

---

# Nationalism in Lin Shu's Translation of Haggard's Adventure Stories

Ning Li

School of Foreign Languages, Guangdong Pharmaceutical University, Guangzhou, PR China

**Email address:**

Glorialeesmile@163.com

**To cite this article:**

Ning Li. Nationalism in Lin Shu's Translation of Haggard's Adventure Stories. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*. Vol. 8, No. 4, 2020, pp. 240-244. doi: 10.11648/j.ijla.20200804.19

**Received:** June 15, 2020; **Accepted:** July 2, 2020; **Published:** July 6, 2020

---

**Abstract:** Sir Henry Rider Haggard's adventure stories are the great and influential contributions in the numerous works in Lin Shu's translated novels, which are also popular in late Qing China. Moreover, the nationalism started from the late Qing period, which has great influence on the national renaissance in terms of dealing with the national crisis and inspiring the national spirits or reform and exploration. In practice, the translation works have great contribution, among which Lin Shu's fiction translation is of highest value. His translation works are analyzed from the aspects of source text selection, translation principle and skills. As a translator, Lin interfered with the original text by his prefaces and epilogues in the process of translation. It is necessary to discuss reasons why Lin Shu translated large amount of Haggard's adventure stories from the perspective of nationalism on Lin's sense of mission in translation during then society. It also tries to figure out the great influence and meaning of Lin's translated novels from Haggard's adventure stories in the academic circle of late Qing China.

**Keywords:** Lin Shu's Translated Novels, Nationalism, Haggard, Adventure

---

## 1. Introduction

In modern China, the trend of ideological nationalism flourished in the crisis of invasion of China by foreign powers, which had shown a strong ideological atmosphere with national rights and interests as well as the national emotions gradually booming into the core idea. Therefore, it gathered the continuous practical force to transform the reality in the late Qing China. After the invasion and partition by the foreign powers, the patriots of the late Qing Dynasty began to realize the limitations of westernization movement and the importance of cultural enlightenment from the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the failure of "Joint Petition of Imperial Examination Candidates to the Emperor led by Kang Youwei in 1895 to oppose signing of the *Treaty of Shimonoseki* and institute reforms, marking the beginning of the Reformist Movement". Liang Qichao, Yan Fu and other practical translators began to advocate "Fiction Revolution" in translation and printing of political novels. Under this background, Lin Shu's translated novels have appeared on the historical stage. His novels are not only produced for literary purposes, but also for political targets, with nationalism running through them. In order to promote national

consciousness and the spirit of nationalism, Lin Shu translated large amount of foreign novels, hoping to enlighten the wisdom of people and save whole nation from then danger. He once wrote in his translation preface clearly pointed out, "If I want to enlighten the people, firstly I must establish the school, but is goes slowly. Then I need to act the speech in public, but speech is not to act. Finally, the translating is the only way to learn" [1]. This study tries to analyze the nationalism in Lin Shu's translation of his choice on western novels, as well as the discussion on his thoughts and techniques of translation, moreover, analyzing its social influence and significance of progress.

## 2. An Overview of Nationalism

Refer to nationalism, it originated from Europe. According to the number of basic judgment on root, such as origin, religion, custom, language, common ancestor, as well as the physical and cultural established endowment of recognition on nation. For it had the natural population division, emotions and impulses of nationalist then were boomed. Until the late Qing Dynasty, nationalism was introduced to China by Liang Qichao, who defined the nationalism as "What is nationalism?"

People of all races and ethnicities with all regions, whom using the same language, respecting religion and sharing custom, looking on each other as compatriots. They are independent, autonomous, well-organized governments that seeking the common virtue, while the other race is the same” [2]. In the late Qing, China was beset by internal troubles and foreign aggression. Imperialism continued to invade and carve up Chinese territory. The Qing government was corrupt and incompetent. At a critical juncture when all nations stand on their own two feet, when great powers are divided, when survival of the fittest prevails and when progress is not made, nationalism becomes the strongest voice of that time. Liang Qichao once argued passionately that nationalism was a gift from today’s European world [3]. Retrospect the history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the raising of nationalism was not less important under the authority of wise emperor in ancient Chinese society. He also believed that a country without the stage of nationalism would not be called a nation. In the face of the colonial aggression of the imperialist powers, Liang raised his arms and appealed to cultivate the inherent nationalism as soon as possible to fight against the old times, and then only can fight against the national imperialism of the foreign powers to save lives and prevent disasters in late Qing China. Under the vigorous promotion of Liang Qichao and other pioneer, progressive intellectuals responded one after another, the anti-imperialism and national salvation nationalism became the overriding theme in the thought of the whole modern Chinese society.

