

From "Bildungsroman" to "World Classic Fairy Tale": The Translation and Reception of "Bambi" in Modern China

Baiduo Zhang

College of Liberal Arts, Journalism and Communication, Ocean University of China, Qingdao, Shandong, China
1317381378@qq.com

Abstract: *The translation and reception of "Bambi" in modern China have transformed a "Bildungsroman" into a "World Classic Fairy Tale." In different historical periods of modern China, "Bambi" has played roles in "Bildung education", "inspiring national spirit", and "projecting ideals of love and peace". With changes in historical contexts and the adaptation of the film, "Bambi" has ultimately been shaped into a world classic fairy tale and widely accepted.*

Keywords: Bambi; Children's Literature; Translation Studies; Reception Studies; Modern China.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bambi, eine Lebensgeschichte aus dem Wald (short for Bambi) is the representative work of Austrian writer Felix Salten, received widespread acclaim since its publication in 1923. Translated into over 20 languages with more than 400 versions, it was adapted into a Disney animated classic in 1942, featuring an iconic character. "Bambi" was introduced to China in 1929, and by 1946, four translated versions were published, accompanied by the screening of the Disney film. Previous studies often focused on textual analysis within the realm of children's literature or the comparative study of literary texts and film adaptations. The research on the translation and reception of "Bambi" as a literary circulation in modern China has received limited attention. "Bambi" has long been hailed as a "world classic fairy tale" in China, possessing a relatively fixed and singular definition within the realm of children's literature. However, both the original translation and the initial introduction of "Bambi" in China did not categorize it as children's literature. In the complex socio-historical conditions of modern China, its identity has surpassed the boundaries of a fairy tale and entered the broader field of cross-cultural exchange. This paper aims to trace the process of the translation and reception of "Bambi" in modern China, exploring the diverse interpretations that emerged during its introduction and comparing them with the author's original intentions. Thus, this paper seeks to delineate the changing process of "Bambi" in its Chinese translation and the underlying factors related to ideology, literary history, and more.

2. RECONSIDERATION OF GENRE CLASSIFICATION IN THE EARLY TRANSLATION AND RECEPTION OF "BAMBI"

"Bambi", a masterpiece by Austrian writer Salten, first serialized in the "New Freedom Newspaper" in 1922, was published as a standalone edition in 1923 and received widespread acclaim. Quickly becoming popular in the German-speaking world, it was first translated into English in 1928, achieving great success in English-speaking countries.

The initial translation of "Bambi" in modern China occurred in 1929, co-translated by Zhang Xueyan (张雪岩) and Bei Houde (贝厚德, Miss Martha E. Pyle), titled "A Life in the Woods"(林中的生活), and published by the Shanghai Guangxuehui (A publishing house with a Christian background). The title "A Life in the Woods" was derived from the 1928 English translation, which was titled "Bambi, a Life in the Woods." Zhang Xueyan and Bei Houde omitted the name "Bambi" during the translation, perhaps due to the difficulty in translating proper nouns. Interestingly, in modern China, "Bambi" has been translated into four different names in four different translations, namely "Ban'er"(斑儿), "Bao'qi" (宝麒), "Ban'mi"(斑麋), and "Ban'bi" (斑比). The name "Ban'bi"(斑比) known today appears in Yun Wen's translation of 1946. Earlier, this translation "Ban'bi" (斑比) also appeared in the translation of the Disney film "Bambi" in 1944.

The translation by Zhang Xueyan and Bei Houde included an introduction by the authors, stating, "This book was

selected by the Book of the Month Club of New York and regarded as the best choice in two years, indicating its considerable value"[1]. This evaluation reflects the English-speaking world's admiration for "Bambi". Although the German edition was published in 1923, the first English version was not released until 1928. Nevertheless, it rapidly gained popularity in the English-speaking world, selling 120,000 copies by the end of 1929 [2]. At this time, the Chinese translators' translations of Bambi were following the literary trends of the English-speaking world. The motivation behind the translation was not solely to follow the trend but was generally considered as an effort to enrich children's literature [3]. Some scholars also interpreted it as a translation of a "fairy tale" [4]. This is not difficult to understand, the modern Chinese literary scene in 1929 for the construction of the concept of "children's literature" has been relatively mature.

The discussion on "children's literature" in modern Chinese literature had already taken root by 1929, as the concept had been mentioned since the May Fourth Movement. The history of "the discovery of children" in modern China is nearly as long as the development of "New Literature". The importance of "children's literature" was consistently emphasized. Before "Bambi", many outstanding works of world children's literature had been translated into Chinese. The translation of Bambi is also obviously a manifestation of conforming to the development of modern Chinese children's literature. The discussion on children's literature theory also influenced the acceptance process of "Bambi" as children's literature. In 1931, there was a discussion by Shang Zhongyi (尚仲衣) and Chen Heqin (陈鹤琴) on "Children's Reading and 'Animal can speak'(鸟言兽语)", debating whether books with "animal can speak" were suitable for children's reading[5][6][7]. This debate can be considered concluded with the victory of "animal can speak", solidifying the concept that animal novels were suitable for children's literature or reading. Consequently, "Bambi" as a representative of "animal can speak" seemed naturally associated with "children's reading" and "fairy tales".

