# The Dancer and the Dance

## ESSAYS IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

Edited by

Laurence K. P. Wong and Chan Sin-wai

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CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

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This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library



ISBN (10): 1-4438-4737-2, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4737-7

# Contents

# PREFACE

In an essay entitled "Toward a Theory of Translating" published some fifty years ago, I. A. Richards declared that translation "may very probably be the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos." While there may be people who consider Richards's pronouncement an exaggeration, many of those who have had some experience of translating a formidable text from one language into another will agree that translation *is* a highly qualified candidate for Richards's ultimate complexity. In trying to tease out meaning from an obscure passage or in searching for the *mot juste* in the target language, they must have seen how the source text often refuses to be pinned down and come to realize why the perfect target text, or the "transparent" translation, is just a figment of some theorists' imagination. With first-hand experience of the complexity of translation, they will reject any suggestion that a translation theory can be as universally applicable as Einstein's equation, $E = mc^2$. Even if no consensus can be reached about the ultimate complexity or otherwise of translation, one thing is certain: that translation is profoundly mysterious and tantalizingly intriguing, alluring and thwarting the inquirer at the same time. Hence the endless discussions of the subject from Cicero to Saint Jerome, from Benjamin to Derrida, from Xuan Zang 玄奘 to Yan Fu 嚴復, and from Tytler to Nida, all of whom have tried, each in his own way, to come to grips with translation.

Over the centuries, particularly over the past decades, the views put forward by translation studies scholars have been extremely diverse: some of them scientific and verifiable findings worthy of the status of theories, some of them reliable principles deduced from practice, some of them observations about isolated phenomena, some of them mere speculations serving to spawn further speculations.… More often than not, many of these views—or theories, as their originators would like to call them—are at variance with each other, testifying just too cogently to the complex, mysterious, and protean nature of translation. No wonder volume after volume of essays in translation studies keeps appearing year after year, all intended to tackle the complex, probe the mysterious, or tame the protean.

Amidst the continuous churning out of essays in translation studies, a few words by way of justification for yet another collection are in order.

Over the past decades, the majority of collections have been confined to specific topics or areas, put out by those who have a theory to defend, an ideology to spread, a school of thought to champion, or a target to destroy. While such collections do have their value, and can serve various purposes, they all have similar limitations: far too narrow in scope, they tend to base their conclusions on isolated examples.

Unlike many previous collections of essays in translation studies, *The Dancer and the Dance* is a wide-ranging dialogue between many topics as well as between many types of translation: between theory and practice, between linguistic and cultural approaches, between literary and non-literary texts, between computer-aided and non-computer-aided translation…. It does not privilege any particular school or theory; through this polyphonic dialogue, it is aimed at helping the reader gain a deeper understanding of translation.

Like literary theories, many translation theories that dominate the scene today may be refuted or superseded with the passage of time. In publishing *The Dancer and the Dance*, we do not have any pretension to set up principles or theories that can last for ever, but we believe that, by providing an open forum for practitioners of translation and scholars of translation studies alike and covering as much scope as possible, we hope to be able to look at translation more objectively.

Another feature of this collection is the diversity of the authors' backgrounds. A joint effort of thirteen scholars and scholar-translators from Britain, mainland China, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates, and Hong Kong, it contains essays which have benefited from various specialties: literary translation, linguistics, cultural studies, computer-aided translation, Chinese literature, English literature, comparative literature, creative writing, and so on. Of the scholar-translators, some, with widely read and highly acclaimed translations to their credit, are arguably among the most outstanding, particularly in the English-Chinese direction. Of the scholars of translation studies, many have played important roles in trying to unravel the mystery of translation in their monographs and journal articles. Needless to say, quite a number of authors in the collection are "amphibian"—that is, they are both theorists and practitioners.

Over the past years, more and more people have been voicing dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs in translation studies. One of the most commonly heard charges is that many articles and books on translation are nothing more than vague generalities and high-sounding jargon that befuddle rather than enlighten the reader, hardly corresponding with what is happening in actual translation. Mindful of this concern, we have considered it appropriate to steer clear of theorizing in a vacuum.

In his famous poem, "Among School Children," Yeats, after putting a philosophical question to the chestnut-tree, goes on to reflect upon the relationship between the performer and the performance:

> O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
> Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
> O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
> How can we know the dancer from the dance?

In many ways, the relationship between the translator and the translation is similar to that between the dancer and the dance, especially in view of the fact that what goes on in the translation process—the synapse, as it were, that connects the translator and the translation—is determined by a myriad of inexplicable factors: linguistic, cultural, ideological, psychological, and idiosyncratic. In view of this, if Yeats cannot know the dancer from the dance, what hope is there for theorists of translation to know the translator from the translation? Thus, we may perhaps never be able to understand "the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos"; still, we hope that, after reading this collection of essays, the reader will be able to appreciate the dancer / translator and the dance / translation in a clearer light.

—Laurence K. P. Wong and Chan Sin-wai
April 2013

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Dancer and the Dance* is a collection of thirteen papers presented at the International Conference on Translation Studies and Translation between Chinese and English, jointly organized by the Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Warwick and held on 11-12 December 2008 at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Selected as the activity of the Faculty of Arts to celebrate the Forty-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Founding of New Asia College, it was jointly sponsored by The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Chung Chi College, and New Asia College. Although five years have now passed, we are still deeply appreciative of our sponsors' generosity and of the honour bestowed on the Conference by the University and New Asia College. Our gratitude is due especially to Professor Lawrence Lau and Professor Kenneth Young, then respectively Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University, to Professor Archie Lee, then Dean of the Faculty of Arts, to Professor Henry N. C. Wong, then Head of New Asia College, to Professor Wing Yun Kwok, then Acting Head of New Asia College, to Professor Philip Leung Yuen Sang, Head of Chung Chi College, to Professor Nigel Thrift, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Warwick, and to Professor Susan Bassnett, then Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Warwick and Director of its Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies, all of whom have given us support in more ways than one.

Privileged to have had the delightful experience of collaborating with eleven distinguished conference participants, we would like to thank them in the order in which their papers were presented (which is also the order followed in this volume): Professor Yu Kwang-chung (Keynote Speaker), Dr. Lynne Long, Dr. Piotr Kuhiwczak, Dr. John T. Gilmore, Professor Basil Hatim, Professor Wang Ning, Professor Ching-hsi Perng, Professor Guo Jianzhong, Professor Luo Xuanmin, Professor Jin Di, and Professor Yanwing Leung. Without their scholarly papers, it would not have been possible for *The Dancer* to begin dancing. Just one month before the Conference was due to open, though, we were deeply grieved to learn that Professor Jin Di had passed away; consequently, his paper had to be read by his friend Dr. K. K. Sin, whose kindness we here gratefully acknowledge.

Our warm thanks are also due to colleagues in the Department, especially to Ms. Rosaline Chan, Ms. Florence Li, Ms. Miranda Lui, and Mr. Andy Liu, all of whom, in helping organize the Conference, admirably convinced us that a wonderful job could be done under great pressure of time. Assisting Dr. Piotr Kuhiwczak of the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Warwick, Ms. Manita So of the British University's Hong Kong Office did indispensable co-ordinating work for us. To her let us say a special "Thank you."

From the moment we decided to put together the conference papers as a collection of essays in translation studies, Ms. Miranda Lui has been tirelessly communicating with the authors, helping prepare the manuscript of the volume for publication in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style*. For her quality work, we owe her many heartfelt thanks. We would also like to thank our colleague Mr. Duncan Poupard, who has read the proofs with a keen eye for detail and made many valuable suggestions.

Working on the book since 2009, we have been in constant touch with Ms. Carol Koulikourdi of Cambridge Scholars Publishing. For her efficiency and professionalism, we would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation. Finally, we owe a special debt of gratitude to Cambridge Scholars Publishing, without whose acceptance of our book proposal *The Dancer and the Dance* would not have been able to see the light of day.

—Laurence K. P. Wong and Chan Sin-wai
April 2013

# THE POET AS TRANSLATOR

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## [I]

It is said that "poetry can be translated by poets only." This view, however, is challenged by the fact that noted recent translators of poetry, such as Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, Yang Xianyi 楊憲益, Shi Yingzhou 施穎洲, Wang Zuoliang 王佐良, Xu Yuanchong 許淵沖, Arthur Waley, David Hawkes, Ching-hsi Perng 彭鏡禧, and Serena Jin 金聖華, are not themselves poets. As no one insists that "essays can be translated by essayists only" or "novels can only be rendered by novelists," it implies that of all literary genres poetry is the hardest to translate and poetry translation, therefore, should be left to poets.

The sorry truth is that most poets are inadequate for the task, for a poet is free to choose his own subject matter and verse form, but a translator must comply with that of the original work. A poet is expected to express himself at his best, yet a translator is expected to best serve his author. But how can contemporary poets, who have not disciplined themselves in regular prosody, and who advocate and practise "free verse," be expected to tackle such conventional forms as the sonnet, the couplet, or the quatrain? How can the same hand, long used only to "free verse" in its habitual looseness, at a moment's notice, turn to classical forms with all their prosodic constraints? No wonder the unpleasant encounter often results in uneven lines and unnatural rhymes.

Besides, a translator must know at least one foreign language, to render which he must have full understanding of the source, full mastery of the target, and sufficient knowledge of what the original work is about. Thus, I often assert that the translator is a scholar without a treatise and a writer without creative writing. Basically, a translator is a kind of scholar, yet ordinary poets are not necessarily competent scholars, not even in terms of poetics. Furthermore, they may not be adequately bilingual.

## [II]

When I was in senior high, I was thrilled to find translated poems in my textbook of Chinese. The original was "The Isles of Greece," an excerpt from Byron's epic satire *Don Juan*, translated by Su Manshu 蘇曼殊, Ma Junwu 馬君武, and Hu Shi 胡適 respectively in forms of seven-character stop-short, seven-character old verse, and rhapsodic *Li sao* style. As soon as I received the textbook, I chanted the translations to myself again and again and, deeply touched, promised myself that one day I would also be a translator.

All these translators were poets: Su and Ma in the classic tradition, while Hu, though essentially not a poet *par excellence*, had ridden high on the New Literature Movement and become a pioneer of modern Chinese poetry. Fortunately, for the translation of Byron's poem, his choice was the rhapsodic style of Qu Yuan 屈原, which reads much better than the vernacular style he did his best to promote.

Usually, a poet renders poetry in three ways: from a foreign language into his mother tongue, from his mother tongue into a foreign language, or from his own poetry into a foreign tongue.

The most popular practice, of course, is translating foreign poetry into one's mother tongue, which requires thorough understanding of the former and sure mastery of the latter, a process of "entrance" into the mother tongue. On the other hand, translating poetry from one's mother tongue into a foreign language requires a sufficient grasp of the former and a full mastery of the latter, a process of "exit," which also means "entrance" into an alien realm, a process, as is to be expected, less convenient than the other way round. Understandably, since the May-Fourth Movement, most Chinese poets, including Hu Shi, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Xu Zhimo 徐志摩, Liang Zongdai 梁宗岱, Bian Zhilin 卞之琳, Feng Zhi 馮至, and Mu Dan 穆旦, have rendered foreign poems into Chinese, but very few have made efforts in the opposite direction. The same is true, recently, of the English-speaking world, as exemplified by John Ciardi's version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Rex Warner's of Euripides's *Medea*, Horace Gregory's of Catallus's lyrics, and Roy Campbell's of Calderon's *La vida es sueño*. But examples in the opposite direction are rare, not to mention turning contemporary works into ancient languages. The same, again, applies to the history of English literature before the twentieth century, which abounded in poet-translators like Wyatt and Surrey, Chapman, Dryden, Pope, Cowper, and Rossetti, who contributed so much with their English versions of Homer, Dante, Villon, and other classics.

## [III]

In translating foreign classics into one's mother tongue, however, there is yet a suspicious realm where certain translations can be accepted in the name of adaptation, rewriting, transfiguration, or transformation, in a word, what Shakespeare called "sea change," without necessarily becoming "rich and strange." Positive examples should include Jonson's "To Celia," adapted from the *Epistles of Philostratus*, and Pope's "Solitude," modelled upon Horace's *Epode II*. A famous but not positive example is Ezra Pound's "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter," borrowed from Li Bai's 李白 "*Changgan Xing*"〈長干行〉("A Song of Changgan"), in the music-bureau style:

妾髮初覆額，折花門前劇。
郎騎竹馬來，遶床弄青梅。
同居長干里，兩小無嫌猜。
十四為君婦，羞顏未嘗開。
低頭向暗壁，千喚不一回。
十五始展眉，願同塵與灰。
常存抱柱信，豈上望夫臺？
十六君遠行，瞿塘灩澦堆，
五月不可觸，猿聲天上哀。
門前遲行跡，一一生綠苔。
苔深不能掃，落葉秋風早。
八月蝴蝶黃，雙飛西園草，
感此傷妾心，坐愁紅顏老。
早晚下三巴，預將書報家。
相迎不道遠，直至長風沙。

*The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter*

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.
At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours
Forever and forever and forever
Why should I climb the lookout?
At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.
You dragged your feet when you went out.
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August
Over the grass in the West garden;
They hurt me. I grow older.
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you
As far as Cho-fu-sa.

Let us look first at the verse form. The Chinese original is a poem in five-character old verse which is less strict in its rhyme scheme. The English version is unrhymed, which is passable, but the uneven lines are at variance with the neatness of the original. A saving merit, however, is that most of the lines in English are end-stopped like their Chinese counterparts. Semantically, there are quite a few errors. "Bamboo horse" (*zhu ma* 竹馬) is misread as "bamboo stilts," resulting in a grotesque scene. The allusion in "faith that holds to a bridge" (*bao zhu xin* 抱柱信) would be too complicated to keep; its omission is only reasonable. "You have been gone five months" (*wu yue bu ke chu* 五月不可觸) is again a misreading: it means "you should steer clear of the midstream rocks in the fifth month (when they are submerged by the summer flood)." The error in "You dragged your feet … the different mosses" (*menqian chi xingji, yiyi sheng lütai* 門前遲行跡，一一生綠苔) arises from a misinterpretation of "wait" for "late" (遲). The two lines actually mean: "The footprints I left while waiting for you have one by one been overgrown with moss." "Yellow with August" is very beautiful and worthy of Imagism, but, here, according to the Chinese lunar calendar, the "eighth month" refers rather to September. Lastly, "They hurt me. I grow older." is too prosaic, too weak to suggest the keenly lyrical complaint of a helpless young wife vainly waiting at home, not to mention the visual appeal of youthful rosy countenance (*hongyan* 紅顏).

The three place names in the poem, full of echoes of ancient China, were transliterated into Japanese as Chokan, Ku-to-yen, Cho-fu-sa, which ring no bell, of course, to the English ear. "Cho-fu-sa" (*chang fengsha* 長風沙), for instance, means "long wind and sand," highly suggestive in Chinese of inclement weather on a long journey and is a felicitous association with "I will come to greet you, however long the way" (*xiangying bu dao yuan, zhizhi chang fengsha* 相迎不道遠，直至長風沙). The absurd fact is Pound did not know Chinese: his free handling of *The Book of Songs* and Li Bai owed much to the manuscripts of Fenellosa. His pretentious "translation" of Chinese classics is thus only retranslation which retains even Japanese transliterations of proper nouns and presents Li Bai as Riha-Ku. Godfather of modernism and "Big Brother" (*il miglior fabbro*) of Hemingway, Joyce, and, in particular, T. S. Eliot, Pound was a polyglot of erratic erudition, who delighted in mixing the ancient with the modern, the English with the European, and the Western with the Oriental, into an impressive *mélange* of culture. He had a way of salvaging classicism, medievalism, and orientalism and gleaning something out of these new themes and forms so that his brilliant open smuggling across international literary borders has passed as "translation," but somehow reminds me of collage in modern art. T. S. Eliot, his junior partner, even boasted that Pound "invented Chinese poetry." No wonder his daring and resourceful piracy was described by Yeats as "more style than form … a style constantly interrupted, broken, twisted into nervous obsession, nightmare, stammering confusion" and as typical of "a brilliant improvisator translating at sight from an unknown Greek masterpiece."

## [IV]

To date, I have written nearly 1,000 poems of my own and translated nearly 500 pieces by other poets. The latter category includes about 200 from English and American verse, and sixty Turkish poems retranslated from English versions. Of the 200 or so rendered into English are some one hundred from my own poetry and the rest from classical Chinese poetry and contemporary poetry from Taiwan. I can assert without hesitation that my translations of English and American poets are positively much more reliable than Pound's adaptations from Chinese verse. My mastery of Chinese is no less competent than Pound's of his mother tongue, but, since I have taught English poetry for forty years at college, my knowledge of the subject naturally far exceeds Pound's slight acquaintance with his. I hope the statement will not be taken as self-complacency. English has been a compulsory course in our high

school curriculum for almost a century; the English proficiency of the Chinese people is, of course, greater than the Chinese proficiency of the English so that our language has been increasingly anglicized to a point where it is much more convenient to render English into Chinese than vice versa. Through sustained conditioning of the education system, our language has come a long way in adapting itself to English, but, on the other hand, English has not yet begun its adaptation to Chinese. This may be easily explained by looking at Cui Hao's 崔顥 "*Changgan Xing*"〈長干行〉("A Song of Changgan"):

家臨九江水，
來去九江側：
同是長干人，
生小不相識。

Such a sentiment, if expressed by a present-day poet in the so-called "new verse," may read as follows:

我家啊就在長江的邊上，
所以來來去去都不外岸邊：
我們原來是南京的同鄉，
卻從小就沒有機會見面。

In what way is the new verse "new" after all? There is nothing new here except the grammar, which is more anglicized and features additional form words. This is why it is more convenient today to render English into Chinese, which is to some extent already anglicized, than to render Chinese into English, which is not sinicized at all. This is also why a reader of my Chinese translations of English poetry, which closely follow the versification of the original, whether in rhyming or in line pattern, can tell, even at a glance, how the original looks and sounds. John Dryden's "Epigram on Milton" is a typical example:

三位詩人，遠生在三個時代，
為希臘、義大利、英國添光采。
第一人以思想之高超出眾，
第二人以雄偉，第三人兼通：
造化之功更無力向前推移，
為生第三人惟將前二人合一。

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed,
The next in majesty, in both the last:
The force of nature could no farther go;
To make a third, she joined the former two.

Obviously, my lines are composed in heroic couplets. The next example is Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," composed in a unique combination of English quatrain and the typical Dantesque *terza rima*, the rhyme scheme closely associated with *The Divine Comedy*:

我想我認得這座森林。
林主的房子就在前村；
卻見不到我在此歇馬，
看他林中飄滿的雪景。

我的小馬一定很驚訝，
周圍望不見什麼人家，
竟在一年最暗的黃昏，
寒林和冰湖之間停下。

馬兒搖響身上的串鈴，
問我這地方該不該停。
此外只有微風拂雪片，
再也聽不到其他聲音。

森林又暗又深真可羨，
但是我已經有約在先，
還要趕多少路才安眠，
還要趕多少路才安眠。

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

It is demanding to translate a poem in traditional prosody. On the other hand, no less difficult is it to render a poem in "free verse" into a style spontaneous and fluent yet free from sloppy prose. The following is the first passage from my translation of T. S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi":

「好冷的，那次旅途，
撿到一年最壞的季節
出門，出那樣的遠門。
道路深陷，氣候凌人，
真正的隆冬。」
駝群擦破了皮，害著腳痛，難以駕馭，
就那麼躺在融雪之上。
好幾次，我們懊喪地想起
半山的暑宮，成排的坡屋，
還有裯衣少女進冰過的甜食。
然後是駝奴們罵人，發牢騷，
棄隊而逃，去找烈酒和女人，
營火熄滅，無處可投宿，
大城仇外，小城不可親，
村落不乾淨，開價還很高:
苦頭，我們真吃夠。
終於我們還是挑夜裡趕路，
趕一陣睡一陣，
而一些聲音在耳邊吟唱，說
這完全是愚蠢。

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.

There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters.
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

## [V]

From my experience of translating into English from classical Chinese poetry, from modern Chinese poetry in Taiwan, and from my own poems, I find the first to be the hardest task. Brevity is the soul of classical Chinese poetry, that is, brevity enriched with condensed suggestiveness and associations. Such concentration often dispenses with grammatical elements, such as preposition, conjunction, pronoun, and even subject and object, elements indispensable in English. These have to be provided in English translation with the result of uncontrollable syntax and unwieldy lines. For instance, in Chinese two closely related nouns often go together without the help of a preposition or conjunction, such as "river village" instead of "village by the river" or "riverside village," or "river moon" instead of "moon on the river." Again, to be fully intelligible in translation, the last line of Su Shi's 蘇軾 famous poem, "*Chibi huaigu*"〈赤壁懷古〉("Nostalgic Thoughts at Red Cliff"), "*yi zun huan lei jiang yue*" "一樽還酹江月" (literally, "a cup to toast river moon"), has to be elaborated as "Let me offer a libation to the moonlit river" or even "I'll pour a cup of wine on the moon's reflection on the river," which would be too verbose to sound poetic.

Allusion is also a problem. Literal translation would be hardly intelligible and downright cumbersome, to say nothing of the interruption of the smooth flow of syntax. On the other hand, free translation would miss the associations with history or myth. Furthermore, places called by their old names, such as "*Wu tou Chu wei* 吳頭楚尾" ("where Wu began and Chu ended") or "*sai bei jiang nan* 塞北江南" ("north of the Wall and south of the River"), would sound flat and abstract.

Yet the worst ordeal, perhaps, is to cope with prosody. In lines of either five characters or seven, the variety attained by dividing a line into two sections or phrases, one of even-number characters (two or four) and the other of odd (three), can hardly correspond with the shifting caesura in English prosody. The balance and contrast of even tones with deflected ones, too, are the translator's despair. Also, to sound steady and spontaneous, rhyming demands experienced virtuosity. It takes a masterly craftsman to arrange the syntax so that the rhyming word appears at the end of the line. Such a manoeuvre often involves the restructuring of neighbouring lines, even a whole stanza. An awkward hand often betrays itself where the rhyming is contrived. I have translated about forty classical Chinese poems, many of which I did for quotation in my English articles. The following are two examples, the former by Su Shi and the latter by Gu Xiong 顧敻:

〈題西林寺壁〉

橫看成嶺側成峰，
遠近高低各不同。
不識廬山真面目，
只緣身在此山中。

〈訴衷情〉

永夜拋人何處去？
　絕來音，
　香閣掩，
　眉斂，
　月將沉，
爭忍不相尋？
　怨孤衾，
　換我心，
　為你心，
始知相憶深。

*Inscribed on the Wall of Xilin Temple*

A ridge in full view, but, sideways, a peak:
With distance and angle the spectacles change.
The truth about Mount Lu is hard to tell
So long as you're within the mountain range.

*The Heart's Complaint*

Whither have you gone all night long,
Message there's none?
My bower's shut,
My brows knit,
The moon about to set.
How could you keep me awaiting?
O the lonely bed:
Just exchange
Your heart with mine
To know how much I pine.

## [VI]

Among contemporary poets in Taiwan there are quite a few who are scholarly and well versed in English: some did translate their own poetry, and even compiled a whole anthology of poetry in English translation, Wai-lim Yip and Dominic Cheung being two good examples. To the *Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature* in English translation, compiled by the National Bureau of Compilation and Translation in Taipei, I also contributed my translations of eighty poems by my fellow poets. The bilingual *Shouyeren* 《守夜人》(*The Night Watchman*), published in 2004, is a selection of eighty-five of my own poems, which I personally rendered into English.

In the long history of English literature I have not yet found a single case of any noted poet who published a book of his own verse rendered into a foreign language all by himself. This is perhaps because poets in the West can wait to be translated after they have won international fame. The fact is that European writers and scholars are often polyglots, even in the major languages. Now that English has practically become a world language, writers in the English-speaking countries can concentrate on mastering their mother tongue without worrying about wining foreign readers directly in the original or through translation. Our ancestors, poets like Li Bai, Bai Juyi 白居易, and Su Shi, did not have to worry either. Students in neighbouring Japan, Chosen, and Annam used to know Chinese; so Chinese writers did not need the mediation of translators. Yet contemporary Asian poets, including those writing in Chinese, do need such mediation if they wish to appeal to the English-speaking world or even to their Asian neighbours. Since competent translators in verse are even fewer than those in other literary genres, the poor poets themselves, who think they are able, have to try their own hands at it.

I have heard a witticism that there are three things one has to do in one's mother tongue: swear, say one's will, and write poetry. I can think and write in English while working on a paper, but cannot express my lyrical feelings, namely, compose a poem, in any language except my mother tongue. It is a different matter, however, to render my own poetry because the feeling is already there in full expression, ready to be transformed into another tongue. Misunderstanding is impossible, but so is the demand to match up with the original. The best one can expect is approximation, with the degree of approximation depending on one's mastery of the target language.

I have studied English poetry for sixty years and taught it off and on for more than thirty. Its imagery, rhythm, rhyme, and syntax have been absorbed into the depths of my sensibility to become a part of my *ars poetica*. The basic metrical patterns, such as iambic pentameter and tetrameter, have long taken root in the recesses of my auditory memory so that I breathe iambs and trochees, so much so that when I divide a poem into equal sections, the stanzaic form is readily available; and when I compose a poem without stanzaic division, blank verse offers itself to combine with the undivided verse of seven-character lines in the Chinese tradition into a rich alloy of flexibility to allow, on the one hand, a sustained complex sentence to expand across many lines and, on the other, more freedom in the rhyme scheme. Since my poetry has benefited so much from English versification, it becomes easier, of course, for it to be rendered into English, a process of mutual compatibility and agreeable exchange, widely different from the ordeal of turning classical Chinese verse into English.

The English translations by Shelley from Greek, Roman, and German poets, though not on a large scale, proved to be a fruitful discipline. His exercise in rendering fifty lines or so from *The Divine Comedy* did acquaint himself with *terza rima*, so that, when he wrote "Ode to the West Wind," he was resourceful enough to combine Dante's stanza and Shakespearean sonnet with great success in rhyming sonority and syntactical suspense. In addition to my study and teaching of English verse, I have translated much from it and so have subjected myself to a severer discipline than Shelley, which I find quite rewarding when it is my turn to ask its help. Thus to a bilingual poet creation and translation may be complementary and fruitful to his poetic art. The following are four poems of mine in my own English rendition. The former two are in the traditional form of regular stanzaic division. The latter two are undivided whole pieces partly inheriting ancient Chinese style and partly adopting blank verse from Western prosody.

〈民歌〉

傳說北方有一首民歌
只有黃河的肺活量能歌唱
從青海到黃海
　風　也聽見
　沙　也聽見

如果黃河凍成了冰河
還有長江最最母性的鼻音
從高原到平原
　魚　也聽見
　龍　也聽見

如果長江凍成了冰河
還有我，還有我的紅海在呼嘯
從早潮到晚潮
　醒　也聽見
　夢　也聽見

有一天我的血也結冰
還有你的血他的血在合唱
從 A 型到 O 型
　哭　也聽見
　笑　也聽見

*A Folk Song*

By legend a song was sung in the north
By the Yellow River, with her mighty lungs.
From Blue Sea to Yellow Sea,
　It's heard in the wind,
　And heard in the sand.

If the Yellow River froze into icy river,
There's the Long River's most motherly hum.
From the plateau to the plain,
　It's heard by the dragon,
　And heard by the fish.

If the Long River froze into icy river,
There's myself, my Red Sea howling in me.
From high tide to low tide,

It's heard full awake,
And heard full asleep.

If one day my blood, too, shall freeze hard,
There's the choir of your blood and his blood.
From type A to type O,
It's heard while crying
And heard while laughing.

〈冰姑雪姨〉
—— 懷念水家的兩位美人

冰姑你不要再哭了
再哭，海就要滿了
北極熊就沒有家了
許多港就要淹了
許多島就要沉了
不要哭了，冰姑

以前怪你太冷酷了
可遠望，不可以親暱
都說你是冰美人哪
患了自戀的潔癖
矜持得從不心軟
不料你一哭就化了

雪姨你不要再逃了
再逃，就怕真失蹤了
一年年音信都稀了
就見面也會認生了
變瘦了，又匆匆走了
不要再逃了，雪姨

以前該數你最美了
降落時那麼從容
比雨阿姨輕盈多了
潔白的芭蕾舞鞋啊
紛紛旋轉在虛空
像一首童歌，像夢

不要再哭了，冰姑
鎖好你純潔的冰庫

關緊你透明的冰樓
守住兩極的冰宮吧
把新鮮的世界保住
不要再哭了，冰姑

不要再躲了，雪姨
小雪之後是大雪
漫天而降吧，雪姨
曆書等你來兌現
來吧，親我仰起的臉
不要再躲了，雪姨

*Aunt Ice, Aunt Snow*
*— in memory of two beauties in the Water family*

Aunt Ice, please cry no more
Or the seas will spill all over,
And homeless will be the polar bear,
And harbors will be flooded,
And islands will go under.
Cry no more please, Aunt Ice.

We blamed you for being so cold,
Fit to behold, but not to hold.
We called you the Icy Beauty,
Mad with self-love on keeping clean,
Too proud ever to become soft.
Yet, when you cry so hard, you melt.

Aunt Snow, please hide no more
Or you will truly disappear.
Almost a stranger year after year,
When you do come, you're less familiar,
Thinner and gone again sooner.
Please hide no more, Aunt Snow.

You were beloved as the fairest:
With such grace you used to descend,
Even more lightly than Aunt Rain.
Such pure white ballerina shoes
Drift in a whirl out of heaven
Like a nursery song, a dream.

Cry no more please, Aunt Ice.
Lock up your rich treasury,

Shut tight your translucent tower,
And guard your palaces at the poles
To keep the world cool and fresh.
Cry no more please, Aunt Ice.

Hide no more please, Aunt Snow.
"Light Snow is followed by Heavy Snow."
Descend in avalanche, Aunt Snow!
Your show the Lunar Pageant waits.
Come and kiss my upturned face.
Hide no more please, Aunt Snow.

〈如果遠方有戰爭〉

如果遠方有戰爭，我應該掩耳
或是該坐起來，慚愧地傾聽？
應該掩鼻，或應該深呼吸
難聞的焦味？我的耳朵應該
聽你喘息著愛情或是聽榴彈
宣揚真理？格言，勳章，補給
能不能餵飽無饜的死亡？
如果有戰爭煎一個民族，在遠方
有戰車狠狠地犁過春泥
有嬰孩在號啕，向母親的屍體
號啕一個盲啞的明天
如果有尼姑在火葬自己
寡慾的脂肪炙響絕望
燒曲的四肢抱住涅槃
為了一種無效的手勢。 如果
我們在床上，他們在戰場
在鐵絲網上播種著和平
我應該惶恐，或是該慶幸
慶幸是做愛，不是肉搏
是你的裸體在懷裡，不是敵人
如果遠方有戰爭，而我們在遠方
你是慈悲的天使，白羽無疵
你俯身在病床，看我在床上
缺手，缺腳，缺眼，缺乏性別
在一所血腥的戰地醫院
如果遠方有戰爭啊這樣的戰爭
吾愛，如果我們在遠方

*If There's a War Raging Afar*

If there's a war raging afar, shall I stop my ear
Or shall I sit up and listen in shame?
Shall I stop my nose or breathe and breathe
The smothering smoke of troubled air? Shall I hear
You gasp lust and love or shall I hear the howitzers
Howl their sermons of truth? Mottoes, medals, widows,
Can these glut the greedy palate of Death?
If far away a war is frying a nation,
And fleets of tanks are ploughing plots in spring,
A child is crying at its mother's corpse
Of a dumb and blind and deaf tomorrow;
If a nun is squatting on her fiery bier
With famished flesh singeing despair
And black limbs ecstatic round Nirvana
As a hopeless gesture of hope. If
We are in bed, and they're in the field
Sowing peace in acres of barbed wire,
Shall I feel guilty or shall I feel glad,
Glad I'm making, not war, but love,
And in my arms writhes your nakedness, not the foe's?
If afar there rages a war, and there we are
You a merciful angel, clad all in white
And bent over the bed, with me in bed
Without hand or foot or eye or without sex
In a field hospital that smells of blood.
If a war O such a war is raging afar,
My love, if right there we are.

〈翠玉白菜〉

前身是緬甸或雲南的頑石
被怎樣敏感的巧腕
用怎樣深刻的雕刀
一刀刀，挑筋剔骨
從輝石玉礦的牢裡
解救了出來，被瑾妃的纖指
愛撫得更加細膩，被觀眾
艷羨的眼神，燈下聚焦
一代又一代，愈寵愈亮
通體流暢，含蓄著內斂的光
亦翠亦白，你已不再
僅僅是一塊玉，一棵菜

只因當日，那巧匠接你出來
卻自己將精魂耿耿
投生在玉胚的深處
不讓時光緊迫地追捕
凡藝術莫非是弄假成真
弄假成真，比真的更真
否則那栩栩的螽斯，為何
至今還執迷不醒，還抱著
猶翠的新鮮，不肯下來
或許，他就是玉匠轉胎。

*The Emerald White Cabbage*

Ore-born of Burmese or Yunnan descent,
By whose hand, sensitive and masterly,
Driving and drilling its way so surely,
Leaving clean all the tendons and bones,
Are you released from the jadeite jail?
Refined further by the fingers of Jin,
The royal concubine, and polished bright
By the spectators' adoring gaze
Focused under the light, year after year,
Until a liquid clarity is lit within,
Verdant and pearly; no longer are you
Merely a piece of jade or a cabbage
Since the day the sculptor set you free
And left, instead, his own devoted soul
Reincarnate in the womb of the jade,
Beyond the relentless pursuit of time.
Art is simply play become truth,
Truth at play, even truer than real.
Or why is that vivid katydid,
Unmoved in its belief, still holding on
To the fresh green without regret?
Perhaps it's the sculptor in his rebirth.

For half a century in Taiwan, modern poetry has been composed without punctuation marks, especially at the end of a line, leaving its reader to find out for himself where the sentence begins and ends and how a line is related grammatically to its context, a cause for frequent misunderstanding. It has been my practice in translation to fill up all the missing marks to enable the reader to fully grasp what I mean and, at the same time, to show that my poem can stand close grammatical analysis. It is my belief that a poem is liable to obscurity if it fails the test of logic.

Of the four poems quoted above, "A Folk Song" and "Aunt Ice, Aunt Snow" belong to the neat, stanzaic form with a ringing sweep like the lyric of a vocal composition: thus the rhythm is simple and racy and the line pattern more end-stopped than run-on. "If There's a War Raging Afar" and "The Emerald White Cabbage" belong to the type of uninterrupted consummation where the sentence and the line overlap, often with a long sentence crossing many lines as in Milton's blank verse. Yet in this case I still enlist the aid of rhyme as in the seven-character lines of classical Chinese verse. All these prosodic transfusions, ironically met in a sort of "rhymed blank verse," can also be discerned in my translations.

Finally, do the self-rendered English versions of my own verse count merely as translation or, in the long run, also as creation in a sense? Of course it is translation. Yet, essentially, all creative works are also translations, translations from the artist's aesthetic experience into language. As a fusion of emotions, ideas, and all sorts of sensory feelings, our aesthetic experience has to undergo such stages as settlement, clarification, reorganization, and distillation, until it is fully "translated" into definite language. If the inner aesthetic state is the original text, then the language or the finished work may be called its translation. Yet what and how exactly the "text" is is not clear at first; it has to be gradually defined and refined in the process of "translation" until it reaches its total truth. Here lies the difference between the translator and the author: the former faces a definite, clear "text" at the very start. Spared all the efforts at reorganization and distillation, etc., the translator has yet the duty to bring the text into an alien language situation where it must get oriented and naturalized to become finally a happy immigrant. This immigration procedure still allows a translator freedom in the choice of diction, arrangement of order, and the manoeuvre of coordination. The same original often results in a variety of versions ranging from the indifferent to the inspired, depending on the degree of flexibility and resourcefulness the translator can attain. If it is a poet translating his own work, the situation is, as the Chinese proverb says, "*Yixin eryong* 一心二用" ("one mind dually applied"). So long as he is duly mindful, it is hopeful his mind can emigrate to a second body. Accordingly, it may not be a luxury for the true poet-translator to aspire to rebirth or reincarnation. If Pound could claim Li Bai's poems as his own, I should think that I can also claim my self-rendered versions as my realm, my reclamation, and my settlement.

Yet the poet-translator himself is keenly aware there is, after all, a realm in his work which defies translation. Poems that are intricate in allusion, unique in diction, or subtle in rhythmical pattern and sound effects, in a word, that are branded with the birthmark of the mother

tongue, are too intimidating to the helpless translator, too native to have international appeal and, therefore, have to stay at home. No Muse would ever bless the translator who undertakes the thankless task of tackling the untranslatable. I for one would not try the following lines from my own poetry: in the poem "*Fei Jiangjun*" 〈飛將軍〉("The Winged General") I describe how, as the legend goes, "General Li Guang, surprised by mistaking a rock in the grass for a tiger, shot an arrow at it so hard that the arrowhead was driven in. Wondering, he shot again but was no longer able to pierce it."

弦聲叫，矯矯的長臂抱
咬，一匹怪石痛成了虎嘯
箭羽輕輕在搖

In "*Shanyu*"〈山雨〉("Rain on the Hill") I apply the techniques of cubism and pointillism in describing a rainy scene.

霧愈聚愈濃就濃成了陣雨
人愈走愈深就走進米南宮裡
路愈轉愈暗就暗下來吧黃昏.

# TRANSLATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFER: RELIGIOUS TEXTS

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## [I] Introduction

The phenomenon of globalisation, together with the cultural turn in translation studies,[1] has led to an extension of the boundaries of the discipline of Translation Studies. In the West more attention is beginning to be paid to traditions of translation from cultures other than Europe and the United States, and in China there is reciprocal awareness of Western traditions. This widening of the horizons of translation studies has been beneficial all round and has been sustained by a move towards internationalisation and collaborative research from major universities in the world.

There are some commentators[2] who are troubled by the current employment of Western translation theory as some kind of standard and the use of English as *lingua franca* for discussion and the medium of published research. Choice of languages for any discipline naturally restricts discourse and interchange. As Eugene Eoyang points out, there is

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1 Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998); Mary Snell-Hornby, *The Turns in Translation Studies* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006); Michael Cronin, "The Empire Talks Back: Orality, Heteronomy and the Cultural Turn in Interpretation Studies," in *Translation and Power*, eds. Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Michael Cronin, *Translation and Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2003).

2 Maria Tymoczko, "Trajectories of Research in Translation Studies," in *Meta* 50, no. 4 (December 2005): 1082–97; Eva Hung and Judy Wakabayashi, eds., *Asian Translation Traditions* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2005).

always polylingualism within monolingualism, as is demonstrated by the many varieties of English in use.[3] Consequently intercultural research brings its own complications in terms of the language of discussion and the access to theory. Certainly Western translation theory has been used in other cultures because there is plenty of it available and it comes in a dominant language. Much is being done to redress the balance by research into alternative translation traditions and production of comparative studies. Extensive translation of theoretical ideas on translation from and into other languages will contribute further. As research progresses, we would hope for a positive interchange of traditions and theories of translation from all cultures and an injection of new perspectives into the discipline of translation studies.

This paper intends to contribute in a small way by making a brief survey of the history and tradition of religious translation in China and the West. By China I mean the vast and shifting areas in Asia ruled by the emperors of China since the first century and by the West I mean Europe in the early history of Christianity extending to the United States after the Reformation.

Historicising translation provides context and perspective and highlights patterns in development in the areas of translation and cultural studies. The point of studying the tradition of sacred text translation is that in both Eastern and Western cultures translating scripture was a major project that set the parameters for the processes of literary and philosophical translation and first made translators aware of the complexity of linguistic and cultural issues in a way that smaller, less important translation tasks did not. The extent of the venture, the variety of texts, the time scale, and the range of languages involved made it a unique process in the translation history of both cultures and even gave us some of the very earliest writing specifically about translation in the shape of Dao'an's discussion of the difficulty of sutra translation[4] and Jerome's letter to Pammachius on the best method of translating.[5]

The particular difficulties related to the transfer of sacred texts have merited special attention from practitioners, not least because of the question of authority and the need to justify the position of the translator

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[3] Eugene Eoyang, "Speaking in Tongues: Translating Chinese Literature in a Post-Babelian Age," in *Translating Chinese Literature*, eds. Eugene Eoyang and Lin Yao-fu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 297.

[4] Eva Hung, "Translation in China: An Analytical Survey," in *Asian Translation Traditions*, 102.

[5] Douglas Robinson, *Western Translation Theory* (Manchester: St. Jerome 2002), 23; Also online at http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001057.htm.

*vis à vis* the source text or texts. Some of the earliest issues that confronted translators of sacred texts in the West are still contentious and arise in the wider field of translation. How to integrate and acknowledge the oral tradition and the question of fidelity to and authority of the source text are just two issues that have exercised theorists through history, and the problems of cultural transfer, how to bridge the time and thought difference between source and target audience continue to do so.

In many ways the translation of religious texts with their status as the word of God could be blamed for the prioritization of the source text and for the narrow linguistic view of translation taken by some commentators, particularly in Europe and the United States. The custom of textual commentary and exegesis that dominated sacred texts in early Western tradition had its origin in an intense anxiety that the sacred text, and therefore God's instructions, would be misinterpreted or mistranslated and the status of both threatened in the process.

