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The translation of childhood trauma—Taking the English and Chinese translation of *Michikusa* as an example

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ABSTRACT: *Michikusa* (1915) is an autobiographical novel penned by the renowned Japanese writer, Natsume Sōseki. Researchers typically employ it to probe the intricate interplay between the author/protagonist's evolution and the historical milieu of Meiji-era Japan. Scholars such as Chiaki Ishihara have advocated for a new avenue of inquiry, advocating the application of psychoanalytic perspectives in exploring Natsume Sōseki's corpus. Surprisingly, this direction remains relatively uncharted, with the scholarly realm notably lacking discussions on its Chinese and English translations through the lens of literary criticism. This article undertakes an in-depth investigation into the translation of *Michikusa*'s portrayal of childhood trauma into English and Chinese, facilitated by the construction of a comprehensive trilingual corpus. Employing a psychoanalytic framework for interpretation, it discerns that the childhood scenes play a foundational role in shaping the protagonist's post-traumatic personality facets, significantly influencing his relationships with his immediate and extended family. The findings underscore a critical gap: despite the pivotal nature of childhood trauma scenes, the conflict, sorrow, and torment within the source texts are often inadequately conveyed. Translations frequently involve undue omissions, adaptations, or distortions, thereby potentially obstructing the target audience's accurate comprehension and interpretation. Furthermore, this study establishes that a nuanced understanding of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) studies equips translators to convey trauma with greater fidelity. This contribution to literary criticism holds promise for enhancing existing translations, providing a nuanced perspective on the significance of accurately representing trauma in literary works.

KEYWORDS: translation examination; literary criticism; Natsume Sōseki; psychoanalysis; Japanese literature

1. Introduction

In the realm of world literature, Natsume Sōseki stands as an iconic figure in modern Japanese literary history, widely regarded as the foremost Japanese writer of his time (Vessel, 1993). Early studies of his works often focused on intertwining the author's life experiences with the historical backdrop of Meiji-era Japan or delving into key concepts and terms drawn from the author's lectures and other works,

such as "zokuten kyoshi" (則天去私; the abandonment of self) (e.g., Toyotaka Komiya, 1942). While scholars like Chiaki Ishihara acknowledged the merit of such research, they also noted its rigid framework, urging the incorporation of new literary criticism methods and perspectives (2014).

Michikusa (Grass on the Wayside) falls within the domain of Natsume Sōseki's autobiographical novels, composed during the later stages of his literary career. In contrast to more widely examined works like Kokoro and Meian, this novel has received comparatively less scholarly attention. Furthermore, Ishihara clearly articulated that future scholarship could potentially flourish by adopting psychological perspectives in analyzing Sōseki's works (2010). Research on *Michikusa* as well as its translation offers ample room for development.

Translation scholars generally concur that literary translation and literary criticism complement each other. Susan Bassnett (2014) and Lawrence Venuti (2008) assert that translation is a form of literary criticism, with translators interpreting and evaluating the original work, and selecting translation strategies accordingly. Antonie Berman (2009) and Andre Lefevere (1997) emphasize that literary criticism provides translators with new texts and perspectives, enriching their understanding and study of literary works. Therefore, this paper will first focus on the interpretation of this novel, based on trauma/PTSD studies theory, and then, examine the English and Chinese translation to see if the translators are able to accurately represent trauma in the original text. Moreover, this paper aims to enable translators to better appreciate literary works that have not yet been sufficiently appreciated, interpreted, and translated psychoanalytically or psychosocially.

2. Review of literature

In the field of literary studies, Natsume Sōseki is recognized as a representative figure of modern Japanese literature, and early scholarship centered on biographical and contextual readings. Then, the "Sōseki Boom" in the 1990s introduced new research perspectives from European and American academia, including linguistics, narratology, and gender studies. Explorations of Sōseki's works from a psychological viewpoint can be traced back to Ara Masahito (1953), who initiated Freudian psychoanalytic interpretations of Sōseki's writings. Kenro Tsuchii further argued in *Natsume Sōseki's Psychological World* (1976) that Sōseki's contributions paralleled those of Freud, with in-depth analyses and interpretations of human psychology, transformation, and dreams. Sōseki emerged as a rare "psychological" writer (1976). Howard Hibbett and Edwin McClellan also hailed him as a "master of psychological fiction in modern Japan" (1971, 1968). Ishihara explicitly suggested that future scholarship could flourish by adopting psychological perspectives in analyzing Sōseki's works (2010).

