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《论语》中“君子”的英译比较研究

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摘要:《论语》是中国古代儒家思想文化的代表作,在近现代的典籍英译中占有重要地位。国外汉学家和国内学者在《论语》英译中付出了艰辛的劳动,并取得了较大的成就。《论语》中提及的一些基本概念,诸如仁、义、礼、知、信、君子、小人等核心概念具有丰富的思想底蕴和文化内涵,可以称得上微言大义。不同的英文版本对于这些概念的英译既有相同的见解,又存在一定的差异,通过比较研究理雅各(James Legge),威利(Arthur Waley),辜鸿铭,吴国珍4种英译本,探讨中西文化和不同译者在看待人类普遍天性上的异同以及英文互译的差异。

关键词: 论语; 君子; 英译; 文化异同

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A comparative study on the English translations of the core concept “Junzi” in *The Analects*

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Abstract: *The Analects* has long been regarded as one of the most significant works of Confucianism, which holds an important position in the translations of Chinese classics. Both the sinologists and the Chinese scholars made great contribution to translating *The Analects*, which not only paves the way for the transmission of Confucian thoughts but also provides a window for the world to know Chinese culture. *The Analects* introduces some basic concepts that are culturally meaningful. “Junzi” is repeatedly mentioned, which indicates that Confucianism attaches great importance to the cultivation and perfection of one’s character. Therefore, the study on the translations of “Junzi” in different English versions is interesting and rewarding. This paper makes a comparative study of the English translations of “Junzi” by James Legge, Arthur Waley, Gu Hongming, and Wu Guozhen. First, through explaining the meaning of “Junzi” in Confucian study, it discusses the translators’ understanding and translation of this concept in terms of perfection of one’s character. Then, compared with the translation of “Xiaoren”, it examines and emphasizes the translation of “Junzi”. The paper suggests that translators from different cultures share something in common in their understanding of humans’ good qualities. The translation of Chinese classics is a process

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of seeking common ground while reserving differences.

Key words: *The Analects*; “Junzi”; English translation; cultural similarity and difference

孔子生活在古代的春秋时期(551 BC—479 BC),他是一位具有世界影响力的思想家和教育家。《论语》以对话体的形式记载了孔子及其弟子的言行,对中国文化的发展和国民品格的塑造起到了推动作用。其中包含许多重要概念,例如“仁”“义”“礼”“知”“君子”等。本文重点探讨和辨析不同英译本对于“君子”的理解和英译,旨在探索中西文化在涉及人类品行描述方面的异同。笔者从众多的英译本中选取了4种作为研究对象,译者分别是国外汉学家理雅各(James Legge)、威利(Arthur Waley)以及中国学者辜鸿铭和吴国珍。以上译本的时间跨度约有一百五十多年,理雅各的译本出版于1861年,威利的译本诞生于1938年,辜鸿铭在1898年出版了首部由中国人自己独立翻译的《论语》,吴国珍的译本出版于2015年。由于文化背景的差异和时代的变迁,国外译者与国内译者对于《论语》中“君子”这一概念的理解上是否存在差异,有何相似之处?本文力求对以上问题进行探索性的解答。

一、有关“君子”的理解与翻译

“君子”是儒家学说中一个具有重要意义的概念,是对一类人的指称。《论语》中的“君子”,有时指“有德者”,有时指“有位者”^{[1]3}。“有德者”侧重强调具有高贵品格和德行的人;“有位者”重在说明具有一定社会地位并身居要职的人。吴国珍认为《论语》中提及的“君子”大多指“身居高位的达官贵族”^{[1]23},除此之外,在个别场合还可以指具有良好修养的人(近似于英文中的gentleman)^{[1]23}。因而,要辨别“君子”究竟何所指,需要根据语境来加以仔细区分。作为中国民间教育的创始人和伟大的教育家——孔子,他教育弟子门人要好学力行,努力成为“君子”,即兼顾学识修养又要兼顾人格品行。为了论述明晰,本文将对《论语》及其译文中提及的“君子”进行分类:一类是“君子”应具备的品质,就“有德者”和“在位者”而言;一类是“君子”与“小人”的对比说明,“君子”应具备的品质包括哪些呢?