In addition, the Christian background behind the 1929 translation activities of "Bambi" in China needs to be considered. The Shanghai Guangxuehui (上海广学会), which published "Bambi", was a prominent Christian publishing institution in modern China, exerting significant influence on Chinese modern culture and the publishing industry. The two translators of "Bambi", Zhang Xueyan and Bei Houde, were also religious figures. In the spring of 1929, Zhang Xueyan joined the Shanghai Guangxuehui, and in 1930, he enrolled in the Jinling Theological Seminary. In 1934, he founded the "Tianjia"(田家半月刊) (affiliated with the North China Christian Rural Development Association). Zhang Xueyan had a solid Christian education background and consciously engaged in related work. On the other hand, Bei Houde was a missionary and education missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. She successively engaged in missionary work in Shanghai, Suzhou, and other places, participating in the establishment and management of local Christian women's schools. The Christian background of the two translators and the publishing institution provide another interpretation of the motivation behind the translation of "Bambi". Children's education has always been a focus of attention for Christian groups in modern China. Since they entered China, the primary purpose has been to spread the Gospel and cultivate "Children believers", establishing education and extensively translating, editing, and publishing children's literature [8]. Given the weaker religious nature of animal literature and its better reflection of the Christian conception of love and equality, it gradually replaced traditional Gospel novels and became a favored choice for missionaries to translate children's literature. Since the 20th century, missionaries began translating animal novels for children's literature, such as the 1907 translation of "Animal Strike"(动物罢工), and the 1923 translation of "A Dog's Autobiography"(狗的自传). In this context, with literary features "animal can speak", and "Bambi", can also be considered a form of children's literature. From this perspective, the translation of "Bambi" in 1929 appears to be a typical event of translating world classic fairy tales.

However, a crucial question arises: Is "Bambi" a fairy tale or children's literature? While this question may seem peculiar, a closer examination of the details of the translation event reveals its validity. Admittedly, "Bambi" has been regarded as a fairy tale since its inception. In terms of content, the novel depicts the lives of animals, with animals speaking human language, having their own emotions, and living according to human-like thoughts, emotions, social relationships, and even ethical and moral principles. It is imaginative, akin to many fairy tales that ostensibly depict animals but convey human experiences [9]. Moreover, the writing style of the novel is "concise and elegant", possessing many elements of fairy tale literature.

However, it is essential to note that the discussion in modern China about "animals can speak" in children's literature began in 1931, two years after the translation of "Bambi". More importantly, the introductory publication of "Bambi" in the magazine "Ming Deng" (明灯) in the same year did not label it as a "fairy tale" but instead categorized it as a "novel": "This is a well-known Western novel, finely printed, profound in meaning, a good book

among youth literature" [10]. This publication introduction from Shanghai Guangxuehui, the organization responsible for publishing "Bambi", provides a clear indication of how the translators perceived the book. In the translators' preface, they also pointed out, "Therefore, Bambi's life history is indeed a true portrayal of ancient human pure morality" [1]. They also quoted Salten himself as stating, "I often think of portraying the miserable fate of life with entertaining ways" [1], which indicates the translators' view of the book. Whether it is the portrayal of "ancient human pure morality" or the depiction of the "miserable fate of life," the weightiness and profundity of the themes differ from the lighthearted and lively style typical of fairy tales.

Certainly, fairy tales or children's literature do not shy away from heavy topics. For instance, in Grimm's Fairy Tales, seemingly inappropriate topics for children are addressed. However, the profound and serious nature of the themes in "Bambi", as perceived by Zhang Xueyan and Bei Houde, deviates from what is typically considered suitable for children's literature. As evidence, many of the books published by Guangxuehui are fairy tales, such as Wilde's fairy tales [11]. For these books, Guangxuehui will point out its "fairy tale" genre classification. Notably, the length of the book also sets it apart from traditional fairy tales or children's books that are often "short, simple, and easily understood". In the translations by Zhang Xueyan and Bei Houde, "Bambi" comprises a total of 350 pages (the shortest version has 161 pages, with no content reduction, only differences in typesetting). In terms of reading difficulty, it is not suitable for children. However, during the same period, there were other "fairy tales" also deemed inappropriate for children, such as the fairy tales of Austrian female writer Hermynia Zur Muehlen [12], which Lu Xun considered unsuitable for Chinese children's literature. Muehlen's tales were deemed more suitable for adults while retaining a childlike heart [13].