## [II] The Status of Sacred Texts

What makes a text sacred is the status it commands and the way it functions within the host culture. A philosophical or spiritual text central to the beliefs of a community or disseminated as the prescribed way to conduct society commands a central position in the network of local systems. The cultural theorist Itamar Even-Zohar's conditions for translated texts being central to the literary polysystem do not entirely cover the case of sacred texts.[6] Polysystem theory places translated texts centrally in the literary system of a culture when the culture is young and developing, when it is stale and needs regenerating and when there is some crisis or turning point. Sacred scriptures that enter a culture under one of these conditions often remain at the centre of literary systems for centuries and become translated intra-lingually as time progresses. In spite of their entrance as translations, they tend to lose their translated status through constant use and soon function as originals.

A holy text's position as part of an organized religious or ethical system leads it to be treated as unique and sacred by those subscribing to the system. It quickly becomes assimilated into the host language and culture and as time passes becomes as familiar within that culture as any source language writing. Those who do not subscribe to the same

[6] Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem," (1978) in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 192–97.

organized religious or ethical system will not of course perceive the texts in the same way and may approach their translation with a completely different attitude. Eva Hung points out that twentieth-century commentators on translation studies in China have not engaged with religious translation movements because politically they were not considered important as a focus for intellectual activity.[7] The use of translated literature for effecting change in Chinese society in the nineteenth century has been considered to be of far more interest and relevance. However with renewed interest in China's older translation traditions this may now change.

In Europe, the issue of Scripture translation has been difficult to ignore as religious activity was for centuries closely bound up with the politics of the state and is part of the historical narrative of the area. The religious peace of Augsburg in 1555 established the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, indicating that whoever ruled the area chose the religion of the people.[8] Christian writings were the authority referred to by both Church and State. The main political and religious question in Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was whether the Bible should be allowed in the vernacular of the individual states and if so, who should be allowed to not only translate it but also to read it. The act of translation made the text available to those (mainly women and servants) who were not considered capable of using it without guidance. Consequently sacred text translation received an exceptional amount of attention historically and continues to do so currently, particularly in the United States and within the Catholic Church. Whatever the level of attention received at any one time in history, the fact remains that through translation the enormous influence of Christianity and Christian writings on European thought, society, architecture, and literature equalled the effect of Buddhism and Buddhist writings on Chinese society. Nor was China the only Asian culture to be affected by sutra translation undertaken by the Chinese. Judy Wakabayashi reminds us that in the second century the texts resulting from the government-sponsored project could be understood by educated people in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam and became central texts in those cultures also.[9] It is an interesting development to remark that the cycle continues today with the introduction of Japanese Buddhism into Italy, with the attendant problems of writing Buddhism into a language already imbued

[7] Hung, "Translation in China," 96.

[8] Carter Lindberg, ed., *The European Reformations Source Book* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2000), 260.

[9] Hung and Wakabayashi, *Asian Translation Traditions*, 25.

with Roman Catholicism.[10]

The translation of holy texts has been the means of focusing the attention of scholars on translation theories as well as on the commentary of such texts. In the West, theories applied in the justification of sacred text translation have become mainstream theories of translation. For example, Eugene Nida's theory of equivalence, formal, and functional (or dynamic as it was first known) arose from his translation experience putting the Bible into other languages than English.[11] Ernst-August Gutt's idea of relevance comes from linguistics but also from a desire to have a paradigm for Bible translation acceptable and justifiable to the religious community.[12]

## [III] Why Scripture Is Translated, or Not Translated

Holy texts are translated for a variety of reasons. Evangelical mission, the search for answers to philosophical questions, the pursuit of spirituality or the desire to appropriate power have all stimulated sacred text translation. The translation of Buddhist sutras from Sanskrit into Chinese formed part of a cultural translation movement in China which lasted from the first to the ninth century was initiated by Buddhists from central Asia and encouraged by the Chinese interest in spiritual culture.[13] Vernacular translation of the Bible in reformation Europe was an attempt to lessen the authority of the institutional hierarchy of the church and allow more direct contact between God and the ordinary person.

Religion also provides a code of conduct and a system of rewards and penalties that can be used to keep communities functioning. Patronage and impetus for translation has been provided by governments, by individuals or by missionary organizations. Authority or ownership of the text or texts and their accompanying liturgies becomes important where there is a religious organization involved in missionary impetus. The Jesuit Matteo Ricci's problems in sixteenth-century China illustrate this point and his journals reveal the restrictions from several quarters under which he was obliged to work.[14] Bible societies, formed by enthusiasts for the

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[10] Manuela Foiera, "When East Meets West via Translation: The Language of Soka Gakkai in Italy," in *Translation and Religion*, ed. Lynne Long (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005).

[11] Eugene Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Amsterdam: Brill, 1964), 159.

[12] Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000).

[13] Hung and Wakabayashi, *Asian Translation Traditions*, 83.

[14] Matteo Ricci and Nicholas Trigault, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The*

distribution of vernacular Bibles, were very active in nineteenth-century Europe and continue to be so in America today translating Bibles into minority languages.

On occasion the translation of religious texts into a minority language has been done with the desire of elevating the status of the language by including a high-status text in the cultural system. Theologians through history have been known to translate the sacred text of a rival religion in order to refute and invalidate the content. Governments have been known to commission translations of the central sacred text of a minority group in order to understand the customs, politics, and context of the group. In the modern multicultural world it has become necessary to look outwards and to address cultures and religions other than our own through translating and interpreting the various scriptures.

The other side of the movement towards translation is the historical reluctance to alter the form of writing considered to embody the word of the deity or the precepts of the master. Often the language itself was considered to be a key part of the power of the word in the way that a scientific formula cannot be changed and a recipe or magic word must keep its form for it to work. Most sacred texts were first written in ancient and classical languages of high status. The recitation of prayer in an ancient language set apart the communication with God from communication between ordinary people, and the preservation of the distinct language of scripture added status and mystery to the practice of the religion. Even in modern times, the Qur'an, the sacred scripture of the religion of Islam, is considered to be untranslatable. The true Qur'an is the ancient Arabic text; all translations are carefully marked as such. Even if read privately in translation, the text is recited in Arabic and the content taught and explained to the community by the appointed religious leader. Similarly, in the Roman Catholic Church, although the Bible has been available in English since the Reformation, the weekly worship and liturgy took place in Latin until the 1960s, when the vernacular was allowed in each country for the first time. The restrictions and caveats on the translation of the liturgy are evident from the detailed instructions and justifications of methodology to be found on the Internet in the official documents concerning translation.[15]

Apart from evangelical zeal on the part of practitioners of the religion who translate in order to spread religion to as many people as possible, one of the greatest causes of translation is migration. We tend to think of

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*Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583–1610.* (New York: Random House, 1953).

[15] Liturgiam Authenticam at http://www.adoremus.org/liturgiamauthenticam.html, Rome, 2001, accessed 27 August 2008.

the modern world as being one in which migration is a new phenomenon, but people have always found a way to travel and wars or political situations have always forced migration. The transfer of European refugees to North America after the 1939–1945 war initiated a repositioning of cultures in which sacred text translation played a significant part, not least in language acquisition.[16] Migration necessitates administrative translation on the part of the host country and cultural translation on the part of the migrants. It also requires in the longer term the translation of holy texts that embody the core values of the migrating or the encountered culture. Second-generation migrants are working in a new mother tongue, first-generation migrants desire to pass on the old culture. In this way there arises a linguistic hybridity serviced by translation of sacred texts into the host language.

## [IV] Specific Problems of Translation of Religious Texts

There are some aspects of translation that are unique to sacred texts and that have become more complex with the development of the religion in question: as theological positions become determined, the range of possibilities for transfer is diminished. Exegetical patterns prove impossible to replicate in another language; poetic forms and language sounds more often than not disappear in translation. Specific historical, social, and political contexts are difficult to convey through translation without footnotes or commentary and the problem is compounded by distance through history: most ancient texts were written down for readers who already knew the context and in many cases already knew the text orally.

Orality predominated in the ancient world, so that the writing down of a sacred text was often the second or third stage in its development. The historical narrative or the sutra existed first in oral form or forms, sometimes for generations, before it was committed to writing. These oral forms may still be detected to some extent in the combination of two or more narratives, the repetition of colloquialisms or the insertion of stock phrases. The question is whether the forms could or should be reflected in translation. Oral tradition continues to form a fundamental component of most religions and connects with the central sacred texts in that the explication of the content, the reading aloud of them, the reference to them in sermons and speeches or the chanting of them in prayer forms a major part of most liturgies, rites, and ceremonies.

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[16] Leonard Greenspoon, "Texts and Contexts: Perspectives on Jewish Translations of the Hebrew Bible," in *Translation and Religion*, 59.

Another problem of cultural transfer is that specific technical and theological terms in the source text may have already had meaning assigned to them in the target language. If the host culture already has a major religion, then spiritual terminology will most likely already be assigned to that. A modern example is the translation of Japanese Soka Gakkai Buddhist texts into Italian (as mentioned above). The words for "altar," "piety" or "shrine" in Italian can have no other connotation than the culturally specific meaning with which they are imbued through centuries of Catholic usage even though the Buddhist context is totally different.[17]

Finally it has to be remembered that translators of religious texts often tend to be driven by ideological causes rather than being impartial practitioners. As translators we know the possibilities for manipulation through translation, and sacred texts are as vulnerable as any to the enthusiasms of the committed. This is perhaps a reason for the historical reluctance to translate in any other way but by glossing or with a very literal translation. A selection of translations of the same religious text invites comparison between them and often reflects divisions in thought between sections of the same religious community or different perspectives on the same theme.

## [V] Conclusion

Religious text translation provides a rich field of research inviting interest from translation scholars working in many different areas of expertise. There are possibilities of projects in the history of language, original sources, textual authority, commentary, audience reception, cultural transfer strategies, rhetoric, imagery, manipulation, influence of the early translators on the development of theory, the influence of translated scripture on Eastern and Western culture, comparative traditions of sacred text translation.

There are several reasons for undertaking such projects. On a business level, globalization with its extension of communications has brought attention to other religions and their central texts in the quest for additional markets and a global economy. Understanding of the "other" involves understanding the culture and religion of the other through access to the central religious text. Study of audience reception and of the things important to a culture may bring new markets whereas lack of understanding or ignorance brings hostility and restricts new markets.

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[17] Foiera, "When East Meets West via Translation," 184.

On a philosophical level, we can situate ourselves better in context if we understand the basis on which our own culture is built. Communication between cultures depends on being able to open ourselves to the other and in the act of translating sacred religious and philosophical texts every culture has done and continues to do exactly that.

# IN DEFENCE OF POOR TRANSLATIONS

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> A text cannot speak for itself:
> it needs a reader as well as a writer.
> (Chandler 1995)

In order to eradicate what is commonly known as "Chinglish," Beijing made a tremendous effort to improve public signage before the start of the 2008 Olympic Games.[1] When asked about the effectiveness of this enterprise, Liu Yang, a member of the special committee responsible for improving the translations, replied:

> "Of course, it will still happen occasionally but I think we can ensure that once mistakes are found they are rectified. We know how important image is and all departments are being a lot more proactive about it. Part of the problem is that the English language is constantly evolving and changes from country to country."[2]

Liu Yang's approach to the issue appears to be pragmatic. Bejing can do only so much, and one should not expect all mistakes to disappear overnight. The added complexity of English language variants makes the task of eradicating errors even more difficult—what sounds right in one variety of English would not necessarily satisfy users of other varieties, and privileging one variant over another brings a new set of both grammatical and political problems. However, the most interesting thing about Liu Yang's comment is that he is not much concerned with the communicative function of the public signage but rather with the fact that the inappropriate use of English may affect Beijing's image. So it seems

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1 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/6052800.stm

2 Daniel Schofield, "Let the Games Begin," *The Linguist* 47, no. 3 (2008): 9.

that the main point of the exercise is not to check whether the signs fulfil the intended function, but whether they are written in what is perceived as correct English. It is not so much the pragmatic aspect of language that is at stake here, but the fact that Beijing should be perceived as a global city where people can communicate in English with ease. If we place Liu Yang's answer within the translation studies framework, we shall immediately see that the theoretical models do not necessarily help to explain situations where language and communication are intricately intertwined with often incompatible social attitudes.

The development of translation quality assessment has always occupied an important place in translation studies research, but as Juliane House has demonstrated, different translation evaluation models are based on different presumptions about how a translation should be assessed:

> In the field of translation criticism, it is unfortunately often the case, that the difference between linguistic analysis and value judgment is ignored when one talks about the quality of a translation. While it is true that both a linguistic and a judgmental component are implicit in translation evaluation, I would caution against mixing them up. I would also caution against using the evaluative component in isolation from the linguistic one.[3]

It is clear now, I hope, why Liu Yang's statement may be at odds with the prevailing translation studies paradigm. The aim of translation studies, as the passage from House's article suggests, is to search for the appropriate translation quality model to ensure that the translated text is both linguistically acceptable and fulfils the intended communicative function. If such a model is found then it will be used to demonstrate how to translate well. Unfortunately, there is plenty of evidence that the combination of these two requirements is often missing in practice. We know very well that despite an enormous effort on the part of everybody engaged in raising the quality of translation, the number of poorly written and poorly translated texts in the public sphere is still considerable. It would be naive to believe that a fast growing number of translation training courses is going to improve the situation across the board and everywhere, because the roots of the problem are outside education. They are cultural, economic, and often connected with individual judgment rather than with objective assessment. Since the conviction that anybody who speaks a foreign language can translate is widespread, few,

[3] Juliane House, "Translation Quality Assessment: Linguistic Description versus Social Evaluation," *Meta* 46, no. 2 (2001): 255.

particularly as in the case of smaller businesses, are prepared to pay for a professional translation service. As a result many translation scholars, including myself, have a tendency to point out with some irritation that despite our collective effort, the number of poorly translated texts available in the public sphere is astonishingly large. What we automatically assume is that a text that we define as poorly translated has no communicative value whatsoever and, as such, cannot be understood by the intended user.[4] What we often forget is that texts are not written and translated for their own sake, but for a particular purpose and a particular user, so even if the text is wanting it can be still usable, i.e., despite its shortcomings, it fulfils a purpose for which it was created. It would be better, of course, if all translated texts were grammatically correct, stylistically appropriate, and aesthetically pleasing, but this is not a standard that can be realistically achieved. This suggests that the process of reading and interpretation is a very complex one, and that the readers have at their disposal a number of interpretive strategies that allow them to convert what purists see as an unacceptable text into a text that is functional as well as meaningful.

Perhaps because of the prevalence of prescriptive attitudes, translation studies scholars have not paid sufficient attention to the issue of reading strategies and text comprehension. Source text analysis for the purpose of comprehension has been discussed in a variety of contexts, and the functionalist, or *skopos* approach, sees the meaning of the text as something that is generated by the reader.[5] As Christina Schäffner aptly

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[4] See Mary Snell-Hornby, "The 'Ultimate Confort': Word, Text and the Translation of Tourist Brochures," in *Word, Text, Translation,* eds. Gunilla Anderman and Margaret Rogers (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1999), 95–104. Aniela Korzeniowska and Piotr Kuhiwczak, *Successful Polish-English Translation* (Warszawa: PWN, 2008 4th edition). Anthony Pym, "Localization and the Dehumanization of Discourse," *The Linguist* 41, no. 6 (2003): 168–70.

[5] Wolfgang Lörscher, *Translation Performance, Translation Process, and Translation Strategies: A Psycholinguistic Investigation* (Tübingen: Narr, 1991). Sonia Tirkonnen-Condit and J. Lukkanen, "Evaluations: A Key towards Understanding the Affective Dimension of Translational Decisions," *Meta* 41, no. 1 (1996): 45–59. Christiane Nord describes the reading process as related to translation in the following way:

> What I wanted to make clear is that text function is a pragmatic quality *assigned* to a text by a recipient in a particular situation of reception and not something *attached* to it from the start. The recipient interprets the signals given by the situation (e.g. name of the sender, medium, time and place, motive for communication, etc.) in the light of his/her experience of functions normally or *conventionally* linked with certain text-in-situation.

writes, "Skopos theory has helped to bring the target text into focus."[6] It is debatable, however, whether the approach has really advanced our understanding as to how the recipient of translation goes about assigning the meaning to the text. This aspect of text reception has been elaborated more successfully by Ernst-August Gutt, who applied the relevance theory to translation. In his account Gutt emphasizes that translation is not a separate phenomenon, but a case of communication.[7] This means that the interpretation of the text depends very much on the hearers' "assumptions about the world," or the cognitive environment, and the central question Gutt asks is "how do hearers manage to select the *actual*, speaker-intended assumptions from among all the assumptions they *could* use from their cognitive environment?"[8] Unfortunately, Gutt does not go into details here and his approach is not a "hands-on" approach to translation studies. What he proposes is a conceptual framework and leaves the practice-based studies to those who want to test his proposition on actual translations.[9]

But reading and comprehension have been studied carefully somewhere else, mainly in psychology and education. This research has been very intensive and diverse because of its direct relevance to the teaching of reading at school.[10] Three major theories of reading have gained considerable ground so far: Schema, Mental Model, and Proposition Theories. All three have been widely applied across school curricula in different countries. The Schema Theory is probably the most popular of the three, as it takes the widest view of comprehension as an interaction

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(Christiane Nord, "The Relationship between Text Function and Meaning in Translation," in *Translation and Meaning, Part 2: Proceedings of the Lódz Session of the 1990 Maastricht-Lodz Duo Colloquium on "Translation and Meaning,"* eds. Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszyk and Marcel Thelen (Maastricht: Rijkshogeschool Maastricht Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, 2002), 91–96.

[6] Christina Schäffner, "*Skopos* Theory," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker (London: Routledge, 2000), 238.

[7] Ian Mason and Basil Hatim, in *Translator as Communicator* (London: Routledge, 1996), were first to look at translation within the framework of communication.

[8] Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000), 27.

[9] Ernst-August Gutt, "Applications of Relevance Theory to Translation: A Concise Overview," http://homepage.ntlworld.com/ernst-august.gutt/, accessed 27 October 2007.

[10] See Maggie Snowling and Charles Hulme, eds., The *Science of Reading: A Handbook* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) and Harry Singer and Robert B. Ruddell, *Theoretical Models and the Processes of Reading,* 3rd ed. (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1985).

between the reader's existing knowledge and text, which should result in comprehension.[11] Schema theory has also been tested in cross-cultural contexts proving its universal applicability. One can assume that if the theories of reading were combined with translation studies interpretive models it would be possible to consider a number of issues around the comprehension of poorly translated texts in order to shed more light on how we, the readers, strategically approach translations. We could also consider some related issues. For instance, what happens with the interpretation when the readers of texts are bilingual and they can read both what is considered the original and the translation? How does this functional bilingualism influence the readers' input into the text, and is there any pattern in the readers' decision process about which texts to read and in which language? And finally, what happens to the *skopos*, schema, and the cognitive environment under these complex communicative circumstances? Considering the fact that human mobility is on the increase, and bilingualism is a fast growing phenomenon, this problem should not be treated as a marginal one.

But the most common communicative situation that concerns almost everybody is when we have to read texts that are not written in our first language. This is the case with public notices, tourist brochures, and sometimes local government information. All these texts are available in the world's major languages, which for the majority of users are languages that they learn at school. But it is not only the reception of such texts that is complex, production of such texts is no less complex since in many cases it is undertaken by translators for whom the target language is not their first language.[12] If we exclude studies of reading comprehension with a strong pedagogical bias, then there is not much there that may help us to understand what is going on in our heads when we read a literary work in a foreign language, or when we are trying to make sense out of tourist information translated into incomprehensible English. The scale of

[11] See Richard C. Anderson, "Role of the Reader's Schema in Comprehension, Learning, and Memory," in *Learning to Read in American Schools: Basal Readers and Content Texts*, eds. Richard C. Anderson, Jean Osborn and Robert J. Tierney (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1984).

[12] The issue of translating into a non-native language has been extensively discussed by the following authors: Beverly Adab, "Translating into the Second Language: Can We, Should We?" in *In and Out of English*, eds., Gunilla Anderman and Margaret Rogers (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005), 227–42. Stuart Campbell, *Translating into the Second Language* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998). Nike Pokorn, *Challenging the Traditional Axioms* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005).

the phenomenon can be demonstrated by the fact that the English edition of the last volume of *Harry Potter* has sold as many copies in non-English speaking countries as it did in Britain.[13] However, while the reading of foreign texts in educational context and the reading of original literary works are predominantly voluntary actions, the reading of other types of texts may be more of a necessity. Therefore, I want to look at those cases when we have to read in a foreign language simply because the text is not available in the language of our habitual use. While thinking about contexts when this happens, one immediately thinks about tourism. Indeed, the tourist industry generates masses of texts in the major world languages, and all of us who are not native speakers of one of these languages end up choosing the language we grapple with in the best possible way we can. But there are other spheres where this "enforced" reading takes place—immigration, customs, property law, and local government regulations. In cases where there is no legal obligation to provide users with information in their own language, or when the appropriate legislation exists but is ignored, we are again compelled to read many important texts—from equipment operating instructions to social benefit rules—in a language which is not our own.

Because of the global nature of the English language, most often these texts are produced in English, although this "globalized" reading happens also in Mandarin, Spanish, French, or German. English is, however, the language of the widest dissemination. It is also the language where speakers display an amazingly wide range of communicative competence, from near-native speaker fluency to an ability to understand and produce just a couple of simple sentences.

The texts I am talking about are ontologically complex. Some of them are purposefully written in English, while others are either marked as translations, or betray the features of translated texts in the sense that they do not resemble standard English language texts at one or more levels.[14] Then there are texts that, following the terminology used by House, we call "covert" translations, that is texts that function like original texts and we do not even try to think of them as translations.[15] Finally, there are

[13] Katie Allen, "Untranslated Harry Potter Breaks Language Barriers," *The Guardian Weekly* (26 October 2007), *Learning English*, 8.

[14] I realize that this may be a contentious statement, but there are types of errors and mistakes that one can clearly recognize as made by the habitual user of a given language as opposed to somebody for whom this language is not the language of habitual use. Very often mistakes are a result of language interference.

[15] Juliane House, *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1981), 19.

texts in several language versions, but we do not know which one of them is the original. Instruction manuals and product labels are good examples of this variant. There is no doubt that, with the globalization of international trade and the increase in the volume of internet-based commerce, the number of such texts will be increasing very fast.

There is plenty of practical evidence showing that despite difficulties readers cope well with all kinds of strangely written texts. But there is also evidence that these texts are recognized by the users as a special category. This can be inferred from the very simple fact that there are numerous internet sites devoted to the collection of translated texts meant to be used by tourists or consumers. The principal idea of these sites is to point to the unintended comic effects these texts have.[16] But the recognition of the comic effect means that the users must have been competent enough to realize what the text was supposed to convey (informational function), and what the text conveys because something has gone wrong in the process of writing or translation (unintended poetics). This recognition implies that the recipients of such texts must have developed strategies of reading and interpreting that rely on interpretive mechanisms that they normally use while reading texts in their first language. It would be interesting to know how the process of reading and comprehension of these foreign texts differs from the usual interpretive processes we normally deploy in our everyday reading processes within our habitual languages and cultures. My aim is not to improve the quality of translation, but to consider how readers read texts that are available to them, how they make sense out of them often against the odds, and finally, how they use them for the purpose for which they were intended, or for the purpose they decided is important to them. In short, I want to know what it is like to cope with texts that are written in a foreign language.

I shall look at several examples of such texts in order to re-create possible interpretive scenarios. Some of these cases have been tested on a considerable group of readers, while others have been experienced by me, and I have tried to compare my experience with the experience of other users. At this stage the project lays no claim to universality and it is based on neither systematic quantitative research nor carefully selected user groups. It is just a statement of the fact and a suggestion that more thorough investigation of the phenomenon could provide useful insights with perhaps some practical implications for translators and translation training institutions.

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[16] Some of the sites contain numerous examples, which I suspect are not authentic. However www.engrish.com is a site devoted to Chinese and Japanese to English translations, and the authentication is done by means of photographs.


This sign was taken from one of the hotels in southern China. I have chosen this example because out of its local context the English text is barely comprehensible. In its original context, however, which is a hotel bathroom, the word *mat* combined with *bath* and *shower* makes enough sense for the text to be considered acceptable despite its formal shortcomings. It is simply a warning message telling us to use the rubber mat in the bath to prevent a slippage and fall. The *tower horse* is still a mystery, but it does not matter much because as long as the mat is visible somewhere in the bathroom the message makes sense. Even the word *Slip*, which on first reading looks like a personal noun, becomes less mysterious once the sign is contextualized. One could easily say that what worked in this case was what we call a "common sense" interpretation, or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that an average hotel guest has a schema that helps to assimilate text information.[17] Basically the schema is provided by a memory of all previously experienced hotel stays. With international hotels attempting to use the same global standard, a frequent traveller will not be confronted with many arrangements she or he will not recognize. The hotel experience will be the same or very similar in any large city on at least five continents and this will certainly help to figure out the meaning of any notice that would be found in this particular context.

[17] See Anderson, "Role of the Reader's Schema," 376.

But not all interpretive situations are taking place in this kind of unspecific cultural space. If the reading of the text takes place in a more culturally specific context, then the interpretation will be more complex. The process of interpretation may go along the lines which Nord defined in the following way: "Normal recipients, who cannot be expected to be (an) expert at intercultural communication, cannot help judging a translated text according to their own culture-specific standards because they are not aware of the 'relativity' of their standpoint."[18]

I hope that the following text, which comes from a brochure advertising Swiss railways, illustrates this point very well. Unlike in the Chinese hotel example here the grammar is beyond reproach, and yet the interpretation of the text may constitute considerable problems.

> Cheap flight, no transfer?
>
> The *Swiss Travel Ticket* is a popular product and ideal for winter travellers. It is a return ticket allowing one-day transfer from airport or border station to any destination in Switzerland and back. Each journey must be completed on day of validation. Tickets are valid for one month. Full family reduction applies!

Here the past schema may come in handy if a traveller is familiar with the European system of validating tickets on a platform before commencing the journey. But the system is not universal, and the English verb to *validate* does not cover the same field as, for instance, the Italian *convalidare*, or Polish *skasować*. This is why very often the more specific near synonyms are used to describe the process: *to stamp*, *to punch*, and sometimes to *activate.* English or American country-specific travel guides explain the procedure in detail because it is not familiar to the US and UK travellers. In the text above the procedure is difficult to understand because the word *valid* has conveyed two different meanings, first as an equivalent of *to stamp* on the day of travel, then in relation to the period of time during which the ticket can be used—*valid for one month.* Although this may look like a minor linguistic issue, in practice it may be of considerable significance. There is no extra-textual evidence that this text is a translation, but some stylistic features, such as the unnecessary use of *and* in the first sentence, and the exclamation mark at the end, indicate that this may be a translated text. In this case, however, it is not the translation style that matters but the notions that have a limited cross-cultural applicability.

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[18] See Nord, "Relationship between Text Function and Meaning," 92.

What conclusions can be drawn from this necessarily short textual analysis? First of all, there is no doubt that while confronted with poorly translated texts, readers rely on a number of reading and interpretive strategies which they normally apply in their own language. These strategies can be analysed in a variety of ways, using the currently available theories of reading. There is no doubt that reading texts translated into a language not our own makes the interpreting process much harder, but, at the same time, it also forces the reader to concentrate on the primary task, which is the identification of those elements of the texts which are most relevant to the particular situation. Obviously, the interpretive success or failure will vary depending on the available schema and linguistic competence. If we agree with this conclusion, then we may want to suggest that the writers and translators of informative texts should always prioritize clarity. Indeed, this is the recommendation of the Campaign for Plain English—public information should be as clear as possible.[19] There is no reason why the same principle should not apply to translations. This seemingly simple advice is not easy to put into practice. From everyday reading we know that clarity is not necessarily the first principle that all writers and all translators have in mind when they address the readers. Translators are often so preoccupied with the idea of faithfulness to the original that the needs of the readers vanish beyond the horizon. Another way of interpreting clarity prevails in the localization industry. Here it is called simplification.[20] The original text is made simple with a view to removing translation difficulties. If this is a genuine exercise in clarification aimed at producing a user-friendly text, then we should applaud the effort. But if the assumption is that information can be imparted most successfully in a linguistically impoverished version in order to reduce translation costs, then perhaps we should approach the offer of writing for translation with some caution.

[19] http://www.plainenglish.co.uk.

[20] A large localization company offers the following service: Simplify your English content to improve its comprehension by "English as a Second Language" readers, reduce the cost of translation, and even enable automated translation. http://www.simplifiedtranslations.com.

# A Hundred Flowers: English-language Versions of the Poems of Mao Zedong

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The poems of Mao Zedong[1] are among the most widely circulated literary works in human history. Even in his lifetime, two of his English translators noted that "It is probably true that the fifty-seven million copies said to have been sold of the poems of Mao Tse-tung may well equal the number of all volumes of poetry by all poets writing in English from the beginning of time."[2] As well as being published in many different periodicals, they have appeared in volume form in numerous editions in China, in both traditional and simplified characters, and in a wide range of formats, from large luxury editions[3] to pocket-sized ones[4] modelled on

* An earlier version of this paper was presented at a conference at the Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, in December 2008. I would like to acknowledge the support I received from the former Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Warwick to enable me to attend that conference. I have benefited from a number of comments made by conference participants, and I am particularly grateful for help and encouragement received subsequently from Red Chan 陳美紅, Wanyu Chung 鍾琬瑜 and Cristina Marinetti.

[1] Following the most widespread modern practice, I use the *Hanyu Pinyin* system for transliterating Chinese names and quotations, e.g., Mao Zedong for 毛澤東. However, I have not altered other forms of transliteration, e.g., Mao Tse-tung, when they appear in titles of older works or direct quotations from other writers.

[2] Hua-ling Nieh Engle and Paul Engle, trans., *Poems of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 11.

[3] E.g., *Mao Zhuxi shici sanshiqi shou*《毛主席詩詞三十七首》(*Thirty-seven Poems and Lyrics of Chairman Mao*) 2nd ed., (n.p. (Shanghai), Cultural Heritage Publishing House 文物出版社, 1964). This is a large-format book (approximately 33.2 cm x 21.3 cm) in the traditional Chinese "thread-bound" style, printed in

the "Little Red Book" editions of *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*. In the 1970s, young children in Guangdong province played skipping games whilst chanting Mao's poem on "*Changzheng*"〈長征〉("The Long March.")[5] A quotation like "*bu dao Changcheng fei haohan* 不到長城非好漢" ("Those who do not reach the Great Wall are no heroes"), from the poem "*Liu pan shan*"〈六盤山〉("Mount Liupan") , can turn up in a Chinese-language textbook for foreign learners,[6] while other quotations turn up, without attribution, in a well-known reference work like the *New Age Chinese-English Dictionary* to illustrate points of usage.[7] The poems have been reproduced in books and even on postage stamps as examples of Mao's calligraphy,[8] and have been set to music.[9]

They have also been widely translated. As well as versions in other Western languages (such as French, German, Italian, and Spanish), there are at least twelve different collections of English translations in volume form, as well as numerous appearances of translations of single poems or groups of poems in periodicals or in quotations in books and articles. One of the more curious examples of the latter is the publication of "Seven

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vertical columns in traditional, not simplified characters.

[4] E.g., *Mao Zhuxi shici*《毛主席詩詞》(*Poems and Lyrics of Chairman Mao*) (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文學出版社, 1968). This is a second printing of an edition first published in 1967, and is approximately 10.5 cm x 7.5 cm, with a red plastic cover decorated with a reproduction from the author's calligraphy of the poem "*Renminjiefangjun zhanling Nanjing*"〈人民解放軍佔領南京〉("The People's Liberation Army captures Nanjing"). The poems are printed in simplified characters in the modern style (i.e., right to left and horizontally, with each line of verse on a separate line).

[5] I owe this detail to Red Chan, who supplies it from personal knowledge.

[6] Beijing Languages Institute, *Chinese for Today*, Book 1, 2nd ed., 9th printing (Hong Kong: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 2004), 223, 226.

[7] *Xinshidai Hanying dacidian*《新時代漢英大詞典》(*New Age Chinese-English Dictionary*) (Beijing: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 2001). See, e.g., entries under 獨立, 寥廓, 崢嶸 for quotations from the poem "*Changsha*"〈長沙〉. The English-language versions in the dictionary are taken from Mao Tse-tung, *Poems* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press 外文出版社, 1976).

[8] Many editions of the poems, in both Chinese and other languages, reproduce at least one or two poems in the author's calligraphy. See also Gordon S. Barrass, *The Art of Calligraphy in Modern China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), esp. 105–17, where Mao appears, significantly, as part of a chapter titled "The Classicists."

[9] E.g., *Mao Zedong shici jingju*《毛澤東詩詞京劇》(*Peking Opera from Mao's Poems*), compact disc produced by China Record Shenzhen Corporation, n.d.

Poems by Mao Tse-tung: The Classical Verse of a Revolutionary," translated and with commentary by Nieh Hua-ling and Paul Engle, in the April 1972 issue of *Playboy* (p. 163–67).

Nevertheless, although translations of Mao's poetry have the potential to provide the basis for an interesting case-study on the problems of translating Chinese poetry more generally, I am not aware of the existence of any such study in English. Because of the constraints of length, the present paper is necessarily far from comprehensive, and focuses on those translations published in volume form.[10] However, I will outline the history of the poems and their English translations, examine the translations of one poem in some detail, and comment on the differing approaches of the translators to the poems as a whole. While the result may be neither entirely an essay in translation history nor one on methodologies of the translation of poetry, I hope to show that the two are difficult to separate. All literary texts, including poems, have socio-cultural contexts, and this is particularly important in the case of Mao's poems. The same is equally true of their translations. Lawrence Venuti has argued for "an understanding of translation that is hermeneutic, translation conceived not as the reproduction of an unchanging textual essence but as an act of interpreting a text that is variable in form and content."[11] The many different translations of Mao's poems certainly do not offer "an unchanging textual essence," but are, rather, interpretations which comment on them in different ways, offering criticism which is both literary and political, and the translations themselves will be understood differently by different readers.

Non-Chinese who perhaps associate Mao mainly with the Cultural Revolution and its hostility to the "Four Olds" are sometimes surprised to discover that he had a marked enthusiasm for classical Chinese literature and a real appreciation of it which can be seen as being at odds with some of his theoretical pronouncements on art and literature and their functions in society.[12] Mao wrote poetry from his boyhood, and did so in quantity, writing poems "as other men wrote 'doodles'."[13] Some of these poems

[10] Mao's poetry can be found on a number of websites, but I have not attempted to survey these.

[11] Lawrence Venuti, "Introduction" to special issue on Poetry and Translation, *Translation Studies* 4, no. 2 (2011): 127–32.

[12] Recognition of this dichotomy can be found even before the Cultural Revolution. See, e.g., Robert Payne, *Portrait of a Revolutionary: Mao Tse-tung*, rev. ed. (London, New York, Toronto: Abelard-Schuman, 1961), esp. Chapter 10, "The Poetry of Mao Tse-tung," 230–48.

[13] Payne, *Portrait,* 230.

circulated in manuscript or were published in various periodicals, and some even appeared outside China in translation. According to Sun Dongsheng, Mao's poem on〈長征〉"was the first one made public" when in 1937 it was included (in English) in the American journalist Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*, the most influential early account of Mao and the Chinese Communist Party in the West.[14] All of this, according to the British writer Robert Payne, who had met Mao in Yenan and discussed his poetry with him, was without Mao's knowledge or consent. Payne further stated in 1949 that "Only three poems of Mao Tse-tung are known to exist publicly, though a whole collection of poems called *Wind Sand Poems* is in private circulation." Payne also reported at that time that Mao regretted the publication of some of his poems "and will allow no more to be printed."[15]

It was accordingly regarded as something of a major literary event when a total of nineteen poems by Mao were published, with his authorization and a self-deprecating "Letter on the Writing of Poetry," in two issues of the magazine *Shikan*《詩刊》(*Poetry Journal*) in 1957 and 1958. These were immediately given a wide circulation by being reprinted all over China, and systematic translation soon followed. In September 1958, the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing published a slim booklet called simply *Nineteen Poems*. This included the poems, in English but without the Chinese texts, together with translations of Mao's "Letter on the Writing of Poetry," a preface and an essay by Zang Kejia 臧克家 "On Mao Tse-tung's Poems," which commented on individual poems in some detail and was described on the title-page as "An Appreciation," as well as further notes on the poems by Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫. The first eighteen poems were noted as having been translated by Andrew Boyd, while the rest of the material was translated by the well-known and prolific translator Gladys Yang.[16] These translations were reprinted in another edition brought out by the Foreign Languages Press in 1959, which was

[14] Sun Dongsheng 孫東升, "A View on Mao Zedong's Poems," in *Illustrated Poems of Mao Zedong*, trans. Xu Yuanchong 許淵沖 (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press 五洲傳播出版社, 2006), 1. See also Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1937), 208, where Snow gives what he describes as "a free translation" (apparently by himself) of the poem, and admiringly calls Mao "a rebel who can write verse as well as lead a crusade."

[15] Robert Payne published "A Note on Two Poems by Mao-Tse-Tung [*sic*]" in the British literary magazine *Nine* I, no. 1 (October 1949): 18–20. The two poems, included in translations ascribed to Yuan Chia-hua, are "The Long March," which is not given a title, and "Snow," which Payne calls "The Snow."

[16] Mao Tse-tung, *Nineteen Poems* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1958).

just called *Poems*, but apart from a brief "Publisher's Note," and the notes to the previous edition (which were now rearranged in a single section at the back, rather than being printed with the individual poems, and which were no longer attributed), the only additional material was the reproduction of two of the poems in Mao's calligraphy—both Mao's "Letter on the Writing of Poetry" and the material by Zang Kejia were dropped.[17]

More poems continued to appear, and a collected edition published in 1964 included a total of thirty-seven.[18] Ten of these were published in translation in the English-language Chinese periodical *Chinese Literature* in May 1966, and these translations were reprinted in book form in Hong Kong the following year,[19] and later included in a new collection of translations issued by the Foreign Languages Press in 1976.[20] This was available in at least three different formats: a paperback (20.8 cm x 13.2 cm) and a hardback (22 cm x 13.4 cm) of ordinary size, and a larger de luxe edition (33 cm x 22.5 cm) in hardback with a slipcase. All were well printed in red and black, with a photographic portrait of the author and a fold-out facsimile of the poem "*Loushan guan*"〈婁山關〉("Loushan Pass") in his calligraphy; the deluxe edition had a different photograph of Mao (showing him smiling), included the Chinese texts, and set the text of each page within a gold border. The poems of Liu Yazi 柳亞子 and Guo Moruo 郭沫若, to which some of Mao's poems were replies, were included, and there were a few (mostly short) notes by Mao himself, but no others, with the exception of a brief "Note on the Verse Form" signed "Translators." The translators are not identified and, while there is some resemblance between the 1976 versions and the translations published nearly twenty years earlier in *Nineteen Poems* (to the extent that some lines in the two sets of translations are identical), they are substantially different.[21] Since Mao's death, other poems have continued to appear, and

[17] Mao Tse-tung, *Poems* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1959).

[18]《毛主席詩詞三十七首》. This, the edition I have been able to consult, appeared in April; the original edition was published on New Year's Day, simultaneously with another edition of the same poems issued by the People's Literature Publishing House—see "Publisher's Note" in Mao Tse-tung, *Ten More Poems of Mao Tse-tung* (Hong Kong: Eastern Horizon Press, 1967), 33. The count of thirty-seven depends on treating "*Shiliu zi ling san shou*"〈十六字令三首〉("Three Short Poems") and the two parts of "*Song wenshen*"〈送瘟神〉("Farewell to the God of Plague"), which are normally printed together, as separate items.

[19] *Ten More Poems*. See the "Publisher's Note," 33.

[20] Mao, *Poems*, 1976.

[21] In 1999 the Foreign Languages Press published Mao Zedong, *Poems*, a paperback

one relatively recent edition includes over sixty.[22]

While the translations published by the Foreign Languages Press in 1976 are probably those most commonly encountered, the English-language reader has been offered plenty of choice over the years. There have been at least nine other collections of translations published in book form from 1966 onwards, appearing in Hong Kong, the United States, Britain, and mainland China.[23] Most of these are by native speakers of Chinese. Two translators who were well-known American poets worked with Chinese collaborators: the name of Paul Engle's wife, Hua-ling Nieh Engle, gets equal billing, and indeed comes before his on the title-page, whereas Willis Barnstone's translation is simply stated to be "In collaboration with

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edition containing the 1976 translations with the Chinese texts on facing pages, and this edition was reprinted in 2002. The blurb on the back flap of this later version refers to the 1976 edition as "published in five different sizes and with differently designed covers" but I have only seen those I have described above. For the origins of the 1976 text, see below.

[22] Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong shiciji*《毛澤東詩詞集》(*Collected Poems and Lyrics of Mao Zedong*), ed. Wang Chunming 王春明 (Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House 中央文獻出版社, 1996).

[23] In chronological order, these are as follows:

Wong Man, trans., *Poems of Mao Tse-tung* (Hong Kong: Eastern Horizon Press, 1966).

Willis Barnstone, trans., with Ko Ching-po, *The Poems of Mao Tse-tung* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972). (Also published in the USA by Harper & Row, New York, 1972; re-issued by University of California Press, 2008). There was also a paperback edition by Bantam Books (New York, 1972).

Engle and Engle, *Poems of Mao Tse-tung*.

Wang Hui-ming, trans., *Ten Poems and Lyrics by Mao Tse-tung* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976). (Previously published by University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1975.)

Nancy T. Lin 林同端, trans., *Reverberations: A New Translation of the Complete Poems of Mao Tse-tung with Notes* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Company 三聯書店, 1980).