(1)子曰:“学而时习之,不亦说乎?有朋自远方来,不亦乐乎?人不知而不愠,不亦君子

乎?”(《论语·学而》1-1)^①

孔子一生重视教育,强调学习的重要性。“孔子之教人以学,重在学为人之道。孔子论学,范围虽广,然必兼心地修养与人格完成之两义。”^{[2]4}“君子”对于有志于学的人而言恰是一种做人行事的楷模。对于例(1)中的“人不知而不愠,不亦君子乎?”学者和译者给出的解释略有出入。钱穆译为:“别人不知道我,我心不存些微拂郁不欢之意,不真是一位修养有成德的君子吗?”^{[2]5}杨伯峻的译为:“人家不了解我,我却不怨恨,不也是君子吗?”^{[1]2}辜鸿铭译为:“一个人即使不能被人称道,却仍然不怨恨、不恼怒,而是泰然处之,不也是有德行的君子吗?”^{[3]2}吴国珍的译文如下:“不为他人所了解也不恼怒,这样的人不也是个君子吗?”^{[4]52}根据以上译文,“人不知”的意思大概归为两种:一是“不被他人了解或注意”;二是“不被他人称道”。应该说,两种理解都讲得通。子曰:“古之学者为己,今之学者为人。”(《宪问》14-24)大意与此相合。孔子又说:“君子病无能焉,不病人之不已知也。”(《卫灵公》15-19)“不患人之不已知,患其不能也。”(《宪问》14-30)可见,孔子强调的修身之道在于“凡事求诸于己”,他倡导做人应首先努力提高个人的学识和修养,即使暂时不能为人所了解,也不应怨天尤人。对(1)的英译:

a. 理雅各的英译

Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?

b. 威利的英译

To remain unsoured even though one's merits are unrecognised by others, is that not after all what is expected of a gentleman?

c. 辜鸿铭的英译

But he is truly a wise and good man who feels no discomposure even when he is not noticed of men.

d. 吴国珍的英译

Isn't he a gentleman who is not annoyed for not

^①全文中所有的《论语》原文都引自钱穆的《论语新解》(第三版),北京:生活·读书·新知三联书店,2012。

being understood? ①

在上述4位译者对例(1)给出的英译中,“君子”被分别译为“a man of complete virtue”“a gentle man”“a wise and good man”以及“a gentle man”;“人不知”被译为“take no note of him”“are unrecognised”“is not noticed of men”以及“not being understood”。由此可见,理雅各对“君子”的英译更强调具备完善道德品质的人,即“拥有美德的人”;而威利和吴国珍都采用了英文中的“绅士”(gentleman)来进行对等。根据《麦克米伦高阶英语词典》,“gentleman”的英文解释为“a man who is always polite and honest and considers other people's needs; an old word for a man from a family in a high social class”^{[5]591}。两位译者此处显然是选取了第一个英文意思,更看重“君子”所蕴含的良好品质和修养。辜鸿铭的翻译则从智慧和德行两方面来对君子进行概括。尽管侧重略微有所不同,但中西译者都把“君子”视作一种具有“真、善、美”的人格榜样。统观全篇,在“君子”这一概念的翻译上,理雅各使用“a/the superior man”较多;威利通篇使用“a/the gentleman”;辜鸿铭通篇使用“a wise man or a wise and good man”;吴国珍则根据语义的变化分别使用了“a/the virtuous man or a man of virtue”“a superior man”和“a gentleman”,其中“a superior man”的使用最为普遍。

《论语》是一部记载孔子及其弟子言行的文化典籍。如前所述,全书中并未对“君子”给出一个确切明了的定义,而是陈列了孔子及其弟子的多种理解与阐释。因此想要真正理解“君子”的含义,我们大概只能通过归纳,看看“君子”究竟符合哪些言行举止或具备什么道德品质?首先,让我们从例(2)入手来思考一下孔子及其弟子眼中的“君子”具有什么样的内涵或外延?