Michikusa is Sōseki's autobiographical novel but has received relatively less attention compared to his other works. Existing research on *Michikusa* largely falls into four categories: firstly, scholars have explored the novel's genesis within the context of the Meiji era or its familial relationships, often juxtaposing these with the author's renowned lecture, My Individualism, to explore Sōseki's development of "individualism" and "naturalism" (e.g., Matsui Nahoko, 2005; Wang Yu, 2011; Zhang Ming and Guo Xiao, 2013; Kimura Takumi, 2020); secondly, scholars have delved into the novel's narrative structure and literary techniques, scrutinizing language styles, lexical choices, and rhetorical devices, emphasizing close textual analysis (e.g., Ozawa Katsumi, 1990; Peng Qiuju, 2022); thirdly, investigations have revolved around the inner conflicts of Japanese intellectuals in society (Takashima Atsuko, 1971; Guo Xiaoli, 2014); fourthly, researchers have examined female characters, including the wife, within Sōseki's works from feminist perspectives or in conjunction with the socio-cultural milieu of the time (e.g., Tadashi

Makiko, 1996).

Research on the translation of *Michikusa* offers significant room for further exploration. For example, Atsuko Takashima (1973) conducted a comparative study of the Japanese and English versions, using McClellan's English translation (1969) as a reference. She contended, based on the concept of "ie" (家; the family) in the novel, that the English translators failed to accurately convey the ideological, cognitive, and behavioral standards of Meiji-era Japanese. Domestically, research on Sōseki's translations has primarily focused on works like *I Am a Cat, Kokoro,* and *Sanshirō*. These studies often adopt classical translation theories such as Nida's dynamic equivalence, relevance theory, and domestication and foreignization, to scrutinize character details, culturally laden terms, and other translation aspects (e.g., Wang Yunjiao, 2017; Zhang Qing, 2019; Yang Rong, 2019).

Translation scholars widely recognize the complementary relationship between literary translation and literary criticism. Scholars including Susan Bassnett (2014), Lawrence Venuti (2008), Antonie Berman (2009), and Andre Lefevere (1997) assert that translation is a type of literary criticism, where translators assess and interpret the original work, guiding their choice of translation strategies. It's highlighted that literary criticism offers translators fresh texts and viewpoints, enhancing their comprehension and analysis of literary pieces. Therefore, this paper embarks on a journey rooted in clinical psychiatry and psychology, offering a literary criticism perspective informed by trauma/PTSD theory. It primarily focuses on the childhood trauma which profoundly and negatively influences his subsequent personal growth. This approach aims to provide a novel interpretive lens for the academic community's study of *Michikusa*. Additionally, it engages in translation criticism, exploring techniques to faithfully convey the trauma depicted in the original text, thereby guiding academia and the general public to reevaluate profound classic literature. This reevaluation encompasses an exploration of trauma and recovery within the literature, further contributing to the construction of a harmonious society rooted in psychological well-being.

3. Materials and methods

The methodology employed in this study involves the construction of a comprehensive trilingual corpus, comprising an extensive list of over 1,000 entries. This corpus encompasses five published translations of Natsume Sōseki's novel *Michikusa* in both English and Chinese, along with the original Japanese source text. It is noteworthy that the Japanese novel was initially published in 1951. The selected English translations, undertaken by Edwin McClellan (1969) and Angel Ray Reilly (2017) in the Kindle edition, offer distinct linguistic renditions of the original text. Additionally, three Chinese translations contributed by Yiwen Ke (1985), Yu Wei (2015), and Qingbao Li (2016) provide a valuable multilingual dimension to the corpus.

In the course of this research, a trauma/PTSD studies lens was adopted as a novel and pertinent literary criticism approach to interpret and analyze *Michikusa*. This perspective, rooted in clinical psychiatry and psychology, offers a nuanced framework for understanding the psychological intricacies portrayed within the novel. Following this interpretative phase, meticulous attention was directed towards the manual selection of pivotal scenes and sentences related to the central character, Kenzō, and his childhood trauma within the original Japanese source text. These chosen segments were then systematically cross-referenced across the English and Chinese translations. This methodological step serves to highlight the fidelity of translation in conveying the nuanced psychological underpinnings inherent in the protagonist's experiences. To facilitate the systematic organization and analysis of the

corpus, an Excel spreadsheet was employed. This spreadsheet comprises seven columns, each dedicated to one entry, housing the original Japanese source text and its corresponding translations (Since the author has plans to utilize this corpus for future research, I decided to refrain from sharing this corpus at this time). Complementing these entries are concise comments provided by the author. These annotations serve as a critical tool for discerning subtle nuances in translation choices and their potential impact on the portrayal of trauma within the narrative.