Ma Wen-yee, trans., *Snow Glistens on the Great Wall: A New Translation of the Complete Collection of Mao Tse-tung's Poetry with Notes and Historical Commentary* (Santa Barbara, California: Santa Barbara Press, 1986).

Gu Zhengkun 辜正坤, trans., *Poems of Mao Zedong with Rhymed Versions and Annotations* (Beijing: Peking University Press 北京大學出版社, 1993).

Xu, trans., *Illustrated Poems of Mao Zedong*.

Haiying Zhang, trans., *Mao Zedong Selected Poems*, 3rd ed. (Chelmsford: Little Bird Publishing, 2006, reprinted 2007). I have not seen the earlier editions of this.

Ko Ching-po."[24] All of these translations included annotation and commentary, and all except two (those by the Engles and by Ma Wen-yee) included Chinese texts of the poems translated. In addition, at least two book-length studies of Mao's career in English (by Robert Payne and Jerome Ch'ên) have included substantial selections of translations of the poems.[25]

Part of the interest in Mao as a poet is inevitably due to his status as a contemporary leader or, later, as a historical figure, and the introduction to Barnstone's translations dismissed most of what had been written about the poems in China at that date, saying (p. 23) that "studies of the poems tend to be so full of admiration that there is much paean singing, little criticism." While there have been disparaging comments about Mao's literary abilities from some of those hostile to his politics, appreciation of the poems is by no means confined to those with one view of Mao himself. The comments of Michael Bullock and Jerome Ch'ên appear to express a fairly widely held opinion:

> No doubt Mao's status as a poet has been enhanced by his eminence as a political figure; nevertheless his poetic abilities, though they are uneven, are of no mean order and would have secured him a place in contemporary Chinese literature independent of his pre-eminent position in the political sphere.[26]

Mao's poems are all composed in classical styles. The difficulties of translating classical Chinese poetry into English have been widely discussed.[27] The concision of classical Chinese, which makes English translations seem verbose in comparison, the use of parallelism, tonal patterns impossible to reproduce in English, the importance of literary allusion, are only some of them. For the translator of Mao, additional problems are caused by the fact that there is simply much more

[24] See Willis Barnstone, "How I Strayed into Asian Poetry," *Manoa* 12, no. 1 (2000): 74–79, where he identifies Ko Ching-po/Ge Jingbo as a Chinese graduate student from whom he "requested literal, dictionary meanings—not equivalents or interpretations—for each word."

[25] Payne, *Portrait*, 230–48, includes translations of all the nineteen poems which were then available; Jerome Ch'ên 陳志讓, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), includes 313–60, translations by Michael Bullock and Jerome Ch'ên of thirty-seven poems, with an introduction and notes.

[26] Ch'ên, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, 315.

[27] An excellent survey is that offered by David Hawkes, "Chinese Poetry and the English Reader," in *The Legacy of China*, ed. Raymond Dawson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 90–115.

information available about the author than is usually the case with poets of older periods, and this can raise issues applicable to translations more generally. For example, how should the translator deal with the phrase "*fengliu renwu* 風流人物" at the end of the poem "*Xue*"〈雪〉("Snow")? Borrowed from a well-known poem by Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037–1101), the famous writer of the Song Dynasty (960–1279), it could mean something like "exceptional" or "illustrious" men, or just "heroes"—but it could equally well be singular. As some translators have noted,[28] Mao himself said in a note in 1958 that in his poem the phrase referred to the proletariat. However, depending on one's opinion of just when and in what circumstances the poem was written (concerning which there are a number of different views), it could be taken to refer to Mao himself, or even to Mao and Chiang Kai-shek together, at a time (August 1945) when a Kuomintang-Communist coalition government was still within the bounds of possibility.[29] To what extent should a translator privilege one particular interpretation over others, even if one appears to have the backing of the author? More generally, how far can or should the translator preserve ambiguities and divergent possibilities which exist within the source text? While Chinese poetry often leaves a range of interpretations open to the reader, the translator into English is usually forced to limit this range, if only because English grammar demands the selection of a verb tense, or a choice between singular and plural.

Some of these problems can be seen in the translations of "Changsha" 〈長沙〉, one of the earliest and best-known of Mao's poems. As is the case with most of Mao's other poems, the majority of English-language readers need at least some annotation—the lack of this in the 1976 Foreign Languages Press translation appears to be what led one anonymous reader to produce an eight-page pamphlet of *Notes to accompany the Poems of Mao Tse-tung*, which seems to be related to this edition.[30] At the very least, it helps in understanding the poem to know that 長沙 is the capital of Mao's native Hunan province, where he had been a student and political activist, and that it was written on a return visit to the city some years later. The reader can probably work out that the Xiang River and Orange Island are in the same area, but more details, such as the fact that the Xiang is one

[28] E.g., Lin, *Reverberations*, 42; Gu, *Poems of Mao Zedong* ,105.

[29] See the discussion of the poem in Yong-sang Ng, "The Poetry of Mao Tse-tung," *China Quarterly*, no. 13 (January–March 1963), 60–73.

[30] Anon., *Notes to Accompany the Poems of Mao Tse-tung*. There is no indication of the place or date of publication or printing. However, I bought my copy from an Australian book-dealer, together with a copy of the 1976 Foreign Languages Press translation.

of the largest tributaries of the Yangtze, might be appreciated. At least some of this information is supplied in most of the translations.

The first half of the poem has the poet, seemingly in a melancholic mood, admiring the grandeur of nature in the vicinity of Orange Island. The landscape is magnificent, eagles soar in the sky, fish swim in the river in which hundreds of boats struggle against the current, and all sorts of creatures move about at their liberty. Overwhelmed with the immensity of it all, the poet asks what has become the famous question, "*shei zhu chenfu*? 誰主沉浮?" ("Who rules destiny?", or, more literally, "Who controls the sinking and floating of things?"). On the whole, this section is not problematic, though some tendencies can be noticed in the translations. Some translators place the poet specifically on Orange Island, e.g., Ma Wen-yee: "Standing alone on the Orange Isle." However, this is a possible, but not a necessary interpretation—the poet could equally well be standing on an opposite bank of the river and looking at the island from there. Wong Man captures the ambiguity in his lines: "In the keen autumn alone stood I / Where Hsiang waters northward sped / round the point of Orange Isle." The 1976 Foreign Languages Press translation turns "誰主沉浮？" into "Who rules over man's destiny?", while other translators keep the question more general. Barnstone has "who is master of nature?", and Wang Hui-ming adopts the more literal "Who is to determine the sinking and floating?". Ma Wen-yee makes two lines out of one with the repetitious "Who rules this immense universe? / Who is the master of its fate?" (though "immense universe" appears to render "*cangmang dadi* 蒼茫大地" ("vast earth"), in the previous line). It is also open to interpretation whether the question is addressed to the landscape or is actually about it. Barnstone has "I ask the huge greenblue [*sic*] earth,/who is master of nature?" while Xu has

> Lost in immensity, I wonder who,
> Upon this boundless earth, decide
> All beings' fall and rise.

Translators are sometimes tempted to add extra detail: while Mao refers to "*ceng lin* 層林" ("woods rising in tiers or terraces up the mountain sides"), Gu Zhengkun makes these into the much more specific "maples." While it could be argued that this is a logical enough deduction from the autumn setting and the fact that Mao does refer to the woods and mountains as appearing red, the source text does not identify any particular tree.

In the second part of the poem, Mao remembers visiting the spot in

times past with his fellow students—百, a hundred of them, he says, but expressions like "a hundred" or "10,000" are not to be taken literally in Chinese poetry. They enjoyed the scenery, talked politics, and generally set the world to rights. A line which provokes different responses from translators is "*fentu dangnian wanhuhou* 糞土當年萬戶侯." The general meaning appears to be clear enough. As Andrew Boyd put it: "And those in high positions we counted no more than dust." However, one can argue about the detail. "當年" is specifically "in those years," emphasising that the speaker in the poem is looking back. "糞土" seems a rather stronger expression than "dust;" "糞" is "dung" or "manure," while "土" is "earth, soil." Wang Hui-ming has the literal "dung and dirt," Barnstone has "cowdung," and the 1976 Foreign Languages Press translators "muck," but Ma Wen-yee tells us that Mao and his companions "called those in high places / By names worse than dirt," which seems a little evasive, and Nancy T. Lin's "mere scum in our eyes!", like Boyd's "dust," is a lot less forceful than the source text. And who are the "萬戶侯"? They are, indeed, Boyd's "those in high positions" or "the mighty" as the 1976 Foreign Languages Press translators have it, or even Gu Zhengkun's "those big men," and the suggestion by several translators and commentators that Mao is referring specifically to the warlords who plagued Hunan and China generally in the years following the 1911 Revolution is plausible enough. However, "萬戶侯" is a title which goes back to the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.–220 A.D.), and is defined by the *New Age Dictionary* as "marquis with a fief of 10,000 households; high-ranking official or noble." Indeed, Bullock and Ch'ên's translation of the poem has "marquisates." Wang Hui-ming uses "lords of the land" in his version of the poem, and discusses the issue at some length in his introduction (p. 4–5), noting that he was accused of inaccuracy for not keeping it as "the marquis of 10,000 families." Wang pointed out, correctly, that the Han title predated the first use of "marquis" in an English context by over 1,000 years, and that "marquis" was "at best a very rough equivalent of the ancient Han term." At the time Mao wrote, he added, the Han nobles had been dead for over 2,000 years. In Wang's opinion, "marquises of 10,000 families" was a "clumsy mouthful," and "Some sinologists tend to forget that what is good for the dictionary is not necessarily good for poetry." One can see his point. Nevertheless, "marquis" has been a conventional English equivalent for "侯" for a very long time,[31] and it could be argued that Mao used the

[31] See, e.g., the entry under 侯 in Herbert A. Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary* 2nd ed. (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1912), where it is character no. 4006.

phrase “萬戶侯” rather than some more specific reference to warlords to assimilate the latter to the whole of China’s feudal past in order to express a hope that they would be swept away along with it. The translator who domesticates the phrase into English eliminates the possibility of this interpretation.

Another reading, and we should consider that accepting the possibility of one interpretation need not require others to be dismissed as invalid, would suggest that while the poem has the students admiring the landscape and criticising, there is nothing which grammatically requires the “萬戶侯” to be the object of their criticism. This is indeed suggested by Zhang’s version:

> Pointing to the mountains and lands,
> We wrote emotional words.
> All the past lords are nothing.

It may be that the line “糞土當年萬戶侯” means only that the great ones of the earth have passed away and are now no more than dust. In keeping with the melancholic and nostalgic tone of the poem as a whole, the great ones may even include Mao’s companions, many of whom would have perished in revolutionary struggle, or the line may continue the suggestion of the earlier part of the poem, of man’s helplessness in the face of a vast and indifferent universe. No one interpretation can be considered as definitive, to the exclusion of all others, and this line is an excellent example of how matters beyond the purely linguistic will affect the translator. Whether one emphasizes the romantic or the revolutionary in Mao as the writer of this poem will depend not just on personal predilection, but also on one’s view of Mao’s career as a whole, and this in turn will affect one’s translation of the line.

The ending of the poem is perhaps the most difficult, or at least most ambiguous part:

> 曾記否，
> 到中流擊水，
> 浪遏飛舟？

As with the rest of the poems he translates, Wang Hui-ming offers not only a more finished translation but also a literal character-by-character rendering which is useful to English-language readers:

> (Indicates past action)/remember/not
> Do you not remember

Reach/mid/current/strike/water
We reached the midstream and struck the water
Wave/impede/fly/boat
Waves crashed against the flying boat

Wang's final version is

Do you remember?
When reaching midstream, we struck the water,
How the raging waves crashed against our flying boat.

This places Mao and his friends in the boat, as does Bullock and Ch'ên's "our boats struck currents/And were slowed down by torrents." Other translators put them in the water: "How we used to swim in the middle of the river" (Ma Wen-yee); "swimming in the midstream" (Gu Zhengkun); or even "We breast-stroked in mid-stream" (Nancy T. Lin). Boyd's translation keeps it relatively ambiguous ("… don't you remember/How, when we reached mid-stream, we struck the waters,/How the waves dashed against the speeding boats?"), but Zang Kejia's commentary refers specifically to "swimming in the river."

An important question is the force of "*e* 遏" ("impede"). Waves are slowing down the boat (or boats), but are the waves an impersonal force, or are they being caused by the vigour of the students' swimming? This is suggested by several of the translations: Wong's "we… struck the waves/And impeded the swift sails"; Barnstone's "how our waves slowed down the swift junks"; Ma's "the huge waves we splashed around us,/How they blocked the speeding sails!"; Gu's "we sent up waves/That stayed even the flying canoe." How one interprets this affects one's view of the whole poem, for the strict form in which it is written means that the ending parallels the ending of the first section, and hints at the answer to the all-important question "誰主沉浮?". The students slowing down the boats with the vigour of their swimming suggests that people can control their own destinies, and is perhaps a suitably revolutionary image, but it seems a little bombastic. However, in the first half of the poem, we have the line "*bai ge zheng liu* 百舸爭流" ("a hundred boats struggle against the current"). In other words, we have already had the suggestion that the Xiang is a large, choppy, fast-flowing river with strong currents. At least to me, it seems that it is not that it is the students who are slowing down the boats, but that, in the enthusiasm of youth, they plunge fearlessly into the river in spite of its dangerous nature. This keeps the idea of control over one's destiny, suggesting that, even in the face of overwhelming odds, struggle remains worthwhile, and this reading perhaps offers a more

genuinely heroic view of the swimmers—the battle against the "萬戶侯" must have seemed a difficult and dangerous enterprise which was far from sure of success. But I realise this is a personal interpretation.

English-language translations of Chinese poetry range from what we may call (using the terminology popularised by Lawrence Venuti[32]) the domesticating, to the foreignizing. At the far end of the domesticating side of the spectrum we have the rhymed versions of Herbert Giles, which tend to make all Chinese poetry, of whatever style or period, sound as though it might have been produced sometime late in Queen Victoria's reign, by a Cambridge don in need of Long Vacation amusement.[33] At the opposite end we may place David Hawkes's *Little Primer of Tu Fu*,[34] which makes sure the English reader never forgets that Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) wrote in Chinese, not English, or that Chinese poetry is not like English poetry. With its detailed introductions to each poem, analysing content and form, its character-by-character exegesis, leading up to a prose translation, Hawkes's book is also an example of what has come to be known, following the publication of an influential article by Anthony Appiah, as "thick translation."[35]

The translations of Mao's poems show almost as wide a range of approaches. Wang Hui-ming takes a "thick translation" approach, expressly stating his desire to "reveal the thinking process of a translator whose native language is Chinese" (p. 2). However, his final versions are in free verse, not the prose favoured by Hawkes. The opposite extreme is perhaps represented by the translators of the 1976 Foreign Languages Press edition, in which the absence of notes and commentary obliges the English-language reader to treat the target texts simply as poems in English. While the de luxe version of this edition does include the Chinese texts, if the English-language reader cannot understand these, their function is purely decorative, like the reproductions of Mao's calligraphy. Most of the other translations lie somewhere in between, though that by Gu Zhengkun is something of a hybrid. He includes Chinese texts (in both characters and *pinyin*) and notes and commentary which are detailed and

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[32] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

[33] See, e.g., the translations included in Herbert A. Giles, *A History of Chinese Literature* (New York and London: Appleton, 1937) (first published 1901).

[34] David Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Hong Kong: Renditions Paperbacks, 1987, 1994; first published by Oxford University Press, 1967).

[35] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Thick Translation," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 389–401. (Appiah's article was first published in 1993).

often useful, but his actual translations are rhymed. While he says that other sorts of translations "are certainly also needed to further a combined effort of rendering Mao's work into English in its totality of both artistic forms and ideological connotation," he claims that since Mao uses traditional rhyme schemes, "a rhymed version of Mao's poetry is naturally required." (p. 18) Unfortunately, his use of lines of irregular length and apparent lack of any sense of rhythm in English mean that his versions sound, at best, strange to the ear of a native speaker of English, and certainly do little justice to their source texts. The case of Xu Yuanchong is similar. The ending of Xu's version of 〈長沙〉(p. 16–18) is as follows:

> Do you remember still,
> Swimming mid-stream, we struck waves to impede
> That boats which passed at flying speed?

The rhyme of "impede" and "speed" (and a regular rhyme scheme throughout the translation) is not enough to create poetry in English. The last line in particular is devoid of rhythm and sounds like the flattest of prose, and is not helped by the use of "That" where the sense would appear to require "The" or "Those." I doubt if anyone who had only the English versions of Gu or Xu to go by would be convinced that Mao was a good poet.

Some of the translations discussed can be shown to owe their appearance, or the form in which they appeared, to particular circumstances. Barnstone has told how, after being neglected in a publisher's office for four months, the manuscript of his translation was rushed into print in eleven days, "all in time for Nixon to have it before his trip to Beijing, where he would toast Mao with one of the poems."[36] The translation thus played some small part in the establishment of relations between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China after more than twenty years of hostility. The blurb on the back flap of the 2002 reprint of the 1976 translations by the Foreign Languages Press gives some of the history of that translation, when it says that, after publishing the translations of nineteen poems in 1958, "In the early 1960s, it [the Press] again organized scholars and translators to translate more of Mao Zedong's poems into English." For why this process took so long for a group of poems which, however complex, are relatively few in number and short in length, we have to look elsewhere. In an autobiographical memoir, Sidney Shapiro, an American who worked at the Press for many years, gave a glimpse of the process. "Late in 1974," he says, "I had participated in a discussion of

[36] Barnstone, "How I Strayed into Asian Poetry," 76.

a draft translation with very perfunctory footnotes." He and others insisted on the need for annotation, but "at a second meeting in 1976, we were shown a final version, in page proof, with no comments or footnotes at all." Further protest was unavailing, because, according to Shapiro, Mao's wife, Jiang Qing 江青 (1914–1991) had objected to a note explaining a reference to one of Mao's previous wives, Yang Kaihui 楊開慧 (1901–1930). As simply omitting this would have been too obvious, she had insisted on the removal of all annotation.[37] This, Shapiro suggests, was part of the power struggle in which Jiang Qing and the other members of the "Gang of Four" sought to position themselves to take over after Mao's impending death.

In view of this, we may perhaps be reluctant to accept the claim made by the Foreign Languages Press that its edition of Mao's poems in English "is the authoritative one so far."[38] The Foreign Languages Press version has become widely diffused because the Press is an agency of the Chinese government, a fact which does not, of itself, validate any opinion about the merits of the translations themselves, though it may remind us of the way Pascale Casanova has emphasised, in a Western context, the importance of established centres of publication in creating literary reputations.[39] The variety of translations of Mao's poems already in existence offers ample evidence in favour of the proposition, now generally accepted among scholars of translation, if not necessarily by the reading public at large, that there is no such thing as a single, definitive translation of any text. The way forward is suggested by the slogan "*baihua qifang, baijia zhengming* 百花齊放，百家爭鳴" (usually translated as "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend"), popularised by Mao during the "Hundred Flowers Campaign" of 1956–1957, though the expression contained an allusion to the ancient Chinese past.[40] While the

[37] Sidney Shapiro, *An American in China: Thirty Years in the People's Republic* (Beijing: New World Press, 1979), 265–66.

[38] Mao Zedong, *Poems* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2002 reprint), blurb on inside back flap.

[39] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[40] See the entry for the slogan in the *New Age Dictionary* under 百; Mao Zedong, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," in *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, vol. V (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), 384–421; J. A. G. Roberts, *The Complete History of China* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2003), 431–33. 百家爭鳴 originally referred to the many different philosophical schools in China's Spring and Autumn (770–476 B.C.) and Warring States (475–221 B.C.) periods.

period of officially sanctioned free expression was soon followed by a change of policy and the repression of the Anti-Rightist Movement, the slogan can still serve to express the importance of multiplicity and diversity in translation. There is room even for such things as the passage in a novel by Lucie Wu, a Chinese writer living in France, where three of the characters spend over a page discussing Mao's poem on "*Lushan xianren dong*"〈盧山仙人洞〉("The Cave of the Immortals on Mount Lu"). As the narrator points out, the poem's imagery of the pine tree rising in the clouds is conventionally interpreted as referring to the true communist undaunted by reactionary forces, but (in keeping with the tone of much of the rest of the novel) the discussion concentrates on teasing out possible erotic implications.[41] We are a long way from the reverential commentary of the Engles in *Playboy*, but it certainly makes the reader look at the poem (and at Mao) in a new light.

The Anglo-Irish poet C. Day Lewis once wrote of his belief "that every classical poem worth translating should be translated afresh every fifty years."[42] He was thinking of how changes in poetic idiom in the target language could make older translations obsolete, but his argument is more generally applicable. While predicting the taste of future generations may be pointless, Mao's poems would appear to have achieved classic status, and their complex nature makes them a worthwhile challenge to the translator. Different translators and different readers will inevitably have their own interpretations and prefer different approaches, and while it is fairly certain that there will never be such a thing as a single perfect English translation of Mao's poems, it seems very likely that future translators will continue their attempts to produce one.

[41] Lucie Wu, *Histoire de Qu* (Paris: La Musardine, 2012), 179–81. (First published by Mercure de France, 2003.)
[42] C. Day Lewis, trans., *The Georgics of Virgil* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940), 7, Preface.

## Appendix: Chinese text of〈長沙〉[43]

〈沁園春〉

長沙

一九二五年

獨立寒秋
湘江北去
橘子洲頭
看萬山紅遍
層林盡染
漫江碧透
百舸爭流
鷹擊長空
魚翔淺底
萬類霜天競自由
悵寥廓
問蒼茫大地
誰主沉浮

攜來百侶曾游
憶往昔崢嶸歲月稠
恰同學少年
風華正茂
書生意氣
揮斥方遒
指點江山
激揚文字
糞土當年萬戶侯
曾記否
到中流擊水
浪遏飛舟

[43] After text in《毛主席詩詞三十七首》, 1.

# A Framework for Computer-Aided Translation Studies

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## [I] Introduction

To many, computer-aided translation is simply about the clicking of buttons and saving of data on computer systems for future reuse. Actually, computer-aided translation is more than what meets the eye. It is not simply operational. To machine translation scholars and system developers, computer-aided translation is an area that deserves serious attention and academic examination.

In this paper, a framework for computer-aided translation studies will be proposed. Before details of this framework are presented, theoretical frameworks for translation studies proposed by other scholars will first be explained and discussed. This will be followed by justifications for the proposed framework and detailed explanations of its divisions and sub-divisions.

## [II] Frameworks in the Past

Several frameworks for translation studies have been proposed in the past, including those of James Holmes,[1] Mary Snell-Hornby,[2] Gideon

[1] James S. Holmes, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," in *Translation across Cultures*, ed. Gideon Toury (New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1972, 1987), 9–24; James S. Holmes, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," in *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*, ed. James S. Holmes (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1988), 93–98.

[2] Mary Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1972/1988).

Toury,[3] and Jeremy Munday.[4] These frameworks are discussed chronologically in the following paragraphs.

## *James S. Holmes (1972): Map of Translation Studies*

James Holmes is generally considered to be the first scholar who coined the term "translation studies." In his article entitled "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies,"[5] he proposed a map of translation studies, the first of its kind. According to Holmes, translation studies has two main objectives: to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience, and to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted. He divides translation studies into "pure" and "theoretical." Pure translation studies can be subdivided into descriptive translation studies (or translation description) and theoretical translation studies (or translation theory). There are three types of descriptive translation studies: product-oriented descriptive translation studies, function-oriented descriptive translation studies, and process-oriented descriptive translation studies.

There are two major types of theoretical translation studies: general translation theory and partial translation theories, which can be grouped into six main types: (1) medium-restricted theories; (2) area-restricted theories; (3) rank-restricted theories; (4) text-type-restricted theories; (5) time-restricted theories; and (6) problem-restricted theories. Applied translation studies can also be divided into (1) translator training, (2) translation aids, and (3) translation criticism. The growth of translation studies depends partly on the efforts made within the translation circles and partly on the recognition by other disciplines of its importance in their own research and development.

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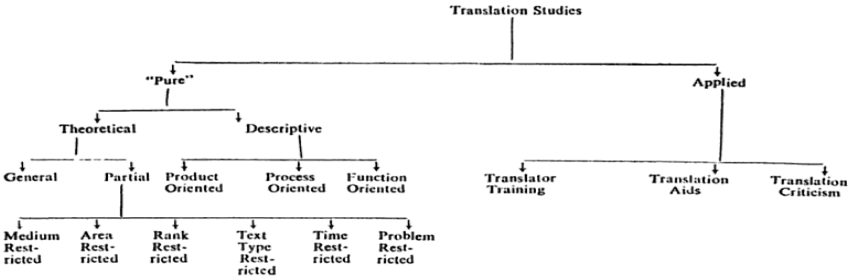
[3] Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995).

[4] Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 13.

[5] Holmes, "Name and Nature" (1972), 9–24; Holmes, "Name and Nature" (1988), 67–80.




### *Mary Snell-Hornby* (*1988*): *Integrated Framework for Translation Studies*

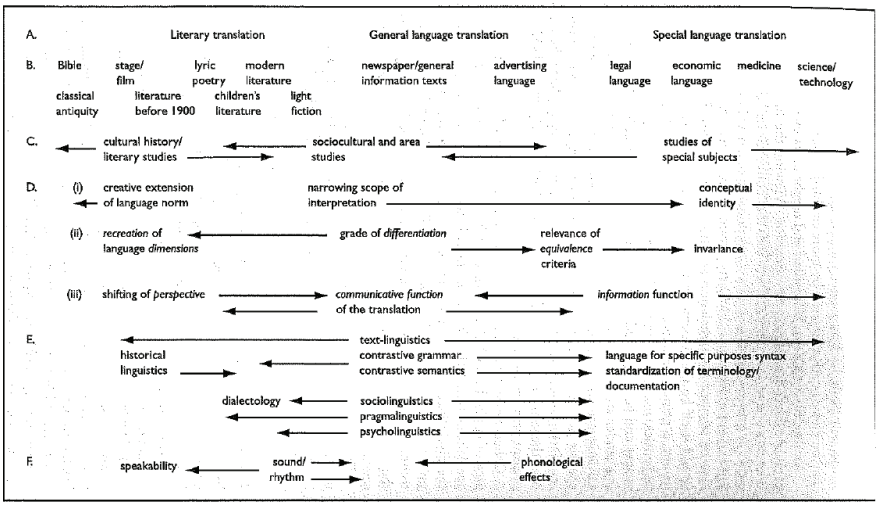
Sixteen years later, a syncretic approach to translation was proposed by Mary Snell-Hornby in her book entitled *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, which stresses the importance of treating translation from a wide range of perspectives. Her theoretical framework has been known as an integrated approach to translation.

According to Snell-Hornby, her study is an attempt to present recently developed concepts and methods both from translation theory and linguistics so that they can be usefully employed in the theory, practice and analysis of literary translation. However, only those concepts and methods in linguistics relevant to translation have been developed for use in translation studies. In fact, this study can also be seen as an attempt to clear the ground for the growth of translatology by removing some deep-rooted misconceptions.

The integrated approach presented by the author is one which attempts to encompass all text-types and includes relevant aspects from related disciplines, especially linguistics, which shows her intention to make translation studies a discipline in its own right. Her approach is shown through a system of relationships established between basic text-types and the crucial aspects of translation. Horizontally, as shown in the diagram, it represents a cline; vertically, it is a stratification model, proceeding from the most general level A to the most particular level F as follows: Level A: conventional areas of translation in a fluid spectrum; Level B: a prototypology of the basic text-types; Level C: related non-linguistic disciplines; Level D: aspects and criteria governing the translation process; Level E: areas of linguistics relevant to translation; Level F: phonological aspects of specific relevance to certain areas of translation.

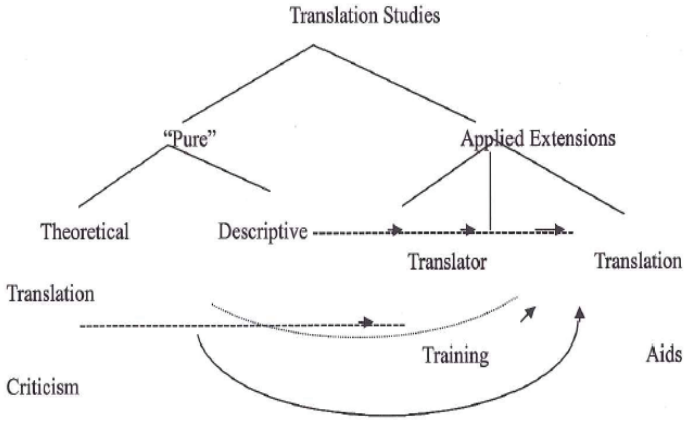
With this prototypological framework the foundations have been laid for the conception of translation studies as an integrated and independent discipline that covers all kinds of translation and has its own methods to

deal with the complexities of translation. Thus it can be concluded that Mary Snell-Hornby is a syncretic scholar who believes in the application of the various disciplines to the formulation of a theoretical framework.




## *Gideon Toury* (*1995*): *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*

It should be noted that in Toury's work, Translator Training, which covers curriculum design and teaching methods, and Translation Aids, which covers dictionaries and information, have been given emphasis in Applied Extensions of Translation Studies. This is probably the first framework in which translation aids have been included to highlight the importance of using tools in translation practice.

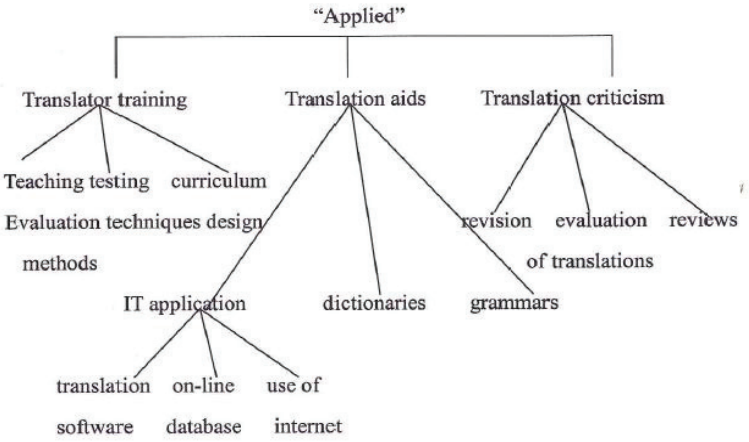



### *Jeremy Munday* (*2001*): *Applied Branch of Translation Studies*

Munday, in his book *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*,[6] goes a step further by putting IT application, which covers translation software, on line database, and use of Internet, under Translation Aids in the area of "Applied" Translation Studies. It can be assumed that translation software refers to both computer translation software and computer-aided translation software, that on-line database covers both terminology database and translation memory database, and that the use of Internet is about the use of browsers to find the information we need and the use of machine translation systems in translating websites and other materials on the Internet.

It can be observed that a new framework has been proposed in every decade since the 1970s. It can also be observed that it is only in Jeremy Munday's framework that IT is mentioned.[7] In fact, there are justifications for the creation of a framework for computer-aided translation studies.

[6] Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, 13.
[7] Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, 13.




## [III] Justifications for the Creation of a Framework for Computer-Aided Translation Studies

Though computer-aided translation has been around for less than thirty years, it has been the fastest-growing area in the field in the last decade. Its rapid growth is attributable to several factors.

(1) In terms of research and development, computer(-aided) translation has been studied and developed in thirty countries, or 16 percent of the total number of countries in the world.

(2) In terms of the literature on the subject, 8,363 works have been written either in English or Chinese by 5,404 authors between 1948 and 2006, a period of fifty-eight years.[8] In China, 736 articles on CAT have been written since 2004. Of all the publications on translation, those on translation technology are ranked No. 2, after translation studies.

(3) In terms of the development of computer-aided translation systems, over ninety systems have so far been developed, which can be divided into fourteen different categories.[9]

(4) In terms of the number of conferences, there were twenty-six

[8] Chan Sin-wai, *A Topical Bibliography of Computer(-Aided) Translation* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2008), xxix.

[9] Chan Sin-wai, "Approaching Localization," in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*, eds. Francesca Bartrina and Carmen Milan Varela (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 361–76.

conferences on computer(-aided) translation and its related areas from 1993 to 2003, second only to translation studies in terms of number.[10]

(5) In terms of the number of commercial system users, there are more than 6,000 corporations which use CAT systems to solve their language problems.

(6) In terms of labour force, there are more than 150,000 computer-aided translators and the number has been on the rise, especially in China and other emerging countries in Asia.

All this means that the time has come for us to take a new look at computer-aided translation and present most of the issues related to computers and translation in a systematic manner.

## [IV] A Proposed Framework for Computer-Aided Translation Studies

Firstly, it should be noted that this framework is the first of its kind, establishing computer-aided translation studies as an independent academic area. Secondly, most if not all of the concepts in computer-aided translation have now been put in their proper places in this framework. To show that these concepts have been discussed and studied in the field, a reference is given to each of them, to be followed by a concise explanation.

This framework, as shown below, is made up of three major divisions: Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies, Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies, and Applied Computer-Aided Translation Studies.

Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies includes Medium-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies, Language-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies, Computer-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies, and Goal-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies.

Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies includes System-Specific Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies, Function-Specific Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies, and Process-Specific Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies.

Applied Computer-Aided Translation Studies includes Lexicography, Translator Training, Translation Profession, Translation Corpus, Translation Business, and Translation Market.

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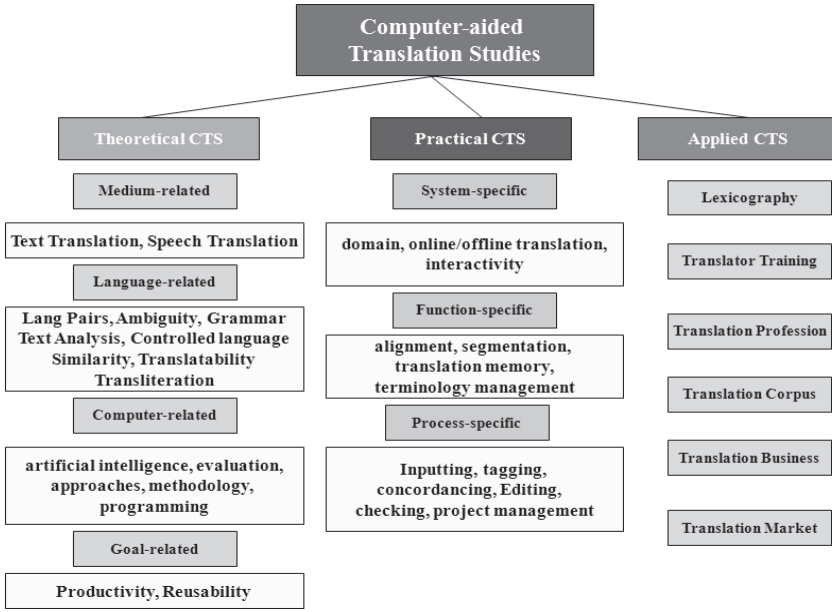
[10] Chan Sin-wai, *A Chronology of Translation in China and in the West: From the Legendary Period to 2004* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2009), 12–15.

This is the overall framework for Computer-Aided Translation Studies. The following is a detailed description of each division and sub-division.




## (1) Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies

This refers to the study of the theoretical aspects of computer-aided translation, which has four sub-divisions.

### *Medium-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies*

The first sub-division of Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies is Medium-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies. The media are texts and voices, or textual data and speech data. In other words, this sub-division covers text translation and speech translation.[11]

[11] Manny Rayner, "Speech Translation and Text Translation: Similarities and Differences," in *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Theoretical and Methodological Issues in Machine Translation* (*TMI-95*) (The University of Leuven, Leuven, 1995).

Text Translation refers to the translation of a text by a CAT system. The texts to be translated can be existing documents, pasted from other programmes or typed into the programme. Text translation, however, must not be interpreted as the translation of printed documents or documentary translation. It is about the translation of electronic texts in different formats, such as word files, tagged files, and web pages. In the literature of computer translation, texts have been divided into "bilingual text," "colloquial text," "comparative text," "parallel text," and "source text." Texts have also been studied according to the different ways they are processed, such as "text chunking," "text clustering," "text generation," "text abstracting," and "text summarization."

Speech Translation refers to computer-aided translation of a spoken text from one language to another involving speech recognition and production. Speech translation is related to speech recognition, speech process, speech synthesis and speech generation through the use of speech recognition and speech translation systems.[12]

The second sub-division of Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation studies is Language-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies. This sub-division covers language pairs, linguistic ambiguity, grammar, text analysis, controlled language, textual similarity, and translatability.

Language Pair, the first area, refers to the specified input and output languages in a computer-aided translation system. Studies on the translation of around eighty language pairs have been conducted, mostly with the language pairs of Chinese and English, Japanese and English, and Korean and English.[13]

The second area of this sub-division is Linguistic Ambiguity, which arises when an expression can be interpreted in more than one way. Linguistic ambiguity can be divided into "lexical ambiguity" and "syntactical ambiguity." Disambiguation has also been widely studied.[14]

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[12] Christine A. Montgomery, Bonnie Glover Stalls, Robert E. Stumberger, Naicong Li, Robert S. Belvin, Alfredo R. Arnaiz, and Susan Hirsh Litenatsky, "The Machine-Aided Voice Translation (MAVT) System," in *Proceedings of the 14th Annual International Voice Technologies Application Conference* (*AVIOS-95*), (San Jose, California, 1995), 101–10.

[13] Kevin Scannell, "Machine Translation for Closely Related Language Pairs," in *Proceedings of the 5th SALTMIL Workshop on Minority Languages and the 5th International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation* (*LREC-2006*)*: Strategies for Developing Machine Translation for Minority Languages* (Genoa, 2006), 103–108.

[14] Marcus Sammer, Kobi Reiter, Stephen Soderland, Katrin Kirchhoff, and Oren Etzioni, "Ambiguity Reduction for Machine Translation: Human-Computer

The third area is Grammar. For computer(-aided) translation, grammatical knowledge is essential in parsing, tagging, and editing data. A number of grammars, such as context-free grammar, dependency grammar, functional grammar, head-driven phrase structure grammar, lexical-functional grammar, Montague grammar, phrase structure grammar, stochastic grammar, and universal grammar have been discussed. The idea of translation grammar has been proposed as a grammar for computer translation.[15]

The fourth area is Text Analysis, which is an important step to produce a good translation of the source text.[16] Analysis, which is important in both human and computer translation, is mainly about "source analysis" and "translation analysis." Text analysis is also considered as "linguistic analysis," which includes "morphological analysis," "semantic analysis," and "syntactical analysis."

The fifth area is Controlled Language, which is a type of natural language developed for specific domains with a clearly defined restriction on controlled lexicons, simplified grammars, and style rules to make it easier to be processed by machine translation systems. It is generally agreed that the use of controlled language helps to produce controlled language translation with improved consistency, higher reusability, easier processing, greater standardization, and increased translatability.[17]

The sixth area is Similarity, which refers to the degree of closeness between or among texts.[18] Linguistic similarity is the theoretical foundation

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Collaboration," in *Proceedings of the 7th Biennial Conference of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas* (*AMTA-2006*)*: Visions for the Future of Machine Translation* (Boston Marriott, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2006).

[15] Stefan Riezler and John T. Maxwell III, "Grammatical Machine Translation," in *Proceedings of the Human Language Technology Conference—Annual Meeting of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics* (*HLT-NAACL-2006*) (New York, 2006).

[16] Chris Taylor and Anthony Baldry, "Computer-Assisted Text Analysis and Translation: A Functional Approach in the Analysis and Translation of Advertising Texts," in *Exploring Translation and Multilingual Text Production: Beyond Content*, eds. Erich H. Steiner and Colin Yallop (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001), 277–305.

[17] Jeffrey Allen, "Adapting the Concept of 'Translation Memory' to 'Authoring Memory' for a Controlled Language Writing Environment," in *Translating and the Computer 20* (London: The Association for Information Management, 1999).

[18] Agam Patel and Dragomir R. Radev, "Lexical Similarity Can Distinguish between Automatic and Manual Translations," in *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation* (*LREC-2006*), (Genoa, 2006).

for the function of "Analyse" in computer-aided translation systems. The input text is gauged against the stored translation units and a similarity rate is generated. Similarity in computer-aided translation systems is usually set at 75%, but it varies with the purposes of translation.

The seventh area is Translatability, which refers to the possibility of translating from one language into another. Machine translatability has a number of issues that are worth studying, such as the techniques for rating translatability, the intertranslatability of natural languages, methods of improving translatability, and the use of a translatability checker to gauge the textual suitability of translation.[19]

The last area in this sub-division is Transliteration. It refers to the act or process of representing or spelling the words, letters or characters of one language in the words, letters or characters of another language or alphabet. In the context of computer(-aided) translation, transliteration covers mainly the issue of using a particular Romanization system to transliterate words and proper names. Also of concern to computer-aided translation are the detection, recognition, extraction, disambiguation, and transliteration of bilingual or multilingual name entities.[20]

## *Computer-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies*

This part covers the theoretical aspects of artificial intelligence, evaluation, approaches, methodology, and programming.

The first area is Artificial Intelligence (AI), which refers to the capacity of a machine to replicate the functions and operations of the human brain such as reasoning and learning.[21] Artificial intelligence has a lot to do with the thinking of a computer translation system. The linguistic aspects of artificial intelligence and the making of AI systems are important issues in this area.

The second area is Evaluation. This refers to the methods and criteria used in assessing the usability and functionality of a computer translation or computer-aided translation system. Evaluation includes issues of

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[19] Sharon O'Brien, "Machine Translatability and Post Editing Effort: How Do They Relate?" in *Translating and the Computer 26* (London: The Association for Information Management, 2004).