(2) 有子曰:“其为人也孝弟,而好犯上者,鲜矣。不好犯上,而好作乱者,未之有也。君子务本,本立而道生。孝弟也者,其为仁之本与?”(《学而》1-2)

在例(2)中,孔子强调“君子务本”。“仁”是“君子”的至高追求,而孝弟(孝悌)又是实践仁德的根本或基础,因而“君子”必要以孝弟为做人行事之根本。在上文中,孔子说道:“孝弟也者,其为仁之本与?”父母与子女的关系是人类社会中最基本的一种人际关系,即血缘关系。

“仁”强调与重视人与人之间的关爱,而此种关爱最根本的一个表现就是父母对子女的养育之恩和子女对父母的孝顺之心。钱穆先生解析到:“仁者,人群相处之大道。孝弟乃仁之本,人能有孝弟之心,自能有仁心仁道,犹木之生于根。”^{[2]6}中国文化看重人伦之道,孝道更是深植于中国的文化基因之中。要弘扬人与人之间的友爱,儒家思想认为必先始于家庭成员间的关系。因此,“君子”若要治国平天下,须先齐家,齐家在修身。“君子务本,本立而道生。孝弟也者,其为仁之本与?”的译文如下:

a. The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses are naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission, are they not the root of all benevolent actions?

b. It is upon the trunk that a gentleman works. When that is firmly set up, The Way grows. And surely proper behaviour towards parents and elder brothers is the trunk of Goodness?

c. A wise man devotes his attention to what is essential in the foundation of life. When the foundation is laid, wisdom will come. Now, to be a good son and a good citizen——do not these form the foundation of a moral life?

d. A superior man strives to establish his moral foundation, on which he forms his lifelong principle. Filial piety and fraternal love are the foundation of benevolence!

以上译文的焦点集中在“君子务本,本立而道生”这两句话的翻译上。针对“君子”,理雅各和吴国珍使用了“the/a superior man”“superior”作为一个形容词,如果修饰人的话,一般有如下几个释义:一是 better than someone else in quality or skill; 二是 having a higher status or position than someone^{[5]1441}。所以此词既可以是“有德者”,也可以指“有位者”。辜鸿铭此处的翻译稍微有些潦草。例(1)中他使用了“a wise and good man”来翻译“君子”,在例(2)中却只用“a wise

①英语译文按照 a, b, c, d 的顺序排列,译者分别对应为 Legge, Waley, 辜鸿铭和吴国珍。译文分别选自 Legge, James, Trans. The Analects of Confucius [M]. The University of Adelaide. (E-book). Waley, Arthur, Trans. The Analects [M]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1998. 辜鸿铭译. The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius [M]. 天津:天津社会科学出版社, 2014. 吴国珍译注.《论语》最新英文全译全注本(A New Annotated English Version of The Analects of Confucius) [M]. 福州:福建教育出版社, 2015。

man”。此段引文的另一个翻译要点是“本”的理解,这里的根本或基础是指什么呢?4位译者的译文如下:“what is radical”“the trunk”“what is essential in the foundation of life”“moral foundation”。“radical”的一个英文释义为“relating to the most basic or important part of something”^{[5] 1162}。威利在翻译时为了便于西方读者理解而给“trunk”加了注,注释为“i. e. Upon what is fundamental, as opposed to ‘the twigs’, i. e. small arts and accomplishments, which the gentleman leaves to his inferiors”。威利在翻译此词时采取了异化的翻译策略(Foreignization),向英语为母语的人介绍了中国哲学中的一个重要概念“本末之分”。辜译和吴译都采取了“意译”而非“直译”,突出了原文的内涵,即道德的修养。另外一个关键词“道”也是一个中国化色彩很浓的观念与词汇。在不同的语境和场合下,“道”有着不同的意思,可以被理解为“天道”(the law of Heaven)、真理(the truth)、正确合理的原则(the Doctrine, the right principle)。庄子在《庄子》一书中开宗明义地讲道:“道可道,非常道”。由于“道”的不可言说,许多译者采用了“Tao”的译法。理雅各的“all practical courses”有些笼统;威利的“The Way”对于西方读者可能会有不知所云的感觉,毕竟西方文化中没有“道”的对应词;辜鸿铭的“wisdom”则有以偏概全之嫌,似乎理解有些狭窄;吴国珍的译文“lifelong principle”相对比较切合原文,因此更佳。

孔子的一条重要教学理念就是鼓励学生“好学”。孔子所言的“好学”意思丰富。它不仅仅指学问上的精进,更强调人的修养提高与品格的升华。学无止境,故君子必要力求“是日新,苟日新,日日新。”易象言:“天行健,君子以自强不息。”此亦与孔子意相近。那么,具体的实践途径有哪些呢?