This methodology, combining a meticulous trilingual corpus construction with a specialized trauma-focused literary criticism approach, is poised to yield insights into the intricate dynamics of translation fidelity, particularly in relation to the depiction of psychological trauma. By examining the interplay between original text and translated versions, this study seeks to contribute to a nuanced understanding of *Michikusa* and its representation in different linguistic contexts.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Trauma/PTSD studies

David Stahl is one of the few scholars interpreting Japanese novels based on trauma/PTSD studies. In his books (2018, 2020), writers such as Murasaki Shikibu (pp. 973–1014), Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), Ōoka Shōhei (1909–1988), and Ōe Kenzaburō (1935–2023), are approached and appreciated as artists who deal with trauma and are deeply concerned with the psychology of traumatized people. Based on an interpretive framework derived from trauma/PTSD studies theory, he explains the protagonists' behavior in an enlightening and convincing manner.

Contemporary trauma studies emphasize that "trauma exists outside conventional forms of perception, representation, and transmission" (Simine, 2018, p. 144). Also, "foundational trauma" is a term used to mark the turning point(s) of people's lives from "normal" to "post-traumatic" (Stahl, 2018, p. 12). Lifton points out that the devastating psychic pain interrupts the "formative-symbolizing process" and that traumatized people can enter a state of "desymbolization" (1996, p. 6). To understand traumatized individuals, a crucial step is to examine "where they have become 'stuck' and around which specific traumatic event(s) they have built their secondary psychic elaborations" (Stahl, 2018, p. 12). Both Herman and Stahl ascribe the core of foundational social trauma to betrayal. The victim will not only suffer damage to the memory system but also have crises regarding loss of safety and relational disconnection. Traumatic events shatter the victims' assumptions about the world and basic trust and bring about a loss of "attachment and meaning that link individual and community" (Herman, 1992, p. 51). According to Herman, "the sense of safety in the world, or basic trust, is acquired in earliest life in the relationship with the first caretaker" (ibid). When people are in terror or danger, familial bonds are the first recourse to seek "comfort and protection" (ibid). If they are broken, they will feel completely abandoned and alone, that "they belong more to the dead than to the living" (ibid). The result of social betrayal is devastating and can influence a person's whole life.

In the next section, this paper will analyze the English and Chinese translations while explaining the childhood trauma as well as its impact on the protagonists' behavioral patterns and interpersonal relationships.

4.2. Synopsis

Michikusa, published in 1915, is a retrospective autobiographical work narrated by an omniscient third-person narrator, in which the alter ego/protagonist is named Kenzō. The period dealt with in this

novel is relatively short. It began in 1903 when Sōseki returned from London and became a professor of English literature at Tokyo Imperial University. The novel ends in 1905, the year before he resigned and became a full-time writer. Besides the descriptions of his contemporary interactions with his wife, father-in-law, sister, and brother, as well as his foster parents, intrusive memory experiences of his traumatic childhood appear with increasing frequency. Thus, the actual period of this novel spans about forty years.

Kenzō was born in Tokyo and was given away for adoption to his foster parents, Shimada and Otsune when he was two. Due to Shimada's affair some six years later, their marriage ended in divorce, and they married other people. After they separate, Kenzō is returned to his natal family when he is eight. Following a falling out between Shimada and his natal father regarding the "ownership" of Kenzō, the adoption is officially ended. After he grows up, Kenzō gets married to Sumi and goes to London to study for two years. He comes back and works as an English professor in Tokyo and is overworked and constantly feels fatigue and irritation. He has a fraught relationship with his wife children, and other relatives since they all consider him the source of money. Surprisingly, after fifteen or sixteen years, Shimada and Otsune begin to socialize with him with the same greedy aim.

4.3. Translation examination of childhood trauma based on the trauma/PTSD studies

One of the specific aspects of this work readers should initially be informed about is that the story of Kenzō's childhood is constituted by a third-person, omniscient, retrospective narrator (Stahl, unpublished work). The narrator exhibits the ability to make connections and determine the causality of the past and the present and its implications for the future. In contrast, since the protagonist's childhood experiences are so traumatic, they have been dissociated. Therefore, these events and experiences and their afterlives, are by and large constituted through the omniscient narrative perspective.