[20] Kevin Knight and Jonathan Graehl, "Machine Transliteration," in *Translating and the Computer 26* (1997).

[21] Yang Xianze 楊憲澤, *Rengong zhineng yu jiqi fanyi*《人工智能與機器翻譯》(*Artificial Intelligence and Machine Translation*) (Chengdu: Southwest Jiaotong University 西南交通大學, 2006).

evaluation criteria and methodology for computer translation or computer-aided translation systems.[22]

The third area is Approaches to Computer and Computer-Aided Translation. This refers to the approaches used in designing and developing computer and computer-aided translation systems. There are twenty-two approaches to computer translation, and seventeen different types of computer-aided translation system have been developed based on different approaches. Issues such as the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches and the use of hybrid approaches are worth examining.[23]

The fourth area is Methodology. This refers to the methodologies used in treating the linguistic data in computer and computer-aided translation systems. Methods particular to computer translation systems are pre-editing, interactive editing, and post-editing.[24] Methods which are particular to CAT include translation by reuse, translation by selection, and translation by modification.

The fifth area is Programming. This refers to the use of a set of coded instructions that enables a computer to perform a desired sequence of operations. Programming is about the use of a programming language, such as Java and VBNet, to create a computer or computer-aided translation system. The issue of algorithm has been widely discussed.[25]

### *Goal-Related Theoretical Computer-Aided Translation Studies*

This part mainly covers the concepts of productivity and reusability.

The first area is Productivity. This refers to the increase of production in the case of a computer-aided translation system. One of the most important issues in this area is the relationship between productivity and quality, or how to do more with less. The use of tools to enhance

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[22] Celia Rico Pérez, "Reproducible Models for CAT Tools Evaluation: A User-Oriented Perspective," in *Translating and the Computer 23* (London: The Association for Information Management, 2001).

[23] Gábor Prószéky, "Machine Translation and the Rule-to-Rule Hypothesis," in *New Trends in Translation Studies: In Honour of Kinga Klaudy*, eds. Krisztina Károly and Ágota Fóris (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2005), 207–18.

[24] Harold L. Somers, "Machine Translation: Methodology," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 143–49.

[25] Ralf D. Brown, "Automated Generalization of Translation Examples," in *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Computational Linguistics* (*COLING-2000*) (Saarbrücken, 2000), 125–31.

productivity is also an issue frequently discussed.[26]

The second area is Reusability, which is about the use of stored data in subsequent and next similar translation projects. Reusability is an important function of a computer-aided translation system. The issues of when, why, and how best to reuse translations are important.[27]

## (2) Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies

This refers to the study of the practical aspects of computer(-aided) translation. This division of computer-aided translation studies has four sub-divisions.

### *System-Specific Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies*

This part covers domains of application, online translation, and man-machine interaction.

The first area of this sub-division is Domain. This refers to issues related to the needs of a specific domain or area. It has been known that CAT has been applied to all types of practical writings. It is expected that CAT will be applied to more and more domains in practical translation.[28]

The second area is Online Translation. This refers to the translation of a text by a computer or computer-aided translation system which is available at all times on demand from users.[29] Online translation is fast becoming a popular topic in computer-aided translation. It covers both "internet translation" and "web translation." Sometimes, "online translation" is synonymous with "web translation."

The third area is Interactivity. This refers to the provision of facilities to allow the translator-editor to build up a translation interactively. Interactivity should be understood in the context of human-machine interaction. It covers the topics of interactive computer translation, interactive computer-aided translation, interactive speech translation,

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[26] Fotini Vallianatou, "CAT Tools and Productivity: Tracking Words and Hours," *Translation Journal* 9, no. 4 (2005).

[27] Magnus Merkel, "When and Why Should Translations Be Reused," *Papers from the XIII VAAKKI Symposium* (Vaasa, 1993), 139–49.

[28] Elena Filatova, Vasileios Hatzivassiloglou, and Kathleen R. McKeown, "Automatic Creation of Domain Templates," in *Proceedings of the Joint Conference of the International Committee on Computational Linguistics and the Association for Computational Linguistics* (*COLING / AL-2006*) (Sydney, 2006).

[29] Thei Zervaki, "Online Free Translation Services," in *Translating and the Computer 24* (London: The Association of Information Management, 2002).

interactive translation systems, interactive computer translation systems, interactive computer-aided translation systems, interactive bilingual systems, interactive multilingual systems, interactive speech translation systems, and interactive text-editing systems.[30]

### *Function-Specific Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies*

This part includes alignment, segmentation, translation memory, and terminology management, which are functionally specific to computer-aided translation.

The first area is Alignment. This refers to the process of matching up a source text and the target text segment by segment into translation pairs. Technically, we have automatic alignment, fuzzy alignment, and statistical alignment. Linguistically, we have lexical alignment, terminology alignment, word alignment, phrase alignment, clause alignment, sentence alignment, and text alignment. A lot of attention has been given to "word alignment" and "sentence alignment." The algorithm, methods, techniques and other practical issues in the automatic alignment are also widely examined.[31]

The second area is Segmentation. This is sentence separation in a CAT system with the purpose of dividing a text into easily manageable segments. Automatic segmentation is done in CAT systems. Segmentation can be done at different levels: word segmentation, sentence segmentation, and text segmentation. Some languages are easier to be segmented; others are not.[32]

The third area of this sub-division is Translation Memory.[33]This is a database that stores translated sentences with their respective source segments. The topics often discussed in this area include "matching," "fuzzy match," "translation memory system," and "translation memory

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[30] Oliver Bender, Sasa Hasan, David Vilar, Richard Zens, and Hermann Ney, "Comparison of Generation Strategies for Interactive Machine Translation," in *Proceedings of the 10th Workshop of the European Association for Machine Translation: Practical Applications of Machine Translation* (Budapest, 2005), 33–40.

[31] Wu Dekai, "Alignment," in *Handbook of Natural Language Processing*, eds. Robert Dale, Hermann Moisl, and Harold L. Somers (New York: Marcel Dekker, 2000), 415–58.

[32] Wang Fu Lee, Deng Xiaotie, and Zhou Feng, "Towards Unified Chinese Segmentation Algorithm," in *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation* (*LREC-2006*) (Genoa, 2006).

[33] Shih Chung-ling, *Helpful Assistance to Translators: MT & TM* (Taipei: Bookman Books Ltd., 2006).

exchange (TMX)."

The fourth area is Terminology Management. This refers to the documentation, storage, manipulation, and presentation of a specialized vocabulary in a computer or computer-aided translation system, covering terminology recognition, terminology acquisition, terminology extraction, terminology database, and terminology processing, and terminology management systems. All these are constituent parts of terminology translation.[34]

## *Process-Specific Practical Computer-Aided Translation Studies*

This part covers inputting, tagging, concordancing, editing, checking, and project management in computer(-aided) translation.

The first area is Inputting. This refers to the entering of the source text into the computer for machine processing.[35] As there are many writing systems in the world, inputting is not an easy task. A number of inputting methods are discussed and issues such as optical character recognition and the proof-reading of the scanned texts are also covered.

The second area is Tagging, which is to give each word in a sentence a grammatical label so that its syntactic structure can be shown and properly used. Much has been done on part-of-speech tagging, taggers, and statistical tagging.[36]

The third area is Concordancing. This is to use a concordancer to analyse the lexical, grammatical, and textual structure of the source text. It has been generally recognized that "concordancing" is an effective way of analysing the source text. There are three types of commercial concordancers: Multiconcord, ParaConc, and WordSmith. There are also two types of linguistic concordancers: bilingual and multilingual. Concordancing is the first stage of the technology-oriented translation procedure where statistical and lexical information of the source text are given in a systematic manner.[37]

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[34] Frank Austermühl, "Computer-Assisted Terminology Management," in *Electronic Tools for Translators* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing Company, 2001), 102–23.

[35] Chen Zheng and Lee Kai-Fu, "A New Statistical Approach to Chinese *Pinyin* Input," in *Proceedings of the 38th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics* (*ACL-2000*) (Hong Kong, 2000).

[36] Geoffrey Leech, "Grammatical Tagging," in *Corpus Annotation: Linguistic Information from Computer Text Corpora*, eds. Roger Garside, Geoffrey Leech, and Anthony McEnery (London: Longman, 1997), 19–33.

[37] Margherita Ulrych, "The Impact of Multilingual Parallel Concordancing on Translation," in *Proceedings of the Conference on Practical Applications in*

The fourth area is Editing.[38] This is to fine-tune the text to make it acceptable to the target user. Editing is divided into pre-editing, interactive editing, and post-editing. Pre-editing and post-editing are for computer translation, while interactive editing is for computer-aided translation.

The fifth area is Checking. This is to check errors in the target text. Checking is usually done computationally by checkers, such as controlled language checker for the proper usage of controlled language text, grammar checker for grammatical accuracy, spelling checker for spelling correctness, style checker for stylistic reproduction, syntax checker for syntactical well-formedness, translatability checker for helping to make decisions on full-text translation, and translation checker for automatic validation of human and computer translation.[39]

The sixth area is Project Management. This is to track and manage the progress of translation projects by a computer-aided translation project management system. Server-based or web-based systems are used for managing translation projects in the digital age. Management is done in an efficient and effective manner with the use of translation management systems. Much has been written on the use and efficiency of using project management systems.[40]

## (3) Applied Computer-Aided Translation Studies

This part covers topics which are indirectly related to computer-aided translation, including lexicography, translator training, translation profession, translation corpus, translation business, and translation market.

The first area is Lexicography. This is related to the work of compiling, writing, and editing dictionaries. It is related to both computer translation and computer-aided translation as all systems need bilingual or multilingual glossaries. Lexicography is essential knowledge for anyone interested in computer translation. Topics in this area include computational lexicography, corpus lexicography, lexical acquisition, phrasal lexicon,

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*Language Corpora* (*PALC-97*), eds. Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Patrick James Melia (Łódź, 1997).

[38] Jayanta Ray, "Machine-Aided Translation (MAT)—Aspects of Editing," *International Journal of Translation* 7, nos. 1–2 (1995), 47–57.

[39] Martin Chodorow and Claudia Leacock, "An Unsupervised Method for Detecting Grammatical Errors," in *Proceedings of the 1st Meeting of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics* (Seattle, Washington, D.C., 2000), 140–47.

[40] Celia Rico Pérez, "Translation and Project Management," *Translation Journal* 6, no. 4 (2002).

and translation lexicon.[41]

The second area is Translator Training. This is to train translators with the technological competence to work with CAT systems.[42] Translator training is no longer by bricks and mortar, but by bricks and clicks. Teaching is both online and offline. The training of translators is based on vocational needs and practical demands rather than on the academic interests of the teachers.

The third area is Translation Profession. This refers to a service activity which is performed in a professional setting with CAT competence to achieve a professional aim.[43] To be able to play a role in a translation team through the use of a server-based computer-aided translation system is professionally essential. Translator competence, the core of which is technological competence, is considered as essential in addition to translation competence, the core of which is bilingual or multilingual competence.

The fourth area is Translation Corpus. This refers to corpora containing both source-language texts and their translations. Translation corpus is based on parallel texts, the alignment of which is an essential issue. The use of translation corpora in parallel text processing is a topic which deserves further examination.[44]

The fifth area is Translation Business, which is about using computer translation or computer-aided translation systems to run a translation company. Issues such as global collaboration, vendor control, relationship management, profitability enhancement, and task outsourcing are some of

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[41] Zhang Yihua, "Computational Lexicography and Computer-Aided Dictionary-Making," paper presented at the *International Conference on Computer-Aided Translation: Theory and Practice* (Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2006).

[42] Geoffrey S. Koby and Brian James Baer, "Task-Based Instruction and the New Technology: Training Translators for the Modern Language Industry," in *Beyond the Ivory Tower: Rethinking Translation Pedagogy*, eds. Brian James Baer and Geoffrey S. Koby (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2003), 211–27.

[43] Christina Schäffner, "Squaring the Circle—The Contribution of Universities to the Needs of the Profession," paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the Association of Translation Companies: Getting in Shape for the Future—Working towards a New Environment for the Translation Profession* (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2004).

[44] Jean Véronis, *Parallel Text Processing: Alignment and Use of Translation Corpora* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000).

the important topics in the translation business.[45]

The sixth area is Translation Market. This refers to the size of clients who need translation services, human or machine. The market of translation has seen marked growth in recent years. It is getting increasingly globalised as international cooperation has become the norm.[46]

## [V] Conclusion

The above is a proposed framework for computer-aided translation studies at its current stage of development. Its emphasis is on the static factors that form the basis of translation studies in the area of computer-aided translation. These factors are relatively stable as they will not change too drastically as a result of developments in other areas. But the dynamic aspects of translation technology should not be ignored. With the rapid advances in computer sciences, computational linguistics, translation studies, mobile phone science, and digital touchpoints, translation technology, or, more specifically, computer-aided translation, will move ahead at a pace much faster than before. In the future, there will be new concepts and functions for inclusion in the framework, resulting in its expansion and revision.

No framework is perfect or will last for ever. For a framework in a new domain, there is undoubtedly room for improvement. It is hoped that this proposed framework has served the purpose of organizing concepts and ideas in computer-aided translation in a more coherent and logical manner to allow future explorations of this emerging discipline.

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[45] Sarah Schuh, "Technology in Translation Businesses: An Industry Opinion," in *Proceedings of the 6th Portsmouth Translation Conference: Translation Technologies and Culture* (School of Languages and Area Studies, University of Portsmouth, England, 2006).

[46] Renato S. Benitatto, "A Global Review of the Translation Market Place," in *Programme of the 30th Anniversary Conference of the Association of Translation Companies*: *Building Strong Markets for Translations —Making Links and Seizing Opportunities* (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London, 2006).

# TEXTURE AND BEYOND: IN AND OF TRANSLATION

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To deal with the way language is manipulated for effect, and with the translation or ESL problems involved, we first need to get to grips with the wider issue of "text in context." In any analysis of this kind, the topic of "texture" is bound to feature prominently since it is the use of such devices as cohesion and thematization that ultimately enables a sequence of disparate sentences to acquire "texthood" and "functionality." It may thus be helpful at the outset to discuss a number of basic assumptions generally entertained by applied text linguists dealing with texture in domains as varied as translation, interpreting, lexicography, and language teaching.

## [I] Basic Assumptions

### *Text Is the Minimal Unit of Communication*

It is the text, and not the individual word or the single isolated sentence, that is the relevant unit of both linguistic communication (text production and comprehension) and, indeed, translation. Take the semantic process of "synonymy," for example. Of course synonymy is theoretically possible at the level of words or sentences, but, examined closely, this level of correspondence can be achieved most adequately only through the mediation of texts.[1] Where on earth but in "texts" in "context" can *wide-ranging* ever mean "unmethodical" or "chaotic," and *restrictive* "rigorous," "exact." The sample text we have in mind is an academic Abstract which, in describing a model of analysis, highlights a contrast between the model being "vague and *wide-ranging*," on the one hand, and

[1] Robert de Beaugrande, *Factors in a Theory of Poetic Translation* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1978).

the proposed procedures promising "a more *restrictive* definition that sheds light on data," on the other hand:

*Sample 1*

ABSTRACT
[…]
One way to interpret these findings is to use the concept of modulation defined by Vinay & Darbelnet (1958)…. Their definition is rather *vague*, and the examples that they and other scholars use to illustrate the concept are *wide-ranging*. By analyzing various translations of the same expression, however, it is possible to define the concept more *restrictively* and to shed light on the data.
[…][2] (Italics added)

In dealing with this text, standard, dictionary-driven "synonyms" of *wide-ranging* such as "extensive," "comprehensive," "inclusive," or of *restrictive* such as "constraining," "hampering," are thus to be excluded, as they are exclusively elements of *langue*. That is, the synonymy established in this way remains part of the language system until and unless the wider framework of "text in context" or *parole* (and a radical notion of *parole* at that) is invoked. It is only then that we can have such meanings as "all over the place," "haphazard," even "chaotic" and "unmethodical" for *wide-ranging* and "rigorous," "exact," even "thorough" and "meticulous" for *restrictive* (as Sample 1 above shows).

Let us take another example, this time from a book review in which the praiseworthiness of a book is "argued through" (another text type and text format in which we have Assertion > Substantiation):

*Sample 2*

Theologian's book a *wide-ranging* study
[…]
While Farley does address those issues, she does so only after first undertaking a *wide-ranging* study of how sexuality has been treated in cultures across the globe throughout history, of how the soul and the body should be considered separately and together in these questions, and how theories of justice might be applied to help create "norms" to guide our sexual actions.
[…][3] (Italics added)

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[2] Raphael Salkie, "A New Look at Modulation," in *Translation and Meaning*, Part 5, ed. Marcel Thelen (Maastricht: Translation Institute, 2001), 433–41.
[3] Joshua J. McElwee, *Theologian's Book a Wide-Ranging Study* (National Catholic

Contrary to what we saw in the case of Sample 1, dictionary-driven synonyms, envisaged at the level of *langue*, would most certainly stand us in good stead here, and meanings such as "comprehensive," would indeed be what we may readily adopt. Compared with the Abstract in Sample 1, the publishers' review (Sample 2) has, on this occasion, exploited not only a different text type (a Through-argument, not a Counter-argument) but also a different genre (a Review, not an Abstract) and a different discourse (the hortatory discourse of the reviewer, as opposed to the analytical discourse of the academic paper). Translators or language practitioners are mainly concerned with the intricacies of this level of "performance," and what we utilize in practice is certainly not mere dictionary entries but real language in actual use.

## [II] Text as Process

When two or more texts are compared, inter- or intralingually, for whatever purpose (translating, style analysis, etc.), one thing is certain: the communicative potential analysed does not reside in the text alone, nor merely in the text seen as a product, but in text production and reception approached as dynamic processes. Process analysis accounts better and more adequately for the intricacies of the interaction, not only between text producer and text receiver (as commonly believed), but also, and perhaps more significantly, between, on the one hand, these "agents" and the texts they happen to be using (manipulating or reacting to a texture that responds to a diverse range of communicative purposes), and, on the other hand, between the text in hand and all the other relevant texts in the immediate textual environment and beyond (through such mechanisms as "intertextuality").

As Beaugrande[4] makes amply clear, the interesting factors governing the process of communication are therefore not text features in and by themselves, but entire underlying strategies of language use manifested by text features. Consider, for example, the following fragment from the English translation of an Arabic "oath of allegiance" which members of the Muslim Brotherhood take upon joining the group:

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Reporter, 4 June 2012).

[4] Robert de Beaugrande, *Text, Discourse, and Process: Towards a Multidisciplinary Science of Texts* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1980).

*Sample 3*

In comfort and in adversity, in suffering and in joy.[5]

Looked at as a product, text features would generally be sufficient in and by themselves, and in this sense, the above translation is unblemished. Such an approach, however, is too static and can only yield a translation which only communicates propositional content. In the process of this almost item-by-item formal transfer of meaning blatantly manifested by the translation above, the underlying strategy of the source text is all but glossed over. As it stands, the target text can now be processed in terms of an entirely different text, different genre, and different discourse, from that intended by the source text. In the target language and culture—the pledge will most likely be perceived in the context of a Christian marriage ceremony (and not a Muslim Brotherhood Oath of Allegiance):

*Sample 4*

For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health.[6]

The oddness of the above translation from Arabic is thus glaring. At source-text level, we have a member of an Islamic political party interacting with higher authority, a text worded in a particular way to communicate the meaning of an oath within the culture or subculture concerned and, perhaps most important, an "intertertextuality" that links the unfolding text with the type of solemn oaths we customarily encounter in a range of contexts (e.g. the physician's oath). These three levels of the interaction realizing the text as a dynamic process have all been distorted by the translation. At target-text level, we have a Christian marriage ceremony with its customary interactants, the kind of language use associated with this particular social occasion/communicative event, and all the other texts conjured up when text producer or receiver engage with this kind of text.

[5] James Dickins, *Thinking Arabic Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Arabic to English* (London: Routledge, 2002).
[6] Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Common Prayer* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre Publishing, 1962).

## [III] The Appropriateness of Text to Context

Thus, the first level of interaction at which texts as a dynamic process tend to function is that which involves a speaker and a hearer. A higher level involves intertextuality where a text interacts with other texts. What pushes communication forward in a meaningful way, however, is an interlevel which involves the essence of what we as speakers and hearers do with language or what we have here called "texture." It is this interlevel which ensures that "man speaks in many tongues": the many registers (Level One) and the many text allusions covering the intertextual potential of all texts (Level Three).

Texturally, then, text strategy is seen in relation to the context of communication, and in response to a set of instructions which the text implements. This textural aspect may be illustrated by the following example of an exchange between an English foreign correspondent and an Arab government minister:

*Sample 5*

JOURNALIST (in English): What were the contents of the letter you handed to King Fahad this morning?
MINISTER (in Arabic): The contents of the letter *concern* the Saudis

Alongside the speaker-hearer dimension, the context of the "rebuff" (as opposed to that of, say, cooperatively engaging in an explanatory exchange) must be uppermost in the interpreter's mind. Regrettably, however, this was not the case on this occasion. What was relayed back to the English-speaking journalist by the interpreter was precisely what was "said" which did not do justice to what was "meant," that is, "this letter *concern* the Saudis," a reply which earned the tongue-in-cheek remark by the journalist: "Yes I know, that is why I asked!." The crucial trigger *concern*, crafted dexterously by the speaker and intended to have a specific impact on the hearer, was thus almost totally misperceived. The result was a text that does not function as intended, a breakdown in communication which could have been easily avoided had the interpreter operated within the appropriate context of "rebuff" and an appropriate degree of emphasis, producing in the process something like: "This is solely a matter for the Saudis to consider."

## [IV] Approaches to Texture

So far, we have been using the term *text* in a fairly general sense, with the emphasis on the well-formedness (i.e. surface cohesion) of a sequence of sentences. We shall continue to adopt this perspective, focusing on how a sequence of sentences "sticks together." This is justified in the light of the purpose we have set ourselves, which is basically to look into the phenomenon of texture and to examine how, with the words on the page as a point of departure, text users (readers and writers alike) can effectively "negotiate" the text's overall strategy.

The three levels of interaction identified at the outset above may now be seen from the perspective of texture proper. Speaker-Hearer Level One would capture how texts link up with their contexts as a matter of register "situationality." This is a standard of textuality which all well-formed texts must meet.[7] Next, Level Two (which caters for the interaction between Speaker/Hearer and the Text) captures how text producers mould and remould texts in particular ways to reflect higher-level contextual preferences, thereby meeting the pragmatic standard of "intentionality." Finally, Level Three of Text interacting with Text captures how performing a variety of rhetorical purposes becomes the framework within which we can ultimately account for "what we do with texts" through the fulfilment of another, this time the semiotic standard of textuality, or what came to be known as "interetextuality."

Central to the issue of texture (which is primarily a concern of the interlevel Two in the above formulation) has been the tension between the twin notions of "cohesion" and "coherence." Certainly, there are texts in which the tension is minimal, with cohesion (or the continuity of surface forms) and coherence (or the connectedness of underlying concepts) co-existing in perfect harmony and complementing each other in relaying surface and underlying connectivity. In such instances of language use, "informativity" (or the extent to which utterances, even texts, may be expected or unexpected) would be extremely low (i.e. tending towards stability). The following diagram illustrates this harmonious relationship:

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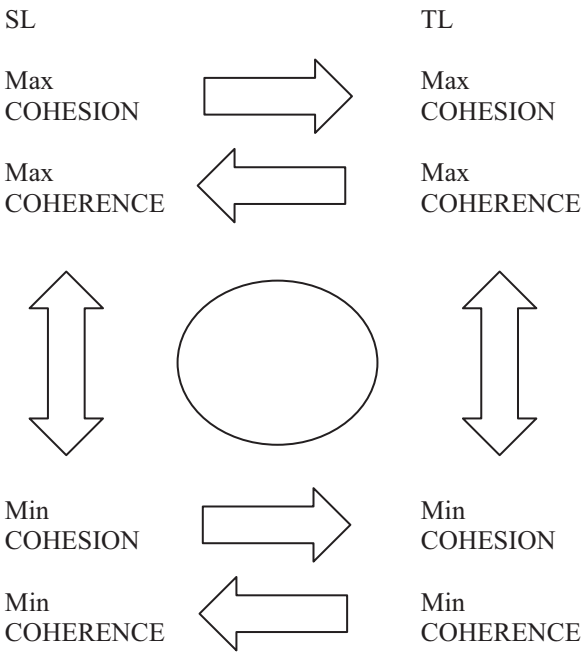
[7] Robert de Beaugrande and W. Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics* (London: Longman, 1981).

Figure1: Full Transparency




This can be illustrated from highly predictable forms of writing such as:

*Sample 6*

*Summary*

> The present report… has been prepared in response to General Assembly Resolution 51/186. In accordance with resolution 54/93, the report comprises a review of the implementation and results of the World Declaration and Plan of Action…. It draws upon a wide range of sources …. It also draws upon earlier reports…. [8]

But text production is not always as orderly as this ideal scenario might suggest. To convey all kinds of preferences, text producers tend to "mark" their language in a variety of ways, with varying degrees of texture "turbulence" ensuing in the process. In situations like these, cohesion is

[8] From the *Report of the UN Secretary-General*, United Nations General Assembly (A/53/186, 22 July 1998).

constantly challenged and can in extreme cases be so strained as to "degenerate" to minimal degrees of "intelligibility." Text users seem to be adept at salvaging coherence by means of a range of strategies that ensure "sense constancy."[9] It has to be noted that "degenerate" or "minimal intelligibility" are terms used here not in any negative sense but merely to indicate how text surface continuity can suffer in the interest of serving higher-level creative goals. Repetition or ellipsis, parallelism or a break in the patterns, are all examples of what we mean when we talk of texts in which cohesion is strained in the interest of serving such higher-level purposes as "defamiliarization" or "foregrounding," in areas such as "ideological manipulation," and "persuasion." In such creative contexts, text receivers invariably succeed in salvaging coherence in texts that certainly lack standard cohesion and are seemingly incoherent. The result of this negotiation process is a text where, although cohesion may well be minimal, coherence tends to be miraculously intact, if not maximal.

In this theoretical formulation, the translation angle may be discussed in terms of Figure 1 above.

(1) All things being equal, translators should operate horizontally: ST maximal or minimal cohesion/coherence must be preserved, and the TL text receiver should be able to retrieve coherence from a cohesive or a non-cohesive text, in the same way as the SL text producer did.
(2) Translators turning ST maximal cohesion/coherence into TL minimal cohesion/coherence (diagonally downward) are committing an error of the kind common among those who are neither linguistically trained nor pragmatically aware.
(3) More pernicious is to turn minimal cohesion/coherence into maximal cohesion/coherence (diagonally upward). This is equally erratic, a practice that may be illustrated by what often happens to foreign texts when translated into English within the Anglo-American translation tradition (the "fluency school").[10]

Consider the following text samples illustrating the three kinds of phenomena:

[9] Hans Hörmann, *The Concept of Sense Constancy* (Mimeo: University of Bochum, 1975).
[10] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995).

*MARKED INTO MARKED/UNMARKED INTO UNMARKED*

*Sample 7*

Polonius: What do you read, My Lord?
Hamlet: Words, words, words.

Markedness, realized by the repetition of *words* to convey irony, has been preserved in the several translations consulted for a number of languages.

*MARKED INTO UNMARKED UNJUSTIABLY*

*Sample 8a*

> At first we would play for walnuts, then we began to play for poultry, and then came the day when I played for the three calves I had. Finally, I played for the trees.[11] (back translated from Arabic)

The markedness of this Arabic literary text is realized by the incessant repetition of *play for*. In the Arabic ST, this is justified since the rhetorical purpose served is one of arguing the case for "self-respect" (in the sense of national dignity) and how this can gradually degenerate among nations going through a crisis. The ideological message is clear: values we hold dear such as "land" and "homeland" are sacrosanct. The translator of this text into English, for whatever reason, does not seem to see this ideological theme as noteworthy for the English reader. Source-text markedness has been all but obliterated, a course of action we certainly find unjustifiable:

*Sample 8b*

> At first we used to gamble with walnuts, then we began to play for poultry; and then came the day when I gambled with the three calves I had. Finally, I threw the trees in.[12] (published translation into English)

*UNMARKED INTO MARKED UNJUSTIFIABLY*

Consider Sample 6 cited above to illustrate stable, straightforward language use:

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[11] A. Munif., Al Ashjar (*The Trees*) (Beirut: Arab Publishing House, 1973).
[12] A. Munif, *Arabic Short Stories: The Trees* (Iraqi Cultural Centre London, 1973).

> *Summary*
> The present report… has been prepared in response to General Assembly Resolution 51/186. In accordance with resolution 54/93, the report comprises a review of the implementation and results of the World Declaration and Plan of Action…. It draws upon a wide range of sources…. It also draws upon earlier reports….[13]

This is a summary intended to serve the rhetorical purpose of "informing," which is realized by a particular kind of language use that essentially reflects the informative function in question (e.g. *It draws on a wide range of sources. It also draws on …*). In the published UN translation, however, this "informative" text was erroneously rendered into Arabic. The informative purpose and function were both misperceived, with the translator opting for a form of words so inappropriate that the end result is a style more suited for an editorial serving a persuasive purpose/function than anything else, as the following word-for-word back translation shows:

> It was in response to the General Assembly Resolution 51 that the present report was prepared. And it is in accordance with resolution 54 that …

As the Munif Sample 8a above shows, the process of retrieving coherence in otherwise seemingly incoherent, non-cohesive texts is always exciting and, when texts are well crafted, the effort exerted by source or target language readers would not be in vain. In such cases, what we have is often communication that is "interesting," thanks to a masterly use of language which puts cohesion on hold, as it were, only to generate a fascinating array of new meanings within novel coherence structures. Let us consider the following text samples and see how these elements of the theory shape up in actual practice.

Thomas[14] cites the example of someone (B) not wanting to be involved with a married woman (A) but neither does he want to hurt her feelings:

*Sample 9*

A: "You can't refuse just to come and have a drink with me," Bluey said to James.
B: "I don't want to refuse," James said.

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[13] United Nations General Assembly.
[14] Jenny Thomas, *Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics* (London: Longman, 1995), 90.

Note the marked hesitation in "I don't want to refuse," which, if rendered, say, as "I would like to accept," would immediately lose the force of the utterance as an example of thwarted interaction.

In the same vein, arriving for a meeting which she was scheduled to attend and which she had requested, Thomas[15] quotes the Chairman as saying with effusive generosity:

*Sample 10*

It's really very kind of you to come.

Once again, manipulation is used for effect to preserve the speaker's sarcastic comment on the late arrival of a member of the committee.

Thomas[16] also cites an example of a newly-widowed woman (Speaker A) who finds living with her interfering mother a strain:

*Sample 11*

A: I wish you wouldn't creep up on me, Mother.
B: I don't creep, dear. I merely refrain from making gratuitous noise.

In this case, the choice of the "offending" lexical item (*creep*) must be seen against the background of the salience (i.e. markedness) introduced by the formality and the bookishness of "making gratuitous noise."

## [V] Text in Context

All of this points to the urgent need to define the notion of textuality more procedurally and to take this as the hallmark of an approach in which pragmatics and other contextual dimensions can be most usefully viewed. The process involved is one of context feeding off and at one and the same time contributing to the development of texts effectively, efficiently, and appropriately.[17] It is now my aim to outline the elements of such a model in some detail, and to relate the various parameters to pragmatic postulates so far in the main relegated to what at times amounts to a category little understood—namely "context."

I have, on several occasions, used the image of an egg-timer as a

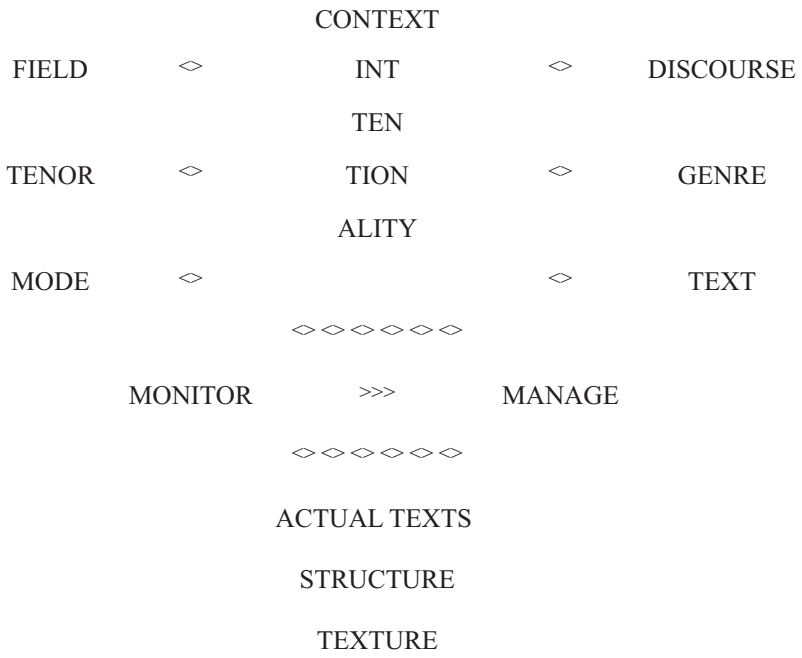
[15] Thomas, *Meaning in Interaction*, 91.
[16] Thomas, *Meaning in Interaction*, 78.
[17] Beaugrande, *Text, Discourse and Process*.

graphic representation of the way text and context interact. The upper half of the timer may be likened to "context," the lower half to "text." Purely as a convenience, we may decide to commence with the very narrow conduit which allows the downward passage of the grains of sand from one cell to the other. In this area of contextual activity, we recognize what may be described as macro-level intentions to do one of two things text users are likely to do: they would either predominantly "monitor" a situation in a fairly detached, unmediated fashion, or predominantly "manage" a situation by attempting to steer the text receiver in a direction favourable to the text producer's goals.[18]

Notice that the two orientations are not mutually exclusive and that they can merge in one and the same utterance/text. This intentionality derives its impetus, on the one hand, from the fairly abstract notion of text as a sign facilitating the achievement of rhetorical purpose and, on the other, from the actual process of textualization involved. As concrete entities, texts are invariably structured and textured in particular ways, thus fostering the link with those aspects of register membership specifically to do with "mode"—the "instrumentalities" including "channel," which conventionally sanctions as appropriate a given level of "proxemic" (physical) distance. This initial phase in our model may now be represented thus:

[18] Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*.

Figure 2: Text in Context




## [VI] Markedness

To return to our scheme of text stability represented in Figure 1 above, we can now delve deeper into what it is that constitutes a departure from norms and how this can be preserved in translation. What is at the heart of the matter here seems to be the marked vs unmarked distinction.

In the maze of textual practices covered so far, it has become clear that texts tend to interact with context in highly meaningful and intricate ways. Appreciating the complexity of this interaction is crucial to the work of the translator. One basic motif runs through the entire gamut of interrelationships. This is to do with "markedness" or opting for a form or meaning that is less "preferred" or less "natural" than a comparable form or meaning in a comparable instance of language use.

In dealing with markedness, the first procedural hurdle to overcome relates to whether the marked structure or the "deviation" from the norm is actually functional (i.e. serving a contextual purpose) or afunctional (i.e. unmotivated aberration). Functional markedness is central to communicative

dynamism and creativity.

One way of deciding on this functional vs afunctional nature of markedness is to see it in terms of "relevance" (i.e. meaningful contribution to the textual or extra-textual environment), and of MiniMax as a translation strategy: speaker, writer, listener or reader resolves for that which promises maximal effect for minimal effort, and translators should do the same.[19] In this respect, text types are now seen as important templates for the alignment of communicator intentions with audience expectations, thus guiding the text receiver in the search for optimal relevance. For example, one would not seek intended relevance in a novel's historical accuracy of detail, as one would in a historical reference book.[20]

## [VII] Evaluativeness

But markedness is not sufficient in and by itself. What is marked may or may not be sufficiently salient in a given text. By the same token, what is unmarked may indeed acquire salience and should therefore be heeded in translation. Take for example the Passive vs Active sentence structure. Passives are linguistically marked and would convey an array of meanings worth preserving in translation. But this is not necessarily always the case. Indeed, the allegedly unmarked Active may in certain contexts be sufficiently salient and should thus be attended to in any critical translation. We need a new term here to cater for such textual values, and we propose "evaluativeness."

Evaluativeness is closely bound up with Dynamism, and has a great deal to do with the extent to which utterances are expected or unexpected (i.e. given or new). As a textual variable, evaluativeness (or dynamism) is thus not totally unconstrained and is best seen on a continuum which covers the extent to which an instance of language exhibits con(textual) markedness (focus, salience), regardless of whether or not the structure in question is linguistically marked. The defamiliarizing effect which dynamic uses of language convey is encountered when certain devices of linguistic expression (e.g. passive or active) are used in such a way that the use itself attracts attention and is perceived as non-ordinary (e.g. the remarkable incidence of short active material sentences as a feature of Hemingway's fictional style).

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[19] Jiří Levý, "Translation as a Decision Process," in *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967).

[20] Ernst-August Gutt, "Pragmatic Aspects of Translation: Some Relevance-Theory Observations," in *The Pragmatics of Translation*, ed. Leo Hickey (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 41–53.

To show the relevance of this theoretical formulation not only to translation but also to TESOL, let us illustrate the notion of evaluativeness vs markedness from a domain of ESL academic writing: writing academic abstracts. Three types of Abstracts have been found to be commonly in use by the academic writer. These are distinguished in terms of writer "visibility" (degree of emotiveness, presence, etc), as shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Visibility

*Minimal Visibility* >>>>>>> *Maximal Visibility*
Article-heading Abstract (*Context One – C1*)
Conference Programs Abstract (*C2*)
Call for Papers Abstract (*C3*)

With Context One taken as the standard for the moment, the occurrence of a Passive (which is linguistically marked) would be a case of non-evaluativeness since it is the expected construction. In this context, the occurrence of an Active (which is linguistically unmarked) would certainly give rise to a high degree of evaluativeness.

To make this point clearer, let us shift the focus on to Context Three (the abstract in response to a Call for Papers). In this context, the occurrence of a Passive would be seen as a highly evaluative option, whereas the occurrence of the Active would be a non-evaluative option (as normally expected from Active structures in general).

The implications for the translator of this insight into evaluativeness vs markedness are not to be dismissed. In dealing with Context One (the article-heading Abstract, what the translator does with the linguistically marked Passive is a matter of personal choice, style, and strategy. Nothing substantial would be gained or lost if the passive is preserved or not preserved, since the Passive in this kind of context is non-evaluative. On the other hand, Passives occurring in Context Three would become sacrosanct as they would have strained the MiniMax and the translation must reflect this element of threat to relevance. In Context Three, the writer would have opted for the passive knowingly, and the translator must seek to understand and convey the rationale behind this departure from the norm.

## [VIII] Socio-Textual Practices

A framework that pieces together the various bits of evidence and places it within the idea of socio-textual practice may now be proposed. Here, texts are seen in terms of contextual categories such as register, discourse, and genre and in terms of how this links up with the structure and texture of linguistic communication. Schematically, this may be represented as follows:

Figure 4: Thick Context

| REGISTER MEMBERSHIP | PRAGMATIC ACTION | SEMIOTIC INTERACTION |
|---|---|---|
| social processes/institutions ( field) | | socio-cultural practices |
| power/solidarity (tenor) | | socio-textual practices |
| physical distance (mode) | | Discourse |
| | | Genre |
| | | Text |

Within semiotic interaction, two levels of semiotic activity or signs at work may be distinguished: a micro-level, where signs are seen as *socio-cultural objects*, and a macro-level, where *socio-textual practice* takes over as the mainstay of what we do with texts. The latter socio-textual domain involves what we do with linguistic expression when this becomes the mouthpiece of *social institutions* and *social processes* (register membership) and is thus turned into *intentional acts* (pragmatics). But perhaps a more meaningful (i.e. more interactive) level of socio-textual practice is reached when linguistic expression begins to acquire shape (become "*texts*" with a structure and a texture of their own) that conventionally enables us to relay *discursive attitudes* and cater for given *genre requirements* as part of the way different cultures operate.

The codes and cultural meanings relayed are regulated by the semiotic dimension of context. Here, the notion of the sign is crucial. Locally, text users utilize what we have referred to as a collection of "socio-cultural" entities captured in language by the use of, say, specialized terminology (of modes of address, dress, natural conditions such as winds, religious rituals, institutional labels, and so on). This level of cultural meaning must be distinguished from the more dynamic level of global utilization in which these same concepts take part in the evolution of macro-structures to do with:

(a) The requirement that particular rhetorical purposes be served and a variety of rhetorical aims thereby achieved (e.g. the counter-argument in Sample A above, which is what we shall identify as the level of *text*).
(b) The need to express attitudinal meanings and to promote a particular world view or ideological stance (e.g. feminist sentiments as *discourse*).
(c) The need to operate within highly conventionalized forms of language use and to uphold the communicative requirements involved (e.g. the compositional format of an attention-getting Introduction to an academic article as a *genre*).

Socio-cultural and socio-textual kinds of input could both be fairly static, expectation-fulfilling, and norm-upholding. Orality as a socio-cultural backdrop (context of culture) would thus yield stable contexts of situation within which our discourses, genres, and texts would be predominantly unmarked. On the other hand, these objects and practices can be highly dynamic, functional and there for a purpose. It is the latter case of functional text emotiveness/evaluativeness, writer/speaker visibility, and situational markedness that invariably prove to be a real challenge in cross-cultural communication.