(3) 子曰:“君子不重则不威。学则不固。主忠信。无友不如己者。过则勿惮改。”(《学而》1-8)

a. If the scholar be not grave, he will not call forth any veneration, and his learning will not be solid. Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles. Have no friends not equal to yourself. When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.

b. If a gentleman is frivolous, he will lose the respect of his inferiors and lack firm ground upon which

to build up his education. First and foremost he must learn to be faithful to his superiors, to keep promises, to refuse the friendship of all who are not like him. And if he finds he has made a mistake, then he must not be afraid of admitting the fact and amending his ways.

c. A wise man who is not serious will not inspire respect; what he learns will not remain permanent. Make conscientiousness and sincerity your first principles. Have no friends who are not as yourself. When you have had bad habits do not hesitate to change them.

d. Without stately manners a superior man cannot stand on dignity, nor can he lay a solid learning foundation. He should hold the sense of loyalty and faithfulness as prime principle, and have no friends who are lower levels. When he has faults, he should not be afraid to correct them.

本章的英译主要集中于两点。一是关于“不重”的理解与翻译。4位译者分别将其译为:“not grave”“frivolous”“not serious”“without stately manners”。前3位译者都将“重”理解为庄重而严肃;吴译似乎只强调了庄重的举止,而忽视了内心的态度和其他方面的外在表现。二是关于“无友不如己”的翻译。对于此句的理解历来颇有争议。常言道:“物以类聚,人以群分。”“道不同,不相为谋。”在孔子看来,朋友交往的基础应该讲求“志同道合”。钱穆解释说:“师友皆所以辅仁进德,故择友如择师,必择胜我者。能具此心,自知见贤思齐,择善固执,虚己向学,谦恭自守,贤者亦必乐与我友矣。”^{[2]12}因此,笔者认为,“无友不如己”重在说明志同道合与谨慎择友,从而才能“以友辅仁”。在谨慎择友方面,孔子有“益者三友和损者三友”之辨。4个英译中,理雅各和吴国珍的译文表意不明确,容易产生歧义。例如吴译“have no friends who are lower levels”,“lower levels”究竟是针对什么而言,是地位、品德、学识还是财富,此处表达的不清楚。此外,“君子”,无论是“有德者”抑或“有位者”,都应该谨言慎行、言行合一。孔子十分看重言谈话语,反对“巧言令色”,提倡“讷于言”而“敏于行”。就“有德者”而言,言行不一会导致失信于人,有违高尚的道德品行;就“有位者”而言,言行一致才有可能取信于民,不矜功不掩过。以下两则英译

在语义和句型方面都较好地传达了原意。

(4) 子贡问君子。子曰：“先行其言而后从之。”(《为政》2-13)

a. He acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his actions.

b. He does not preach what he practises till he has practised what he preaches.

c. A wise and good man is one who acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his actions.

d. First put your words into practice; then say what has been done accordingly.

(5) 子曰：“君子耻其言而过其行。”(《宪问》14-29)

a. The Master said, “The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.”

b. The Master said, “A gentleman is ashamed to let his words outrun his deeds.”

c. Confucius answered, “A wise man is ashamed to say much; he prefers to do more.”

d. The Master said, “A superior man considers it a shame to have more words than deeds.”

“义”是儒家思想的一个重要概念。简言之，“义”就是正确的道德取向与合理的行为方式。毫无疑问，这是一个社会建构的观念，它的正确与否和历史时代、文化背景、国家地域有很大的关系。然而，从整个人类社会来看，一些价值观念具有普遍的意义，因而被广泛接受的。英语中有一些对应词可以用来表示“义”，比如“righteousness”“justice”“what is right”和“a just cause”。“righteous”的英文释义为“morally good or correct”；“justice”的英文释义为“treatment of people that is morally right”^{[5]1222}。做事是否符合“义”是一个重要的是非判断标准。作为一种道义，它或重于人的生命。孔子的“杀身成仁”和孟子的“舍生取义”便是此意。“君子”，特别是身居高位的官员应该以“义”作为施政的要义。《论语》中的以下章节皆强调“义”的重要。

(6) 子曰：“君子之于天下也，无适也，无莫也，义与之比。”(《里仁》4-10)

a. The superior man, in the world, does not set his mind either for anything, or against anything; what is right he will follow.

b. A gentleman in his dealing with the world has

neither enmities nor affections; but wherever he sees Right he ranges himself beside it.

c. A wise man in his judgment of the world, has no predilections nor prejudices; he is on the side of what is right.

d. To a superior man, there is nothing in the world that he ought to do or ought not to do. He just does what is righteous.