It is essential to emphasize that in the promotional materials of "Bambi", the expected audience is explicitly mentioned as "youth readers", distinguishing them from traditional "adults". Youth can be considered an intermediate stage between "maturity" and "immaturity", suggesting that in the eyes of the translators, "Bambi", while containing profound thoughts, is not suitable for children to read. Even the likelihood of parents reading it and then recounting the story to their children is not high. However, it still serves an "educational" purpose. This form of education aims to make "youth", this quasi-adult group, understand the "miserable fate of life" and the "process of moral growth". Examining concepts of children's literature at that time, there are also several discrepancies between standards of children's literature at that time and Bambi. For example, the "Introduction to Children's Literature" (1924) by Wei Shouyong (魏寿镛) and Zhou Houyu (周侯予) [14] mentions seven elements of children's literature, one of which is "simple and variable meaning". This criterion does not apply to "Bambi". Several critics have described "Bambi" as having a "profound philosophical flavor" [15], something worthy of repeated reading for adults.

Furthermore, the romantic plot involving Bambi was questioned by contemporary critics. The query was raised, "Why should we write about adult love that children cannot understand in fairy tales for children[16]?" This question was posed even after "Bambi" had gained widespread recognition as a "world classic fairy tale". Based on these discussions, it seems worthwhile to reconsider the viewpoints of classifying the initial translation of "Bambi" as a translation event of a fairy tale.

3. EARLY TRANSLATION AND RECEPTION: "BAMBI", AS A "BILDUNGSROMAN"

If readers step out of the image shaping of the nearly century-long dissemination history of "Bambi" and return to the actual environment in which the author Salten created "Bambi", they will find that the original work of "Bambi" is not closely related to "fairy tales" but rather closer to the unique literary genre in German literature known as "Bildungsroman". The author of "Bambi", Salten, was a marginal writer of the Austrian modern literary group "Vienna Modernism". Unlike most young members of "Vienna Modernism" who came from urban middle-class or even traditional aristocratic backgrounds, Salten was born in the rural areas of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Later, he went to Vienna to continue his education, where he had the opportunity to meet the core figure of Vienna Modernism, Arthur Schnitzler, and form a lifelong friendship. Under the recommendation of Schnitzler, Salten had the opportunity to integrate into the Viennese literary circle. Salten's early experiences with nature shaped his perspective on the world in a way distinct from most writers of Vienna Modernism. His focus often transcended the "metropolis" and delved into more primal settings such as forests and villages, and "Bambi" was created against this backdrop. Salten's works on animals, including not only "Bambi" but also "The Hound of Florence" (Der Hund von Florenz) and "Fifteen Rabbits" (Fünfzehn Haasen), reflect a distinctive feature of his literary creation. However, it's worth noting that despite Salten writing numerous animal

stories, these works invariably lack the typical features of children's literature. Instead, they convey a pessimistic view of the world, as Salten does not shy away from depicting death and slaughter in his works. This aligns with the thoughts of some figures in Vienna Modernism, such as Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal, as Jack Zipps puts it: "Through animal stories, he (Salten) allegorically expresses a dark view of the world" [17].

Furthermore, although there is a close relationship between animal stories and children's literature, it does not imply a subordinate relationship between the two. Literary works with animals as protagonists have a long and rich history, and it was only after the establishment of modern children's literature concepts that many animal stories were categorized as children's literature. However, not all animal stories fall into the realm of children's literature. For instance, George Orwell's "Animal Farm" is not considered children's literature. The so-called "animal can speak" children's reading materials mentioned earlier are not directly equivalent to animal literature. Moreover, during modern times in China, the distinction between animal stories and children's literature emerged spontaneously. For example, the renowned German writer E.T.A. Hoffmann, famous for his fantasy and mysticism, had his representative work "The Life View of Tomcat Murr" regarded as profound adult literature. Mao Qiubai praised this unfinished work of Hoffmann, stating, "It reveals Hoffmann's worldview and artistic views through sharp satire and humorous attacks on societal vulgarity and the superficiality of Enlightenment, condemning hypocritical artists, praising wisdom and love. It exposes Hoffmann's views on life and art.[18]" This indicates that, even in the modern era when animal stories became a focal point in Chinese children's literature, they still retained their uniqueness.