# COMPREHENSIBILITY IN DRAMA TRANSLATION: WITH REFERENCE TO *HAMLET* AND ITS VERSIONS IN CHINESE AND IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

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With the notable exception of closet drama,[1] drama in general is meant to be performed on the stage, from which the text, including dialogue and monologue, is spoken by the actors and heard by the audience. This process of communication and reception distinguishes it significantly from the essay, fiction, and poetry, genres generally meant to be read in writing or in print.[2] Because of this difference between drama and the other three genres, there is an all-important criterion by which the success or otherwise of the translation of a play is judged, a criterion which does not apply with equal rigour to the essay, fiction, and poetry: the need to be

[1] According to J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 153, "closet drama" is "[a] play (sometimes also called a dramatic poem) designed to be read rather than performed. The term may also apply to a play which was intended to be performed but hardly ever is, and yet has survived as a piece of worthwhile literature. Well-known examples are: Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1671); Landor's *Count Julian* (1812); Byron's *Manfred* (1817); Shelley's *Cenci* (1819); Keats's *Otho the Great* (1819); Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820); Swinburne's *Bothwell* (1874); and Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1904, 1906, 1908)."

[2] With poetry, the distinction is less clear-cut, for epic poetry, while read in print most of the time, is often read aloud to be heard. With dramatic poetry or poetic drama, of which *Hamlet* is a notable example, poetry is also performed. However, *Hamlet*, or other plays by Shakespeare, or poetic drama written by other playwrights, such as Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, should be regarded as drama in verse rather than poetry *per se*.

instantly comprehensible when an utterance is made by the actor on the stage. Any word, phrase, or sentence that is not immediately comprehensible to the audience in the theatre gets lost, never to be retrieved again. Not that the essay, fiction, or poetry does not need to be comprehensible when spoken; when a poet gives a poetry reading, for example, instant auditory comprehensibility is also necessary. However, as essays, novels (or short stories, for that matter), and poems are meant to be read in printed form, the need for instant auditory comprehensibility does not constitute an all-important criterion by which these genres are constantly judged. To be sure, the text of a play can also be read in printed form for the sheer pleasure of reading it, as Shakespeare's plays often are, but conveying the message of a play to readers through the medium of print is only a secondary process of communication and reception; the primary one is by means of the actor's voice and the audience's ears, since drama is primarily meant for the stage.

The issue becomes more complicated when the source text is a poetic drama, as is the case with *Hamlet*, for, in cases like this, the translator has to deal simultaneously with both drama and poetry, that is, poetry for the stage. In choosing to study *Hamlet* and its versions in Chinese and in four major modern European languages, namely, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, I propose to do two things: (1) to show how the need for instant auditory comprehensibility determines the translator's strategies and the actual process of translation; and (2) to prove that it is much easier to achieve instant auditory comprehensibility in the English-French, English-German, English-Italian, and English-Spanish directions than in the English-Chinese direction.[3]

As far as the process of communication and reception is concerned, when a play is staged in the theatre, its text in writing or in print is taken over by its oral form, which consists of phonemes delivered on the stage to the audience watching the play. The conveying of the entire message of the play, including the characters' thoughts and feelings, the plot and the sub-plot(s), the dramatic tension, the conflict on which the dramatic action hinges, and, in the case of poetic drama, the poetry, totally depends on the playwright's ability to make the phonemes audible and comprehensible to the audience. With an essay, a novel (a form of fiction), or a poem in

[3] Though it is possible to bring in several Chinese translations of *Hamlet* and study them alongside the translations in the major European languages, I have confined myself to only two versions in Chinese, one of them by myself. I have chosen my own version for one important reason: talking about my own translation, I should be in a better position to describe accurately the translation strategies involved and the decision-making steps taking place during the translation process.

printed form, the reader can adjust the pace of the reception process at will; when he fails to understand a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a whole paragraph during the reading process, he can pause and try to figure out its meaning; if the problem of reception is due to a difficult word, he can look up the word in a dictionary; if there is an allusion which is unfamiliar to him, he can consult reference books; if the syntax of the sentence or paragraph is too involved, thereby hampering comprehension, he can study the sentence or paragraph closely, and try to find out how the syntactic structure works or how the clauses relate to one another; if necessary, he can go back a paragraph or even pages to refresh his memory or look for a link or a hint which may be the solution to the problem. In the theatre, what is taken for granted by the essayist, the novelist, or the poet is a luxury denied to the playwright. In the theatre, a word, a phrase, or a line spoken on the stage has only a split second's chance to get comprehended; once a word, a phrase, or a line fails to get comprehended by the audience, it is lost, for the actor making the utterance is not allowed to repeat the word, the phrase, or the line, nor can the audience stop the actor and ask him to repeat the utterance. Moreover, once an utterance gives rise to any difficulty in understanding, it impedes the comprehension of the utterances that follow, resulting in a traffic jam, as it were, which results in further loss of information. For this reason, comprehensibility is of the utmost importance to drama translation.

When it comes to actual translation, a distinction can be made between European languages, such as English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, on the one hand and Chinese on the other: as far as comprehensibility in the theatre is concerned, Chinese is a less effective channel of communication. This is because Chinese is largely monosyllabic while European languages are largely polysyllabic, a major difference which can easily be shown by comparing the numbers of monosyllabic words in six randomly chosen passages of equal length in Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish respectively. In the comparison, it will not be difficult to see that the number of monosyllabic words in the Chinese passage is far larger than the number of monosyllabic words in each of the other five passages, and that the ratio of monosyllabic words to polysyllabic words in the Chinese passage is greater than those in the other five passages.[4] This means that the average

[4] A word, as defined by the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, is "a single distinct meaningful element of speech or writing, used to form sentences with others." See Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1660–61. The definition given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is: "A combination of sounds, or

word in a European language is made up of a larger number of syllables than the average word in Chinese, providing the audience with more auditory co-ordinates; thus *apple* has two syllables, *government* three, *establishment* four…*antidisestablishmentarianism* twelve. Furthermore, in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, even when a word is monosyllabic, it normally has more phonemes, including terminal consonants, that function as additional auditory co-ordinates to help increase the comprehensibility of words spoken on the stage. In English, for example, there are the terminal bilabial plosives /p/ (as in *sip*) and /b/ (as in *nab*), the terminal alveolar plosives /t/ (as in *beat*) and /d/ (as in *fad*), the terminal velar plosives /k/ (as in *sick*) and /g/ (as in *gag*), the terminal post-alveolar affricates /tʃ/ (as in *lurch*) and /dʒ/ (as in *judge*), the terminal labio-dental fricatives /f/ (as in *roof*) and /v/ (as in *dove*), the terminal dental fricative /θ/ (as in *tooth*), the terminal alveolar fricatives /s/ (as in *loss*) and /z/ (as in *rose*), and the terminal post-alveolar fricatives /ʃ/ (as in *hush*) and /ʒ/ (as in *tige*). While such words as *sea* and *see*, *no* and *know* have each two phonemes (an initial consonant and a vowel), other monosyllabic words, such as *beat*, *lad*, *mass*, *split*, and *crashed*, have more than two. Thus, *beat* (/biːt/), *lad* (/læd/), and *mass* (/mæs/) have each three: /b/, /iː/, and /t/ in the case of *beat*, /l/, /æ/, and /d/ in the case of *lad*, and /m/, /æ/, and /s/ in the case of *mass*; *split* (/splɪt/) and *crashed* (/kræʃt/) have each five: /s/, /p/, /l/, /ɪ/, /t/ in the case of *split* and /k/, /r/, /æ/, /ʃ/, /t/ in the case of *crashed*.[5]

Apart from their general abundance of phonemes, there is yet another

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one such sound, used in a language to express an idea (e.g. to denote a thing, attribute, or relation), and constituting an ultimate minimal element of speech having a meaning as such; a vocable." See *The Oxford English Dictionary,* combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield, 2nd ed., prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), vol. 20, 528; 1st ed., James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, W. A. Craigie. In Chinese, most syllables or characters are independent words. Exceptions like the character *hú* 蝴 in the word *húdié* 蝴蝶, meaning "butterfly," are rare; standing alone, 蝴 is not meaningful. In classical Chinese writings, most characters are independent words; in modern Chinese, words tend more often to be disyllabic or polysyllabic.

[5] If a further distinction is to be drawn, one may say that, in respect of monosyllabic words, French, Italian, and Spanish generally have fewer auditory co-ordinates than monosyllabic words in either English or German, since the former group of languages have no terminal consonant clusters—that is, with the exception of loan words.

common feature in many monosyllabic words in the European languages which cannot be found in Chinese and which can increase their comprehensibility in the theatre: the presence of consonant clusters, such as "*spl*" in the English *spleen* or "*Str*" in the German *Strahl*.[6] In Chinese, a monosyllabic word is, in general, phonemically much poorer: it consists of either a vowel, such as *ā* 阿, a diphthong, such as *āi* 哀 ("sorrow"), a vowel and a consonant, such as *ēn* 恩 ("grace"), an initial consonant and a vowel, such as *kū* 枯 ("withered"), an initial consonant and a diphthong, such as *mǎi* 買 ("buy"), or an initial consonant, a vowel, and a final consonant, such as *mǎn* 滿 ("full"), that is, three phonemes at most. As a result, a single sememe in any European language is often represented by a larger number of phonemes than its counterpart in Chinese, so that a word in a European language spoken on the stage is, as I shall show in the following paragraphs, generally easier to identify and less likely to give rise to misunderstanding or ambiguity than a word in Chinese.

To make things worse, the number of syllables that are distinguishable from one another in the Chinese language is relatively small, as has been pointed out by Huang Qingxuan:

> In respect of phonology, the Chinese language has only 419 syllables; when this is multiplied by five (four tones plus the light tone), the total is only around 1,200. (Some syllables do not have all four tones, and some do not have the light tone.) However, according to the *Zhonghua da zidian* 《中華大字典》(*The Chinese Dictionary*), the Chinese language has 44,908 characters; on the average, each syllable is shared by 37 characters.[7]

Normally, the message can be determined or clarified with reference to the context, but when the context is limited in scope, difficulties arise. For example, when a Chinese addresser mentions the characters that make up a

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[6] Among the European languages, further distinctions can still be made. Thus, certain consonant clusters may be peculiar to certain languages. For example, the initial consonant clusters /smr/, /zdr/, /zqr/, and /zdv/, which are found in Serbo-Croatian, are absent in English, whereas Chinese has no consonant clusters. See Lao Yundong 劳允棟, ed.,*Ying-Han yuyanxue cidian*《英漢語言學詞典》( *An English-Chinese Dictionary of Linguistics*) (Beijing: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 2004), 137.

[7] Huang Qingxuan 黃慶萱, *Xiucixue*《修辭學》, University Texts series (Taipei: San Min Book Co., Ltd. 三民書局股份有限公司, 2002), 215. I have translated into English what Huang says in Chinese.

personal name, either by way of introducing himself or in referring to another person, the addressee is often unsure as to which characters the addresser is referring to. In everyday life, one can often hear conversations like the following:

A: *Wǒ jiào Zhāng Yì* (My name is *Zhāng Yì*).
B: *Nǎ yīgè yì* (Which *yì*)?

The question indicates that B is not sure which "*yì*" A is referring to because, according to the *Xiandai Hanyi cidian*《現代漢語詞典》(*Modern Chinese Dictionary*), the syllable "*yì*" is shared by eighty-nine characters, each of which has at least one meaning: "一, 乂, 弋, 刈, 艾, 仡, 屹, 亦, 衣, 抑…杙, 邑, 佚, 役, 易, 佾, 佚, 枻, 昳, 食…弈, 奕, 疫, 羿, 挹, 貤, 唈, 益, 浥, 悒, 埸, 異, 翊, 翌, 軼, 逸, 暘, 嗌, 肄, 詣, 裔, 意, 義, 藝, 勩, 蜴, 廙, 潩, 嫕, 億, 誼, 瘞, 毅, 熠, 薏…殪, 曎, 嶧, 劓, 燚, 懌, 憶, 縊, 翳, 斁, 臆, 鮨, 瘞, 翼, 藝, 鎰, 癔, 鴳, 繹, 饐, 譯, 議, 鷖, 囈, 鐿, 鷁, 懿, 驛…"[8] Suppose A's last name is *Zhāng* 張, his first name could, in theory, be any one of the eighty-nine characters. Certainly, few Chinese, if any, would call themselves 張疫 ("epidemic disease," "pestilence"), 張殪 ("death" or "to kill"), 張劓 ("cutting off the nose (a punishment in ancient China)"), 張瘞 ("bury"), 張縊 ("hang," often used with *zì* 自("self"), meaning "to hang oneself"), or 張癔("hysteria"),[9] but A could be 張艾, 張仡, 張屹, 張佚, 張易, 張佚, 張昳, 張奕, 張羿, 張益, 張異, 張翊, 張軼, 張逸, 張詣, 張義, 張嫕, 張億, 張誼, 張毅, 張熠…. Though the possibility of ambiguity may be slightly reduced if we know the gender of A, for, in Chinese society, certain characters are more commonly used by males than by females, and vice versa. Still, B has no way of knowing for certain what A's name is by only hearing the syllable "*yì*" spoken by the addresser. Because of this, the conversation may, very often, have to continue with A replying: "*Rényì dàodé de yì* 仁義道德的義" ("The *yì* as in the collocation 'benevolence,

[8] See *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 《現代漢語詞典》, ed. Dictionary-Compiling Department, Institute of Language Studies, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Hong Kong: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 2001), 1354–61. In dictionaries like the *Hanyu da zidian*《漢語大字典》, the number of characters pronounced "yì" is even larger.

[9] The translations of the Chinese characters are from Wu et al. (under the entry "yì"). See Wu Jingrong 吳景榮, et al., eds., *Han-Ying cidian*《漢英詞典》(*The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary*) (Beijing/Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1983).

righteousness, and morality'"). Only then will B be sure that A's full name is 張義. With the character 翊, most people are unlikely to know that it means *fǔzuǒ* 輔佐("assist") or *bāngzhù* 幫助 ("help"), nor are they likely to know that there is the Chinese collocation *yìdài* 翊戴 (meaning "assist and support"). As a result, it will not be of much use if A's reply is: "*fǔzuǒ·de yì* 輔佐的翊" ("the '*yì*' meaning 'assist'") or "*yìdài·de yì* 翊戴的翊" ("the *yì* as in the collocation '*yìdài*,' meaning 'assist and support'").

If A's first name happens to be the character 肄 (pronoucned "*yì*"), things will get even more complicated if B does not know the collocation *yìyè* 肄業 ("to pursue a course of study"), in which the character appears. In such a case, A will have to say something like: "*Xiàng sìzì nàyàng·de yì* 像肆字那樣的肄" ("The *yì* that looks like the character *sì*"). Very often, this answer may not be sufficient to make B wiser, and B will have to ask, "*Nǎ yī gè sì* 哪一個 *sì*?" ("Which *sì*?"). This is because the syllable *sì*, according to the《現代漢語詞典》, is shared by twenty-three different characters: "巳, 四, 寺, 似, 汜, 兕, 侣, 祠, 祀, 似, 泗, 俟, 食, 飤, 涘, 耜, 笥, 覗, 肆, 嗣, 飼, 駟, 禩," each character having one or more than one meaning. Consequently, A will have to reply: "*Yī èr sān sì·de sì* 一二三四的 *sì*" ("The *sì* as in the collocation 'one, two, three, four'". As there are two ways of writing the Chinese numeral "four" (that is, "四 and 肆"), B may have to go on asking, "Which *four* are you talking about?" Then A will have to say: "*Dàxiě · de sì* 大寫的 *sì*" ("The capital-form *sì*") or "*Chálóu jiǔsì·de sì* 茶樓酒肆的 *sì*" ("The *sì* as in the collocation *chálóu jiǔsì*"). Only then will B be able to identify the actual character used by A as his first name.

If the first name of A happens to be 嫕, A, in reply to B's question ("Which *yì*?"), will have an extremely difficult task in trying to tell which *yì* his first name is. Unless he wants to cut the "Gordian knot" by writing the character on a piece of paper,[10] A will have to tell a very complicated story (saying, for example, that the character consists of the female radical (*nǚ zì páng* 女字旁), with a heart (*xīn* 心) at the bottom right-hand corner with the upper left-hand component of the character *yī* 醫 ("doctor") put at the upper right-hand corner) and still risk failing to enlighten B.

[10] In this case, A is more likely to be a "she," since the quality or temperament described by 嫕 (meaning "genial, approachable," and often collocated with *wǎn* 婉 to form the adjective *wǎnyì* 婉嫕, meaning "tender and gentle") is more often regarded as a feminine quality or temperament, and, for this reason, the character is more likely to be adopted as part of a name for a girl or woman.

In English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, this kind of "sounding out" and Herculean "elucidation" rarely happens. When A says "My name is Robert Smith," for example (or "Peter Brown," or "Michael Kennedy," or "Alexander Lightbody," for that matter), B does not have to ask "Which Robert, which Peter, which Michael, or which Alexander?" Similarly, we rarely hear a Frenchman asking "Which Jean?" or "Which André?", a German asking "Which Johann?" or "Which Friedrich?", an Italian asking "Which Lodovico?", "Which Leonardo?", or "Which Paulo?", a Spaniard asking "Which Jorge?", "Which Gabriel?", or "Which Enrique?" Though one may argue that the number of first names in the European languages is much smaller than the number of first names in Chinese, in which almost any character could be adopted as a first name or part of a first name (if the first name is disyllabic), the monosyllabicity of Chinese words is undeniably the major reason for the lack of instant comprehensibility in oral communication.

Because of its paucity of syllables, a message in Chinese, especially in classical Chinese, is much less likely to be comprehended with precision and unambiguity than a message in one of the above-mentioned European languages. In a course in literary translation, in which drama translation was also taught, I once dictated the following two passages to the students, slowly reading them aloud, first in Cantonese, then in Mandarin, and then in Cantonese and Mandarin again:

> 淮陰侯韓信者，淮陰人也。始為布衣時，貧無行，不得推擇為吏，又不能治生商賈，常從人寄食飲，人多厭之者。常數從其下鄉南昌亭長寄食，數月，亭長妻患之，乃晨炊蓐食。食時信往，不為具食。信亦知其意，怒，竟絕去。[11]

> 逢蒙之弟子曰鴻超，怒其妻而怖之。引烏號之弓、綦衛之箭，射其目。矢來注眸子，而眶不睫，矢墜地而塵不揚。[12]

The result, as expected, did not reflect very favourably on the effectiveness of Chinese as a medium for oral communication vis-à-vis any one of the five European languages under discussion: a large number of words were incomprehensible to the students, who could make out the message of only a small number of the syllables they heard.

With standard modern Chinese, the problem is less serious, because in

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[11] Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji*《史記》, vol. 8 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Co. 中華書局, 1959), 2609; 10 vols.

[12] Lie Yukou 列禦寇, *Lie Zi zhushi*《列子注釋》, annotated by Zhang Zhan 張湛 (Taipei: Hualian chubanshe 華聯出版社, 1969), 79.

both its spoken and written forms, monosyllabic words are less frequently used. Take "*shǐ*始" in the first passage quoted above. Today, one would say *qǐxiān* 起先, *qǐchū* 起初, or *kāishǐ · de shí · hou* 開始的時候 instead of "始"; similarly, one would use *pínqióng* 貧窮, instead of "*pín* 貧," *guānlì* 官吏 instead of "*lì* 吏," *zǎochén* 早晨 or *dà qīngzǎo* 大清早 instead of "*chén* 晨." In the second passage, one would use *jiàozuò* 叫做 instead of "*yuē* 曰," *yǎn · jing* 眼睛 instead of "*mù*目," *yǎnkuàng* 眼眶 instead of "*kuàng* 眶"…. Because of this tendency to use fewer monosyllabic words, modern Chinese has become richer in auditory co-ordinates than classical Chinese. Nevertheless, it is still not comparable to European languages. When communication takes place through writing or print, this difference does not matter, for the Chinese characters have distinctive features made up of strokes combined in various ways, forming, in this case, finely differentiated visual co-ordinates, so that the reader is much less likely to mistake one character for another.[13] But when communication takes place between the actor and the audience, problems arise, which can become a challenge during the process of translation.

In translating *Hamlet* into modern Chinese, I kept reminding myself that the translation, when completed, would be meant to be performed on the stage, so I kept reading my version aloud or vocalizing it silently during the translation process to test its comprehensibility, playing two roles at the same time: that of the translator and that of the audience. As I read my draft aloud or vocalized it silently, I frequently ran into snags: the words I had chosen often happened to be homophonous with words that mean different things—sometimes ridiculously different. Take 4.7.137–38,[14] for example, where, in reply to the King's suggestion that an unabated sword be used to kill Hamlet, Laertes says, "I will do't. / And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword."[15] My first version was as follows: "*Yào*

[13] On some rare occasions, confusion does arise. For example, it is not uncommon for native speakers of Chinese to mistake 壼 (pronounced *kǔn*, meaning "path in a palace") for 壺 (pronounced *hú*, meaning "pot"), 第 (pronounced *zǐ*, meaning "bamboo mat") for 第 (pronounced dì, used before a number to indicate that the number is ordinal), 丐 (pronounced miǎn, meaning "to cover" or "to obscure") for 丐 (pronounced *gài*, meaning "beg," "beggar," or "give"). Nevertheless, this kind of confusion is minimal when compared with confusion arising from the abundance of monosyllabicity, whether in classical or modern Chinese.

[14] The Arabic numerals stand for the act, scene, and line(s) of the quotation. Thus "4.7.137–38" means Act 4, Scene 7, lines 137–38.

[15] Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, the Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series, general editors: Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson,

*chéngshì, wǒ huì zài jiàn · shang tú yào* 要成事, 我會在劍上塗藥." On reading the line aloud, I became aware that "成事," which, together with "要," translates "for that purpose," is homophonous with *chéngshì* 城市 ("city"), so I added more auditory co-ordinates to remove the ambiguity, and the disyllabic version "成事" was made pentasyllabic: "*wánchéng zhè jiàn shì*完成這件事" ("To accomplish this task").[16] The resultant version does not have the economy and conciseness of "成事"; by the stylistic standards of written Chinese, it is even somewhat wordy; but spoken on the stage, it is less likely to run the risk of misleading the audience. As comprehensibility takes precedence over economy of expression in drama translation, when I have to choose between ambiguity plus economy of expression on the one hand and unambiguity plus less economy of expression on the other, I am decidedly in favour of the latter option. Hence the multi-auditory-co-ordinate version.[17]

In translating 5.1.193–94:

> Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till 'a find it stopping a bung-hole?[18]

in which Hamlet philosophizes about the cycle of life and death, a similar problem arose. At first, I translated "stopping a bung-hole" as "堵塞桶孔" (*dǔsè tǒngkǒng*), but the moment I read it aloud to myself, I realized that "桶孔" ("bung-hole") could easily be mistaken for 瞳孔 ("pupil of the eye"), which has the same pronunciation.[19] Indeed, as 瞳孔 is much

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David Scott Kastan, and H. R. Woudhuysen (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), 404.

[16] As my translation is intended to be analogous to the original in terms of metre, each line in Chinese is meant to have five feet. In changing "成事" to "完成這件事," I had to reduce the number of syllables in the second half of the line.

[17] During the revising process, I found even this option unsatisfactory, and changed it to "*Yào yī jì xíng shì* 要依計行事." See Huang Guobin (Laurence K.P. Wong), 黃國彬, trans., *Jiedu* Hamuleite. *Shashibiya Hanyi ji xiangzhu*《解讀〈哈姆雷特〉— 莎士比亞漢譯及詳注》, *Fanyi yu kuaxueke xueshu yanjiu congshu* 翻譯與跨學科學術研究叢書, vo1. 1 (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press 清華大學出版社, 2013), 571; 2 vols.

[18] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 423.

[19] When spoken separately as an independent word, "桶" has the third tone, and is pronounced *tǒng*, but in the collocation 桶孔, 桶 ("*tǒng*") has its third tone changed to the second ("*tóng*"), because "孔" is also a third-tone word; in Mandarin, a third-tone word followed by another third-tone word has to be pronounced in the second tone. Thus when read aloud or spoken on the stage,

more often heard in everyday Chinese, at least among people living in modern cities, where 桶孔 is rarely seen, much less talked about, when the sound "*tóngkǒng*" is spoken on the stage, the vast majority of play-goers are more likely to equate it with 瞳孔 than with 桶孔. To avoid this ambiguity, I had to change "桶孔" to "一隻木桶的窟窿" (*yīzhī mùtǒng · de kū · long*).[20]

In 5.1.269–72, there is another example:

> And if thou prate of mountains let them throw
> Millions of acres on us till our ground,
> Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
> Make Ossa like a wart.[21]

In this passage, Hamlet is ranting, declaring that his love for Ophelia is no less than Laertes's. The first three lines did not cause any problem during the process of translation; when I came to the fourth, I realized once again that there was a problem with comprehensibility: "wart," according to the English-Chinese dictionary I was using, is "*yóu, ròuzhuì, hóu · zi* 疣, 肉贅, 瘊子" in Chinese.[22] The first translation ("疣"), being monosyllabic, is unlikely to be readily comprehensible to the audience; the second ("肉贅") is rarely heard in everyday Chinese, and is, therefore, unlikely to fare much better in the theatre. What was left was the third ("瘊子"). Without even reading it aloud to myself, I already found it unusable, because the homophonous word "猴子," much more common than 瘊子, is likely to give rise to ambiguity. Consequently, I used a disyllabic collocation, "贅疣," in my translation:

> 要是你滿口大山，就讓人把土地
> 千百萬畝砸落我們的墳頭，直到墳頂
> 在太陽的軌道中燒焦，叫奧薩山

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tǒngkǒng becomes "tóngkǒng," which is also the pronunciation of "瞳孔" ("pupil of the eye").

[20] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 2, 599. It is possible also to render the original as "一隻木桶的孔," but, as the monosyllabic "孔" does not chime in with "一隻木桶" in terms of rhythm, "窟窿" is preferred.

[21] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 431.

[22] Zheng Yili 鄭易里 and Cao Chengxiu 曹成修, eds., *A New English-Chinese Dictionary*《英華大詞典》, 2nd rev. ed. (Beijing: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 1984), 1565.

小成贅疣。[23]

My choice has three advantages: first, it is not homophonous with any other word or phrase; second, it has one more syllable than "疣"; third, though its frequency in everyday spoken Chinese is not particularly high, it is more common than "肉贅."[24]

During the process of drama translation, problems arising from homophony can be too many to enumerate. What the translator should do is to remain alert. To avoid homophony, the translator has two solutions: first, other things being equal, the translator should use modern Chinese instead of classical Chinese, unless he is sure that the abundance of monosyllabic words in classical Chinese does not give rise to ambiguity or misunderstanding. Second, again other things being equal, four-character idioms or stock phrases can prove useful in increasing the comprehensibility rate. The first point is almost self-evident, since the audience's ears are more tuned to modern Chinese than classical Chinese, and are, therefore, more sensitive, more alert to the vocabulary used by the translator.

The second point needs some explanation. Practitioners of translation generally agree that, in translating English poetry into Chinese, four-character idioms or stock phrases should normally be avoided. The reason is twofold. First, four-character idioms are normally phrases which have been used for a long time; no matter how fresh they were when they first came into being, the "wear and tear" they suffered over the years must inevitably have reduced their originality, freshness, and inventiveness of expression, qualities which are of the utmost importance to poetry. Second, four-character idioms in Chinese have a "stock rhythm," consisting of two units, each made up of two characters. When used in poetry translation, they often sound facile and fail to harmonize with the rhythm of modern Chinese. Unless their use is justified by stylistic or other considerations, they are anathema to translators who have a keen sense of rhythm. Not so with the translation of dramatic poetry, which is meant to be language used for conversation, albeit highly stylized conversation at times. It should be noted that, in everyday Chinese conversation, four-character idioms are used with a much higher frequency than in Chinese poetry meant to be read in writing or in print. Therefore, as long as these four-character idioms are used appropriately, that is, in places where freshness or

[23] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 2, 608.

[24] It must be admitted, though, that "贅疣" is not too common in everyday Chinese; but neither is "wart" in everyday English.

inventiveness of expression is not crucial, where "the poetic function" as postulated by Jacobson is not meant to be highlighted,[25] translators rendering dramatic poetry into Chinese can use four-character idioms to increase the number of auditory co-ordinates in their translations, thereby reducing the likelihood of ambiguity. In translating *Hamlet*, I found this method useful. Take 1.2.195–99, for example:

> Two nights together had these gentlemen,
> Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch
> In the dead waste and middle of the night
> Been thus encountered: a figure like your father
> Armed at point, exactly cap-à-pie…[26]
>
> 一連兩夜，這兩位朋友，也就是
> 馬瑟勒跟巴納多；他們放哨的
> 時候，更深人靜，一片死寂中
> 碰見一個人，貌似你的父親，
> 從頭到腳，穿著整齊的盔甲。[27]

In my translation, "*gēng shēn rén jìng* 更深人靜," together with "*yī piàn sǐjì zhōng* 一片死寂中," translates line 197 ("In the dead waste and middle of the night"). Being tetrasyllabic, it provides the line with four auditory co-ordinates, and contributes to its comprehensibility rate, zooming in on the message for the audience and reducing the possibility of ambiguity. As Shakespeare does not in the original ("In the dead waste and middle of the night") appear to be aiming at freshness or inventiveness of expression, a four-character idiom that carries the same or similar semantic content can enhance the process of communication and reception in the theatre without detracting from the poetic quality of the passage.

In translating 3.2.204–206:

> But orderly to end where I begun,
> Our wills and fates do so contrary run
> That our devices still are overthrown [,][28]

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[25] Jakobson postulates six constitutive factors of an act of verbal communication, one of them being the poetic function, which is performed by a language when it focuses "on the message for its own sake." See Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*, vol. 3 of *Selected Writings*, ed. Stephen Rudy (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 570–79; 4 vols.

[26] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 182–83.

[27] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 1, 193.

I have used four-character idioms or expressions liberally:

> 不過，閒話休提，言歸正傳：
> 我們事與願違，命運乖舛，
> 我們的各種計劃總是被推翻。[29]

The expressions "*xián huà xiū tí* 閒話休提," "*yán guī zhèng zhuàn* 言歸正傳," "*shì yǔ yuàn wéi* 事與願違," and "*mìngyùn guāichuǎn* 命運乖舛" are all tetrasyllabic idioms; they are stock expressions with neither freshness nor inventiveness; they are, however, appropriate in the context, since freshness and inventiveness of expression do not appear to be the playwright's primary concern; and since the lines in the original, in terms of freshness and inventiveness of expression, are stylistically unmarked, used largely for the communicative function of language.[30] The

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[28] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 312.

[29] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 2, 411.

[30] What Eliot says of the language of poetic drama in his famous essay, "Poetry and Drama," is also relevant here: "It is indeed necessary for any long poem, if it is to escape monotony, to be able to say homely things without bathos, as well as to take the highest flights without sounding exaggerated." See T. S. Eliot, "Poetry and Drama," in *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 74. For the whole essay, see Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets*, 72–88. Though different from an epic or allegory, a poetic drama is, in many ways, a long poem. As such, it need not, and, indeed, should not, be strikingly fresh or inventive throughout; if it were, it would result in what Eliot calls "monotony." When Eliot made the above point, he had Shakespeare in mind. In translating *Hamlet*, therefore, the translator must remind himself that he is not translating a short poem, a poem written, say, in the Imagist tradition, which aims at delivering "telling blows" within a few lines. As a short piece, an Imagist poem need not worry about monotony resulting from unceasing "high flights"; what it needs to worry about is the danger of descending to "homely things." In an Imagist poem, almost the entire piece has to be strikingly fresh and inventive. As Baldick has pointed out, "Influenced by the Japanese haiku and partly by ancient Greek lyrics, the Imagists cultivated concision and directness, building their short poems around single images [….]" (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 107). In translating an Imagist poem, therefore, the translator should be on guard against conventional language; for this reason, four-character idioms or stock phrases have to be avoided a far as possible. In translating a play by Shakespeare, however, the translator should not regard the source text as a single Imagist poem and aim at striking inventiveness throughout; instead, he should relax his "flights" from time to time; during those relaxed moments, he can afford to use four-character idioms and stock phrases, achieving two goals at the same time: the need for instant comprehensibility and the need to "stagger" "the highest

four-character idioms are especially appropriate in view of the fact that the lines are part of a character's speech in a play within a play, which is stylistically meant to be on a different level from the main plot, and which uses a more conventional language.

Closely linked to the need for comprehensibility and for the prevention of ambiguity is the need for audibility. In a way, comprehensibility is very much determined by audibility; any word spoken on the stage which is inaudible is bound to be incomprehensible. For this reason, the translator must ensure that his version is always audible. To achieve this goal, he should choose words of high instead of low sonority unless the original is meant to be otherwise, as in cases where words are spoken in a whisper or where sonority is meant to be avoided. Take 1.2.101–106, for example:

> Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
> A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
> To reason most absurd, whose common theme
> Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried
> From the first corpse till he that died today
> 'This must be so.'[31]

> 哎喲！這是
> 冒犯上天，冒犯死者，冒犯
> 自然；理智會覺得極端荒謬。
> 理智常說的話題是喪父，而且
> 一直喊：「是理所當然。」[32]

In my first version, "To reason most absurd" was translated as "*lǐzhì huì juéde jídù huāngmiù* 理智會覺得極度荒謬," but on re-reading it, I found the fourth-tone word "度" (*dù*) in "極度" lacking in sonority, so I changed it to "端" (*duān*), which, being a first-tone word, is normally to be preferred, not only because it has a higher pitch, but also because the compound vowel "*ua*" together with the consonant "*n*" in "*duān*" is more sonorous than the simple vowel "*u*" in *dù;* spoken on the stage, "端" is more audible than "度," thereby increasing the comprehensibility of the message.

In translating 1.5.23 and 1.5.25, I found it necessary, once again, to observe the principle of audibility. The two lines, interrupted by Hamlet's

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flights" to avoid "monotony."

[31] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 173.

[32] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 1, 182.

"O God!" (line 24), make up the injunction of Hamlet's father to the hero: "If thou didst ever thy dear father love—/—Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!"[33] At first I rendered the two lines as "*yào · shi nǐ duì qīnfù zhēn · de yǒu xiào xīn —/jiù děi fùchóu—tā cǎn zāo bēiwū hèngnì · de dúshǒu* 要是你對親父真的有孝心—/就得復仇—他慘遭卑污橫逆的毒手"; then, becoming aware that the character "逆" is too weak and indistinct in terms of audibility, I substituted another four-character phrase ("滅絕天倫") for "卑污橫逆."[34] Not only is the second version a more accurate translation of "foul and most unnatural murder," but it has greater sonority as a whole: replacing the expression that contains the phonologically less audible sounds "逆" (*nì*) and "污" (*wū*), it makes use of syllables that contain compound vowels: "*-iè*" in "滅" (*miè*), "*-ué*" in "絕" (*jué*), "*-iā*" in "天" (*tiān*), and "*-ué*" in "倫" (*lún*).[35] The compound vowel in each word prolongs the utterance, thereby increasing its audibility.

In the foregoing paragraphs, I have shown how the lexis of Chinese determines the comprehensibility or otherwise of the target text, and how the comprehensibility rate can be increased. In the following paragraphs, my discussion will go beyond individual lexical items, and focus on syntax.

Syntax, being language-bound, can pose formidable problems for the translator; when there is little cognation between the source and the target language, such as Chinese and a European language, the problem can border on the untranslatable. Take the following passage (4.4.38–45), which is made up of one sentence:

> Now whether it be
> Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple
> Of thinking too precisely on th'event
> (A thought which quartered hath but one part wisdom
> And ever three parts coward) I do not know
> Why yet I live to say this thing's to do,
> Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
> To do't.[36]

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[33] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 213.

[34] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 1, 241.

[35] Though "倫" is simplified as "*lún*" in *Hanyu pinyin* 漢語拼音 (the Chinese alphabetic system of writing), the syllable (or word) should, strictly speaking, be transcribed as "*luén*," which contains two vowels: "*u*" and "*é*."

[36] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 370.

It is much shorter and syntactically much less complex than a typical long sentence taken from non-dramatic works, which can easily run to more than ten lines, as can be seen in Virgil's *Aeneid*:

> Nec minus Aeneas, quamquam tardata sagitta
> interdum genua impediunt cursumque recusant,
> insequitur trepidique pedem pede fervidus urget:
> inclusum veluti si quando flumine nactus
> cervum aut puniceae saeptum formidine pennae
> venator cursu canis et latratibus instat;
> ille autem insidiis et ripa territus alta
> mille fugit refugitque vias, at vividus Umber
> haeret hians, iam iamque tenet similisque tenenti
> increpuit malis morsuque elusus inani est;
> tum vero exoritur clamor ripaeque lacusque
> responsant circa et caelum tonat omne tumultu [;][37]

in Dante's *The Divine Comedy*:

> Tosto che loco lì la circunscrive,
> la virtù informativa raggia intorno,
> così e quanto ne le membra vive:
> e come l'aere, quand'è ben piorno,
> per l'altrui raggio che 'n sé reflette,
> di diversi color diventa adorno;
> così l'aere vicin quivi si mette
> in quella forma che in lui suggella
> virtualmente l'alma che ristette;
> e simigliante poi a la fiammella
> che segue il foco là 'vunque si muta,
> seque lo spirto sua forma novella [;][38]

in Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

> To whom thus Michael: "Doubt not but that sin
> Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
> And therefore was law given them to evince
> Their natural pravity, by stirring up
> Sin against law to fight; that when they see

[37] H. Rushton Fairclough, trans., *Aeneid VII–XII*, by Virgil (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 352.

[38] Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, a cura di M. Barbi, et al., seconda edizione [2nd ed. ] (Firenze: Nella sede della Società, 1960), 649–50.

Law can discover sin, but not remove,
Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
Some blood more precious must be paid for man,
Just for unjust, that in such righteousness
To them by faith imputed, they may find
Justification towards God, and peace
Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies
Cannot appease, nor man the moral part
Perform, and not performing cannot live [;][39]

or in Garcilaso de la Vega's "Ode ad florem Gnidi":

Si de mi baja lira
tanto pudiese el son, que en un momento
aplacase la ira
del animoso viento
y la furia del mar y el movimiento,

y en ásperas montañas
con el süave canto enterneciese
las fieras alimañas,
los árboles moviese
y al son confusamente los trujiese,

no pienses que cantado
seria de mí, hermosa flor de Gnido,
el fiero Marte airado,
a muerte convertido,
de polvo y sangre y de sudor teñido,

ni aquellos capitanes
en las sublimes ruedas colocados,
por quien los alemanes,
el fiero cuello atados,
y los franceses van domesticados;

mas solamente aquella
fuerza de tu beldad seria cantada,
y alguna vez con ella
también sería notada

[39] John Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Douglas Bush (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 451. The full stop at the end of each of the above quotations (from Virgil, Dante, Milton, and Garcilaso de la Vega) has been replaced with a semicolon, so that the quotations can fit in with the grammar of the text.

el aspereza de que estás armada,

y cómo por ti sola
y por tu gran valor y hermosura,
convertido en viola,
llora su desventura
el miserable amante en tu figura [.][40]

Even in printed form, these quotations would require the closest co-operation from the most capable of readers, who, using their eyes to grasp the message, would have to read with great concentration or even go back and forth to work out their grammar or syntactic structure. Spoken on the stage, they would lead the audience into a syntactic maze, where the message could get lost because of the length and complexity of the sentence.

In dramatic works, a sentence has to be much shorter and less complex; it has to approximate to the language of conversation, that is, language as a spoken medium aimed at the listener, not as a written medium aimed at the reader. Comparing the non-dramatic works of Virgil, Dante, Milton, and Garcilaso on the one hand and Shakespeare's dramatic works on the other, one becomes readily aware that the latter are marked by the use of much shorter sentences, sentences which are syntactically less complex. Nevertheless, when it comes to translation, Shakespeare's works assume different aspects for different translators: while those who are translating them into other European languages have little difficulty in tackling the syntax of the source texts, those who are translating them into Chinese are hard put to cope with their syntactic complexity. Take 4.4.38–45 of *Hamlet*, which has just been quoted above. Translators whose target language is French, German, Italian, or Spanish can easily come up with translations which are equally comprehensible:

Pourtant,
Soit par oubli bestial, soit qu'un lâche scrupule
Me fasse examiner de trop près les choses
– Et cette hésitation, coupée en quatre,
N'a qu'un quart de sagesse et trois de frayeur –
Je ne sais pas pourquoi j'en suis encore
A me dire : voici ce qu'il faut faire,

[40] Garcilaso de la Vega, *Obra poética y textos en prosa*, edición de Bienvenido Morros, Clásicos y Modernos 10, publicados bajo la dirección de Francisco Rico, coordinación general: Gonzalo Pontón Gijón (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2001), 90–92.

Quand tout, motifs et volonté, force et moyens,
Me pousse à l'accomplir…[41]

Nun,
Seis viehisches Vergessen oder seis
Ein banger Zweifel, welcher zu genau
Bedenkt den Ausgang – ein Gedanke, der,
Zerlegt man ihn, *ein* Viertel Weisheit nur
Und stets drei Viertel Feigheit hat – ich weiß nicht,
Weswegen ich noch lebe, um zu sagen:
<<Dies muß geschehn>>; da ich doch Grund und Willen
Und Kraft und Mittel hab, um es zu tun.[42]

Ora, sia per uno stupido obblio simile a quello della bestia, sia per una scrupolosa delicatezza che teme di troppo approfondare l'avvenimento (e in tale scrupolo per un quarto di saggezza, tre ne stanno di viltà) ; io non so perchè ancor viva per dir sempre : *questa cosa vuol farsi*, avendo motivo, volontà, forza, e mezzi di farla.[43]

Ahora, sea olvido bestial, o algún escrúpulo cobarde de pensar con demasiada exactitud en el suceso – un pensamiento que, partido en cuatro, tiene una parte de sabiduría y tres partes de cobardía – , no sé por qué sigo vivo para decir <<Esto se ha de hacer>>, puesto que tengo causa, y voluntad, y fuerza, y medios para hacerlo […][44]

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[41] Yves Bonnefoy, trans., *Hamlet*. *Le Roi Lear*, by William Shakespeare, collection folio classique (Saint-Amand (Cher): Gallimard, 1978), 155.