(7) 子曰：“君子义以为质，礼以行之，孙以出之，信以成之，君子哉！”(《卫灵公》15-17)

a. The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules of propriety. He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This is indeed a superior man.

b. The gentleman who takes the right as his material to work upon and ritual as the guide in putting what is right into practice, who is modest in setting out his projects and faithful in getting them to their conclusion, he indeed is a true gentleman.

c. A wise and good man makes Right the substance of his being; he carries it out with judgment and good sense; he speaks it with modesty; and he attains it with sincerity—such a man is a really good and wise man!

d. A superior man takes righteousness as the foundation for all. Guided by the rules of propriety he puts it into practice; in humility he speaks it out; with sincerity he fulfills it. Such is a superior man indeed!

二、“君子”和“小人”的内涵对比及其翻译研究

上文讲到，“君子”是儒家学说中一个具有重要意义的概念，是对一类人的指称。“《论语》每以君子小人对举。或指位言，或指德言。”^{[2]36}“小人”是与“君子”相对而言的一类人。在很多篇章中，“君子”和“小人”构成了一对相反的参照物。因而，要辨别“小人”究竟何所指，需要与“君子”参照对应来看。例如吴国珍根据不同的语境，对“小人”的英译采取了不同的译法：当“君子”译为“the virtuous man/men”或“a gentleman”时，“小人”译为“the virtueless man/men”或“the base man/men”；当“君子”用“a/the su-

perior man”来翻译时,“小人”又被译为“a petty man, or a base man”或“an ordinary man”等。笔者有个疑问,既然“君子”与“小人”是一对对立体,“君子”若译为“a/the superior man”,“小人”为何不采用“a/the inferior man”来翻译?4位译者都没有采用“a/the inferior man”,原因何在?

下例是关于“君子”与“小人”比附的翻译研究。这些篇章的共同特点是语言凝练,句型对称。一些关键词的译法尤其值得关注,诸如“周”与“比”,“和”与“同”,“义”与“利”,“上达”与“下达”等。

(1) 子曰:“君子周而不比,小人比而不周。”(《为政》2-14)

a. The superior man is catholic and not partisan.
The mean man is partisan and not catholic.

b. A gentleman can see a question from all sides without bias. The small man is biased and can see a question only from one side.

c. A wise man is impartial not neutral. A fool is neutral but not impartial.

d. The virtuous people widely unite but not gang up; the virtueless people gang up but not widely unit.

(2) 子曰:“君子和而不同,小人同而不和。”(子路 13-23)

a. The superior man is affable, but not adulatory; the mean man is adulatory, but not affable.

b. The gentlemen is conciliatory but not accommodating. Common people are accommodating but not conciliatory.

c. A wise man is sociable, but not familiar. A fool is familiar but not sociable.

d. The superior men harmonize without demanding conformity; the base men demand conformity but do not harmonize.

上述2个例子,“君子”与“小人”的所作所为为恰恰相反。在篇章结构(句型)的英译方面,3位译者的译法相同,因而,英译的重点应放在关键词的理解和翻译上。对于例(1)中的“周”和“比”两字,4位译者的翻译可谓大相径庭。理雅各的英译是“catholic”和“partisan”。“catholic”的意思是“including a wide variety of different things”;“partisan”的意思是“showing strong and unusually unfair support for one particular person, group, or idea”。“catholic”一词似乎词义含糊,

并且容易使人产生误解,因为“catholic”与“Catholic”拼写相似但内涵不同。与理雅各不同,威利把“周”理解为“全面考虑问题而不带偏见”,“比”理解为“考虑问题偏颇”。辜译使用了“impartial”和“neutral”。“neutral”的意思是“Not supporting a particular side in an argument or disagreement; Not showing strong feelings or opinions in the way you speak or behave”^{[5] 952}。“impartial”意为“not connected to or influenced by a particular person or group”^{[5] 717}。因此辜鸿铭的理解有所偏差,“impartial”和“neutral”本是近义词,但他却用做反义词。吴译使用了“gang up”,此词意为“to join together in a group to hurt, frighten, or fight someone”^{[5] 583}。以上的译文中,理雅各和辜鸿铭将“周”与“比”用形容词译出,而威利和吴国珍则用动词短语译出。