When readers step out of the framework of "animal literature – children's literature" and look again at "Bambi" as an animal story, they find that the underlying theme of "Bambi" is not solely children's literature but rather a genre more characteristic of German literature, the "Bildungsroman". In Salten's era, "Bildungsroman" had been established as a distinctive genre in German literature. "'Bildung' was established as a national essence in the 19th and early 20th centuries and played a significant role in ideological construction" [19] and was even regarded as one of the manifestations of "German-ness". The concept of "Bildungsroman" has multiple translations and variations; for example, educational novel, growth novel, development novel, etc. In German, "Bildungsroman" is also distinguished from a development novel ("Entwicklungsroman") and an educational novel ("Erziehungsroman") [19]. Gu Yu believes that almost all important German novels from Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" onwards can be classified as "Bildungsroman". Regarding the content of "Bildungsroman", Gu Yu thinks, "It uses the life of an individual citizen as a clue, describing the protagonist's growth process from childhood, adolescence, youth to adulthood in chronological order" [19]. Applying this criterion to the content of "Bambi", it is easy to see that the work simply substitutes "citizen" with "a deer". "Bambi" narrates the story of Bambi's childhood, adolescence, youth, and adulthood in sequence. During childhood and adolescence, Bambi grows under his mother's guidance. After Bambi's mother is killed by humans, Bambi begins a "roaming" life, with the narrative often directly mentioning Bambi's "roaming". During this roaming, the "Old Prince" often acts as a mentor, guiding Bambi. At the same time, the novel also touches upon Bambi's experiences of love, as he competes with other bucks for love, faces pain after being injured by a hunter, overcomes fear, resiliently survives, learns to see through the hunter's tricks, and finally, led by the Old Prince, gazes the hunter's corpse. This completes the dispelling of the unknown fears in the world and leads to a new understanding of oneself. Simultaneously, the Old Prince's recurring line throughout the novel, "Can't you survive on your own?" clearly indicates the theme of the novel— "growth" or "Bildung". Bambi must confront the terrifying world through growth. In the final chapter of the novel, Bambi repeats this line to two young deer who cannot find their mothers, indicating that Bambi has "grown up" and can now be a mentor to others. Additionally, "Bildungsroman" emphasizes "Bildung" or "cultivation", highlighting classical notions of "self-reliance", "character molding" and "personal development." This is different from the purpose in English and American Bildungsroman, where the aim is to "return to society" through wandering. Instead, the ending of "Bambi" suggests not a "return to society" but an understanding of the relationship between oneself and the world, a realization of one's place in the world order, and the ability to survive in the world. A significant sign of Bambi's growth is reflected in his ability to "move silently in the forest", indicating his adaptation to the fate of the weak and his struggle against this fate. In a sense, this growth does not help Bambi return to society but instead takes him further away from ordinary society, becoming a secluded figure who has achieved "self-reliance" and even "self-awareness of destiny". Thus, it is evident that "Bambi" exhibits clear characteristics of a "Bildungsroman". In German literature, there are precedents for "Bildungsroman" with animals as protagonists, as mentioned earlier in the case of "The Life View of Tomcat Murr".

It is also essential to note that during the formation of "Bildungsroman", it was significantly influenced by the Christian tradition. This strong connection between this type of novel and Christian educational traditions is

stressed by Ernst Ludwig Stahl, who emphasized the combined influence of religion and humanistic philosophy on the genesis of the German "Bildungsroman" in the 18th century. He asserted that in the form of the novel, "Bildungsroman" has two sources: religious confession and religious autobiography [19]. The concept of "man's establishment" in "Bildungsroman" clearly echoes the colors of the "Bildung tradition" and "self-confession" in the Christian tradition. Therefore, Guangxuehui's translation and introduction of "Bambi" may have aimed at helping young people "cultivate themselves." The translator, Zhang Xueyan, later compiled works like "Spiritual Progress", which are religious "self-cultivation" manuals, demonstrating the translator's attention to and demand for issues related to "cultivation" and "growth." In this sense, as a "Bildungsroman", "Bambi" has gained ample motivation for translation.

Considering the advertisements released by Guangxuehui, the identity of the translator, and the characteristics of the novel in terms of content and style, it can easily be deduced that when "Bambi" first entered China, it might not have been introduced as a "fairy tale" or "children's literature" but rather as a "Bildungsroman" with themes of "self-cultivation" and "growth". It was only later, with the development of the concept of children's literature, that this translation event was consciously placed under the purview of children's literature translation. Of course, it is essential to note that the introduction and reception of "Bambi" in modern China were entirely based on information from the English and American literary circles. As it will be occupied later, the interpretation of this work as a "fairy tale" by the English and American literary circles significantly influenced the reception by Chinese translators and readers. However, when Guangxuehui published "Bambi" in Chinese, the English version of "Bambi" had only been in circulation for about a year, and there was not yet a powerful unified viewpoint. Although Chinese translators were influenced by misinterpretations and variations from English and American translators, this influence was limited. Therefore, Chinese translators could still start from the text itself and discover the original appearance of the work.