[42] A. W. v. Schlegel and L. Tieck, trans., herausgegeben und revidiert von Hans Matter, *Romeo und Julia; Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark; Othello, der Mohr von Venedig*, in *Shakespeares dramatische Werke*, erster Band [vol. 1], by William Shakespeare, Birkhäuser-Klassiker 13 (Basel: Verlag Birkhäuser, 1943), 188; 12 vols.

[43] Carlo Rusconi, trans., *Amleto: Principe di Danimarca*, by William Shakespeare, in *Teatro completo di Shakespeare voltato in prosa intaliana*, quarta edizione [4th ed.], vol. 2 (Torino: Unione tipografico, 1858), 68; 6 vols.

[44] José María Valverde, trans., *Hamlet, Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2000), 83. For lack of space, I have cited examples from only four translations, respectively in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. As a matter of fact, other versions exhibit similar syntactic affinities. These versions include the French versions by Georges Duval, Jean-Michel Déprats, and François-Victor Hugo, and the Spanish versions by R. Martínez Lafuente and Salvador de Madariaga. See Georges Duval, trans., *Hamlet*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Le roi Jean*, *La Vie et la mort du roi Richard II*, by William Shakespeare (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1908); tome premier [vol. 1] of *Œeuvres dramatiques de William Shakespeare*; traduction couronnée par l'Académie française entièrement conforme

With a syntax equally malleable, with relative pronouns like "que" in French, "der" in German, "che" in Italian, and "que" in Spanish to deal with the circular movement of English, the four European languages have succeeded in translating Hamlet's train of thought, including his self-doubt, his hesitation, and his self-accusation. Like English, they can also accommodate parenthetical constructions by means of either dashes or brackets, which facilitate the re-creation of the original's stylistic effects. However, the same cannot be said of Chinese, which has a widely different syntax with no relative pronouns to match those of the English language, and which cannot idiomatically accommodate parenthetical constructions as do English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish; as a result, a translator whose target language is Chinese has to make various adjustments to achieve comprehensibility on the stage:

> 我有理由、有决心、
> 有力量、有辦法復仇，卻仍在說，
> 復仇行動要稍候，究竟是甚麼
> 原因呢？是因為我渾噩如野獸，
> 還是怯懦優柔、謹小慎微？
> 細加分析，謹小慎微只有
> 四分之一是謹慎，四分之三
> 總是膽怯。[45]

In my Chinese translation, the last two lines in the original ("[…] I have cause and will and strength and means / To do't") have been shifted to the beginning ("*Wǒ yǒu lǐyóu, yǒu juéxīn, yǒu lì · liang, yǒu bànfǎ fùchóu* 我有理由、有决心、有力量、有辦法復仇") with the conjunction "sith" (since)

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au texte anglais, 7 vols.; Jean-Michel Déprats, trans., *La Tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark*, by William Shakespeare, in *Shakespeare: Tragédies I* (*Œuvres complètes, I*), édition publiée sous la direction de Jean-Michel Déprats avec le concours de Gisèle Venet (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 2 vols; François-Victor Hugo, trans., *Hamlet*, in *Shakespeare: Théâtre complet*, by William Shakespeare, tome II [vol. 2] (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1961), 2 vols.; R. Martínez Lafuente, trans., *Hamlet, Príncipe de Dinamarca*, in *Obras completas de Shakespeare*, by William Shakespeare, libros célebres españoles y extranjeros, director literario: V. Blasco Ibáñez, clásicos ingleses, prólogo de Víctor Hugo, tomo primero [vol. 1] (Valencia: Prometeo, 1900), 12 vols.; Salvador Madariaga, *El Hámlet de Shakespeare*, by William Shakespeare, edición bilingüe, ensayo de interpretación, traducción española en verso y notas (Buenos Aires: Editorial sudamericana, 1949).

[45] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 2, 513.

understood, the linkage being introduced by "*què* 卻." The indirect question ("whether it be / Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple") has been changed to a direct question ("*jiūjìng shì shen · me / yuányīn · ne*? 究竟是甚麼 / 原因呢?"). As Chinese cannot accommodate parenthetical constructions as readily as does English, or, for that matter, French, German, Italian, or Spanish, I have reorganised the sense units so as to avoid relying on parentheses. As a result, the message is conveyed in a linear movement rather than the circular movement of the original.

In 1.1.7 9–94, when Horatio explains to Marcellus "Why this same strict and most observant watch / So nightly toils the subject of the land,"[46] we have a syntactic structure that can prove the bane of the translator whose target language is Chinese:

> Our last King,
> Whose image even but now appeared to us,
> Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway –
> Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride –
> Dared to the combat, in which our valiant Hamlet
> (For so this side of our known world esteemed him)
> Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact
> Well ratified by law and heraldry
> Did forfeit with his life all these his lands
> Which he stood seized of to the conqueror;
> Against the which a moiety competent
> Was gaged by our King, which had return[47]
> To the inheritance of Fortinbras
> Had he been vanquisher, as by the same co-mart
> And carriage of the article design
> His fell to Hamlet.[48]

In terms of complexity, the sentence may still not be comparable to "notoriously" long sentences found in Virgil, Dante, Milton, and Garcilaso de la Vega, but in Shakespeare's plays, it stands out rather conspicuously by virtue of the large number of relative clauses as well as by virtue of the parenthesis. Translating it into French:

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[46] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 155.

[47] "*Had return* was to revert. *Return* (often emended to F's 'return'd') seems misleading if it implies that Fortinbras and his heirs would recover lands they had previously owned." See Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 157.

[48] Thompson and Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, 156–57.

notre défunt roi,
Dont l'image à l'instant vient de nous apparaître,
Fut, vous le savez, par Fortinbras de Norvège,
Qu'aiguillonnait l'orgueil le plus jaloux,
Défié en un combat, au cours duquel notre vaillant Hamlet
(Ainsi l'estimait-on de ce côté du monde connu)
Tua ce Fortinbras, qui, par un contrat scellé
Garanti par la loi et les règles de la chevalerie
Abandonnait, avec sa vie, toute les terres
Qu'il possédait à son vainqueur.
En contrepartie, un bien équivalent
Avait été gagé par notre roi, qui serait revenu
Au patrimoine de Fortinbras,
Eût-il été victorieux; ainsi par ce traité,
Et la teneur de la clause dont j'ai parlé,
Ses biens revinrent à Hamlet [;][49]

German:

Der letzte König,
Des bild uns eben jetzt erschienen ist,
Ward, wie Ihr wißt, durch Fortinbras von Norweg,
Den eifersüchtger Stolz dazu gespornt,
Zum Kampf gefordert; unser tapfrer Hamlet
(Denn diese Seite der bekannten Welt
Hielt ihn dafür) schlug diesen Fortinbras,
Der laut dem untersiegelten Vertrag,
Bekräftiget durch Recht und Rittersitte,
Mit seinem Leben alle Länderein,
So er besaß, verwirkte an den Sieger;
Wogegen auch ein angemeßnes Teil
Von unserm König ward zum Pfand gesetzt,
Das Fortinbras anheimgefallen wäre,
Hätte er gesiegt; wie durch denselben Handel
Und Inhalt der besprochnen Punkte seins
An Hamlet fiel [;][50]

Italian:

Il nostro ultimo re, di cui l'imagine dianzi ci apparve, fu, lo sai, sfidato in

[49] Déprats, trans., *La Tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark*, 683, 685.
[50] Schlegel and Tieck, trans., herausgegeben und revidiert von Hans Matter, *Romeo und Julia; Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark; Othello, der Mohr von Venedig*, 107–108.

> tenzone singolare da Fortebraccio di Norvegia, cui geloso orgoglio animava. In quel combattimento, il prode nostro Amleto (chè tale lo giudicò questa parte del nostro mondo conosciuto) uccise Fortebraccio. Per patto suggellato, stretto con tutte le formule, e confermato dalla legge delle armi, Fortebraccio cedeva al vincitore, colla vita, tutti dominii di cui disponeva; avendo contr'essi il re nostro posto egual misura di terre, che sarebbero entrate nel retaggio del suo avversario, se ei fosse rimasto vincente [;][51]

and Spanish:

> Nuestro último re (cuya imagen acaba de aparecérsenos) fué provocado á combate, como ya sabéis, por Fortimbras de Noruega. En aquel desafío, nuestro valeroso Hamlet (que tal renombre alcanzó en la parte del mundo que nos es conocida) mató á Fortimbras, el cual, por un contrato sellado y ratificado según el fuero de las armas, cedía al vencedor (dado caso que muriese en la pelea) todos aquellos países que estaban bajo su dominio. Neustro rey se obligó también á cederle una porción equivalente, que hubiera pasado á manos de Fortimbras, como herencia suya, si hubiese éste vencido. En virtud de aquel convenio y de los artículos estipulados, recayó todo en Hamlet.[52]

the translators have no difficulty following the syntax and word order of the original. Admittedly, for the sake of greater comprehensibility, the translators, with the exception of Schlegel and Tieck, have broken up the original, not confining themselves to only one sentence, but the train of thought in the original remains more or less the same in the translation.

When it comes to Chinese as the target language, inadequate adjustment in accordance with idiomatic Chinese syntax and word order can result in low comprehensibility on the stage, as can be seen in the following version by Zhu Shenghao 朱生豪:

> 剛才他的形象還向我們出現的那位已故的國王，你們知道，曾經接受驕矜好勝的挪威的福丁勃拉斯的挑戰；在那一天決鬥中間，我們勇武的哈姆雷特，—他的英名是舉世稱頌的，—把福丁勃拉斯殺死了；按照雙方根據法律和武士精神所訂立的協定，福丁勃拉斯要是戰敗了，除了他自己的生命以外，必須把他所有的一切土地撥歸勝利的一方；同時我們的國王也提出相當的土地作為賭注，要是福丁勃拉斯得勝

[51] Rusconi, trans., *Amleto: Principe di Danimarca*, 9.
[52] Lafuente, trans., *Hamlet, Príncipe de Dinamarca*, in *Obras completas de Shakespeare*, 78–79.

了，就歸他沒收佔有，正像在同一協定上所規定的，他失敗了，哈姆雷特可以把他的土地沒收佔有一樣。[53]

With no relative clause in Chinese to rely on to render "Whose image even but now appeared to us," Zhu, contrary to idiomatic Chinese, begins by introducing a form of premodifying phrase which is alien to the language: "*Gāngcái tā · de xíngxiàng hái xiàng wǒ · men chūxiàn · de* 剛才他的形象還向我們出現的." Then by using a parenthetical construction ("*nǐ · men zhī · dao* 你們知道") as Shakespeare does, he gets the sentence tangled up, so that the audience has difficulty connecting "*yǐgù · de guówáng* 已故的國王" and "*céngjīng jiēshòu* 曾經接受." The lengthy premodifier, "*jiāojīn hàoshèng · de Nuówēi · de Fúdīngbólāsī · de* 驕矜好勝的挪威的福丁勃拉斯的," which follows, further reduces the version's comprehensibility, because it is a compound premodifier consisting of three simple premodifiers: "驕矜好勝的," "挪威的," "福丁勃拉斯的" (the first one is attributive, the second and third possessive). As a result, the audience is called upon to tackle a highly involuted and unnatural turn of phrase. In translating "in which" (line 83 in the original), Zhu uses another unidiomatic phrase "*zhōngjiān* 中間" instead of "*zhōng* 中," again impeding the audience's reception process. Then follows another parenthetical construction ("*Tā · de yīngmíng shì jūshì chēngsòng · de* 他的英名是舉世稱頌的"), which sets up another road block between "*wǒ · men yǒngwǔ · de Hāmǔléitè* 我們勇武的哈姆雷特" and "*bǎ Fúdīngbólāsī shā sǐ · le* 把福丁勃拉斯殺死了." Such a road block appears again when two adjectival phrases ("*suǒyǒu · de* 所有的" and "*yīqiè* 一切"), redundantly translating "all" (line 87 in the original), increase the audience's burden in the reception process. After this, apart from the ambiguous "*xiāngdāng* 相當," which can mean both "considerable" and "equivalent," the terms of the "compact" get lost in a maze, so that even the most attentive play-goer in the audience would have great difficulty understanding what was agreed on between old Hamlet and old Fortinbras.

To get Shakespeare's message across to the Chinese audience, the translator has to respect the parameters set by idiomatic Chinese, and make adjustments in syntax and word order:

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[53] Zhu Shenghao 朱生豪, trans., *Shashibiya quanji*《莎士比亞全集》(*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*), by William Shakespeare, vol. 5 (Nanjing: Yilin Press 譯林出版社, 1998), 12; 8 vols.

先王
哈姆雷特因為挪威王福廷布拉斯
向他挑戰，受了好勝心理的
驅使，跟挪威王決鬥。—這點你是
知道的。剛剛出現的就是先王的
樣貌。就我們所知，這邊世界
都認為先王英武。決鬥中，先王
殺死了這個福廷布拉斯。根據
簽訂的協議，福廷布拉斯死後，
所有的土地就歸於勝利的人。
要是福廷布拉斯戰勝呢，先王
也承諾以相等的土地給他。
協議得到法律跟比武慣例
確認。按照上述的協議跟條文，
福廷布拉斯的土地當年落入了
哈姆雷特手中。[54]

The syntax and word order are widely different from those of the original; what is "circular" is made "linear"; what is complex is made "simple."[55] At the same time, long clauses have been broken up and rearranged, and the idiomatic thinking process in English has been turned into the idiomatic thinking process in Chinese—adjustments made inevitable by the syntactic differences between the two languages.

Being a genre common to Chinese and the European languages under discussion, drama appears, at first sight, straightforward and equally easy or difficult to translators working in these languages, for every play, made up of similar components, namely, dialogue, monologue, asides, and stage directions, should lend itself readily to the same translation techniques, techniques that constitute universals applicable to all target languages. However, by studying comprehensibility in drama translation with reference to various versions of *Hamlet* in Chinese and in the major European languages, we can see how drama translation differs from translation of the other genres, how vast the chasm that separates Chinese

[54] Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, vol. 1, 160–61.

[55] For a detailed comparison of Chinese and English syntax or the syntax of the major European languages, see Laurence Wong, "Musicality and Intrafamily Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese," *Meta* 51.1 (March 2006): 89–97; Laurence Wong, "Centripetality and Centrifugality in Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese," *Across Languages and Cultures: A Multidisciplinary Journal for Translation and Interpreting Studies* 8.1 (June 2007): 55–80.

from the major European languages is when the latter group of languages function as target languages, and how much more complicated, more formidable it is to translate a play from an Indo-European language (such as English, French, German, Italian, or Spanish) into a Sino-Tibetan language (such as Chinese) than to translate a play from one Indo-European language into another.

# LITERARY TRANSLATION: DECANONISATION AND RECANONISATION

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In dealing with the issue of world literature, we cannot but come across the function of translation. Actually, according to David Damrosch in his book *What Is World Literature?*,[1] translation plays a very important part in constructing the canonical works of world literature. In this respect, translation actually plays a double role: decanonising some literary works if the translation is poorly done, and recanonising some literary works if the translation is well done. But here, the act of translating has already gone beyond the linguistically oriented word-for-word rendition. This is what the present paper will discuss after revisiting the issue of canon formation.

## [I] Canon Formation Revisited

When we talk about the issue of canon formation, we will soon be reminded of Harold Bloom. Before dealing with his ideas on this issue, I will first offer a comparatively acceptable definition of "canon." As for the term "canon," we can easily find that it has evolved throughout the past centuries. According to John Guillory, "'Canon' descends from an ancient Greek word, *kanon*, meaning a 'reed' or 'rod' used as an instrument of measurement. In later times *kanon* developed the secondary sense of 'rule' or 'law,' and this sense of the word, important to literary critics, first appeared in the fourth century A.D., when 'canon' was used to signify a list of texts or authors, specifically the books of the Bible and of the early theologians of Christianity."[2] That is, canon, from its early coming into

[1] David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).
[2] John Guillory, "Canon," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 2nd ed., eds. Frank

being, has always been closely related to these two things: religion and literature. Obviously, in this essay, I will exclusively deal with canon in its literary sense. So in this way, we can get to the most recent definition of this controversial term,

> ....The problem of canon-formation is one aspect of a much larger history of the ways in which societies have organized and regulated practices of reading and writing (it is perhaps an illusion of our own age to believe that we are simply free to read and write whatever, whenever, and however we wish).[3]

From the above descriptions, we can clearly understand that there is no such thing as a "purely" objective rule for canon formation. It must be restricted to several external factors: ideology, culture and social relations, as well as literary tradition. Or we could say that canon formation is composed of many external factors, of which some artificial operations appear significantly important. It is true of the writing of both Western and Chinese literary history. To my understanding, to judge whether a literary work could be included in the canon usually depends on at least three factors: literary market, critical response, and university curriculum, without any one of which canon formation cannot be achieved.

As we all know, Bloom is most famous for his concept of "misreading," especially in translation studies. As a controversial scholarly critic, Bloom, regarded as "our most extraordinary theorist of literary revisionism, would certainly say this is true of literary history. 'Misreading' is his provocative term for the poet's necessary and founding swerve from the work of the precursors."[4] To him, in literary history, every strong poet could not but give full play to his creative talents to "misread" those literary masters preceding him. Therefore, every poem of his seems to have undergone various stages of such "revisionism."

Actually, what he means by "misreading" is not a practice due to the poet's ignorance or misunderstanding, but rather a sort of deliberate revising or even deforming of the established canonical work in an attempt to create something new transcending his/her precursors. As a result, this sort of misreading will lead to certain innovation and contribution to the reformation of literary canon. Historically speaking, it is true, according to Bloom, that since Milton published his monumental *Paradise Lost*, poets

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Lentricchia et al. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 233.

[3] Guillory, "Canon," 239.

[4] Jean-Pierre Mileur, "Revisionism, Irony, and the Mask of Sentiment," *New Literary History* 29, no. 2 (1998): 197.

of later generations cannot help experiencing a sense of belatedness, for all their inspirations have been exhausted by their precursors. Thus, the only strategy of innovation is to struggle against these historical literary masters and "kill" them, so as to enter into a unique plane of creation.

In *The Anxiety of Influence*,[5] Bloom, on the basis of his deconstructive and subversive strategy characterised by belittling the ancient and highlighting the modern, develops a sort of "antithetical criticism." This type of criticism, apparently under the influence of both Freudian psychoanalysis and Derridian deconstruction, is characterised by creatively applying the Freudian concept of the "Oedipus complex" to literary criticism. That is, the ancient poets have already formed a father-like tradition which shadows the modern poets and which certainly prevents them from making any literary innovation. In order to transcend and surpass this tradition, what contemporary poets must do is kill this symbolic "father" by means of deliberately "misreading" and "revising" their precursors so as to achieve some absolute innovation. Undoubtedly, this type of misreading should be based on the profound understanding of their precursors, otherwise, it will be further misleading. What particularly impresses us in the book is his description of the six revisionary ratios of *Clinamen*, *Tressera*, *Kenosis, Daemonization*, *Askesis,* and *Apophrades,* which are illustrated in a symbolic way in the book.[6]

Obviously, such a powerful revisionary drive apparently enables Bloom to suspect any "canonical" work and its creator, informing us that all literary creation by contemporary writers must be based on their misreading and revising of their precursor's work. Thus, maintaining his individual style of literary criticism has been a constant throughout Bloom's critical career, which is also the characteristic feature of his revisionist criticism. But on the other hand, under the influence and illumination of Nietzsche's notion of the will to power and Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex, "having interpreted the entire post-Enlightenment tradition, from Blake to the Romantics to Franz Kafka and Freud, as a process akin to the secondary repression of primary drives, Bloom went on with a new project that entailed the construction of a critical medium capable of enabling the return of these primary sources."[7] This is represented especially in his elaborations on canon formation and reformation.

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[5] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[6] Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*, 14–16.

[7] Cf. Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth, eds., *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 96.

Although Bloom adopts a hostile attitude toward the current prevalence of cultural criticism and Cultural Studies, his revisionist critical theory has still inspired contemporary literary and Cultural Studies scholars. This inspiration finds particular embodiment in his unique idea of canon formation and reformation. Actually we have no difficulty finding its common point with the strategy of "decanonisation" adopted by the Cultural Studies scholars. In his best-selling theoretic work *The Western Canon*,[8] he, in expressing his dissatisfaction with the strategies adopted by those cultural critics and Cultural Studies scholars, readjusts the connotations and content of the traditional literary canon, defending it for its established aesthetic value and cultural connotations. In dealing with the dual associations in both literature and religion that a canon might have, he points out, "The canon, once we view it as the relation of an individual reader and writer to what has been preserved out of what has been written, and forget the canon as a list of books for required study, will be seen as identical with the literary Art of Memory, not with the religious sense of canon. Memory is always an art, even when it works involuntarily…. We need to teach more selectively, searching for the few who have the capacity to become highly individual readers and writers." That is to say, a literary canon to him is composed of all the best writings produced by writers of various generations. Similarly, those who have produced "canonical" works of art are naturally regarded as "canonical" writers. Thus his analysis has largely deconstructed the power manipulation behind canon formation, and anticipated the necessity of a sort of canon reformation.[9] In this way, we have no difficulty understanding that canon formation is manipulated by many artificial factors, and it will by no means be finalised. Every generation of literary scholars and critics has the responsibility to make a critical exploration of the established canon toward a new interpretation from a unique theoretical perspective. In this sense, literary studies will always be in a dynamic state, which is true of studies of both Chinese and Western literature.

## [II] Beyond Word-for-Word Translation

Although Bloom's concept of misreading has had a great impact on literary translation, he himself seldom engages in this activity. So his

[8] Bloom Harold, *The Western Canon: The Books and Schools of the Ages* (London: Papermac, 1994).

[9] In this respect, cf. André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

strategies of decanonisation and recanonisation are still practised within the English-speaking context. As we know, translation plays a significant role in decanonising or recanonising literary works in a cross-cultural context, as it is done between at least two languages and cultural backgrounds. According to David Damrosch's description, "World literature is writing that gains in translation."[10] Without translation, no literary work can be counted among world literature.[11] In discussing the function of translation in highlighting and canonising literary works in other languages, one would do well to start with Walter Benjamin, who, in dealing with the task of the (literary) translator, pertinently points out, "For a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life. The idea of life and afterlife in works of art should be regarded with an entirely unmetaphorical objectivity."[12] To Benjamin, translation is no longer merely linguistic rendition, or word-for-word translation only. It has some other functions, one of which is to help a literary work to become international or canonical. So according to Benjamin, it is translation that endows a literary work with a "continued" life or an "afterlife," without which it might remain dead or "marginalised" in a particular literary and cultural tradition.

It is true that when we decide to translate a literary work which we think might well have some transnational or international significance, we must measure its "translatability" inherent in the original and predict its potential market. If a translated work should have a "continued" life in another language and cultural background, it must have a sort of translatability, which will guarantee the successful translation of a literary work in the target language. In this sense, Benjamin argues,

> Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential that they be translated; it means rather that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability. It is plausible that no translation, however good it may be, can have any significance as regards the original. Yet, by virtue of its translatability the original is closely connected with the translation; in fact, this connection is

[10] Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, 281.

[11] As for the dynamic function of translation in constructing world literature, cf. Wang Ning, "World Literature and the Dynamic Function of Translation," *Modern Language Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2010): 1–14.

[12] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, eds. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 73.

> all the closer since it is no longer of importance to the original. We may call this connection a natural one, or, more specifically, a vital connection. Just as the manifestations of life are intimately connected with the phenomenon of life without being of importance to it, a translation issues from the original—not so much from its life as from its afterlife.[13]

Obviously, to Benjamin, the translator is not a passive recipient of the original, but rather, a dynamic interpreter and sometimes even a creative representer of the original, since a work produced by the author is far from complete. An excellent literary work of world significance should be completed by the author in collaboration with translators in different languages. For once a literary work is published, it no longer belongs only to the author, who wields no influence over its possible "continued" life and afterlife. Its significance can only be exploited by different readers-interpreters of both his generation and later generations. The translator thus plays three different roles at the same time: a value judge of whether the work he wants to translate is worth the effort or will have a potential market, or whether it is of certain translatability; a close and intimate reader of the original who is subject to the original; a dynamic interpreter and a creative representer of the original to complete the incomplete task of the author. In this sense, a translator's function should be treated as equal to that of the author.

Apart from the above–mentioned, the most important function of the translator is to ensure the quality of the translated version, which will directly decide whether the original work will have a "continued" life in another language and cultural background. Judging by the situation of translation practice in China, I think that there are three possibilities as regards the relationship between the translator and the author: (1) the translator's cultural and literary level is higher than that of the author; (2) the translator's level is equal to that of the author; and (3) the translator's level is lower than that of the author. Obviously, in the first case, the translator may intervene too much in re-creating the original, like some of the translations done by Lin Shu 林紓 at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The second case is the ideal one, in which the translator collaborates with the author with complete understanding, and the translator not only renders the subtle meaning between the lines of the original but also preserves the author's style, as was done by Fu Lei 傅雷, who translated Balzac's works in the 1950s and 1960s, subsequently making Balzac the most famous and canonical French author in China. The third case is the most common in

[13] Benjamin, "Task of the Translator," 72–73.

today's translation circles, in which many inexperienced translators involve themselves in serious literary and academic translation. Some of them are even bold enough to translate canonical works of literature or theory into poor Chinese, thereby undoubtedly doing harm to the circulation of excellent literary or academic works in China. And it is exactly the reason why many of the Chinese translations of foreign literary and theoretical works are hardly readable or even comprehensible.

Thus, the function of the translator is much more important than that of a faithful transmitter of information. A good translator may well make an originally good work better and even canonise it in the target language, while a bad translator may not only ruin an originally excellent work but also decanonise it in the target language. As a pioneering figure of deconstructive translation theory, Benjamin's essay has strongly influenced a whole generation of contemporary translation theorists and literary scholars: Paul de Man not only generally agreed with him but also went on to develop his own ideas.[14] In Derrida, translation is both "inevitable and impossible," but a "relevant" translation can still be achieved by the efforts of the translator, "a translation that does what one expects of it, in short, a version that performs its mission, honours its debt and does its job or its duty while inscribing in the receiving language the most relevant equivalent for an original, the language that is the most right, appropriate, pertinent, adequate, opportune, pointed, univocal, idiomatic, and so on."[15] Although Derrida's translation theory is not highly regarded and is not used as a guide to translation practice, it has at least opened up some new possibilities for translators. For Derrida and other deconstructionists, you cannot say that you have obtained the truth (faithfulness); you have only approached the truth (the original). So translation is always an incomplete process which can be advanced by the efforts of successive generations of translators. To André Lefevere, translation is a kind of "rewriting," which even manipulates the fame of the original and its author.[16]

Perhaps the most powerful institutional authority in the twentieth century to manipulate the fame of an author as well as his work is the Swedish Academy which gives the Nobel Prize for literature, which may well make an unknown writer become world-famous and canonise his

[14] Cf. Paul de Man, "'Conclusions': Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'," in *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 73–105.
[15] Jacques Derrida, "What Is a 'Relevant' Translation?" *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 2 (2001): 177.
[16] Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 9.

work in a very short time. But even so, just as Horace Engdahl, former permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, frankly admits, "The Nobel Prize for literature basically rests on the Western concept of literature that took shape with the Brothers Schlegel."[17] As for its power for canonicity, he points out, "Canonicity is a function of forces that cannot be controlled and do not form a closed and identifiable system. Cultural authority is only one of these forces and perhaps not the strongest. The symbolic power that the Nobel Prize has accumulated over a hundred years is demonstrably insufficient to make an author canonical, but sufficient to arouse the curiosity of posterity."[18] If he is modest in belittling the power of the Nobel Prize in canonising a literary work, the last sentence I quote here is certainly true: being awarded a Nobel Prize will make the author world-famous, and his work will become a part of world literature. What is more, he and his works will be studied by critics and scholars in later generations.[19] And in this respect, translation plays an inevitable role: Gao Xingjian 高行健 had an excellent translator in Mable Lee, who translated his prize-winning work *Ling shan*《靈山》(*Soul Mountain*) , and Mo Yan 莫言 had an even better English translator Howard Goldblatt, who has translated most of his important novels into excellent English, while many of his Chinese peers do not find such able translators. And some of them are still waiting for the day to come, or aimlessly searching for such an opportunity. The same is true of many humanities scholars or theorists: Derrida's wide influence in the world largely depends on the English translations of his important works, through the intermediation of which he has become a world famous figure. Since we have realised the importance of English translation, what positive strategy can we Chinese translators adopt to promote Chinese literature worldwide? I will answer this question in the following paragraphs.

## [III] Translating Chinese Literature in a Global Context

If we recognise that globalisation has impacted studies of an individual

[17] Horace Engdahl, "Canonization and World Literature: The Nobel Experience," in *World Literature; World Culture*, eds. Karen-Margrethe Simonsen and Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2008), 204.
[18] Engdahl, "Canonization and World Literature," 210.
[19] It is true that, in China in particular, many publishing houses are very interested in publishing the Nobel Prize winning writers' works. They even organise translators to do the job in the shortest possible time so that the translated works can hit the market while still fresh in people's minds.

national literature, then it has also promoted studies of comparative literature and world literature: it has greatly expanded the domain of traditional elite literary studies, and enabled comparative literature studies to merge into cultural studies and world literature. If we still overemphasise literary form by sticking to the old-fashioned formalist-structuralist principle, we will probably neglect the cultural significance of literary phenomena. That is, it is possible to put literary studies in a broader context of cultural studies in an attempt to transcend literature proper.

Obviously, globalisation has brought about two aspects of influence to China's literary and cultural studies: its positive aspect lies in that it brings cultural and intellectual production closer to the governance of the market economy rather than the past socialist planned economy. But on the other hand, it makes elite cultural production increasingly difficult, thus widening the gap between elite culture and popular culture. In the present era, formalistically-oriented literary theory has been largely replaced by a more inclusive cultural theory, or just "theory." Any theory produced in the Western context, if it intends to become universal or global, should be capable of interpreting non-Western literary and cultural phenomena. Similarly, any theory produced in a non-Western context, if it intends to move from the "periphery" to the "centre," must be first of all "discovered" by Western academia and translated into English. The same is true of literary translation in China.

In the past century, Chinese literature, under Western influence, has been introduced to the world by means of translation. To conservative intellectuals, this opening up to the outside world and cultural modernity is a historical process of colonising Chinese culture and literature. In this way, the May-Fourth Movement started the process of Chinese modernity, thus largely destroying the mechanism of China's long-lasting nationalism. To many people, the Chinese language was also largely "Europeanised" or "Westernised" in this "colonising" process. But to my mind, this is undoubtedly the direct result of China's modernity, which is different from that of Western modernity. One of the most conspicuous phenomena is that numerous foreign literary works and theoretic trends have been translated into Chinese, thus strongly stimulating Chinese writers' creative imagination. Although from a linguistic point of view, many of the translated versions are far from "faithful," and some of them belong to a sort of "rewriting," this large-scale translation has indeed brought about a sort of cultural transformation. Even Lu Xun 魯迅, a pioneering figure of modern Chinese culture and literature, in talking about his literary inspiration, rather frankly admitted that he only received inspiration from

foreign novels rather than from traditional Chinese literary works.[20]

Although Lu Xun, as we all know, had great cultural and literary accomplishments in the Chinese context, he still tried to deny his being influenced by traditional Chinese literature, motivated largely by his desire to modernise Chinese literature and culture. Actually, to Lu Xun, a man of letters with a profound knowledge of both Chinese and Western learning, proposing an overall "Westernisation" of Chinese culture was nothing but a cultural and intellectual strategy. He originally wanted to study medicine to save his motherland, but later he changed his mind and studied literature, for he knew that literature could also save the country by wakening people to struggle against the man-eating feudal society. In his work *Kuangren riji*《狂人日記》(*The Diary of a Mad Man*), he vividly and ironically illustrates how men ate men in old China. His hopes were placed on the new generation. Thus, he called for the "saving of the children," for children, not corrupted by traditional feudal culture, could easily accept a changing society or a changing world. Of course, Lu Xun did not want to destroy the traditional Chinese nationalist spirit, but, rather, he wanted to highlight a sort of transnational cultural spirit in an attempt to reconstruct a new Chinese national and cultural identity, in the broader context of global culture and world literature.

Other May-Fourth writers, such as Hu Shi 胡適 and Guo Moruo 郭沫若, have also forcefully deconstructed traditional Chinese literary discourse by translating as many Western literary works into Chinese as possible. As a result of such large-scale translation, modern Chinese literature moved closer to the mainstream of world literature, and there even appeared a modern Chinese literary canon, which could, on an equal footing, engage in a dialogue not only with modern Western literature but also with traditional Chinese literature. In a modern Chinese literary history, translation would be regarded as having played an important role. But this sort of translation is not the traditional linguistic rendition from one language into another; rather, it is a kind of cultural transformation by means of language. It was through this large-scale cultural translation that a new literature was born, which has helped to construct a new transnationalism.

On the other hand, world literature is always moving forward, in the process of which it might have its continued life and afterlife. This fact finds particular embodiment in China's large-scale translation of Western and Russian literary works. There is also a subjective and dynamic

[20] Lu Xun, *Lu Xun quanji*《魯迅全集》(*Collected Works of Lu Xun*), vol. 4 (Beijing: People's Literature Press 人民文學出版社, 1989), 512.

selection of canonical literature in the Chinese context.[21] And it is this selective translation that has enabled world literature in China to have its own unique canon, which is not always the same as its original form in the West and in Russia. During the May-Fourth period, a lot of Chinese writers were influenced by anarchism and cosmopolitanism. Some of them, such as Ba Jin 巴金 and Ye Junjian 葉君建, even studied Esperanto, and the latter could write in the artificial language. So transnationalism has its own tradition and unique form in China: in the old society, when China was poor and Chinese culture and literature were backward, having no place in world literature, its writers simply called for the translation of foreign literary works into Chinese so that modern Chinese literature could move from the periphery to the centre, and finally towards the world. Today, when China has become a strong power, both economically and politically, there is an urgent need to re-create it as a cultural and literary power. In this way, translation will play an even more important role in bringing Chinese literature closer to the mainstream of world literature. But this time, we will have to shift our attention from translating Western literature into Chinese to translating Chinese literature into the various languages of the world.

Obviously, if we re-examine the positive and negative consequences of the May-Fourth Movement from today's perspective, we may well reach the following conclusion: in bringing various Western cultural trends and theories to China, the May-Fourth writers and intellectuals overlooked this attempt at introducing Chinese culture and literature to the outside world. Similarly, in destroying the Confucian temples, they also got rid of the positive elements in Confucianism, thereby precipitating the "crisis of belief" in contemporary China. The recent practice of cultural globalisation in the Chinese context will by no means colonise Chinese culture; instead, it will help to promote Chinese culture and literature worldwide. So highlighting a sort of "transnational" spirit might well be the goal of scholars of literary and cultural studies as we go about our task of translating Chinese texts for consumption abroad. Then one may raise another question: What role does translation play?

It is true that whether we do literary studies or cultural studies, we cannot do it well without the intermediation of language. But the role translation has played in forming the modern Chinese literary canon is more cultural, political, and pragmatic than merely linguistic and formalistic. Obviously, the influence of globalisation on culture finds

[21] As for the pragmatic practice of China's literary translation, cf. Sun Yifeng, "Opening the Cultural Mind: Translation and the Modern Chinese Literary Canon," *Modern Language Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (March 2008): 13–27.

particular embodiment in the remapping of the world language system. In this respect, English and Chinese are two of the major world languages which have benefited most from the globalisation of culture. Because of the comprehensive power of the United States and the long-standing colonial heritage of the British Empire, the popularisation and influence of English still rank first in China among all the major world languages.

Now, what is the consequence of globalisation for Chinese, the most popular language after English? As we have already noticed, Chinese has also undergone several changes: from a national language to a regional language and, finally, to one of the major world languages. The global popularisation of Chinese language has undoubtedly changed the established framework of world culture.[22] The construction of Chinese modernity or modernities has also deconstructed the "singular" modernity characterised by Westcentrism.[23] The advent of globalisation has blurred the boundaries between nation-states all the more, as well as those between languages and cultures, paving the way for a new world language system. In this new framework of world language and culture, the transnationality of the Chinese language and Chinese culture will become more and more conspicuous. In this way, we may well think of translating Chinese literature as an activity on both the intercultural and interlingual levels. The former highlights Chinese literature and culture in the current global climate, while the latter makes it possible for Chinese literature to become better known across the non-Chinese-speaking world.

[22] Cf. Wang Ning, "Global English(es) and Global Chinese(s): Toward Rewriting a New Literary History in Chinese," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 19 (63) (2010), 159–74.

[23] As for the so-called multicentric modernities, cf. Wang Ning, *Translated Modernities: Literary and Cultural Perspectives on Globalization and China* (Ottawa and New York: Legas Publishing, 2010).

# HERE IS FOR THY PAINS: TRANSLATING *HAMLET* INTO CHINESE*

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In 1856, a book titled *Da Yingguo zhi*《大英國誌》(*The History of England*) was published in China. It was a Chinese translation by the British missionary, William Muirhead (1822–1900), of Thomas Milner's *The History of England: From the Invasions of Julius Caesar to the Year A.D. 1852* (London, 1853). Many scholars attest that this book contains the first Chinese transliteration of Shakespeare's name: *She-ke-si-bi* 舌克斯畢. But the introduction of his works had to wait nearly a half century, when an anonymous translator published ten stories from Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) in 1903. Lin Shu 林紓 and Wei Yi's 魏易 collaborative translation of the Lambs' twenty tales appeared the next year. The translation of a complete play came much later, with Tian Han's 田漢 rendition of *Hamengleite*《哈孟雷特》(*Hamlet*), published in 1921. In the decades that followed, Shakespeare's works have found favour with academic, publishing, and theatrical circles in China.[1] In what follows, I will first describe the various translations available in Taiwan before discussing some of the more tricky problems confronting Chinese translators of *Hamlet*.

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* Revised and updated from "*Kuxin guyi Hamulei*"〈苦心孤譯《哈姆雷》〉("Translating *Hamlet*: The Heart Way"), an article written in Chinese and published in *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly*《中外文學》33, no. 11 (April 2005): 13–32.

[1] Ching-hsi Perng 彭鏡禧, *Xishuo Shashibiya lunwenji*《細說莎士比亞論文集》(*Perusing Shakespeare: A Collection of Essays*) (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press 國立臺灣大學出版中心, 2004), 287–88.

## [I] Shakespeare Translation in Taiwan

In Taiwan, the name "Shakespeare" is popularly associated with Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋 (1902–1987) and Zhu Shenghao 朱生豪 (1912–1944), each credited with the translation of the "Complete Works of Shakespeare." It took Liang thirty-three years to complete the Herculean task, which he began in Mainland China in 1936 and finished in Taiwan in 1969. Zhu started at the tender age of twenty-three, also in Mainland China, and in ten years finished 31 and a half plays, when he passed away in 1944. Yu Erchang 虞爾昌, a professor of English at National Taiwan University, was then commissioned to translate the rest of the plays—all histories—and the Sonnets. Together, they form a set of the "Complete Works of Shakespeare" alongside Liang's. To this date, these two sets remain popular among Chinese readers in Taiwan. They also exerted a tremendous influence on the Taiwan stage.[2]

In 1980, Taipei's He-lo 河洛 Publishing Company (now defunct) introduced a series entitled the "Complete Works of Shakespeare," which was first published in 1978 by Beijing's People's Literature Press. It turned out to be mainly revisions of Zhu Shenghao's translation, with new translations of some of the history plays, the Sonnets, and other poems that Zhu left untranslated. This series was reproduced in 1981 by Kuo Chia 國家 Publishing House in Taipei. It is not until 2000, when Fang Ping's *Xin Shashibiya quanji*《新莎士比亞全集》(*New Complete Works of Shakespeare*) was issued in Taipei, that Taiwan readers got another edition of Shakespeare's complete works in Chinese.