The historian Yu Yingshi once pointed out that the greatest driving force for the development of Chinese history in the past century is nationalism. When a society is built up, the rise of new knowledge groups are also formed, they enthusiastically hope to establish national and ethnic identity, training the awareness of “nationalism” [4], setting up the national state. In order to enlighten the wisdom of people, translating the foreign works had become the first choice of great number of patriots, especially the translation of western novels gradually become a social trend. Therefore, the novel translation turned into the forefront of the propaganda of nationalism. From the perspective of nationalism, it contributes to two new themes in translated novels, one is the nation, and another is the civilian.

### 3. Spiritual Representation of Haggard’s Novels

Sir Henry Rider Haggard was born in Bradenham, Norfolk, England, and graduated from Ipswich common school with the law major. He served in South Africa as a secretary to the governor of Natal from 1875, later for a time, as the President of the local Supreme Court. Refer to his name, may not be familiar to readers today, but he was an influential figure in the literary world of late Qing and early Republic China. Haggard began to write novels after returning to England in 1881. Though all his life, he had created 57 novels. Haggard is an experienced man who has traveled to the Netherlands, Mexico,

Palestine, Egypt and Scandinavia and so on. Every time when he returned, a new novel or work may be composed. His stories can be divided into three categories, which have included the adventure, ghost & monster and romance. All of his works have the characteristics of quirky, twisty, exotic and good command of planting mysterious seeds in the soil of history.

Haggard’s works were first translated into Chinese by Pan Xizi and Tian Xiaosheng with the name of *Jia Yin Xiao Zhuan*. However, it was Lin Shu whom made Haggard and his stories famous in modern Chinese literature. Among the four major novel magazines in the late Qing Dynasty, three published portraits of western literary masters in the first issue. For example, the Characters Issue of “*New Novel*” is Tolstoy, the option of “*Collection of Novels*” is Hugo. However, the Characters of First Issue of “*Monthly Novels*” in 1906 was printed the image of Haggard [5]. It was obviously shown Haggard, such a popular novelist as important as the literary giant, for example Tolstoy at that time. Thus it can be seen, the booming of “new novel” literary enlightenment of the late Qing dynasty construction according to the object and literary reading. Popular and influential author, who is not the literary giant, can also be warm accepted by target readers, which seems a little bit astonishing, but also the real reflection. According to one statistical data, Haggard is the second most published novelist in translation after Conan Doyle among foreign novelists introduced from 1886 to 1916.

Haggard’s works were introduced to China in late Qing Dynasty. After the rising of translation, the media, publishing organization energetically spread to the early years of the Republic of China has been extensively accepted in the whole nation. Therefore, he become a classic English literature of modern China, the construction of its classic road is the modern social transformation in modern China and modern western thought to the prominent reflection of cultural consciousness fits the conception of nationalism of Chinese society properly.

The social and historical context of late Qing China is the external motivation for the ethic canonization of Haggard’s novels. In the context of the profound national crisis in late Qing and the entry of western modern ideology and cultural concepts into Chinese society, “saving the nation from extinction” and “strengthening the country” became the main historical national tasks. However, under the shackled of thousands of years of Chinese traditional feudal culture, how can the whole society accept the modern ideology and carry out modern thought reformation? A large number of people with vision and insight have set off a social wave of “cultivate people with new thought”, “enlighten the wisdom” and “enhance the national power” in China [6]. In other words, a modern movement in pursuit of modernization began to become the mainstream trend of social thought, and the society entered a period of “great changes were not seen in thousands of years” [7]. Against this background, the Chinese literary circle raised a great movement of translation and dissemination of western

novels, which was introduced western artistic theory into the Chinese literary world. It has pulled the leisure position of novels towards the orthodox literature camp. The ideological enlightenment and moral education value of western novels are highlighted from then on. The popularity of western works reflects the ardent call for western cultural concepts of Chinese people [8]. Haggard's adventure novels have important external social conditions to become classics according to the taste of target readers. Moreover, it is an urgent need for social and cultural transformation that drives Haggard's novels becoming the influential cultural phenomenon in the late Qing China.