4. TRANSLATION AND RECEPTION DURING THE WAR PERIOD: "BAMBI" AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WEAK

In modern China, there are four translations of "Bambi", including the 1929 version by Zhang Xueyan and Be Houde; Hu Zhongchi's (胡仲持) translation, titled "Tragedy in the Forest," published by Chongqing Dashidai Shuju in 1943; Fang An's (方安) translation, titled "Ban'mi", published by Chongqing Commercial Press in 1943; and Yun Wen's (蕴雯) translation, titled "Bambi - A Fawn's Story", published independently by Nanjing Publishing House in 1946. Among them, Fang An's translation has been reprinted, indicating considerable sales. Reviewing the translation history of "Bambi" in modern China, it is not difficult to find that three out of the four translations were done during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. The preface of the 1946 edition mentions that the translation was completed amidst chaos and displacement. Regarding this phenomenon, Wei Maoping believes, "Those translations (fairy tales) often created amid gunfire and chaos, reveal the translator's deep affection for the Children." Moreover, he states, "Exploring childhood interest in stories untainted by the world, capturing the essence of life in sympathy and care for the weak, isn't it also a way for translators in troubled times to convey their contemplation and resistance to fate?" [4] He believes that "Bambi" played a role in China's translation history, providing a "haven to cast off worries" for translators. This judgment is correct. We cannot deny that the translation of "Bambi" during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression served as a refuge for "escaping worries of reality". However, it is worth noting that after the initial translation in 1929, "Bambi" was not translated again until 1943, a gap of 14 years. During this period, information about the Guangxuehui edition of "Bambi" was missing, and even the new translations did not mention the Guangxuehui version, which had seemingly been forgotten. The three translations of "Bambi" in the 1940s are interrelated. This is closely related to the view of "Bambi" as a "fairy tale" in the English and American literary circles at the time. Therefore, people also have reason to believe that the view that "Bambi is a fairy tale" was formed after the 1940s when it re-entered China. Although "Bambi" in the 1940s was indeed defined as a fairy tale, translators and readers during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression did not regard it as a simple "adult fairy tale". If readers once again look at the introduction of "Bambi" in the mid-1940s from a perspective beyond the fairy tale, discussing its affinity with the times based on the text, they will find that the introduction of "Bambi" was not simply about "escaping reality". Instead, it was more about Chinese readers projecting themselves into the harsh reality and the need for uplifting spirits. "Bambi" tells a story of suffering, easily evoking empathy from the suffering Chinese people. In Bambi's world, deer face the test of survival from both humans (referred to as "HE" in the text) and threats from nature. Humans hunt animals throughout the year, and in winter, the forest lacks food, leading to mutual killings among animals. The forest in the novel is not the utopia depicted in typical fairy tales. Bambi's mother is shot by a hunter, and Bambi's friend Gobo cannot escape capture due to a lack of food in winter. Predatory animals like foxes prey

on ducks, rabbits, and mice. At the beginning of the novel, Bambi's mother tells him that the meadow is very dangerous, and if he sees her running, he should not ask why but run with her immediately. This dialogue sets a heavy tone for the novel. From Bambi's birth, the threat of death is ever-present. The oppressive atmosphere permeates the entire story. Bambi must live in the forest without his mother's protection, constantly evading the pursuit of hunters. He is chased by hunting dogs, deceived by the simulated call of a deer by the hunter, and even wounded by a hunter, narrowly escaping death. Bambi does not grow up freely and healthily but struggles in adversity, ultimately learning how to face hardship. Bambi's success at the end is not a fairy-tale-like happy ending but a conclusion with a Faustian quality. Bambi cannot eliminate the threat of survival and can only face it directly, constantly fighting against fate and passing this spirit on to the next generation.