4.3.1. Childhood trauma with his foster parents

Scene 1:

「御前は何処で生まれたの」

こう聞かれるたびに健三は、彼の記憶のうちに見える赤い門――高藪で蔽われた小さな赤い門の家を挙げて 1.答えなければならなかった。御常は何時この質問を掛けても、健三が差し支えなく同じ返事の出来るように、彼を仕込んだのである。彼の返事は無論器械的であった。2.けれども彼女はそんな事には一向頓着しなかった。

「健坊、御前本当は誰の子なの、隠さずにそう御いい」

彼は苦しめられるような心持がした。3.時には苦しいより腹が立った。4.向うの聞きたがる返事を与えずに、わざと黙っていたくなった。

「御前誰が一番好きだい。御父ッさん？　御母さん？」

健三は彼女の意を迎えるために、向うの望むような返事をするのが厭で堪らなかった。　彼は無言のまま棒のように立ッていた。それをただ年歯の行かないためとのみ解釈した御常の観察は、むしろ簡単に過ぎた。5.彼は心のうちで彼女のこうした態度を忌み悪んだのである (Sōseki, 1951, p. 131).

Sometimes she would ask, "Where were you born?" And Kenzō would 1. have to describe the house that he could even now remember—the little house with the red gate and the grove. His answers were of course mechanical since Otsune had seen to it that they would be precisely what she wanted to hear. 2. But this did not seem to detract from her pleasure at hearing them repeated. "Whose child are you really? Come on, tell me the truth." It was a terrible ordeal for Kenzō. 3.

> Sometimes, he felt more anger than pain and would stand stiff as a board, refusing to answer. But Otsune would simplemindedly decide that his silence was due to his boyish shyness; 5. she did not know how much he hated her at such times (McClellan, 1969, pp. 66, 67).
>
> "Where were you born?" she would ask. Every time she asked, Kenzoh[1] pictured a vermilion gate and a house nestled in a thicket of brush beyond it. It was the only place he could think of, for Otsune had conditioned him to respond accordingly whenever he was asked. 8. And she was not at all troubled by the mechanical nature of his reply.
>
> "Kenny boy, whose boy are you, really? Tell me the truth, now."
> Kenzoh felt tormented. 4. At times, he grudgingly went along with her; at others, he took offense and clammed up rather than give her the satisfaction she was looking for.
>
> "Who do you like better, mama or papa?"
> Loathing the idea of playing up to her, Kenzoh stood as stiff as a board and refused to say a word. She mistook his reaction as evidence of his tender years, all the while underestimating the extent to which 5. he detested her insensitivity (Reilly, 2017, pp. 1348-1353).

This scene is integral to Kenzō's dissociated foundational trauma in that it contains the overwhelming mental torment inflicted on Kenzō and the couple's selfishness/greed/ possessiveness toward him. Also, it has the sprout of Kenzō's rebellion and desire for freedom. The unrelenting interrogations result in his defensive mechanism of "unwillingness/inability to openly express himself to others" that lasts throughout his life when interacting with his wife, children, siblings, and other relatives when they question him (Stahl, n.d.; Gu, 2024). In turn, the lack of emotional expression and honest interpersonal communication leads to an enduring and profound sense of "frustration and alienation" (ibid).

This scene of Kenzō's childhood trauma occupies an important place in the novel. Nevertheless, translators fail to pay close enough attention to the traumatic elements and twist the original meaning unwittingly. First, Reilly omits the phrase, "1.答えなければならなかった (Kotaenakereba naranakatta)," which expresses that Kenzō has no choice but to answer in this way because he is being forced by the Shimadas to do so, as opposed to him replying of his own free will and intention. By omitting this phrase, Reilly waters down the coerced, begrudging nature of Kenzō's behavior and the despairing aspect of the experience. Besides, it weakens the brutal image of two adults who ruthlessly manipulate and coerce a young child.