The modernity thought and cultural consciousness of the western transitional society in Haggard's novel, especially the adventure stories, are the intrinsic motivation of the classicalization of modern China. Not only himself, but also his novels have been regarded as the popular novelist in the western world, which the important reason is the western modern conceptions and values such as scientific rationality, positive enterprising, liberal democracy, bold exploration and survival of the fittest. This ideology became a model for the late Victorian social transformation and the establishment of a new world order. It is the just spirit that has become the yardstick of value for modern Chinese to observe the world. Such the western thoughts and world order are largely reflected in Yan Fu's translation of *Evolution and Ethics*, Liang Qichao's translation of *Political Novels* and Lin Shu's translation of western novels [9]. In addition, in a wide range of communication and Haggard's novels after accepting the western modernity thought into the modern Chinese by imitating and worship in the nation, such as breaking the traditional, fighting for freedom and so on. Since the pursuit of building a prosperous new world in late Qing China, the change in ideology has become the main kind of social consciousness of the main flow, in order to save the whole nation. Therefore, the enrichment of modern ideological and cultural connotation of Haggard's novels, especially the adventure stories inevitably inspires modern Chinese people to make unremitting efforts to achieve national independence, save the country, preserve the species, explore the way of survival and establish their own identity. Obviously, it is the modernity thought and cultural experience in Haggard's novels which is becoming the internal ideological motivation for the construction of his modern Chinese classical literature. The external and internal causes promote the localization of Modern China, which shows the inter-subjectivity of western modernity and Chinese modern modernity. In a word, the motivation in Haggard's adventure novels aroused not only the reflection of modern Chinese classic novel the advanced cultural experience great charisma, but also reflected China to accept the "subjectivity" of modernity [10]. It is the fully fit between the traditional Chinese historical condition and western modernity ideology and the modern western thought in the Chinese localization of civilization, which is also responded to the modern era in China modernization development demands of late Qing Dynasty.

#### 4. Nationalism in Lin Shu's Translated Novels

Ideology influences the choice of original works, and the form of consciousness makes translators choose different translation strategies in different times. In his translation of foreign novels, Lin Shu used various meaning to promote the spirit of nationalism, show his own political views and inspire the people to work hard and contribute to the future of the country and the nation.

In modern China, the translation of novels with the theme of saving the country and preserving the species was fraught with foreign invasion and a precarious time. As one of the important and influential translator, Lin Shu was also deeply felt the crisis of national subjugation and the survival of civilian, what's more, he realized the importance and urgency of educating people and inspiring the nation. Therefore, Lin hoped to awaken and educate people by translating the foreign novels, so as to finally achieve the goal of saving the country and protecting the species, enriching the country and strengthening the people [11]. He responded to Liang Qichao's calling to translate western political novels by translating Mrs. Stowe's masterpiece *Uncle Tom's Cabin* only in sixty-six days. Through this novel, he tried to alert the Chinese people to draw lessons from the tragic experience of the black people and make great efforts. If the tragic fate of the black people cannot be saved from the life and death of the nation, it will become the fate of the Chinese people.

During the period of late Qing China, the nation was invaded by the imperialist, and the government lost the confidence to face strong ships and guns of the western foreigners. Moreover, the people lost their inherent angles and blood of the Chinese nation, as well as the powerful driving force of the nation, the warrior spirit. At that time, there was a general feeling of fatigue among the Chinese people. Therefore, Lin Shu chose to translate foreign novels with the characters of adventure and hero, most of which are from Haggard's works. In addition, Lin also translated a large number of historical military novels with the hope to inspire the national morale and spirit with the indefatigable anti-aggression spirit of foreign people. Refer to Haggard's adventure stories, which translated by Lin Shu and popular in Chinese readers were *Allan Quatermain*, 1887, *King Solomon's Mines*, 1885 and *People of the Mist*, 1894 [12]. They all told stories about white men's exploration in Africa and their near-death experience with no regrets. Lin Shu's vigorous translation and introduction of such adventure novels had strong political intention, hoping to cultivate the spirit of exploration and enterprising of Chinese nation.