However, it is this spirit of the weak struggling against fate that greatly encouraged the Chinese readers who were suffering in the war at that time. The novel suggests that animals cannot overcome humans, which is called "HE" in the text. The reference to "HE" apparently carries the meaning of the biblical "Lord", omniscient and almighty. Importantly, "HE" cannot be violated or overcome. The novel also contains expressions reminiscent of Christianization. As the hunter's hunting dogs say, "'HE' is almighty. 'HE' is above you" [20]. Faced with the hunter's gun, animals can hardly comprehend; some think the bullets are "his" claws, while others believe they are "his" teeth. This scene inevitably evokes thoughts of the situation that the modern Chinese encountering the modern weapons of Western powers. Bambi appears to be a weakling forever, running away from the hunter's gun without the ability to kill "him" or even engage in a duel. This is the fate of the weak. However, Bambi eventually realizes this fate and views "HE" as a part of life, constantly maneuvering around "HE". At the end of the novel, "HE" is killed, and the old deer takes Bambi to see "his" corpse. The novel meticulously describes the corpse, with blood flowing from it, signifying that death still visits "HE". The old deer tells Bambi that another "HE" killed "HE". Although "HE" can arbitrarily kill animals, there is a more powerful "HE" above "HE". The old deer's words may seem desperate at first glance, seemingly depicting a Darwinian reality. However, it is not difficult to find out that this "HE" refers to the symbol of the "strong". Above the strong, there is always a stronger one. As a weakling, the essential struggle is to survive and resist the arrangements of fate. The death of "HE" elevates the meaning of "Bambi" from the natural law of the jungle to the resistance against fate. Bambi, as a weak, provides great comfort to Chinese readers at that time. As translator Yun Wen stated in the preface, "'Bambi' is truly a good friend of the weak, sweeping away our latent shy and depressed psyche, restoring the lost confidence" [21]. As Jack Zipes pointed out, Bambi's spirit of silent resistance comes from Salten's reflection on the fate of Jews. Jack Zipes believes that Salten, as a Jew, undoubtedly projected the weak position of the Jewish people into the writing of "Bambi". Salten abstracted the meaning of the weak from the unfortunate fate of the Jewish people, those who were constantly humiliated, trampled, and slaughtered, individuals without the ability to resist, and whose existence seemed to be repeatedly questioned. At that time, China, as a weak nation, undoubtedly experienced a similar fate. In the animals' scared, Chinese readers can see the cruel reality they faced. For example, at the beginning of the preface, the translator wrote, "The enemy destroyed our home for the fourth time, and the remaining property left a few old books and a blanket. We staggered from the distant southern China to the unfamiliar Chongqing." [21] This is indeed a realistic portrayal of the animals fleeing. In Fang An's translation, there are three prefaces written by Galsworthy, Zou Haibin (邹海滨), and Zhang Tianze (张天泽), respectively. They focus more on the beauty of the language and the issue of animal protection. This is also sympathy for the weak, especially in Galsworthy's preface, where he introduces the book "especially for those who love hunting." [22] At first glance, this seems to be advocating animal protection, but it has a profound meaning. Galsworthy has a strong humanitarian spirit, and here, those who love hunting may also refer to the powerful. However, the weak in "Bambi" is not only relative to the hunter's prey. There is also a relationship between eating and being eaten among animals. For example, the fox eats ducks, flying birds eat squirrels, and there are also strong and weak animals. At the beginning of the novel, Bambi's mother tells him about the reality of animals preying on each other. This aspect is once again discovered in Yun Wen's preface, where she describes her living environment: "The bed and walls are full of bedbugs, the loud shouts, and the villains in police uniforms at midnight, questioning and beating people from time to time" [21]. The translator's experience is perhaps a microcosm of Chinese society during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, where ordinary people not only faced external aggressors but also oppression from the strong among their compatriots. "Bambi" can be considered a psychological healing place for Chinese readers at that time. From Bambi's various experiences, Chinese readers undoubtedly saw their own harsh reality. Based on empathy, readers projected themselves onto Bambi, and while reading and understanding Bambi's self-growth and the process of resisting fate, they also engaged in self-healing.

What "Bambi" brought to Chinese readers is not only empathy and psychological healing amid suffering but also a spirit of self-reliance and self-respect in the face of adversity. There are two plots in the novel that touched Chinese readers at the time: the fate of Bambi's childhood friend Gobo and the confrontation between the animals and the

hunting dogs. Gobo is Bambi's childhood friend and also the brother of Bambi's wife, but unlike the robust Bambi, Gobo has poor nutrition from a young age and struggles to survive in winter. During a winter hunt, Gobo is unable to escape and is captured by the hunter. Everyone thinks Gobo is dead. However, one day Gobo suddenly returns, even more robust and healthy. It turns out that the hunter found Gobo malnourished, took him home to raise him, and released him back into the forest after he became healthy. After returning to the forest, Gobo propagates that "HE" is not so terrifying and believes that animals can be friends with "HE". The animals are skeptical of Gobo's words. When the hunter hunts again, Gobo, despite warnings, walks to an open area to prove that "HE" will not kill him, only to be shot dead by the hunter. In this plot, there is an evident theme of struggle. The hunter and the prey are always in a state of conflict. Prey cannot survive by relying on the hunter's mercy, hoping for the benevolence of the powerful; they will inevitably die one day. Translated into the historical process of China's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, China cannot rely on the "kindness" of Japanese invaders to obtain peace. Perhaps under this "kindness," China may temporarily gain some benefits, but in the long run, there is a risk of national destruction. Gobo's experience is telling people in China: "Give up illusions and prepare for battle." The confrontation between the animals and the hunting dogs can be considered another classic plot in "Bambi". Despite being animals, the dogs help the hunter capture their fellow foxes. This action eventually leads to condemnation from all the animals. In Yun Wen's translation, the dogs are even directly referred to as "traitors" (汉奸): "Traitor!" the squirrel shouted sharply. 'Right, traitor!' the fox sneered at him (the dog) and said, 'No one is a traitor except you, except you' [20]. The implication is evident. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the fox, who is caught by the dog and scolds the dog as a traitor, killed a duck not long ago, causing the ducklings to lose their mother. However, when the fox is in distress, about to be bitten to death by the hunting dog, almost all the animals stand up to speak for the fox, accusing the dog of betraying the animals. This scene forms a peculiar intertextuality with the situation in China during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression.

