for the detailed artistic unfolding of the circumstances of the internal and family life of the protagonist Oleg Trudovich Bashmakov. He acted as an 'escapist' in twenty years of married life, always plotting to leave his wife. The phenomenon of 'escapist' is not individual, we can say that in life "everyone, even for a minute, if not for several minutes, has been or is becoming an Escapist." In analyzing critical and literary articles of Chinese authors devoted to the novel *I Planned an Escape*, we noticed that the attention of Chinese researchers is focused on the fate of intellectuals in new era and family issues. "The plot of the work constitutes an ever-increasing gap between the external well-being of the protagonist's life (solid business, absence of private and other debts, complete material independence) and the lingering feeling of dead emptiness that pervades his existence (Сюжет произведения составляет все увеличивающийся зазор между внешним благополучием жизни главного героя (прочный бизнес, отсутствие частных и иных долгов, полная материальная независимость) и томительным ощущением мертвенной пустоты, наполняющей его бытие)" [Golubkov 2015: 75]. The main personage in the novel *I Planned an Escape* Bashmakov, like the heroes of most of the author's works, is an intelligent man lost in the flow of time and a victim of time. The author describes his hero with sympathy. Polyakov's heroes are contradictory, realistically created living figures with real feelings, obvious advantages

and disadvantages. Bashmakov is surrounded by a number of intellectuals who have withstood the blows of time. The changes did not give them the opportunity to realise their talents and qualifications, on the contrary, many of them lost their jobs in their speciality and for survival became cleaners, security guards, speculators, etc. It should be noted that the fact that knowledge is no longer valued is a national tragedy and ultimately affects the further development of the country. Intellectuals with a conscience are sorry to see the objectification of man in a capitalist money society, but at the same time they themselves cannot change these circumstances. The family is the most fundamental component of society in all countries, and family issues are always universal throughout the world. Yu. Polyakov repeatedly touched on the topics that concern him about the family crisis in Russia, which affects Russian society more than in the West. The family crisis, like a pandemic, has already seized the whole world and has become a global problem. In Russia, it is related to the social comprehensive changes after perestroika. In China, it is also related to modernization and the propaganda of Western ideology after the reform and opening-up policy in the 1980s. Therefore, finding a way out of this crisis is a common task for Russian and Chinese society. Divorce, love, adultery, relationships between parents and children, conflict of feeling and duty, and other family problems are interestingly presented in the novel and attract the attention of Chinese readers.

Chinese literature has long been associated with realism since ancient times, always emphasizing the close connection between literature and the development of the nation and society. As the famous Chinese poet Bai Juyi, who lived in the Tang Dynasty in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, wrote in his *Letter to Yuan Zhen*, “literature should serve its time, respond to the life and events of contemporary times”. According to Bai Juyi, literary work should not only reflect social life, but also be related to the current political struggle and actively intervene in the life of the people. Here, “time” and “contemporaneity” refer to the nation and the people, highlighting the close relationship between literature and real life. In Chinese literature, the poet’s views express the dominant viewpoint in society, which is close to the Russian literary tradition: the poet is the voice of the people, the ruler of the minds. Chinese readers are eagerly interested in the history of Russia, especially in times of change, in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, which helps them better understand their choices at the historical crossroads. Yuri Polyakov, by describing the life of ordinary intellectuals in its socio-historical concreteness, as a result gets not only the trials of individual personalities in different times, but also the whole universal historical picture of the society of that time. The novel *I Planned an Escape* displays all the most important historical events and moments before and after perestroika in the fates of individual personalities. The action of the

novel covers the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the introduction of the main character's memories of his grandparents and other relatives. His personalities are not only witnesses to history, but they are also active participants in it. China, being a socialist country, had the same state regime and social system as the Soviet Union, but unlike the USSR, which collapsed in the 1990s, has charted its own path and managed to preserve socialism and the integrity of the country. Chinese intellectuals always analyse with interest the reasons for the collapse of the USSR and the choice of the capitalist path of development in Russia and the other former Soviet republics. The novel provides an opportunity and material for such analyses.

Despite much cultural losses in the reception process of Chinese readers, Yu. Polyakov's novel *I Planned an Escape* was a success and a hit in China. The reason for the success is the topical relevance, since great works of literature touch on issues that concern all of humanity, issues that know no boundaries. Secondly, the translator's skill in preserving the idiosyncrasies of the original author while referring the reader to parallels in his native culture, as brilliantly demonstrated by Zhang Jianhua's translation, can convey the hidden cultural meanings of a foreign-language work of fiction to the masses as much as possible. Thirdly, the Chinese reader, probably, is close to the type of hero who aspires to a happy and wealthy life, who manages to realize his desires, but never becomes truly happy. Everyone, even for a minute, if not for several minutes, has been or is becoming an Escapist.

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