

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT TIM BURTON'S FILMS AND TRANSLATION OF THE FILM NAMES

This essay is intended to give a brief introduction of Time Burton (时间 伯顿 in Mainland, 時間 伯頓 in Taiwan, 時 伯頓 in Hong Kong) and his films, and then discuss and compare the translations (mainly in Simplified Chinese and slightly in Traditional Chinese) of the film names.

Tim Burton is a very special and talented American director. He is famous for his black humor and unique view of point. He was born in California in 1958. He has presented us a lot of films full of wonderful thoughts and innovations.

However, not all of them are familiar to Chinese audience, so some of them don't have a well-received Chinese name. So here we only talk about those which got a well-received Chinese name.

Means of translation can be roughly grouped as literal translation and free translation. Literal translation refers to translating the source text word by word or based on its literal meaning, while free translation refers to translating the source text based on the meaning of the source other than word by word. Because the film names often are very short, so in most of the cases literal translation is adopted.

Translations in Taiwan and Hong Kong are very different from translation

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in Mainland. The following table list different translations of the films in mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong. And the blanks indicates an incomplete collection.

No.	Year	English	Main land	Taiwan	Hong Kong
1	2010	Sweeney Todd	蘇維尼托德	蘇維尼托德	蘇維尼托德
2	2010	Alice in Wonderland	愛麗絲夢遊仙境	愛麗絲夢遊仙境	愛麗絲夢遊仙境
3	2005	Corpse Bride	屍骨新娘 or 屍骨新娘	屍骨新娘	屍骨新娘
4	2005	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	查理與巧克力工廠	查理與巧克力工廠	查理與巧克力工廠
5	2003	Big Fish	大魚	大魚	大魚
6	2001	Planet of the Apes	猿人星球	猿人星球	猿人星球
7	1999	Sleepy Hollow	斷頭谷	斷頭谷	斷頭谷
8	1996	Mars Attacks!	火星撞地球	火星撞地球	
9	1996	James and the Giant Peach	詹姆斯與大桃		
10	1994	Ed Wood	艾德·伍德	艾德·伍德	艾德·伍德
11	1993	The Nightmare Before Christmas	聖誕夜驚魂	聖誕夜驚魂	聖誕夜驚魂
12	1992	Batman Returns	蝙蝠俠：歸來	蝙蝠俠：歸來	蝙蝠俠：歸來
13	1990	Edward Scissorhands	剪刀手愛德華	剪刀手愛德華	剪刀手
14	1989	Batman	蝙蝠俠		
15	1988	Beetle Juice	甲蟲汁		
16	1985	Pee-wee's Big Adventure	皮維的偉大冒險		
17	1984	Frankenweenie	科學怪狗		
18	1982	Vincent	文森特		

From the table above, we can know that [translations of the film](#) name in mainland and Taiwan are much more similar, closing to literal translation, while the translations in Hong Kong are more of the local culture, a kind of free translation.

The latter are more flexible and kind of romantic color, because these words “”, “”, “”, “” often indicates the films of Kung Fu, myths, ghosts or monsters in ancient Chinese culture. So this kind of names has a familiar appearance and sometime it is hard to decide if it is Chinese movie or a foreign movie only by the name.

Of course there is no right or wrong in these translations and different methods serve the same purpose: introduction and promotion of films. The film name can be separated from the film which is intended to be put

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into the market, so from certain point of view, the film name is of some commercial elements.

In this case, the translation of the films names should not only clearly express the meaning and its commercial effects and attraction are to be taken into consideration.

Please free to make comments if you see any error or missing or have something to share. I am glad to hear your voices.

And later I will post another small essay on *Tim Burton's Corpse Bride* here.

The translation names in simplified Chinese are mainly based on Baidu Baike and *10th Screening Room* of CCTV-10 and others are based on Wikipedia.

Reference:

Baidu Baike, Wikipedia, *10th Screening Room* of CCTV-10

Read Also: [Some thoughts of Green Lantern](#)

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