From this, it can be seen that what made "Bambi" popular in China during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression was not only the need of Chinese readers to escape reality amid hardship. Other fairy tales could have had a similar effect. However, in "Bambi", what attracted Chinese readers was the discussion about "how the weak can survive" and the discussion of self-reliance and self-respect in the face of adversity. In the process of translating and receiving "Bambi", Chinese readers gained not only comfort but also the courage to continue facing the tragic reality.

5. TRANSLATION AND RECEPTION DURING THE POST-WAR PERIOD: "BAMBI" AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF "LOVE AND HARMONY"

The novel "Bambi" achieved phenomenal success in the English-speaking world, drawing the attention of Disney to this whimsical work. Within a few years of the English translation of "Bambi", Disney began preparing to adapt it into a color animated film. The film officially started production in 1936 and was released in 1942. As early as 1944, Chinese domestic newspapers reported on the film "Bambi" [23], and in 1946, after the end of World War II, the film was screened in Shanghai, Nanjing, and other major cities, attracting considerable attention.

The impact of the film "Bambi" in China was a typical cross-media communication event. As an adaptation from a literary work to a film, "Bambi" underwent significant adjustments in its storyline and overall concept. It can be said that under the adaptation of Disney, "Bambi" completely gained the status of a "world classic fairy tale." Disney's adaptation also influenced the reception of "Bambi" in modern China. To some extent, the image of Bambi in the novel was replaced by the image of Bambi in the movie.

To understand the impact of the film "Bambi" on the modern Chinese image of "Bambi", it is necessary to first examine Disney's rewriting of the original work. It is important to note that "Bambi" already experienced many losses of meaning during its translation from German to English. Scholars have pointed out that the first English translator of "Bambi", Whittaker Chambers, had a "limited understanding of Austrian German," "failed to capture Salten's unusual Viennese writing style and personification techniques," and "mistranslated many German idioms, omitted some phrases, and did not convey Salten's profound personal and philosophical dilemmas" [17]. English translators tended to interpret "Bambi" as a fairy tale, which, on the one hand, expanded its audience and, on the other hand, significantly weakened its depth. In the process of further adaptation for the film, this tendency was further developed, and almost all disharmonious elements in the original "Bambi" as a fairy tale were removed, taking a significant step towards "fairytales-fiction". Here are seven obvious changes in the film for discussion:

1) Deletion of the character Gobo: In the novel, Gobo is adopted by humans, released back into the wild, and later

killed by humans. The screenwriters felt that this did not fit the overall harmonious tone of the story.

2) Clarification of the term "human" to replace "HE": The film overtly identifies the "human" identity, replacing the original reference to "he," thus weakening the overall religious and fatalistic undertones. Humans shift from being "strong" to "the other" of nature.

3) Removal of scenes depicting animals hunting each other: The film eliminates scenes of mutual killing among animals, and carnivorous animals are almost absent in the movie.

4) Omission of the dialogue between two leaves: The novel features a profound conversation between the last two leaves on a tree discussing the meaning of life as winter (death) approaches. The film omits this dialogue and instead uses a scene of the leaves falling to imply the arrival of winter.

5) Rewriting of Bambi's courtship scene: The film adopts a more secular narrative, emphasizing the romantic process among animals. The film symbolically portrays Bambi and other stags grappling for the right to mate, reminiscent of the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel. The novel's description of this scene is closer to the animals' primitive instincts.

6) Adding plots of the heroic rescue and confrontation with hunting dogs: This plot is added for dramatic effect in the film. In the novel, Bambi never directly confronts hunting dogs but instead chooses to run away when encountering them.

7) Changes in the ending: In the film's conclusion, Bambi has two children, and together with the old stag, they stand on a cliff, symbolizing the new prince inheriting the legacy of the old prince, leading to a happy ending. In the novel, Bambi encounters two fawns, but their relationship is not explicitly mentioned. Bambi educates the two children by saying, "Can't you live on your own?" and then hides in the forest, indicating the beginning of the next stage of growth. The film emphasizes a complete family, while the novel highlights individual growth.