In the interim, new translations of individual plays were few and far between. Early on, Hsia Yitian's 夏翼天 *Zhuli'ao Kaisa*《朱立奧愷撒》(*Julius Caesar*) and *Kalioulinashi*《卡麗歐黎納士》(*Coriolanus*) were published in a combined volume in 1955. Daniel S. P. Yang's 楊世彭 *Xunhanji*《馴悍記》(*The Taming of the Shrew,*1982) and Hwang Mei-shu's 黃美序 *Lier wang*《李爾王》(*King Lear*, 1987), both appearing in *Zhongwai wenxue*《中外文學》(*Chung-Wai Literary Monthly*) and

[2] For ten years from the mid-1960s, the late Professor Wang Shengshan 王生善, of Chinese Culture University, directed at least nine of Shakespeare's plays: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1966), *King Lear* (1967, 1968, 1969), *Julius Caesar* (1968 – 1977), *The Merchant of Venice* (1969), *Othello* (1969), *Hamlet* (1971), *Macbeth* (1972), *Coriolanus* (1973), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1975). By his own admission, he based his production mainly on Zhu's translation, while also consulting Liang's. Cf. Perng,《細說》, 289–90.

published by National Taiwan University's Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, were translated for production but did not appear in book form. Hence they have drawn relatively little attention.[3]

The last two decades have seen a number of new translations of Shakespeare's plays that seem to suggest different emphases and approaches: academic, performance, and ethnic. All of a sudden, in 1999, three new translations and two anthologies were released, as if by agreement: (1) Lu Chien-chung's 呂健忠 *Makebai*《馬克白》(*Macbeth*), a verse-by-verse translation with a longish introduction and copious notes; (2) Yang Mu's 楊牧 *Baofengyu*《暴風雨》(*The Tempest*), which contains some adaptation; (3) Li Kui-hsien's 李魁賢 *Baofengyu*《暴風雨》(*The Tempest*), the first attempt to render Shakespeare into Hoklo or Mannam (Southern Fujian), the prominent dialect in Taiwan; (4) Bian Zhilin's 卞之琳 *Shashibiya beiju si zhong*《莎士比亞悲劇四種》(*Four Tragedies by Shakespeare*), a re-issue of the 1989 version published in Beijing; and (5) Sun Dayu's 孫大雨 *Shashibiya si da beiju*《莎士比亞四大悲劇》(*Four Great Tragedies by Shakespeare*).[4]

In the twenty-first century, at least six new translations of individual plays have so far appeared. Daniel S. P. Yang's *Zhongxiaye zhi meng*《仲夏夜之夢》(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2001) and《李爾王》(*King Lear*, 2002) are bilingual editions, each with a useful introduction to the play. Another distinct feature of the two translations is that Yang marks his performance version by shading the lines he deleted for his productions; the books also feature many beautiful pictures.[5] In 2008, Li Wen-chi 利文祺 published his new translations of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*. My own translation of *Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice*, and *Measure for Measure*, all accompanied with a critical introduction and heavily annotated, appeared in 2001, 2006, and 2012, respectively.

## [II] Why More Translations?

"Why," I have often been asked, "do you bother to produce another version of Shakespeare's plays when already there exist so many?"

For me at least, the answer could not be simpler: Because Shakespeare is there.

Shakespeare's magical language and dramatic complexity pose a great

[3] Cf. Perng,《細說》, 289.
[4] Cf. Perng,《細說》, 290–91, 315–20.
[5] Cf. Perng,《細說》, 326–27.

challenge to his translators. It is a cliché to say that no translation can ever claim perfection. Still, as a teacher of a course on Shakespeare, I cannot with good conscience recommend Liang's and Zhu's renditions primarily for the very fact that they gave up on Shakespeare's blank verse, not to mention that their dated diction sounds quaint to modern ears. Liang believed that blank verse sounds no different from prose in performance; Zhu found it impossible to render into proper Chinese. As translators, they both surrendered before the battle was fought.[6]

And then, often when I need to discuss the play in Chinese, I find the existing translations unusable. One of the first papers I wrote in Chinese on Shakespeare is about an internal play in *1 Henry 4*, Act 2 scene 5, where Falstaff and Prince Hal square off in a verbal joust, at first a seemingly harmless contest.[7] They take turns playing the King and the Prince. Toward the end of that duel, Prince Hal, in the role of the King his father, sternly repudiates Falstaff, calling him, among many other names, "That villainous abominable misleader of youth." Falstaff, playing Hal, makes one last effort to promote himself, hoping thereby to keep himself in favour:

> ... but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant being as he is old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

To this sales pitch, Hal answers, simply:

> I do; I will.

In that paper I tried to argue that here, both Falstaff and Hal know exactly what is at stake. Even though this may seem just another good-natured play-acting meant to amuse the onstage audience as well as themselves, Prince Hal is actually sending a grave message to Falstaff concerning their future relationship. For both are keenly aware that the crown prince will sooner or later become king, the law enforcer of the land, thus putting an end to their lawlessness.

Just as Falstaff's pleading is suave and politic, so the prince's answer is forceful and resolute; the pungency and sternness of the one contrast strikingly with the sweetness and guile of the other. Prince Hal's reply shows an unshakeable resolution on his part. Moreover, by a skilful use of

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[6] Cf. Perng,《細說》, 429–31.

[7] Perng,《細說》, 85–106.

two modal auxiliaries—I *do*, I *will*—Hal avoids altogether the word *banish*, brought up by Falstaff himself. If we bear in mind the playful context—that they are merely putting up a show so that the madcap prince may "practise and answer" before he actually faces the music from the King, with whom he is scheduled to have an audience the next morning—we can see how, in one light-hearted theatrical stroke, Hal proclaims his intention and determination to distance himself from his boon companion. By "I do," he refers to the here and now, as the "player-king"; by "I will," he points to the future, when he will ascend the throne. And because of the playful context and the omission of the key word "banish," the prince succeeds in sending the unequivocal signal of warning to the fat knight without appearing—to the stage audience at least—cruel and callous in the slightest. It is a *tour de force* performance.

The translations of Hal's terse and crafty answer available to me at the time were the first three of the following (with my back translations in brackets):[8]

1. 我要，我一定要。
   (I do, I certainly do.)
2. 我偏要把他攆走。
   (Quite the contrary, I will banish him.)
3. 我要把他趕走，我一定要把他趕走。
   (I will banish him, I certainly will banish him.)
4. 不行，我主意拿定了。
   (No, I've made up my mind.)

The gravest fault of versions 2 and 3 seems obvious: the unspeakable word *banish* is spoken, resulting in the loss of all the calculated subtlety of the Prince's speech. Version 1 does avoid that harsh, ominous word, but instead of emphasizing both the present state of mind (I *do*) and a mapped-out plan for the future (I *will*), as Hal's words clearly suggest, it only points to the future. Version 4, which came out much later, also misses the important point. Having considered the drama in the context, I rendered Hal's words as

[8] Quoted, respectively, from Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, trans., *Hengli Sishi* (*shang*) 《亨利四世（上）》(*1 Henry 4*) (Taipei: Far Eastern Book Co. 遠東圖書公司, 1986 [1967]); Zhu Shenghao 朱生豪, trans., *Hengli Sishi shangpian* 《亨利四世上篇》(*1 Henry 4*) (Taipei: World Book Co. 世界書局, 1988 [1947]); Yu Erchang 虞爾昌, trans., *Hengli Sishi* (*shang*) 《亨利四世（上）》(*1 Henry 4*) (Taipei: World Book Co. 世界書局, 1964); Fang Ping 方平, trans., *Hengli Sishi* (*shang*) 《亨利四世（上》》(*1 Henry 4*) (Taipei: Owl Publishing House 貓頭鷹出版社, 2000).

我要，我會。

to indicate Prince Hal's intention both at the moment and in the future.[9]

## [III] Translating Wordplays in Hamlet

In translating *Hamlet,* I am concerned with two issues beyond linguistic "correctness." First, since I am dealing with a playtext, which meets its ultimate test in performance, the translation has to come close to the level of fluency in the original (keeping in mind that fluency itself is not necessarily a virtue in the dialogue). Secondly, since *Hamlet* has long become a "classic" reading, I try to preserve as many linguistic features of the play as possible. Thus I attempt to approximate the original in its clarity, ambiguity, conciseness, pomposity, liveliness, and even obtuseness. Having dealt elsewhere with the translation of characters' names, personal pronouns, and such rhetorical devices as anaphora, word order, and parallelism,[10] in the remaining space I will just focus on some witticisms. For, of all the difficulties facing a translator, puns and witticisms certainly rank among the most challenging, and there is no lack of them in Shakespeare.

Known for his penchant for witticism, Hamlet engages in verbal duels with many characters in the play—sometimes just in good spirit, but often to vent his dissatisfaction. The first two lines he speaks set the tone for his relationship with the King throughout the play.

*King.* ……
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—
*Ham*. A little *more than kin*, and *less than kind*.
*King*. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
*Ham*. Not so, my lord, I am *too much in the sun*.
(1.2.64–67, italics added)[11]

I translate it as follows, with italicized characters corresponding to the

[9] Cf. Perng, "*Bian yu chang: Lun yuanzuo yu yizuo de guanxi*"〈變與常：論原作與譯作的關係〉("Permanency and Change"), in *Mo Xiang: Wenxue fanyi pinglunji* 《摸象：文學翻譯評論集》(*Feeling the Elephant: Essays in Literary Translation*), by Chi-hsi Perng 彭鏡禧 (Taipei: Bookman Books 書林出版有限公司, 2009), 13–16.

[10] See Perng, "苦心" and《細說》, 367–422.

[11] The text of *Hamlet* used throughout this paper is that edited by Harold Jenkins in The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1982).

italics in the original:

國王　……
　　可是啊，賢侄哈姆雷，也是我的兒——
哈姆雷　未免*親有餘*而*情不足*。
國王　為什麼烏雲還在籠罩著你？
哈姆雷　怎麼會，大人？父親的*慈暉照得太多啦*！

Etymologically, *kin* and *kind* are related: *kin* means "family, race, kind, nature," from which is derived the word kinship; *kind* means "with the feeling of relatives for each other":[12] *kin* focuses on relationship (cf. *kinship*) and *kind* relates to mutually warm feelings. Hamlet's "more than kin" refers to the closer kinship between him and his uncle, their former "uncle-cousin" relationship now replaced by the "father-son" relationship. Hamlet's characterization of this new relationship as "less than kind" clearly indicates his disgust for his uncle-father-king and his mother's overhasty marriage.[13] Interestingly, the word *kind* is literally "more than kin" by one letter, just as *kin* is "less than kind" by one letter, which by sheer coincidence is reflected in the *Pinyin* Romanization of 親 *qin* and 情 *qing*.

When Claudius, seemingly unruffled by the interruption, continues to show concern for Hamlet, asking him in the next line, "How is it that the clouds still hang on you?" Hamlet snaps a reply with a witticism: "Not so, my lord, I am too much in the sun," where *sun* puns with *son*. In the dramatic context, Hamlet not only answers the king's question on the cloud hanging on him, but again shows his repugnance to the new kinship between them. Besides, since sun often suggests kingship, Hamlet is perhaps also sending the message that the king should keep his hands off him. In any case, to get across the relationships among Hamlet, Claudius, and Gertrude, which is key to the tragedy that ensues, the puns have to be preserved in translation.[14] Most translators take note of Hamlet's punning, but do little to make sense of it in their translations, especially with his second speech. To show what is lost in the Chinese translation, back translation is provided in square brackets below the Chinese.

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[12] *Online Etymology Dictionary* (http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=kin&searchmode=none)
[13] Jenkins, 434–36.
[14] For a more thorough discussion of this, see Perng,《細說》, 263–65.

1. Liang Shiqiu:[15]
   比姪子是親些，可是還算不得兒子。
   (Closer than nephew, but not like son yet.)
   不是的，陛下；我受的陽光太多了。
   (Not so, my lord; I've had too much sunshine.)

In a note Liang suggests that "sun and son sound similar, hence a pun may be intended; the translation aims only at fluency. Its implication has to be found outside of the text, for it is obscure in the original." (211-2)

2. Zhu Shenghao:[16]
   超乎尋常的親族，漠不相干的路人。
   (Extraordinary kinsman, totally unrelated stranger.)
   不，陛下，我已經在太陽裡曬得太久了。
   (No, my lord, I've been exposed to the sun for too long.)

Zhu provides no note for the puns.

3. Bian Zhilin:[17]
   親上加親，越親越不相親！
   (Old ties strengthened with new, resulting in even less closeness.)
   陛下，太陽大，受不了這個熱勁「兒」。
   (Your majesty, the "sun" is so hot, it's unbearable.)

In the second speech, Bian emphasizes the last character "*er*" "兒," a colloquial suffix (often used with a diminutive sense intended) in northern dialect that bears the same shape as the character for "son."

4. Sun Dayu:[18]
   比親戚過了頭，要說親人還不夠。
   (More than kin, yet less than family members.)
   並不，大王；驕陽如湯潑面，油灌耳。
   (Not so, my liege; the proud sun is like [hot] soup splashed on the face, [boiling] oil poured into ears.)

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[15] From Liang, trans., *Hamuleite*《哈姆雷特》(*Hamlet*) (Taipei: Far Eastern Book Co.遠東圖書公司, 1986 [1967]).
[16] From Zhu, trans., *Hanmulaite*《漢姆萊特》(*Hamlet*) (Taipei: World Books Co. 世界書局, 1988 [1947]).
[17] From Bian, trans., *Hamuleite*《哈姆雷特》(*Hamlet*), in《莎士比亞悲劇四種（上）》(Taipei: Owl Publishing House 貓頭鷹出版社, 1999).
[18] From Sun 孫大雨, trans.,《莎士比亞四大悲劇》(Taipei: Linking Publishing 聯經出版, 1999).

Sun's translation of the second speech is truly baffling, in spite of his lengthy annotation, which is not quoted here.

5. Fang Ping:[19]
   說親上加親，倒不如說是陌路人。
   (Rather strangers than old ties strengthened with new.)
   才不呢，殿下，太陽曬得我受不了。
   (Not at all, your majesty, the sun burns so much that I can't bear it.)

6. Li Wen-chi:[20]
   亦太過親密，也太過疏遠。
   (And too intimate, and too distant. )
   不，陛下，我生受太多陽兒。
   (No, Your Majesty, I am having too much "sun son." )

Li remarks in a note that there is an intended pun on *sun/son*, adding that although the term "*yanger*" "陽兒" suggests merely "sun," "if the character 兒 is stressed in reading, one gets the idea of 'I am too much in the son'." (81) In the performance or reading of the line, however, where the speaker has to make a choice between stressing or unstressing the character "兒," the pun is concealed—not to mention the fact that the coined diminutive phrase "陽兒" is hardly intelligible to the audience.

Sometimes the simplest words prove the trickiest. After Hamlet has killed Polonius by mistake, he is brought before the king:

*King*. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?
*Ham*. At supper.
*King*. At supper? Where?
*Ham*. Not where he eats, but where a is eaten.
(4.3.16–19)

Obviously the king is baffled: Since Polonius is dead, how can he be "at supper"? By the ambiguity of the phrase Hamlet again teases the king. Its meaning is only made clear in Hamlet's next speech: "Not where he eats, but where a is eaten."

The Chinese translation has to keep the ambiguity of "At supper" in order for Hamlet's next line to make sense—and to achieve the intended

[19] Fang, trans., *Hamuleite*《哈姆雷特》(*Hamlet*), in《新莎士比亞全集》, ed. Fang Ping (Taipei: Owl Publishing House 貓頭鷹出版社, 2000).
[20] Li Wen-chi 利文祺, trans., *Hamuleite Hamlet*《哈姆雷特 Hamlet》(Taipei: Bohemia Workshop, 2008).

comic effect and sarcasm. But the phrase "At supper" has been variously rendered as "(He is) eating supper" (Liang, Sun, Li), "(He) went to eat" (Zhu), "(He) went to eat supper" (Bian, Fang). The reader as well as the audience would be befuddled by the translation.

My translation tries to stick to the original by avoiding the verb *eat/eating*, which in Chinese necessarily implies an agent.

國王　哈姆雷，你說，波龍尼在哪裡？
哈姆雷　在晚餐。
國王　在晚餐？哪裡？
哈姆雷　不在他吃飯的地方，而在他被吃的地方。[21]

## [IV] Scholarship and Translation

Interpretations of any piece of literature often change from generation to generation in accordance with trends in scholarship, criticism, and in the case of drama, even performance style. These changes may be so significant as to require revisions of old, existing translations. With the popularity of Shakespeare in the academic world and the theatre, new light is constantly being shed upon previously obscure passages. For example, in the duel scene in *Hamlet*, after winning two bouts, Hamlet is described by his mother as being "fat."

*King.* Our son shall win.
Q*ueen.* He's fat and scant of breath….
(5.2.290)

The word "fat" has been variously explained, often unsatisfactorily. Some suggest that this is an insider's joke alluding to the plump figure of Burbage, a member of Shakespeare's troupe who played Hamlet. Most modern editions gloss it as "sweaty" or "out of condition," or explain it away by suggesting that Gertrude says this to pre-empt any embarrassment should Hamlet eventually lose. But Hamlet is leading in the contest, and that with ease; even the king believes that Hamlet will win. So why should Gertrude be so forward as to look for an excuse for his son? Indeed, the fact that Hamlet declines to drink the wine offered by the King seems to indicate that he is not at all sweating or out of breath.

On the basis of the sixteenth-century materials outside of literary texts, David Daniell gives a new interpretation of the word. He points out that in

[21] Ching-hsi Perng 彭鏡禧, trans. and anno., *Hamulei*《哈姆雷》(*Hamlet*) (Taipei: Linking Publishing 聯經出版, 2001).

William Tyndale's translation of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel 1, "fat" has an entirely different meaning from today. For example, Judge 3:29 refers to the Moabites as "all fat, and men of might." Danielle believes that, from the context, "fat" means "very strong and able in combat."[22] This meaning is not found in *OED*, but it makes much better sense: Rather than worried about her son, Gertrude is praising him, echoing Claudius. (At this point, she is likely unaware that the drink has been poisoned.) As to the phrase "scant of breath," Daniell suggests, on the authority of *OED*, that "scant" here means not "deficient" but "sparing." He points out that a similar usage occurs earlier in the play: when Polonius forbids Ophelia to accept Hamlet's "tender" of love, he says sternly: "From this time / Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence." (1.3.120–1)[23] Put these two pieces of evidence together, what Gertrude says is clearly "He is strong and able, and not out of breath." Although diametrically different from the orthodox reading, such an interpretation seems to me much more logical and makes much better sense in the context. On the strength of Daniell's interpretation, I translated the queen's line as "*ta hen zhuang*, *lian qi dou bu chuan*" "他很壯，連氣都不喘."[24]

Centuries of scholarship have helped us understand Shakespeare better, but there is still a long way to go. Therein lies the fun as well as challenge. Translation, which partakes of that scholarship, partakes of that challenge and fun too. Here is for thy pains, translator.

[22] David Daniell, *The Language of Hamlet* (London: University of London, 1995), 22.
[23] Daniell, *Language of Hamlet,* 23.
[24] Perng,《哈姆雷》, 193.

# THE INTERPRETIVE THEORY AND CHINESE-ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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The Interpretive Theory of Translation advanced by the scholars of the Paris School originated in their research on conference interpreting, subsequently developed into the field of written translation, and, in due course, was extended from pragmatic translation[1] to literary translation.[2]

The Interpretive Theory takes translation as a bilingual communicative act with the interpreter as its research object. The scholars of the Paris School have focused their research on the translation process by applying concepts of cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics and other branches of learning concerned in an attempt to reveal the nature of translation.

Interpretation can be universally defined as understanding speech and rewording that understanding in a different language. It emphasizes the importance of relevant world knowledge and background knowledge and interpreting methodology. Methodologically, the process of translating requires an understanding of *sense* (language meaning + cognitive complements) and a formulation of the translation on the basis of the synecdoche principle. The theory of *sense* is based on the fact that different languages use different ways of expressing similar *sense* or concepts. The theory emphasizes that the work of interpreting and translation is an extremely creative undertaking.

The Interpretive Theory defines translation as an art of re-expression based on writing techniques and a knowledge of two languages.[3]

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[1] Jean Delisle, *Translation: An Interpretive Approach* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988).

[2] Liu Heping 劉和平, trans., *Shiyi xuepai kou bi yi lilun*《釋意學派口筆譯理論》*La Traduction Aujourd'hui: Le modèle interprétatif*, by Marianne Lederer (Beijing: China Translation and Publishing Corporation 中國對外翻譯出版公司, 2002).

[3] Delisle, *Translation*, 3.

The principal concepts developed by the Paris School are as follows: (1) Conceptualization in the process of translation, i.e. de-verbalization and re-verbalization. Scholars of this school advocate that in translation, the interpreter/translator has interpreted sound chains and graphic signs into concepts, and then adds cognitive complements to such concepts. That is the stage of de-verbalization, meaning that the words and sentences that gave birth to *sense* are forgotten, while *sense* remains present without any linguistic support. In other words, *sense* is born in the conceptualization of sound chains and graphic signs and in the integration of linguistic meaning with cognitive complements. After the concepts are understood, the interpreter/translator expresses them in the TL. That is the stage of re-verbalization, the formulation of the *sense* in the other language. Re-verbalization is also rewriting—*an art based on writing techniques*.
(2) Proceeding from the idea of conceptualization, they introduced the term *conceptual equivalence*, which means the creation of equivalences whose "accuracy…is measured by *how closely the concepts match*, not by the similarity or dissimilarity of the forms in which the concepts are expressed."[4] It is the translator's duty to express the same or similar concept of the SL in the TL. The conceptual equivalence may be built on the levels of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and texts. The talent of literary translators lies in the creation of contextual, conceptual equivalence and the highest level of conceptual equivalence is textual conceptual equivalence (textual organicity).
(3) In the establishment of translation equivalences, four different levels of language manipulation can be distinguished: (i) observing conventions of form; (ii) performing interpretive analysis: (a) transfer of monosemous terms; (b) retrieval of standard equivalents from the linguistic system; (c) re-creation in context; (iii) interpreting style; (iv) preserving textual organicity.[5]

The above-mentioned concepts are verified by the theory of conceptual structures demonstrated by Lu Guoqiang 陸國強, a famous Chinese scholar of English from Fudan University in his work entitled *A Contrastive Analysis of English-Chinese Conceptual Structures: Unravelling the Mysteries of English*.[6] He declares that the differences

[4] Delisle, *Translation*, 51.
[5] Delisle, *Translation*, 83.
[6] Lu Guoqiang 陸國強, *Ying Han gainian jiegou duibi—Jieshi Yingyu de aomi* 《英漢概念結構對比—揭示英語的奧秘》(*A Contrastive Analysis of English-Chinese Conceptual Structures: Unravelling the Mysteries of English*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press 上海外語教育出版社, 2008).

between English and Chinese are, in the final analysis, differences in ways of thinking. He introduces the concepts of conceptual competence and conceptual performance. According to him, people think in concepts instead of language, and there exists in the human brain a network of conceptual structures of one's native language. In learning a foreign language, one has to make great efforts to build a network of conceptual structures of that foreign language and acquire an ability of conversion between the two different conceptual structures. This theory coincides with or rather confirms the idea of conceptual equivalence developed by the scholars of the Paris School and the two stages in the translation process—de-verbalization and re-verbalization.

With reference to the four different levels of language manipulation and to my experience in Chinese-English translation, I will try to illustrate the notions of conceptual equivalence and of contextual conceptual equivalence in Chinese-English translation, especially concerning the re-creation of contextual, conceptual equivalence and re-expression.

## [I] Level One: Observing Conventions of Form

The first level is that of standard writing practice, which encompasses all the formal rules of presentation that differ from one language to another: conventional abbreviations—of courtesy titles for example; units of time and measurement; forms of numbers and symbols; proper names, place names, and historical names, punctuation and other marks. As well, they include the proper etiquette for administrative and business correspondence and other labels, codes, and conventions used in texts. In translation between languages with alphabetic writing systems, the conventions also include the use of capital letters in titles, word division, spelling, and grammatical rules. That is the level of the "mechanics" of style, which are a matter of knowledge, pure and simple.[7]

## [II] Level Two: Performing Interpretive Analysis

The translator's grasp of the linguistic meaning ranges over every word and utterance in the text. However, not all parts of the text require the same degree of interpretive analysis to be understood and re-expressed. So it is helpful to distinguish three different degrees of interpretive analysis:

[7] Delisle, *Translation*, 84–85.

## (1) Transfer of Monosemous Words (No Analysis Required)

Any text contains some monosemous words that the translator can transpose directly to his target text without referring to the context or the situation. He can transfer them more or less mechanically from one text to the other. Proper names, numbers, and most scientific terms fall into this category of monosemous words that have a purely symbolic value. Monosemous terms have to do with knowledge, not comprehension. Seleskovitch points out that such terms are, for all intents and purposes, isolated in discourse, having no meaning other than their linguistic signification.[8] That is the first degree of difficulty in analysis.

Conceptual equivalence may be built on the levels of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and texts. In other words, the translator has to find the same or similar concept in the TL to substitute for the concept in the SL, in our case, to find the same or similar concept in English to substitute for the concept in the Chinese original instead of translating the words, or the forms in which the concepts are expressed.

### (1.1) Conceptually Equivalent Words

鐵 iron　　鋼 steel　　松樹 pine tree　　玫瑰花 rose
太空梭（穿梭機）space shuttle　　太空船 space ship

### (1.2) Conceptually Equivalent Phrases

(a) Set phrases:

紅茶 black tea (not *red tea*)
濃茶 strong tea (not *thick tea*)
（電視播放的）黃金時間 prime time (not *golden time*)
國際社會 international community (not *international society*)
人行橫道線（斑馬線） zebra crossing
私生子 love child
大家庭 extended family
小家庭 nuclear family

[8] Delisle, *Translation*, 87.

(b) Official translations:

"一國兩制" one country, two systems
"三通" the three direct links—trade, postal, and transportation
三角債 debt chain
精神文明 spiritual civilization; cultural and ethical progress

(c) Conceptually equivalent idioms and proverbs:

一舉兩得/一箭雙雕 to kill two birds with one stone
趁熱打鐵 to strike while the iron is hot
火上加油 to pour oil on the flame
一貧如洗 as poor as a church mouse
健壯如牛 as strong as a horse
病從口入，禍從口出 A closed mouth catches no flies.
物以類聚，人以群分 Birds of a feather flock together.
種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆 As you sow, so shall you reap.

(d) Common signs and short notices:

油漆未乾！ Wet Paint!
小心地滑！ Caution! Wet Floor!
禁止吸煙！ No Smoking!
前方施工，請繞道行駛！ Roadworks Ahead—Detour!

## (2) Retrieval of Standard Equivalents from the Linguistic System (Simple Analysis Required)

We all know that the exact meaning of a word, or a phrase, or even a sentence, is determined by the given context. No context, no text. In Chinese we have a similar saying that goes like this: *ci ben wu yi, yi sui ren sheng* 詞本無義，義隨人生. That is, words do not have meanings; people have meanings for words.

According to Delisle, the purpose of translation is to discover the contextual meaning of words, which do not always combine in the same way. The goal of bilingual discourse analysis is not to learn how to translate one language into another, but how to reproduce the meaning of a text using the expressive resources of another language. From this point of view, translation is a search for equivalent ways of expressing a single intended meaning.[9] That is what Roman Jacobson means by "equivalence

[9] Delisle, *Translation*, 88–89.

in difference," because languages differ in all aspects, not only in sound structures, semantics, or syntax, but also in the way speakers refer to ideas, facts, and events. According to the Interpretive Theory, translators and interpreters work mainly on the basis of an awareness of ideas, and understanding a segment of text means de-verbalizing, which enables the translator to discover modes of expression in the target language that are not interfered with by the original language.

### (2.1) Standard Equivalence

This belongs to the category of the second degree of difficulty in analysis, that is to retrieve standard equivalents from the linguistic system, and for that simple analysis is required. This simplest form of interpretation is practised on words whose meaning can be deduced from the linguistic context and reproduced in the target language using nothing more than knowledge and memory of languages.

In the section of conceptually equivalent phrases, we have an example of "*da jiating*" "大家庭" and "*xiao jiating*" "小家庭," which are turned into "extended family" and "nuclear family" respectively. But how about "大家庭" in the following sentence:

每個*大家庭*都有自己的宗祠，在那裡供奉著這個家族的祖先。

If we make an analysis of "大家庭" in this sentence, common sense tells us that it does not mean "extended family." And the latter part of the sentence "*zai nali gongfeng zhe zhege jiazu de zuxian*" "在那裡供奉著這個家族的祖先" tells us that this "大家庭" refers to "家族." And we know that the English concept "clan" is matched with the Chinese concept "大家庭" in this sentence. That is its contextual meaning. The translation can be:

Every *clan* had its ancestral temple where their ancestors were enshrined and worshipped.

In the above cases, equivalents are fixed. What the translator needs is the linguistic knowledge:

她日夜*護理*他直至恢復。
She *tended* him day and night until he recovered.

他一生都在*護理*這條公路。
He devoted his whole life to *maintaining* this highway.

### (2.2) Explanatory Conceptual Equivalence

In some cases, an explanation is a better way to express the contextual meaning of a word or a phrase than a standard equivalent. This explanation is determined by the surrounding sentences.

> 踏進浙江台州的吳子熊玻璃藝術館，穿過凸凸浮雕的《黃鶴樓》，一件件透明半透明的藝術品呈現眼前，還有那些畫般的色玻璃藝術品。外表毫不起眼的吳子熊*站在那裡*，習慣性地搓搓手。
> Entering Wu Zixiong's Glass Art Gallery in Taizhou, Zhejiang, you will walk past glass artworks by Wu like a glass carving in relief named "the Tower of Yellow Crane", and other transparent and translucent glass and stained glass artworks as beautiful as pictures.
> Wu Zixiong, whose unassuming appearance is unlikely to attract anybody's attention, *stands among his glass artworks*, habitually rubbing his hands.

Considering the sentences around, "*zhan zai nali*" "站在那裡" is translated as "stands among his glass artworks," instead of simply "stood there".

> 你想想，有那麼多人關心我，愛護我，醫生、護士、領導、同事，還有許多*陌生人*。
> You see, many people care about and take care of me: doctors and nurses, superiors and colleagues, and even *lots of people whom I've not yet had the pleasure of knowing*.[10]

## (3) Re-creation in Context (Detailed Analysis Required)

There is a third degree of difficulty in analysis. That is the re-creation of equivalents in the context. Words and expressions do not always have agreed-upon equivalents in the target language. Consequently, the translator cannot rely on his knowledge of linguistic systems alone to match the idea in the original text with a generally accepted and sanctioned form in the target language.[11] Because there is no standard equivalent, a contextual, conceptual equivalent must be found.… This sort of functional equivalence must be analysed in the light of the text as a whole, with cognitive complements, so as to understand the *sense* of the word.

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[10] Ju Zuchun 居祖純, *Gaoji Han Ying yu pian fanyi*《高級漢英語篇翻譯》(*A Course in Chinese-English Translation* (*Advanced Level*)) (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press 清華大學出版社, 2000).
[11] Delisle, *Translation*, 89–90.

In Chinese there are words, such as "*fengcai*" "風采," "*fengqing*" "風情," "*lingqi*" "靈氣," etc., whose meaning is very abstract. These words always take on an unusual meaning in context, which can be an obstacle to understanding. Re-creation in context is the only way out of this impasse. And to search for the contextual, conceptual equivalence in this case, discourse analysis is required.[12] In Lederer's words, it is actualization of the meaning of words or phrases.[13]

> 靈氣：
> 這裡（迪慶藏族自治州）不僅民族風情濃郁，同時還是一片具有生命*靈氣*的寶地，草原廣闊，山環水繞。
> The prefecture is rich in (characterized by) the local colours of national minorities and *scenic landscapes*. There one can see vast expanses of grassland and lofty mountains with rivers and streams running through them.

What is "*shengming lingqi*" "生命靈氣"? What is the meaning of "靈氣" in the sentence? We have to make an analysis based on the context of the sentence. The first part of the sentence is concerned with "*minzu fengqing*" "民族風情," and the second with "*ziran fengguang*" "自然風光." From this we can see that "生命靈氣" here refers to "自然風光" and is turned into "scenic landscapes."

> 人們來到這裡，無異於回到了大自然的環抱，能充分享受純樸的自然*靈氣*。
> In scenic spots like these, one returns to the arms of Nature, *enjoying fresh air and natural beauty*.

In this sentence, we have "靈氣" again. What is the meaning of this "靈氣"? What can one enjoy in the natural surroundings? It is fresh air and natural beauty. So in this sentence, "*ziran lingqi*" "自然靈氣" is turned into "enjoying fresh air and natural beauty."

> 這孩子兩眼透著*靈氣*。
> The boy's eyes were expressive of *a native intelligence*.

> 這地方得天地之*靈氣*，物產豐富，人才薈萃。
> The region *draws spiritual power from the heavens and the earth*, making

[12] Delisle, *Translation*, 90.
[13] Liu, trans.,《釋意學派口筆譯理論》, 55–59.

it rich in natural resources and a breeding ground for talented individuals.

風采：
《院士*風采*——中國優秀科學家肖像、手跡集》
Photographs and Autographs of China's Outstanding Scientists: *Images and Integrity* of Academicians

In this translation, "風采" is translated as "images and integrity," in which "images" matches "photographs," and "integrity" matches "autographs." That is re-creation of equivalents in the light of the whole text or the whole book. This is an example of re-creation of contextual, conceptual equivalence.

神州*風采*
Across the Land

What is meant by "風采" in this phrase? This is a Chinese Central Television programme which introduces people, places, and important events in China's history. The English translation is done according to the context of the programme.

長城公司在前進道路上所取得的一次又一次的成功，從一個側面展示了社會主義市場經濟的大潮中，中國鄉鎮企業的迷人*風采*。
The success achieved by the Great Wall Incorporation reflects in one way or another *the rapid rise* of the Chinese township industrial enterprises in the development of the socialist market economy.

In this sentence, "風采" is turned into "the rapid rise."

鴉片戰爭和太平天國時期，外國侵略者不止一次在此駐軍，因此，歷史上豫園屢經災難，許多原有的*風采*不復存在。
During the Opium War and the Taiping Revolution, foreign aggressors stationed their troops in the garden more than once. As a result, the garden has lost much of its original *grace* having undergone repeated plunderings throughout its history.

其文章別具一格，極*有風采*。
His writings have *an elegant style* of their own.
風情：
《西湖*風情*畫》：*Beauties and Views of West Lake*

This is the title of a picture album in which pictures of beautiful

women from China's history are in the foreground. Those beauties, of course, are related in one way or another with West Lake. The backgrounds of the pictures are all famous and beautiful views of West Lake. So "風情" is rendered as "beauties and views" through a discourse analysis based on the content of the whole album—another typical example of re-creation of contextual, conceptual equivalence.

塞外*風情*
*Lifestyle* north of the Great Wall

這條大街的店鋪門面還保留著昔日的*風情*。
The shop fronts in this street are still kept in its former *style*.

More examples:

《漢語漢英*國情*詞典》
*A Chinese-English Dictionary* with Cultural Background Information

This is a dictionary for foreign learners of Chinese of which I am the English editor responsible for English translation and reading. The dictionary contains those Chinese words with cultural connotations. The original title of the dictionary given by the Chinese editors is *Hanyu Hanying guoqing cidian*《漢語漢英國情詞典》. We know the special term "*guoqing yuyanxue*" "國情語言學" comes from Russian. In English there is no equivalent expression. The nearest to it in English is "Cultural Linguistics." If literally translated, "國情" is "national condition" or "situation in a country." Of course neither is proper. Through analysis we know that those culturally loaded words supply the learner with cultural background information. So "國情" here is turned into "with cultural background information." The executive editor of the Commercial Press thought that the English translation better explains the nature and function of the dictionary, and changed the Chinese title into *Zhongguo yuyan wenhua beijing Hanying shuangjie cidian*《中國語言文化背景漢英雙解辭典》, a back-translation of my English title.

The contextual, conceptual equivalence also includes Intertextual Meaning. By intertextual meaning, we mean that the meaning of words or phrases cannot be deduced from the text we are translating. We have to trace the meaning of the words or phrases concerned to some other texts.

杭州的春天，*淡妝濃抹*，無不相宜。
*In rain or shine*, Hangzhou looks its best in spring.

Here in this sentence "*dan zhuang nong mo*" "淡裝濃抹" does not mean "lightly or heavily made up" (or decorated). The phrase comes from Su Dongpu's 蘇東坡 poem about West Lake in Hangzhou:

水光瀲灩晴方好，
山色空朦雨亦奇；
欲把西湖比西子，
淡妝濃抹總相宜。
　蘇東坡《飲湖上初晴後雨》
The shimmering ripples delight the eye on sunny days;
The dimming hills present a rare view in rainy haze.
West Lake may be compared to the Beauty Xi Shi at her best,
Beautiful whether richly adorned or plainly dressed.

That is why in the English translation, "in rain or shine" is used, meaning West Lake is beautiful whether it rains or shines.

設計者富於幻想地將 11 個大小不一、高低錯落的球體從蔚藍的空中串聯至如茵的綠色草地上，而兩顆紅寶石般晶瑩奪目的巨大球體被高高托起，整個畫面渾然一體，充滿了「*大珠小珠落玉盤*」的詩情畫意。
The designers had imaginatively arranged 11 spheres in order of size, hanging like a string of pearls from high up in the blue sky down to a carpet of green lawn, while two colossal, dazzling ruby-like spheres are propped on high. The harmonious entity of the tower presents *a picture of pearls, big and small, seemingly falling down from top to bottom*, a scene full of poetic and artistic imagination.[14]

"*Da zhu xiao zhu luo yu pan*" "大珠小珠落玉盤" ("Pearls, big and small, fall into a jade bowl," referring to the tune produced from the *pipa*, a plucked string instrument with a fretted fingerboard, also known as the Chinese lute.) is a line from a poem entitled "*Pipaxing*"〈琵琶行〉by Bai Juyi 白居易, a famous Tang poet. "落玉盤" is properly translated as "falling down from top to bottom" instead of "falling into a jade bowl," which will puzzle the English reader.

……因為，科學是永恆的，藝術是永恆的！
…, for science is long as art is!

[14] Sun Wanbiao 孫萬彪 and Wang Enming 王恩銘, *Gaoji fanyi jiaocheng*《高級翻譯教程》(*An Advanced Course in Translation*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press 上海外語教育出版社, 2008).

As we know, there is a Latin proverb "Ars longa, vita brevis," the English translation of which is: "Life is short, but art is long." For this reason, the original is not translated as "Science is long, so is art." Instead, we use "Science is long as art is!" because "science is long" comes from "art is long" in this ancient Latin proverb.

It is often difficult to be sure that a text contains a literary or cultural allusion; it is even more difficult to convey it by means of an equivalent; however, the most difficult task of all is, as the above examples have shown, to make the translation comprehensible to the reader.

Seleskovitch said in his *foreword* to Jean Delisle's *Translation: An Interpretive Approach*: "…with the exception of a few set phrases, translation equivalents are creations… and translation consists of the creation of equivalences."[15]

It is to be noted that in all translations there must be correspondence in words, but only by creating equivalents in *sense* can a translator produce a speech or text. In view of this, any translation can be regarded as a mixture of correspondences and equivalents.

> 與*玻璃藝術*結緣，並不是人力所控制的。*十六*歲那年，*吳*子熊*離開澡堂*。"那時候到*許多工廠*去找*工作*，都不招我。後來*海門玻璃廠招工人*，當時的*廠長*在*門口問我*想不想做，就這樣便開始與玻璃打交道。"*從此*，*吳*子熊成為海門*玻璃廠第一代*的玻璃刻花工人，*玻璃*也成為他人生中*唯一的東西*。
>
> It must be fate that Wu became attached to *glass art*. When he was *sixteen*, *Wu left* the *bathhouse*. "I went to *many factories* hunting for a *job*, but was rejected time and again. Once I went to *Haimen*, a district in Taizhou, in Zhejiang province, where a *glass-house was recruiting workers*. The *director* was standing *at the factory gate and asked me* whether I would like to work at his factory. That is how I became attached to glass." *Since then Wu* joined *the first generation* of *glass-cutters* at the factory, and *glass* became *the only thing* he has treasured in his life.

The words in italics are correspondences in Chinese and English, including proper names, material nouns, numbers, and set phrases. However, in the translation, there are more contextual, conceptual equivalents, and changes of sentence structure in addition to background information.

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[15] Delisle, *Translation*, viii.

## [III] Level Three: Interpreting Style

Style is how something is written. As Riffaterre said, "The message expresses; the style stresses." According to Delisle, style is basically equivalent to its form. The translator respects the form by adhering to all the rules governing codified languages and by rendering the affective aspects in certain types of texts, or both. An insurance policy or a collective agreement is not written in the same way as a tourist brochure, an advertisement, or an administrative report. In its broadest sense, style is simply respect for the constraints imposed by the four elements: the author, the subject, the vector (genre of text, type of language used), and the intended audience.[16] Therefore, the translator must comply with certain stylistic requirements to communicate effectively.

To illustrate language manipulation in the translation of style, we can see how equivalence can also be built on the levels of sentences and paragraphs.

### (1) Contextually and Conceptually Equivalent Sentences

There are two ways to achieve conceptually equivalent sentences. One is to retrieve English sentence patterns conceptually equivalent to the Chinese original:

她雙手叉腰。
Her hands rested on her hips.

這個強盜天不怕，地不怕。
The robber was a fool for danger.

在這千鈞一髮之際，一步走錯，全盤皆輸。
Everything was now suspended by a hair, a false step ruining all.

這個戰場至今還保持著當年的舊觀。
The battlefield has not been touched.

杭州西溪濕地一開放就遊人如鯽。
When first open to the public, the Xixi Wetland Park in Hangzhou was bursting/swarming with visitors.

[16] Delisle, *Translation*, 96–97.

全區有豐富的水產、森林和礦產。
The region is naturally rich in fisheries, forests, and minerals.

心病尚需心藥醫，
名醫難治相思病。
Where love is the case,
The doctor's an ass.

The other way is to construct contextually and conceptually equivalent sentences. That is restructuring or reconstructing.

A well-known quotation from Nida is: "To preserve the content of the message, the form must be changed."[17] Nida goes on to explain: "If all languages differ in form (and this is the essence of their being different languages), then quite naturally the forms must be altered if one is to preserve the content."[18] Here "form" is generally understood as methods of expression and sentence structure. As far as the translation of sentences is concerned, "form" of course refers to sentence structure.