在例(2)中,4位译者仍针对“和”与“同”采取了迥异的翻译,究其原因大概在于对这两个关键字的多元阐释。钱穆认为“和者无乖戾之心”而“同者有阿比之意”^{[2] 313}。杨伯峻将“和”解释为“(做事)恰到好处”,将“同”解释为“盲从附和”^{[1] 196}。笔者认为吴译颇佳,而其他3个翻译都存在所用英文单词不准确或和原意偏差较大。

(3) 子曰:“君子喻于义,小人喻于利。”(《里仁》4-16)

a. The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain.

b. The gentlemen takes as much trouble to discover what is right as lesser men takes to discover what will pay.

c. A wise man sees what is right in a question; a fool, what is advantageous to himself.

d. A man of virtue is penetrable to reason; a base man can only be persuaded with benefits.

在例(3)中,译者们的理解和翻译手法相似,都较为准确地传达了原文的意思。而在下面的例(11)中,对关键词的理解和翻译,各位译者有出现了较大的分歧。

(4) 子曰:“君子上达,小人下达。”(《宪问》14-24)

a. The progress of the superior man is upwards; the progress of the mean man is downwards.

b. The gentlemen can influence those who are above him; the small man can only influence those who are below him.

c. A wise and good man looks upwards in his aspirations; a fool looks downwards.

d. A superior man aims high, while an ordinary man directs downwards.

钱穆认为本章有两解：“一说：上达达于道，下达达于器。如为农工商贾，虽小人之事，亦可各随其业，有守有达。若夫为恶与不义，此乃败类之小人，无所谓达也。一说：君子日进乎高明，小人日究乎污下，一念之歧，日分日远也。前解君子小人指位言。后解君子小人指德言。”^{[2]337}杨伯峻的释义为：“君子通达于仁义，小人通达于财利。”^{[1]213}翻译也是一种诠释或阐释。不同的译者会根据个人的见解加以翻译。在一定程度上，这是一个“仁者见仁，智者见智的过程”。4位译者也给出了各自的见解与翻译。理雅各的译文强调“君子”日日向上，自强不息，而“小人”日日向下，不求进取。威利则将“上达”译为“influence those who are above him”，将“下达”译为“influence those who are below him”。笔者认为威利的理解存在着偏差，因此造成了误译。辜鸿铭则强调“君子”志向高远，相反，“小人”则胸无大志，自甘沉沦。吴国珍的理解与辜鸿铭类似，但翻译“下达”却使用了“direct downwards”。吴国珍在英文注释中对“下达”的解释是“to direct one's attention downward (to some worldly benefits)”。在他看来，“君子向上追求道义，小人向下寻求实利”^{[4]368}。由此可见，“译者在文本转换的过程中需要作出很多诠释的选择，《论语》的翻译实际上是多重声音的叠加。我们在译本中固然听到了原著的声音，但是却又加上了译者的声音”^[6]。

三、结 语

尽管东方文明和西方文明存在着较大的文化差异，但在人类的一些基本情感、天性、与是非判断方面，东西方是否存在着一些普遍的看法呢？笔者

认为答案是肯定的，这大概就是钱钟书所说的“和而不同”。翻译在文化交往中起到了很重要的作用，可以说是为不同文化背景的人架起了一座桥梁。要进行英汉互译，不论是对于学习中国语言文化的外国人，还是运用英语向外国人介绍中国文化的国人，都面临着一些不利的条件。比如对于向理雅各和威利这样学识渊博的汉学家，他们需要克服的不利条件“根源于早期概念群和观念群的缺乏”^{[3]189}。辜鸿铭指出：“他们（学习中国文学的外国人）有必要用这些不同于自己民族的观念和概念来武装自己，而且首先要发现在欧洲语言中的对应物，如果那些对应物并不存在，那就要分解它们，然后看这些被提及的概念和观念代表了人类普遍天性的哪一面。”^{[3]189}同样，掌握或了解英语的中国人，当他们准备将一些具有丰富文化内涵的概念用英语来传达给外国人时，也不得不考虑英语中是否存在着类似的概念和表达方式，他们如何用准确的译文来表达此种观念并使外国人能够理解并接受。

由此可见，尽管中西方文化语境上存在着差异，但在描述人类的普遍情感和是非标准方面具有一定的共性。因而，典籍翻译的过程就是一个跨文化交际的过程，是一个“求同存异”的选择过程。

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