By comparing the texts of the film and the novel, it is evident that Disney completely transformed "Bambi" into a universally appealing fairy tale. Disney's adaptation almost eliminated all elements that were not conducive to a fairy tale narrative.

In terms of the reception of the film "Bambi" in modern China, it can be seen that the evaluation of "Bambi" once again focused on the relationship between humans and animals and its educational significance for children. The film not only reduced the human-animal opposition issue but also eliminated internal competition and strife among animals. In other words, the "predicament of survival for the weak" in the original work was significantly downplayed. The film aimed to draw attention to the themes of "love for nature and life" [24], as indicated by the lyrics in its soundtrack: "Love is a song that never ends". Reviews from Chinese audiences at that time also expressed sentiments such as, "Bambi's friendship, Bambi's first love, all have brilliant colors, and the whole film is rich in educational significance" [25]. Another review stated, "It is full of overflowing emotions, with maternal love, friendship, leadership love, marital love—so vivid and real that I suspect the author has lived among them" [26].

It is essential to note that while the film "Bambi" gained popularity, the novel continued to circulate in China. Although the author has not found simultaneous comments from readers who both read the novel "Bambi" and watched the film, a comparison of comments on the two texts during that period reveals a marked difference. A representative example is a review by Ren Weizi published in the "Central Daily", in which he mentioned losing the chance to see the film due to work and expressed expectations for the film's "educational significance". However, after obtaining and reading Yun Wen's translation of "Bambi", the author's conclusion was different. Ren Weizi pointed out that "Bambi" is "a complete history of the deer's growth", addressing core themes such as the "concept of life and death" and the relationship between "the strong and the weak." The author stated, "It is a kind of secular and vivid dissection." In the last paragraph, the author emphasized, "This fairy tale (or rather, a microcosm of society)... I hope every man who takes on the role of a father, using the innocent feelings of a child, and read it again" [27]. It is evident from this that the author discovered that "Bambi" as a fairy tale had a more profound "educational significance" than initially imagined, and the novel's realism far exceeded the fantasy of a fairy tale. In comparison to the prevailing themes of "harmony" and "love" in film reviews, the reviews of "Bambi" as a novel focused on its reflection of reality.

After the film "Bambi" entered China, comments on the original work were overshadowed by the loud acclaim for the film, gradually replacing the image of "Bambi" struggling with the fate of the weak with the portrayal of "Bambi" as a representative of "love and harmony."

The film "Bambi" completely changed the image of Bambi in the eyes of Chinese readers, from a character resembling Wilhelm Meister to a fairy tale protagonist. This result can be attributed to two factors: on the one hand, the film itself has advantages in the dissemination process compared to the novel, making it more appealing—for example, film reviews particularly emphasized its exquisite production, rich colors, and delicate scenes, making the 1942 animated film "Bambi" still considered a first-class work today. As part of popular culture, the film is more readily accepted than the understated and profound "Bildungsroman". On the other hand, the attitude of China towards "Bambi" changed completely during that period. The film "Bambi" was imported on a large scale only after the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, Bambi was seen as a "representative of the weak", providing comfort and encouragement to those in distress. The victory of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression ended this situation—did the Chinese people, having defeated Japanese imperialist invaders, remain weak? This is reflected in reviews from that time, with one commentator questioning the plot of "Bambi": "But I want to ask: Bambi's mother was shot by humans, shouldn't he take revenge?" [26] The commentator also raised the question, "Is the law of the jungle innocent?" Clearly, these were expressions of dissatisfaction with the world portrayed in "Bambi" in the context of the post-war victory. The lack of revenge in the plot also indicates that the concept promoted by the film "Bambi" is a world filled with universal "harmony" and "friendship." This not only aligns with the overall global trend of thought for some time after the end of World War II but also corresponds to China's hopes for the future after the war. From this perspective, the image of "Bambi" as a representative of "love and harmony" in the film "Bambi" was more welcomed in the eyes of the Chinese audience.

6. CONCLUSION

In summary, the translation and reception process of "Bambi" in modern China has undergone a transformation from "Bildungsroman" to "world classic fairy tale". This transition sheds light on the generation of "Bambi" as a "world classic fairy tale" in the literary circulation process. Moreover, the different social-historical backgrounds in modern China provided Bambi with diverse reception environments, enabling it to undergo two transformations: from being a "role model for growth" in Bildungsroman to a "representative of the weak" and then to a representative of "love and harmony" in the world fairy tales classic. Although "Bambi" has become a "world classic fairy tale" today, examining its construction process in modern China can serve as a reference for the study of the circulation and influence of foreign literary children's classics in China.

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Author Profile

Baiduo Zhang Postgraduate student in Comparative Literature and World Literature, College of Liberal Arts, Journalism and Communication, Ocean University of China. Research direction: Comparison of Chinese and Western literature.