In his translated novels, Lin Shu usually adopts renaming the original texts to promote the awareness of cultivating nationalism. For example, he changed the title of his translation of Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with the new one. In the prologue he compares the fate of Chinese people to the black slaves, in order to highlight the tragic experience of the black slaves and to alert the late Qing China. Moreover, Lin Shu also paid attention to look for the proper examples from Asian

among western countries. Among which for the Japanese were also yellow race and had been invaded by western powers in history, Lin observed the hope of the Chinese nation from the revitalization of Japan. He took Japan as the proper case for many times to boost the national spirit and morale, emphasizing the Japanese courage to fight against the western countries, and attaching more importance to Japanese efforts in governance and its pioneering efforts to become strong nation through the Meiji Restoration. By the translation method of renaming the original works, Lin Shu hopes to awaken the sleeping Chinese, cultivate their national consciousness, stimulate the spirit of nationalism, and encourage the people to fight for the survival of the country and the nation through the tragic and miserable historical experiences. Apart from *Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu*, there are also several other novels for his choosing with the awareness of nationalism, such as *Ivanhoe* to boost national morale.

Western adventure fiction is a product of the industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and a historical record of exploring overseas colonial markets. Haggard's adventure novels are the representative of the enterprising spirit of the bourgeoisie in pursuit of individual freedom and wealth. These novels evoke an inner desire for adventure in Chinese readers [13]. All his novel which were translated by Lin Shu, such as *Allan Quatermain*, *King Solomon's Mines*, and *People of the Mist* all were described the white adventure story in Africa, malaria and unique desert. There were totally brand new reading experiences for the Chinese readers. In 1902, the announcement of *New Novel* referred to the seventh category of literature as the adventure novel, which was described as "adventure novels, such as the flow of *Robinson Crusoe*, which were mainly giving the priority in order to inspire the spirit of adventure" [14]. In another word, this is a positive principle, which is full of adventure and struggle bright and pleasant pursuit to come with naturalism literature popular melancholy hopelessness, symbolism of emptiness and pessimistic mood opposite. Therefore, it also has several special meaning to cater for the appreciation of target readers.

With a mixture of envy and jealousy, Lin Shu called on his countrymen to learn the heroism of these novels in order to defend their nation state. Thus, the imperialist elements in Haggard's adventure stories and white racism changed their colors of becoming the Chinese with the weapons of awareness of nationalism. In his interpretation of popular novels such as *Robinson Crusoe* and Haggard's adventure stories, Lin Shu put forward a kind of difference from Chinese traditional novels creation. The new aesthetic spirit of gentleness and modesty advocated by thousands of years of Chinese tradition, and the advocacy of thief and chivalrous spirit, in another word, the opposite meaning of traditional moral ethics. This is a generation of Chinese intellectuals in the special political background, the internal pursuit of national independence and national prosperity. In modern China is after the western understanding of their own problems, the meaning of "western" in late Qing China is still different from the "other" [15], while the "other" strong column and with the west colonialists in the eyes of

backward stupidity or spectacle oriental, difference between "the other" and "the west" in the modern Chinese enlightenment eye. The "other" is through the pain of self-reflection and judgment, which is set up the value of the object. In the context of this object, Chinese chronic weakness is laid out, and the West gradually builds its cult status. Therefore, under the vivid description of Lin Shu's translation, the English popular novelist, Haggard was no longer simply a producer of leisure works, but a cultural symbol and a representation of new ideas. Lin tried to find a connection between the fictional stories of popular novels and traditional Chinese thoughts, which was to extract a higher level of political meaning from the vulgar pure recreational plots such as adventure, supernatural and legend, so as to establish and consolidate the role of western images.

## 5. Analysis of Social Influence of Nationalism in Lin Shu's Translations

In Lin Shu's translation of adventure novels, we can see that the problems of individual freedom implied in his original language writing are ignored instead of being connected with the problems of Chinese national character. Like many intellectuals of his generation, Lin Shu pondered and focused on how to reverse the fact that China was repeatedly defeated in wars against the west imperialism, and sought answers to why China was lagging behind. Thus, the works of popular novelists such as Haggard turned out to be the answer to Lin Shu's question about how to make the Chinese stronger. In fact, both of Lin's translations and Haggard's novels turned out to be the answer, which is the spirit of adventure in new environment. There is a lack of aggressive individualism in the Chinese tradition, such as relying on individuals' own independent struggles and spirit of adventure. Such "aggressive individualism" is the essence of the "spirit of adventure" [16] that comes from Haggard's novels representing to open up the colonial market in Europe since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which is internalized by the optimistic, action-oriented genie novels that are opposed to the naturalism. The individual heroes of romanticism created by Haggard are the unconscious expression of the author's desire to break away from the dull tradition of Victorian Age in England [17]. Lin Shu actually planted them on the soil of modern China by mistake, and opened the flower of nationalism that reflected on the national character in his translated adventure novels..