"2.けれども彼女はそんな事には一向頓着しなかった(keredomo kanojo wa sonna koto niwa ikko tonchaku shinakatta)" means "however, she was not concerned about this kind of things at all." McClellan's translation, "but this did not seem to detract from her pleasure at hearing them repeated," does convey the sense that Otsune is enjoying interrogating and programming Kenzō. However, in the source text, the subject is "Otsune." "頓着しない (tonchaku shinai; indifference; do not care/concern)" shows that Otsune indulges herself in extracting the answers and willfully chooses to ignore Kenzō's unwillingness to comply. The narrator explicitly tells readers that Otsune's manipulation is merciless since she "does not care/is not concerned" about Kenzō's thoughts and feelings "at all (一向; ikkō)." By changing the subject and omitting "does not care at all," McClellan's translation blocks readers from understanding the original meaning that even though the foster parents have noticed Kenzō's reluctance,

[1] Reilly translates the protagonist's name "健三 (Kenzō)" as Kenzoh, instead of using a macron.

they do not relent. Accordingly, his translation dilutes their ruthlessness. In addition, being ignored/ neglected/ dismissed is integral to Kenzō's childhood trauma and has negative effects throughout his life. Sadly, the couple still neglect Kenzō even after almost twenty years. By omitting this word, readers will miss the original, initial, and significant neglect of Kenzō's foundational trauma. Subsequently, readers will lose the chance to experience his delicate feelings and link the couple's brutality and indifference with Kenzō's post-traumatic personality of detachment, egocentrism, and seeking care and attention.

Reilly omits "3.時には苦しいより腹が立った (tokiniwa kurushii yori haragatatta; sometimes, he felt more anger than pain)." The significance of this sentence is that it serves as Kenzō's psychological transition. The narrator says that Kenzō feels pain and anger simultaneously, and his subsequent behavior is that he deliberately falls silent and perversely refuses to respond to show his resistance and mask his hatred. Moreover, it is the first time in the novel that Kenzō is shown feeling anger toward the couple, and it marks the beginning of Kenzō's yearning for an unrestrained autonomous self and freedom. It is from this time that he begins to protect himself actively. Therefore, this sentence sets up the emotional background for his psychological defense.

Another point worth noticing is that Reilly's manner of translation (the whole book) is inclined to fully express and explain the original meaning, sometimes even over-explaining. Therefore, omitting is not his usual style, so it is highly possible that he does so intentionally. In this scene, the repetition of the description of Kenzō's emotion may have led Reilly to ignore this seemingly inessential sentence. This suggests that without the support of trauma/PTSD studies, it is not easy for translators to determine what is significant in this regard. As a result, without this description of Kenzō's psychological status, readers may find the transition of his feelings from being tormented to developing his defense mechanism to be abrupt. Also, it is essential for readers to have access to the multiple layers of Kenzō's delicate feelings to explain the causality between his childhood and his post-traumatic character.

There is a consensus that literary translators may be creative about rewriting the source text to achieve the goal of semantic equivalence in the target text and their translation is based on their interpretation of the novel (Bassnett, 2014; Karjagdiu & Mrasori, 2021). Omitting consecutive sentences diverges from the standard practice in literary translation. In Example. 4[2], McClellan omits three sentences in a row. His choice of omission possibly stems from the profusion of analogous interrogatives since "who do you like better" is noteworthily the sixth occurrence of a similar query within the initial half of Chapter 41, a segment comprising fewer than 200 English words (Gu, 2024). Nevertheless, the recurring interrogations effectively highlights the exasperation induced by the incessant questioning, thus illuminating Otsune's possessive fixation on Kenzō. Moreover, since Kenzō is their foster son, the couple also constantly demands verbal reassurances of affection from him through repeated questions. According to the omniscient narrator, Kenzō considers these endless interrogations as torments, and he has no choice but to "be silent." "Being silent" is an important theme in Kenzō's childhood trauma since it is one of his defensive mechanisms which is using silent resistance as a cover for dissatisfaction and solidly formed loathing. McClellan's omission suggests a potential unfamiliarity with trauma/PTSD studies, leading to an oversight regarding the pivotal role of these sentences in Kenzō's foundational

[2] "4. At times, he grudgingly went along with her; at others, he took offense and clammed up rather than give her the satisfaction she was looking for.

"Who do you like better, mama or papa?"

Loathing the idea of playing up to her, Kenzoh stood as stiff as a board and refused to say a word. She mistook his reaction as evidence of his tender years, all the while underestimating the extent to which 5. he detested her insensitivity (Reilly, 2017, pp. 1349-1353).

trauma (Gu, 2024). Instead, they are regarded as superfluous verbiage and consequently omitted to enhance the paragraph's overall coherence.