Modern China is an era of great transformation from tradition to modernity. The historical context of enlightenment and national salvation has raised the tide of modernity thinking in the society. Under the social background, the creation of new novels writing shoulder the task of emancipating the mind and opening the historical task of wisdom, Haggard's adventure novels of strange stories, romance and adventure met, conflicted and merged with the traditional Chinese civilization, and completed the historical journey of ideological through

creative translation, which also has the dissemination and acceptance of becoming the literary classic of modern Chinese nation. In modernity vision inspection Haggard's road of the construction of modern Chinese classic novel can clear outline of its classical, modern transformation of Chinese society thought is his novel external causation, which deeply reflects the historic changes in the field of modern Chinese social thought. What's more, Haggard's adventure stories of western social transformation period of modern cultural experience and world order is the spiritual value in the novel [18], which is also the need of modern Chinese social and historical change. As the literary classics of modern China, Haggard's adventure novels convey the people's desire for democracy, pursuit of freedom, concern for life, scientific spirit and social energy of the concept of nation and state. Therefore, the modernity thought and spiritual value of Haggard's novels are the intrinsic motivation of his classicalization in modern China. From the viewpoint of modernity and nationalism, the road of modern Chinese classicalization of Haggard's adventure novels shows the social trend of ideological and cultural transformation in modern China and the transformation of national ideology from individual transformation to the construction of national cultural identity.

## 6. Conclusion

To sum up, at the end of the late Qing Dynasty, the national crisis became more seriously. As a patriot and man of vision, Lin Shu bravely stood out, who translated the great numerous of foreign novels to publicize the spirit of nationalism, and took the initiative to shoulder the historical responsibility of saving the national crisis and rejuvenating the great cause of the nation. In most of his translated novels, Lin Shu chose the types that could inspire national emotion for translation, which can promote the national consciousness, enlighten the wisdom of people, alert the awareness of whole nation, cultivate national ambition and the courage to fight against foreign powers. In his translation, Lin Shu also encouraged the Chinese people to develop industry, rely on industry to revitalize the country and find a way to become a strong nation. To some extent, it can be seen that the translation of Lin Shu's translations of Haggard's adventure stories were also the political act to save the country and preserve the species in the late Qing China.

## Acknowledgements

This Article Is Funded by 2018 Young Innovative Talents Project of Guangdong Entitled "Study on the Narrative of National Imagination in the Late Qing China Based on the Cultural Field" (2018WQNCX062).

---

## References

- [1] A Ying. *Historical Translation* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1981.
- [2] Hanan, Patrick. *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* [M]. Press of Columbia University, 2004.
- [3] Haggard, H. Rider. *King Solomon's Mines* [M]. New York: Puffini Books, 1985.
- [4] Haggard, H. Rider. Lin Shu, Zeng Zonggong trans. *Zhong Ru Ku Lou* [M]. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1914.
- [5] Haggard, H. Rider. Lin Shu, Zeng Zonggong trans. *Wu Zhong Ren* [M]. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1913.
- [6] Lin Shu. *Weilu Essays* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Press, 1998.
- [7] Lin Shu. *Lin Qinnan Shuhua* [M]. Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Publishing House, 1999.
- [8] Li Zehou. *On the History of Modern Chinese Thought* [M]. Hefei: Anhui Literature and Art Press, 1994.
- [9] Mrs. Stowe. Lin Shu, Wei Yi trans. *Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu* [M]. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1981.
- [10] Nida, Eugene. *Language and Culture-Contexts in Translating* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2001.
- [11] Shuttleworth, Mark & Cowie, Moira. *Dictionary of Translation Studies* [M]. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997.
- [12] Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* [M]. Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press, 2001.
- [13] Shen Songqiao. *The development of Nationalism in modern China: On two Issues of Nationalism* [J]. Political and Social Philosophy Review (Taipei), 2002 (3): 241-246.
- [14] Shen Songqiao. *Ethnic Group, Culture and State: The National Imagination of the Late Qing Dynasty (1895-1911)* [C], from Cross-strait New History of Modern China (Late Qing Volume), 2016.
- [15] Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2004.
- [16] Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translation Studies Reader* [M]. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- [17] Wang Ermin. *On the History of Modern Chinese Thought* [M]. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2003.
- [18] Zheng Dahua. *Nationalism in Modern Chinese History* [M]. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2007.