The last example is "5. In his heart, he despised this attitude of hers (彼は心のうちて彼女のこうした態度を忌み悪んたのてある; Kare wa kokoro no uchi de kanojo no ko¯shita taido wo imiikunda no dearu)." McClellan translates it as "5. she did not know how much he hated her at such times." He does not mention "he hates her attitude" in the original meaning, and adds "she didn't know." The translators changed the subject from "he" to "she," accordingly, the focus is twisted. "忌み悪む (iminikumu; despised, hatred)" is a powerful word to express the full extent of Kenzo¯'s emotion. However, McClellan's translation weakens this aspect. Besides, the sentence contains Sensei's future character traits, using silence as a cover for his hatred and dissatisfaction.

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the translators inadvertently or intentionally omit several sentences to avoid seemingly monotonous repetitiveness, overlook or fail to appreciate crucial phrases, and change the focal figure of the sentence. They probably make these changes to give the narrative a better flow, but these alternations/modifications reveal that they do not recognize this scene as integral to dissociated foundational trauma. Due to translators' inability to connect the foundational trauma and the aftereffects, readers are unfortunately deprived of the opportunity to do so themselves. Also, their translations dilute the conflicts between Kenzō and his foster parents, Otsune in particular, as well as Kenzō's various intensely negative feelings towards them. McClellan's omission of "don't care/unconcerned" obstructs readers from noticing this emotional trigger, which still plays a significant role in Kenzō post-traumatic interpersonal relationships. Ke, Wei, and Li handle this passage well.

4.3.2. Childhood trauma with his biological father

When Kenzō is returned to his natal family, he is effectively rejected by both his biological father and Shimada at the same time.

Scene 2:

6.両方から突き返されて、両方の間をまごまごしていた。同時に海のものも食い、時には山のものにも手を出した (Sōseki, 1951, p. 295).

6. A wandering creature that belonged nowhere, he found his food sometimes in the water and sometimes on land (McClellan, 1969, p. 149).

6. Spurned by both, he was stranded between the two. Sometimes he ate from the sea; at others, he foraged in the mountains (Reilly, 2017, p. 3086).

6.两边把他推来推去，他在当中打转 (Ke, 1985, p. 213)。

6.两边把他推来推去，他只能在中间打转 (Wei, 2015, p. 198)。

As previously mentioned, rejection is one of the most significant psychological themes in the third segment of Kenzō's foundational trauma. After being returned to his natal family, Kenzō suffers not only rejection, disregard, and neglect, but he is also treated as an object/possession by both his father and Shimada. Legally, Kenzō is still registered as Shimada's adopted son and Shimada is cunning enough to plan to reclaim Kenzō as soon as he is old enough to make money. Considering the economic loss, Kenzō's biological father decides to provide only the minimum care necessary to prevent him from starving. Due to the two fathers' calculation, "両方から突き返されて、両方の間をまごまごしていた (ryōhō kara tsukikaesarete, ryōhō no aida wo magomago shiteita; Kenzō was being kicked around, at the same time, he was wandering aimlessly)" (Sōseki, 1951, p. 295). "突き返される (tsukikaesareru)" means

"being rejected, being sent back" and "まごまご (magomago)" always describes somebody who is confused/flurried/bewildered and hesitates in coming to a decision. The two words are essential to show the cruel rejection by his caretakers. McClellan's "a wandering creature that belonged nowhere" does not clearly show the meaning of "rejection." Though Reilly does convey the meaning of being "spurned," "strand" is not very suitable to translate "magomago". Similarly, Ke and Wei's translation is "Being pushed back and forth on both sides, he was left in the middle." Their translation is not wrong. However, Reilly, Ke, and Wei's translation would be improved by including the original meaning of "wander uncertainly or hesitatingly, aimlessly." Without the precise representation of the two crucial words, it would be more difficult for readers to understand the rejection Kenzō suffers since this is the only sentence which actually has the word "rejection" and shows readers that Kenzō gets physically rejected by both of them, while other sentences are inclined to describe the two father figures' thoughts and readers might consider that Kenzō is only rejected psychologically[3]. Also, "magomago" gives readers a sense of Kenzō's powerlessness and helplessness, showing his confusion about this overwhelming situation which can be related to his reaction to his father's sudden change of attitude when he starts to live in his natal family[4]. Moreover, this sentence can be remotely connected to the description of Kenzō's second daughter, "Kenzō would occasionally find her wandering about the house looking a little lost" (McClellan, 1969, p. 132). Both Kenzō and his second daughter are considered failures by their fathers. Therefore, "wandering aimlessly" is also an important psychological theme for transgenerational trauma. Consequently, those four translations water down the cruel treatment, including rejection and dehumanization, Kenzō suffered from two father figures and his helplessness and bewilderment at that time.

My modified translation is "Being rejected and pushed around by them, he was wandering aimlessly in between" (English translation). "他被两边推来搡去，被夹在中间的他只能原地徘徊，不知如何是好" (Chinese translation).

From the analysis above, the translators clearly do not appreciate the significance of "dissociated foundational trauma" upon which traumatized people unconsciously build their secondary psychic elaborations. Accordingly, the translators fail to examine the related details. Often, traumatic experiences are related to people's first caretakers. This holds true for Kenzō, whose childhood trauma is related to his foster parents and his father. The negative feelings toward first caretakers can endure throughout the traumatized person's life. He/she can feel socially betrayed and this in turn can influence their sense of connection with others. Therefore, for translators, paying attention to the traumatic events of the protagonist's parents and childhood is crucial. Moreover, since every single detail could serve as an emotional trigger and have implications for the emergence of the protagonist's psychological defense mechanisms and other posttraumatic aftereffects, translators should consider such matters.

The examinations of these two scenes suggest translators' inability to appreciate the significance of "dissociated foundational trauma" upon which traumatized people unconsciously build their secondary psychic elaborations, especially in Scene. 1. Translators deliberately omit the repetitive interrogations and sentences regarding Kenzō's psychological state. With the help of trauma/PTSD studies, they would be able to understand the definition of foundational trauma pay more attention to the details related to it,

[3] For example, after the sentence in question, the narrator says that "to his father and Shimada both, he was not a person. To the former he was no more than an unwanted piece of furniture; to the latter, he was some kind of investment that might prove profitable at a later date (McClellan, 1969, p. 149).

[4] "His father had always smiled at him in Shimada and Otsune's presence. But now Kenzō was a burden foisted on him; and the smile was replaced by scowls" (McClellan, 1969, p. 149).

including emotional triggers and parallels, and engage themselves more in this novel more empathetically.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis and examinations above, it is evident that translators unwittingly make mistakes when rendering this novel, and a thorough understanding of trauma/PTSD studies is helpful for improving existing translations.

There are significant takeaways that offer translators a better understanding and appreciation. In this novel, the narrator is omniscient in that he gives translators access to Kenzō's dissociated foundation trauma and explanations of Kenzō's current psychodynamics. The narrator/author, not the protagonist is opening up and pouring out his past and its aftereffects to the readers/translators. Thus, being able to distinguish the narrator and the protagonist is crucial for accurately representing trauma, especially in situations involving foundational trauma, intrusive memory, and recovery. Moreover, recognizing essential signals with the help of trauma/PTSD studies is another essential task for translators. For example, if translators are familiar with this perspective, they would pay more attention to the scenes concerning childhood memory.

In addition to the knowledge and understanding of trauma/PTSD studies, by immersing themselves in the story and becoming witnesses and reading and interpreting the novel empathetically, translator-witnesses will be able to recognize the intertwined causality between the past and the present, as well as the future, notice the innumerable parallels between characters, and figure out the psychosocial dynamics of post-traumatic interpersonal relationships. Combining theoretical background knowledge and reader-witness responsibility, they can discover the foundational traumas and their aftereffects, identify and understand circumstantial triggers, behavioral reenactments, and the underlying reasons for the protagonist's seemingly unwarranted anger. Translators will also be able to appreciate critical self-reflection and self-examination, distinguish the narrator and narratee, and recognize potential signs of healing and recovery. Only in this way, can translators accurately represent the trauma in the original text.

Finally, the result confirmed that trauma/PTSD studies are an innovative methodology to help translators recognize traumatic elements and adequately represent trauma. Trauma/PTSD studies are not only useful for the translation of traumatic testimonies but also for literary translators. Though many serious literary works are not yet appreciated/categorized as traumatic narratives, the application of this theoretical approach will help translators interpret and appreciate such works from an informed psychoanalytical perspective and recognize and represent the traumatic elements accurately and effectively.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, resources, data curation, writing—original draft preparation, QG; writing—review and editing, investigation, supervision, project administration, LY. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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