The theory of the Interpretive Approach emphasizes the art of *re-expression*. Jean Delisle explains that it is the meaning of a message that is transferred from one language to another, and the transfer is accomplished by analysing and then reconstructing *semantic relationships*.[19] The *semantic relationships* here refer to sentences in their narrow sense, and to the whole text in their broad sense. The reconstruction of the text is realized, first of all, by the reconstruction of sentences.

Since English and Chinese are two widely different languages both in their methods of expression and in sentence structure, so in translation structural changes are necessary in most cases.

Then what is the basic difference in sentence structure between English and Chinese?

Chinese sentences are characterized by the use of parataxis. This Chinese sentence pattern is known as "serial clauses" or "run-on sentences." That is, a Chinese sentence may consist of several fully structured simple sentences connected one after another in time sequence or logical order by commas. So this structure of Chinese sentences is commonly compared to waves, known as "wave-like" structure. That is, a Chinese sentence is like a vast expanse of rolling waves, rushing on one after another.

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[17] Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 5.
[18] Nida and Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 5.
[19] Delisle, *Translation*, 3.

English sentences are characterized by the use of hypotaxis. The relationship between clauses is dependent or subordinate, linked by connectives or conjunctions. Those clauses are called embedded clauses. The subordinate structure includes clauses, non-finite verb forms, and prepositional phrases. Sentences are long and compact with strict logic. So this structure of English sentences is commonly compared to a tree, known as "tree-like" structure. That is, an English sentence is like a huge tree, with a lot of branches and sub-branches growing out here and there from the trunk or bigger branches.

The key to success in translation between Chinese and English is to change the sentence structure. In C-E translation, you have to change the wave-like structure into the tree-like structure, and in E-C translation, it is the other way round. The change of structure in translation has to avoid so-called Chinglish or Europeanized Chinese.

The above-mentioned phenomena are known to most of us. The problem is how to make this structural change.

Now let us look at how the wave-like structure of the Chinese sentence is changed into the tree-like structure of the English sentence.

境内*西湖如明鏡*，千峰凝翠，洞壑幽深，風光綺麗。
*West Lake is like a mirror*, embellished all around with green hills and deep caves of enchanting beauty.

The Chinese sentence consists of four independent clauses, or four layers of waves. In translation, we transform one independent clause in Chinese into the main clause in English. In other words, we make one wave in this expanse of waves into the trunk of the tree, then put all the other waves into various kinds of subordinate structures in English.

*天目山*林深人少，古樹掩映，清泉石上流，霧生半山腰，*如仙境一般*。
*Mt. Tianmu*, densely forested and scarcely populated, *is like a fairyland* where heavy fogs envelop halfway up the mountain and clear streams flow along the valleys.

The Chinese sentence consists of four independent clauses. The English sentence is a simple sentence with one main clause and three modifiers, one after another.

## [IV] Level Four: Preserving Textual Organicity

A text develops according to an internal logic that gives it coherence. In translation, the sentences must be organized so as to follow the

development of the thought in the original text. Textual organicity is the framework of a text; it is an inherent quality of a text, referring to the hierarchical interdependence of all the elements of a text. So the organic level is that of the general dynamics of a passage.[20]

In more concrete terms, textual organicity has to do with the links between sentences, the clarity of relationships between elements of information, and the intent underlying the development of ideas or emotions (and not the ideas or emotions themselves) in the various types of writing (such as argumentative, descriptive, narrative, and factual). It simply is not enough to correctly translate each word, sentence, or stylistic effect in a text, for the message must form an organic, living whole.[21] To achieve textual organicity is to achieve textual contextual equivalence.

In C-E translation, paragraphs have to be reorganized because of differences in paragraph structures and in the ways sentences are connected and paragraphs are joined. The structural changes in this respect are necessitated by the dynamics of a message engendered by the internal movement of the text.

So it is better to translate paragraph by paragraph, a process in which paragraphs may be reorganized in various ways.

The reorganization of paragraphs may be for various reasons and may take various forms—for sentence connection within the paragraph, for logic between sentences, for the different ways of distribution of information elements in the paragraph, for concentration of signifieds, for the re-arrangement of paragraphs according to the different conventions in paragraph composition, or for the connection between paragraphs.

> 兩千年前，中華民族的祖輩曾以其非凡的智慧和力量，在*古老的黃土地上*築起了舉世聞名的萬里長城。兩千年後，又有一群勇於開拓的*人們*，正用他們的智慧和力量，在風光秀麗、氣候宜人的浙江柳市，創造了一個新的奇跡——（推出片名）《*崛起的長城*—浙江長城電器實業公司紀實》。
>
> Two thousand years ago, the ancestors of the Chinese, using their extraordinary intelligence and fortitude, constructed the world-famous Great Wall *in north China*. Today, 2000 years later, their enterprising *descendants* are working new miracles *in south China*. Zhejiang Great Wall Electric Appliances Incorporation is rising like a new star at Liushi in Wenzhou, a town with beautiful landscapes and mild climate in Zhejiang province.

[20] Delisle, *Translation*, 102.
[21] Delisle, *Translation*, 102.

In the translation, "*zai gulao de huang tudi shang*" "在古老的黃土地上" is rendered as "in north China," and in the latter part of the paragraph, "in south China" is added. And "*renmen*" "人們" is turned into "descendants" so as to be correspondent to the former "*zubei*" "祖輩" (ancestors). In this way, the sentences implicitly connected in the paragraph in the original are explicitly and closely connected, which achieves conceptual equivalence on the paragraph level.

> 杭州市屬 3 市 2 縣境內，北有超山，西有天目山，溯錢塘江而上，有富陽鸛山，桐廬瑤琳仙境、桐君山和嚴子陵釣台，建德靈棲三洞，新安江「千島湖」等名勝，形成一個以西湖為中心的廣闊旅遊區。
> The beauty spots in the vicinity of Hangzhou form a vast area for tourists, with West Lake at its centre. To the north of Hangzhou stands Chaoshan Hill, and to the west Mount Tianmu. Going up the Qiantang River one finds oneself at Stork Hill near the Terrace where Yan Ziling, a hermit of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220), loved to go angling by the Fuchun River in Fuyang City. Nearby are the Yaolin Wonderland in Tonglu County, Tongjun Hill and the three Lingqi Caves in Jiande County, and finally the Thousand-Islet Lake which is at the source of the Xin'anjiang River.

In the translation, "*xingcheng yige yi Xihu wei zhongxin de guangkuo lüyou qu*" "形成一個以西湖為中心的廣闊旅遊區" at the end of the paragraph is put at the very beginning of the English paragraph as a topic sentence. That is a major difference in paragraph structure between English and Chinese. The English paragraph often has a topic sentence at the beginning while the Chinese paragraph normally gives a summing-up at the end. The translation is reorganized according to the norm of English paragraphs as well as to the different ways of redistribution of elements of information, which achieves conceptual equivalence on the paragraph level.

> 封建社會的家規就是一個家庭的法律，在家裡丈夫打妻子，父親打兒子是合法的，別人無權干涉，兒女們生活包括婚姻都由家長主宰。
> In feudal times family regulations were laws in a family in which husbands dominated their wives and fathers their children, including their choice of spouse. No one had the right to interfere if a husband beat his wife or a father beat his son, for these actions were regarded as legal.

If we compare the English translation with the Chinese original, we can see that the whole paragraph has been re-structured and rewritten. Signifieds are concentrated in fewer signifiers than in the original.

事實上，在現代國家中，絕對不受外來影響的固有文化是不存在的。一位外國的著名歷史學家曾經寫道：「任何國家的文明，來自外來影響的產物總是多於本國的發明創造。如果有人要把英國文化中任何受外國影響或來源於外國的東西剔除掉，那麼，英國的文化就所剩無幾了。」

*事實也近乎如此。……*

In fact, there is not any native civilization on earth that does not bear traces of external influence. A noted American historian once wrote: "The civilization of any country is much more the product of external influences than of native invention. If one subtracted everything from the English culture that had foreign roots or antecedents, there would be little left."

*History bears proof of the above statement. …*

Taking the whole paragraph as a translation unit, it is easier for translators to take into consideration the coherence between paragraphs. With proper coherence between paragraphs one after another, the coherence of the whole text is realized.

The second paragraph in Chinese begins with "*shishi ye jinhu ruci*" "事實也近乎如此." The English translation is "History bears proof of the above statement." The use of "history" and "the above statement" closely links the two paragraphs. "The above statement" of course refers to the above quotation. You will see the different effect of connection between paragraphs if it is literally translated as "The fact is almost like that."

As we have mentioned above, the rewriting is required, first of all, by the differences in sentence structure and paragraph structure between Chinese and English, and secondly, by the differences in textual conventions.

Conventions of form are institutionalized and considered obligatory by the speakers of the language to which they apply. By conforming to them, one implicitly affirms one's allegiance to the community and demonstrates the desire to optimize the process of written communication. In that sense, conventions of form fall within the scope of discourse analysis.[22]

〈朝花惜拾〉

*顧名思義*，這是一束再放的花朵。*它*曾經綻開在*大中學生*的教材裡，*搖曳在中文*老師的講義上，*燦爛*在無數學子的誦讀中。春光似水，十年過去，*也許五年或十五年，甚而至於更多一些年頭*，昔日少年已是*今天的白領階層*，抑或社會各個階層各種角色的扮演者，對於曾經在課堂上讀過的文章，至*今餘香在口*，每能憶起，*那同學少年，那花樣*

22 Delisle, *Translation*, 85.

*季節*，那*響徹幽雅校園*的琅琅之聲，無一不令人*心醉*。於是有一天，我們這一套書的編者便作如是想，假使將那十年前讀過的名篇*重編一書*，*新加評注*，讓舊的讀者以*新的心境*再讀一遍，*連同已逝的韶華一併溫習*，不亦樂乎？（《朝花惜拾・序》）

This is the first paragraph of the "Foreword" to the series *A Retrospective of Chinese Literature*. Let us have a look at the translation:

*Cherished Dawn Blossom: A Retrospective of Chinese Literature*

The title of this bilingual collection, *Cherished Dawn Blossoms*, reminds one of a bouquet of reopened blossoms. These blossoms of Chinese literature were once in full bloom in much-read books, in teachers' curricula and on the lips of students. Time flows like water in a river. Ten or more years hence, those students would have grown up, but whatever positions they might hold in society today, they will never forget those beautiful pieces of prose, poetry and stories in their old school books. The sound of the classroom recitals of those masterpieces still echoes in their ears, making them nostalgic for those school days.

One day, an idea suddenly hit us, the editors of this series—wouldn't it be wonderful to pick up those cherished blossoms and arrange them into bouquets for our readers who would probably look at them again from a new perspective, a matured aesthetic judgment?

—"Foreword" to *Cherished Dawn Blossoms*[23]

If we make a comparison between the original and the translation, we can see the marked differences in addition and deletion of words and phrases, in the change of ways of expressions, in the sentence structure by combination or division and in the use of connectives, in the division of paragraphs, and, most important of all, in the different reader-orientations. Through rewriting the translated text is an equivalent to the original conceptually, which achieves contextual, textual equivalence to the original.

## [V] Conclusion

The four levels of language manipulation describe that phase of the translation process in which equivalences are developed. However, the order in which they are presented here does not reflect successive stages in the cognitive process. The train of conscious and subconscious thought is

[23] *Cherished Dawn Blossoms—A Retrospective of Chinese Literature, Zhao hua xi shi*《朝花惜拾》(Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press 外語教學與研究出版社, Chinese Literature Press 中國文學出版社, 1998).

difficult to follow; a stylistic effect can be perceived either before or after the semantic and syntactic relationships are grasped.[24]

As we have mentioned above, in the final analysis, the differences in language are the differences in ways of thinking. It is the translator's duty to express the same or similar concept of the SL in the TL. In translation, conceptual equivalence, and, most importantly, the contextual, conceptual equivalence should be achieved, and re-expression or rewriting should be the basic strategy and the conceptual textual equivalence should be the criteria for Chinese-English translation.

*Author's note:* All the examples in the article are the author's translations except those otherwise indicated.

[24] Delisle, *Translation*, 106–107.

# ON THE UNIT OF TRANSFER IN TRANSLATION

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## [I] Introduction

The problem of the translation unit ranks among the most complicated problems of translation theory. In translating, we always hope to find a unit which on the one hand, can be transferred freely and reciprocally between two languages, and on the other, can supply all necessary convenience for our translation. This inevitably sounds like a contradiction in terms, since larger units are convenient for analysis but not for transfer, and smaller units are easy for transfer but hard for analysis. There is no easy reconciling of the two. Our solution is to divide the translation unit into two: an analytic unit and a transfer unit. Since a translation is generally done on a textual level, they are also called analytic and transfer units respectively in textual translation. I have illustrated in my previous papers the feasibility of text being the analytic unit in textual translation.

What I am going to propose and illustrate in this paper is that the clause is the basic transfer unit in textual translation, which is, in a certain sense, a contribution to Eugene Nida's investigation on the clause in translation. Nida[1] points out that there are three types of difficulties for correspondence in clause structure in translation: (1) significance of the order of component parts, (2) type of clauses, and (3) the way in which clauses are combined. He has not solved these problems and only touched on the issues of markers and sequences in translation.[2]

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[1] Eugene Nida and Charles Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1984, 2004), 209.

[2] Nida and Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 146–47.

## [II] Analytic Unit and Transfer Unit in Textual Translation

### (1) Analytic Unit

An analytic unit of translation is a piece of relatively complete linguistic material which can help us analyse properly the nonlinguistic factors that exist within and without the text, and those that belong to the understanding of the psychological device of language. The role of text as the analytic unit of translation is determined by the functions it possesses. Text is mainly a unit of meaning, which has been discussed by both linguists and translation theorists, e.g. Halliday[3] and Hatim.[4] A text is treated as the product of the process of constructing utterances. With relative wholeness, it is a sequence of sentences for making a topic and performing an identifiable communicative function. The range of the study of text does not only involve the relationship between the elements within a sentence, but also the relationship between sentences and the environment of language use, the rules and the roles of the user's background knowledge, and the understanding of the psychological device of language. Taking text as the analytic unit of translation, we should analyse such semantic and pragmatic factors of the original so as to maintain its general meaning.

### (2) Transfer Unit

The transfer unit in textual translation is one that has a corresponding identity in the source language, but its components do not necessarily exist in the target language. I suggest that the clause be the basic transfer unit of textual translation. English clauses can be divided into three types according to their form: finite clauses, non-finite clauses, and verbless clauses. The sentence structure of the Chinese language is rather loose; it does not have many grammatical markers, and therefore a Chinese clause refers to a linguistic form that has pauses both before and after it and that has a sentence intonation. Generally speaking, it is an S-V structure; it can be a verb or a verbal phrase, or even a noun or noun phrase. Not only in English, but also in Chinese, a clause can be regarded as an abstract sentence. It is complete in meaning even if it is taken from a sentence. A

[3] M. A. K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985).
[4] Basil Hatim, *Communication across Cultures: Translation Theory and Contrastive Text Linguistics* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Education Press, 2001).

sentence can be made up of one or many clauses. Its functions are characterized by strong cohesion and flexible structures. It is by the various types of construction of clauses that texts can be rich and colourful.

The supposition of the clause as the transfer unit of text translation is based on the consideration of the functions of a text, but this does not mean that words, word groups, and phrases cannot be the transfer unit of translation. In fact, the transfer of clauses also involves the transfer of words and phrases. This transfer can be made simultaneously by the brain and the psychological device. In practice, no translator pieces together the clauses and sentences when they start translating. Some changes can be made in the clause according to the demands of text analysis, but the words of a clause are always dependent on the latter.

Lü Shuxiang[5] 呂叔湘 analyses the clauses of Chinese like this: "*Ci*, *duanyu*, *baokuo zhuwei duanyu*, *dou shi yuyan de jingtai danwei*, *beiyong danwei*; *er juzi ze shi yuyan de dongtai danwei*, *shiyong danwei*. 詞, 短語, 包括主謂短語, 都是語言的靜態單位, 備用單位; 而句子則是語言的動態單位, 使用單位." ("This static unit of language is the morpheme, word, phrase (including s-v phrase) and phrasal words that exist between the word and the phrase. The basic unit is the morpheme. The dynamic unit of language is the clause and sentence (of one or more clauses), and the clause is the basic unit.") He further states that the static unit of a language is a unit in store and the dynamic unit is the unit in use. The two pairs of concepts—static vs. dynamic and in use vs. in store have made clear the respective functions of the clause, words, and phrase, and the dialectical relationships between them. Other Chinese scholars, such as Zhang Bojiang and Fang Mei,[6] Chen Changlai,[7] and Xu Jiujiu,[8] have also made investigations into Chinese texts and clauses from functional

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[5] Lü Shuxiang 呂叔湘, *Hanyu yufa fenxi wenti*《漢語語法分析問題》(*Analytical Questions in Chinese Grammar*) (Beijing: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 1979), 28.

[6] Zhang Bojiang 張伯江 and Fang Mei 方梅, *Hanyu gongneng yu yufa yanjiu*《漢語功能與語法研究》(*Functions of Chinese and Grammatical Studies*) (Beijing: Press of China Social Sciences 中國社會科學院文庫, 2007).

[7] Chen Changlai 陳昌來, *Xiandai Hanyu dongci de jufa yuyi shuxing yanjiu*《現代漢語動詞的句法語義屬性研究》(*On the Categories of the Syntactical Meaning in Modern Chinese*) (Shanghai: Xuelin Press 學林出版社, 2002).

[8] Xu Jiujiu 徐赳赳, *Xiandai Hanyu pianzhang huizhi yanjiu*《現代漢語篇章回指研究》(*Anaphora in Chinese Texts*) (Beijing: Press of China Social Sciences 中國社會科學院文庫, 2003).

and cognitive perspectives. The clause is considered a basic unit for textual analyses.

M. A. K. Halliday[9] claims that the basic unit of text is the clause, and he identifies its three functions as: the ideational function, the interpersonal function, and the textual function, which are not possessed by either the word or phrase. The above views have proved our correctness and feasibility in choosing the clause as the basic transfer unit in textual translation.

## [III] Forms of Transfer between E–C Clauses and Complementary Theories

### (1) Forms of Transfer between E–C Clauses

An English clause differs from a Chinese clause in that the former stresses hypotaxis and the latter puts more emphasis on parataxis; in English, there are a variety of grammatical markers which are absent in Chinese. If we want to transfer the clauses expertly between the two languages when we translate, we will have to know the similarities between the clauses in English and Chinese both in function and in nature, and we should not be confused by the great difference in grammatical presentation. We can see the examples below. The italicized parts are the English clauses and their Chinese equivalents; for the sake of convenience symbols are used in the brackets that follow the clauses to show which type the clause belongs to.

*Example 1*
Do you know that *John is going to China in five days*. ($c^a$)
你知道*約翰五天後要去中國嗎*？

*Example 2*
She telephoned *to ask for an interview*. ($c^{b1}$)
她打了電話，*要求接見*。

*Example 3*
*Her aunt having left the room*, I declared my passionate love for Celia. ($c^{b2}$)
*當她嬸嬸離開屋子後*，我便向塞莉表示了我對她的熱戀之情。

[9] Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 179.

*Example 4*
We left the room and went home, *the job finished*. ($c^{b3}$)
*工作完後*，我們離開屋回家去。

*Example 5*
I don't like *your interrupting us*. ($c^{b4}$)
我們不高興*你打擾我們*。

*Example 6*
I am surprised *to find you here*. ($c^{c1}$)
發現*你在這兒*，真令我大吃一驚。

*Example 7*
*Whether right or wrong*, he always comes off worst in argument. ($c^{c2}$)
*不管是有理或無理*，他在爭辯中老吃虧。

The first example belongs to the $c^{a}$ type, which refers to an English clause that involves changes of gender and number that can be modified by modal verbs and auxiliary verbs. Clauses of this kind are traditionally called finite clauses. Examples 2 to 5 belong to the $c^{b}$ type, which is different from the $c^{a}$ type, and contains the following variations: infinitive ($c^{b1}$), —ing participles ($c^{b2}$), —ed participles ($c^{b3}$), and gerund ($c^{b4}$). All these clauses are regarded in traditional grammar as phrasal elements, but if they are taken out from a sentence, analysed and transferred, we will find that they have the functions of the clause. This can be proved by the above examples. The third type is the c type which does not contain a verb. In certain cases, the verb ($c^{c1}$) and the subject ($c^{c2}$) in these clauses can be both omitted. The omitted verbs and subjects can be resumed according to the meanings of the sentences. For example, "to find you here" in Ex. 6 and "whether right or wrong" in Ex.7 can be extended to "find you (are) here" and "whether (he is) right or wrong." The above three types of clauses often appear within the same text or even the same sentence.

*Example 8*
Springing to her feet,^ her face wrathful,^ gray-green eyes blazing,^ she faced the grossness of the house detective squarely.^//[10]

Chinese Version:
她跳了起來，^怒容滿面^灰綠色的眼睛射出怒火，^直瞪著肥胖的偵探長。^//

[10] Arthur Hailey, *Hotel* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965).

The original is a sentence which contains four clauses; the translation is also a sentence containing four clauses. The formula of transfer can be illustrated as:

$$S^E \rightarrow c^{b1}\, c^{c1}\, c^{c1}\, c^a$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$S^C \rightarrow c^1\, c^2\, c^3\, c^4$$

$S^E$ is an English sentence, $\Downarrow$ is the symbol of transfer, $S^C$ is a Chinese sentence. English and Chinese texts can be represented by $T^E$ and $T^C$. ^ is the dividing line of clause. Here is another example:

*Example 9*

We gazed,^ as the ship slid by^ and the humps receded into the darkness^ and even the lights were obscured by the shoulder of a hill,^ never to be seen by us again,^// so peaceful and secret, so self-contained.^//[11]

Chinese Version:

我們凝視著，^船緩緩地滑駛而去，^島的輪廓消失在黑暗中，^連微笑也為一個小山肩遮掩，^在我們的視野中永遠消失了。^//多麼寧靜、隱秘、深沉！^//

The formula of transfer is:

$$T^E = S^1 \rightarrow c^a\, c^a\, c^a\, c^a\, c^{b1} + S^2 \rightarrow c^2$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$T^C = S^1 \rightarrow c^1\, c^2\, c^3\, c^4\, c^5 + S^2 \rightarrow c^c$$

The translation has kept the structure of the original on the whole.

### (2) Nexus: Complement for the Clause Theory

It is not difficult to find in our translation practice that some non-clause phrases in an original text could appear in the form of clauses in the translation. To explain this, we can borrow O. Jesperson's nexus theory, which can help extend and perfect our theory of transfer of clause in translation.[12]

Jesperson noticed the various functions of the clauses long ago. In his theory, he identifies not only finite verbal nexus, but also non-finite verbal

[11] Vita Sackville-West, *No Signposts in the Sea* (London: Virago Press, 1985).

[12] Otto Jesperson, *The Philosophy of Grammar* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1924).

nexus, verbless nexus, and even verbal substances. For example, in the sentence "I heard of the doctor's arrival," the noun phrase "the doctor's arrival" is an implicated sentence. "Arrival" is a verbal noun. The meaning of the phrase could be interpreted as "I heard that the doctor has arrived," ("*Wo tingshuo yisheng yijing lai le* 我聽說醫生已經來了"). Verbal nouns differ from non-verbal nouns in nature, which can be seen in the contrast between the phrases "the doctor's arrival" and "the doctor's house." The latter is only a phrase. This can be proved in C–E translation.

*Example 10*

今沛公先破入咸陽，毫不敢有所進，封閉宮室，還軍霸上，以待*大王來*。

English Version:

The governor of P'ei has defeated Ch'in and entered Hsien-yang ahead of all others. He has not dared to lay a finger on the slightest thing, but has closed up and sealed the palace rooms and returned to Pa-shang to encamp and await *your arrival*.[13]

In the original "*daiwang lai* 大王來" is a clause, but it is transferred into an English verbal noun nexus "your arrival."

Jesperson further states that some prepositional phrases also have implicated meaning. For instance, in the sentence "I sat at work in the school room with the window open," the prepositional phrase "with the window open" differs in meaning from "near the open window." This kind of phenomenon can be proved by examples in E–C translation.

*Example 11*

Looking out to ascertain for what, I saw, *to my amazement*, Peggotty burst from a hedge and climb into the cart.[14]

Chinese Version:

我向外張望，想弄清怎麼一回事，只見派格蒂籬那邊出現，登上馬車，*真叫我大為驚異*。[15]

The English prepositional phrase has become a clause in the Chinese version. From this example we can see that in some prep-O phrases, the

[13] Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian* (Hong Kong; New York: Renditions-Columbia University Press, 1993).

[14] Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981).

[15] Si Guo 思果, trans., *Dawei・Kaobofei'er*《大衛・考勃菲爾》(*David Copperfield*) (Taipei: Linking Publishing 聯經出版事業公司, 1993).

preposition itself implies an action; therefore in translation the phrase could be translated into a clause.

*Example 12*
There will simply be disaster if forests are destroyed *for more land*.

Chinese Version:
若毀林只是為了*多得土地*，就只有導致災難。

*Example 13*
In short, land is fragile. *Without proper care* it can be ruined forever.

It is translated as:
總之，土地易受到破壞。*若無適當管理*，土地就會一毀無救。

In the examples given above, the propositions "for" and "without" are translated into the Chinese verbs "*de* 得" and "*wu* 無" respectively, and the two English prepositional phrases are turned into two Chinese clauses.

## [IV] Transfer of Clauses in Textual Translation

### (1) In Natural Language

Now let us discuss how the transfer of clauses is realized by analysing the translation from the angle of the text. Our method is to take a text, and use symbols and formulas to represent the clauses and sentences, so that we can see if the division of word order (//) and clause (^) is consistent with that after transfer, and see how the translator analyses textually at a level higher than the sentence, and how the transfer is carried out by making expert use of clauses.

*Example 14*
一早給水門汀凍醒了，^爬起來，^剛扣衣，^屋外一望無際的淡藍色的海和幾隻棕色的風帆像壁間的大幅畫一樣明靜而清新地擺在我面前。^//[16]

[16] Ai Wu 艾蕪, *Haidao shang*《海島上》(*On the Island*) (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe 文化生活出版社, 1939).

English Version:

As the cold concrete had woken me at first light,^ I had got up^ and started putting on my clothes.^// The pale blue sea with brown sails on it like a vast picture on a wall spread peacefully and fresh in front of my eye.^//[17]

Formula:

$$T^C = S \rightarrow C^1\ C^2\ C^3\ C^4\ C^5$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$T^E = S^1 \rightarrow C^a\ C^a\ C^a + S^2$$

The original text consists of one sentence, the text of translation of two sentences. And the former includes four clauses with the last clause further including an adverbial phrase formed by the clause "*xiang bi jian de da fu hua yiyang ming jing er qingxin* 像壁間的大幅畫一樣明靜而清新" and the adverb "*bai* 擺." The adverbial phrase is translated into an English prepositional phrase "like a vast picture on the wall" modifying its precedent subject, a noun phrase "the pale blue sea." This prepositional phrase still has nexus meaning of text. This pattern of clause can be represented by the symbol C. "*Dong xing* 凍醒" is a verbal phrase, if it is translated literally into "coldly wake me." This will not only fail to convey the original meaning, but also cause difficulty in understanding. As the English adjectives are similar to nouns (in Chinese, adjectives are similar to verbs), so the translator skilfully translates it into an adjective modifying the noun "concrete." The English word "spread" entails the meaning of the original "*wu wai yi wang wu ji de* 屋外一望無際的." So after the transfer of clauses and the rearrangement of the sentence order and clause order, the translated text has fully conveyed the meaning and conception of the original text.

There are occasions when, after the original and the translated text are divided, the order of the small units of the two can be the same, and the number of clauses or even the number of sentences can be identical. For example, there may be two sentences in the original, and the translation also has two, but punctuation may not be the same. The following is an example of this kind.

[17] W. J. F. Jenner and Gladys Yang, trans., "On the Island," in *Modern Chinese Stories* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

*Example 15*

他這裡的視線已移到海面上。^//海面上飛馳著兩隻淡黃色的渡輪，^一隻由大陸到海島去，^一隻由海島到大陸去，都是樓上樓下載滿乘客的。^ //[18]

English version:

He was now gazing at the sea,^ on which two brown steamers are crossing, one going from the mainland to the island, and one the other way.^// They were both packed with passengers on upper and lower decks.^//[19]

Formula:

$$T^C = S^1 \rightarrow C + S^2 \rightarrow C^1\ C^2\ C^3\ C^4$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$T^E = S^1 \rightarrow C^a\ C^a\ C^b\ C^c + S^2 \rightarrow C^a$$

After division, the original and the translation have similar structures, that is, two sentences with five clauses. But by referring to the above formula we can easily see that the first sentence is made up of one clause, the second of four; in the translation, the structural order is just the opposite, with the first made up of four and the second made up of one, and the four clauses of the first sentence of the translation represented respectively by two finite clauses, one non-finite clause and one verbless clause. If the word or sentence is regarded as the unit of translation and if the translators had not put the analytical unit translation on the text level and made a dynamic transfer of the clauses, they could not have achieved the good translations above.

The two examples just discussed are from Chinese into English, and what follows are two examples from English into Chinese. The same method is used in the analysis and two translations are provided for Ex. 17 for the sake of contrast.

*Example 16*

The house detective took his time,^ leisurely puffing a cloud of blue cigar smoke,^ his eyes sardonically on the Duchess^ as if challenging her objection.^// But beyond wrinkling her nose in distaste,^ she made no comment.^//[20]

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[18] Ai,《海島上》.

[19] Jenner and Yang, trans., "On the Island."

[20] Hailey, *Hotel*.

Chinese Version:

偵探長不慌不忙，^慢悠悠地噴出一團青色的雪茄煙霧，^他的眼睛嘲笑地瞧著公爵夫人，^仿佛在向她的異議挑戰似的。^//但是她只是厭煩地皺了皺鼻子^什麼也沒說。^//

Formula:

$$T^E = S^1 \rightarrow C^a\ C^b\ C^c\ C^b + S^2 \rightarrow C^b\ C^a$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$T^C = S^1 \rightarrow C^1\ C^2\ C^3\ C^4 + S^2 \rightarrow C^1\ C^2$$

According to traditional grammar, in the English original there are two sentences, within which the units are regarded as different elements. But according to our understanding of the clause, this text contains six clauses, and after it is translated, the text of the translation contains the same number of sentences and clauses as the original.

*Example 17*

All this time I had gone on loving Dora harder than ever.^// Her idea was my refuge in disappointment and distress^ and made some amends to me,^ even for the loss of my friend.^//[21]

Chinese Version 1:

在這全部期間，我愈來愈愛朵拉了。^//她的影子是我失望和痛苦中的避難所，^甚至補償了我在朋友方面的損失。//[22]

Chinese Version 2:

在所有這個時期裡，我對朵拉的愛一直地與日俱增。^//我意念中的她就是我失意煩惱中的慰藉；即便好友失去，^都可借此消憂解愁。^//[23]

Formula:

$$T^E = S^1 \rightarrow C^a + S^2 \rightarrow C^a\ C^a\ C^n$$
$$\Downarrow$$
$$T^{C1} = S^1 \rightarrow C + S^2 \rightarrow C^1\ C^2$$
$$\downarrow$$
$$T^{C2} = S^1 \rightarrow C + S^2 \rightarrow C^1\ C^2\ C^3$$

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[21] Dickens, *David Copperfield*.

[22] Dong Qiusi 董秋思, trans., *Dawei Kebofeier*《大衛・科波菲爾》(*David Copperfield*) by Charles Dickens (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文學出版社, 1978).

[23] Zhang Guruo 張谷若, trans., *Dawei Kaopofei*《大衛・考坡菲》(*David Copperfield*) by Charles Dickens (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House 上海譯文出版社, 1998).

The target texts are the work of two famous Chinese translators. In this instance, both the original and the two translations are respectively made up of two sentences, and the two sentences of the original contain three clauses and a verbal noun nexus phrase ("even for the loss of my friend"). Zhang's translation of the phrase into a Chinese clause "*Jibian haoyou shiqu* 即便好友失去" is better than Dong's "*Wo zai pengyou fangmian de sunshi* 我在朋友方面的損失." Generally speaking, Dong's translation is closer to the original in form but sounds somewhat awkward. Zhang's is more free: it does not adhere rigidly to the words and form of the original; with an extra clause added, it conveys the spirit of the original with great precision.

Chinese sentences are focused on cohesion in meaning and their punctuation is not so clear; a comma, instead of a period, is usually used when the sentence ends. Because of this, punctuation cannot be the basis of our grammatical analysis.[24] Therefore, when one translates a Chinese text into English, one should arrange the sentences according to English usage. On the other hand, English sentences, though more fixed in form, are prolix and complicated, so when translated into Chinese, they should be arranged according to the Chinese style, just as Jin Zhaozi 金兆梓[25] says: " '*Suo yao fabiao de yisi*' *shi renren suo xiangtong de*, '*zenyang ba ta shuochu*' *shi ge you ge de xiguan yongfa de*. '所要發表的意思'是人人所相同的, '怎樣把他說出'是各有各的習慣用法的." ("'The meaning to convey' is the same to everyone, but as to 'how to convey' it, everyone has his own habitual way.") Our proposition of the clause, instead of the word, phrase or sentence, as the transfer unit of text translation has broken the static method of analysis by putting translation in the functional system of text in which the clauses can be transferred flexibly and reciprocally.

[24] Lü, *Analytical Questions in Chinese Grammar*, 29.

[25] Jin Zhaozi, *Guo wenfa zhi yanjiu*《國文法之研究》(*Studies on Chinese Grammar*) (Beijing: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 1983), 4.

# Style in Literary Translation

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Style is the most subtle and personal aspect of literary writing, as was most cogently observed by the Chinese poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) in his remark "*wen ru qi ren* 文如其人" ("the style is the man"). This seemingly simple observation has a subtlety that is almost untranslatable, but we find what might be called a perfect translation of it in the French aphorism "Le style est l'homme même" offered by Comte de Buffon in 1753. Since the French thinker could not possibly be borrowing his idea from the Chinese poet, we may regard this striking coincidence as an indication of the universal recognition of style as a feature of any good literary writing unique to the writer.

Yet the issue becomes extremely complicated when a literary work gets translated. Since a translation will have been written by at least two "men," first the author and then the translator, which one is the "man" who can claim the style to be "his own?" Even in those rare cases where the author translates his or her own work, the shift of linguistic and cultural milieus will often give the translation a stylistic flavour very different from that of the original.

In an attempt to clarify this important and very complex issue of literary translation, I propose to discuss it under three headings, based mostly on the books I have published in English and particularly a new book I am writing in Chinese on literary translation.[1]

[1] *Wenxue fanyi de daolu*《文學翻譯的道路》. Manuscripts to be published.

(1) The Gradgrindian Approach
(Ex. 1.1) Sissy (*Daolu*《道路》Ex. 10.2.1)

> "Girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, "I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?"
>
> "Sissy Jupe, Sir," explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtseying.
>
> *"Sissy is not a name," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia."*
>
> "It's father as calls me Sissy, Sir," returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey.
>
> "Then he has no business to do it," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe…"[2]

This conversation is taken from the beginning of Dickens's novel *Hard Times.* His style is so lifelike that no English reader of his novel can fail to feel that, even in this short passage, there are three distinct styles: Mr. Gradgrind's authoritative voice, Sissy's timid and substandard English, and Dickens's own vivid narration. But we will concentrate on that part of Mr. Gradgrind's speech which I have italicized, in particular the word Sissy.

In a way, "Sissy" may indeed be "not a name," for it may be regarded as a word showing some relationship, just like "brother," "father," "mother," "uncle," etc. However, it is often used as a pet name designating a particular girl in the family, and in that sense it is decidedly a name, particularly when it is followed by the surname, like "Sissy Jupe."

As such, in fact, this name reveals a glimpse of the life of the family from which she comes, that her parents, or rather her father, in Sissy Jupe's case, is loving enough to call her by such a pet-name but not in a social position to care for a more formal name upon sending her to school.

All this nicety is clearly implied in Dickens's text so far, but the fact-serious Mr. Gradgrind has no patience for such niceties altogether. He simply declares the name to be no name at all, and immediately orders the girl to call herself "Cecilia Jupe."

This is what I call a Gradgrindian approach. It consists of taking an authoritative attitude to anything that comes to one's notice and simply removing from it whatever elements one does not understand or does not quite appreciate.

Unfortunately this is exactly what may often be observed in translations of passages with stylistic subtleties. And this Gradgrindian

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[2] Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3–4.

approach in translation is even more destructive than Mr. Gradgrind's own in the original.

The best example to illustrate this point is perhaps to be found in translations of this very speech by Mr. Grandgrind's in Chinese versions of Dickens's *Hard Times*. Thanks to the warm-hearted assistance of two young scholars,[3] I have been able to check five Chinese versions of the novel, published respectively in 1926, 1978, 1982, 1992, and 1995, and this may be considered a rendition of our passage in question representative of all five:

> (Chinese translation）「西絲不是一個名字，」葛擂硬先生說。「你的名字是塞西莉亞。」

Since "Sissy" is a fairly commonplace word, it is unlikely that none of the translators involved (more than five, since some of the versions were collaborations) knew that there are terms in colloquial Chinese which may be regarded as natural renditions for it, such as "妹子" or "小妹." Yet none of them made use of such meaningful Chinese terms with stylistic effects very close to that of the English original—why?

An obvious "justification" is that they decided that "Sissy Jupe" is a proper name, and they followed the principle that proper names need to be transliterated. And in executing that principle they simply obliterated all the stylistic vividness found in the English pet-name Sissy.

This authoritative removal of some stylistic flavour is Gradgrindian in nature, but the Chinese translators were really more Gradgrindian than Gradgrind himself. For in their Chinese versions of the novel, the English pet-name has become a proper Chinese name "*Xi Si* 西絲" from the very beginning, and in those Chinese versions poor Mr. Gradgrind looks like a fool in declaring "*Xi Si bushi yige mingzi* 西絲不是一個名字," for this Chinese version of "Sissy" is actually a very, very proper Chinese proper name for a girl, without any hint of a pet-name. Wasn't there a famous beauty in Chinese history called "*Xi Shi* 西施"?

The adverse effects of this ultra-Gradgrindian approach in translation are even more far-reaching than what we have discussed so far. For in Dickens's novel the Jupe girl actually grows into a young woman of moral integrity to befriend Gradgrind's own children and all the while her name remains unchanged as Sissy Jupe. Since this powerful Dickensian laudation of the homely and satire against Gradgrind's self-important

[3] Ms. Han Yumei and Ms. Shi Ning, both graduate students at Foreign Languages University in Tianjin then.

authority depends entirely on the lively style of the pet-name Sissy, it is completely lost in those Chinese versions in which no such pet-name appears at all!

Unfortunately we do not have the time to go into details about that important development in Dickens's novel, though anybody interested can have a look at my fuller treatment under Ex. 10.2.2 in my Chinese book《道路》. However, even what we find in the short passage at the beginning of *Hard Times* is startling enough to show the very serious harm an ultra-Gradgrindian approach can do to the stylistic effect in translation.

(Ex. 1.2) The old milk-woman (《道路》Ex. 10.3.1)

This is an important example I have used to show how inappropriate it can be, in certain cases of literary translation, to stick to "fluency and easy comprehensibility," the most widely accepted and enforced criterion of translation in China today. And here I am adopting my treatment in *Quest* (Ex. 8.2.1) which seems to be the least time-consuming of all in showing the Gradgrindian nature of that approach in suchlike cases.

What makes this example particularly relevant is that it is our translators' proudly stated "objective" to enforce this criterion throughout their work no matter what.[4] That means the translation we are showing here was produced completely "on principle." And that is what worries us most.

(Their Chinese version)
「發票嗎，先生？」她停下腳步，說，「喏，一品脫是兩便士，七個早晨二七一十四，就合一先令二便士。這三個早晨呢，每夸脫合四便士，三夸脫就是一個先令。先生，一先令再加上一先令二便士就是二先令二便士。」

If we put James Joyce's original text side by side with an English back-translation of this Chinese version, the stylistic differences will be startling, thus:

[4] *Women de mubiao shi, jinguan yuanzuo jianse nan dong, women yiding de jin zui da nuli ba ta huakai, shi yiwen jin keneng liuchang, kouyuhua*. 我們的目標是，儘管原作艱澀難懂，我們一定得盡最大努力把它化開，使譯文盡可能流暢，口語化。(Our objective is this: even though the original is abstruse, we will exert out utmost effort to dilute it and produce a translation that is fluent and colloquial.)

| Joyce's Original | Translation |
|---|---|
| --Bill, sir? she said, halting. Well, it's seven mornings a pint at twopence is seven twos is a shilling and twopence over and these three mornings a quart at fourpence is three quarts is a shilling. That's a shilling and one and two is two and two, sir. (*Ulysses* 1.442–5) | "Invoice, sir?" she said, halting. "Oh, each pint costs twopence. For seven mornings it was two times seven equals fourteen, which comes to one shilling and twopence. And for these three mornings, each quart costs four pence, and three quarts cost one shilling. Sir, one shilling plus one shilling and twopence comes to two shillings and twopence." |

Basically talking about the same matter, the two passages show a contrast of styles simply incompatible with each other. Chinese readers of this translation, not having the strongly charactered original with its ungrammatical flow before them, will see only the characterless speech with its "correct" calculations.

Indeed the translation is fluent and easily comprehensible, a lot easier to follow than Joyce's original. But one may pause and ask: why did Joyce himself not write that kind of clear and easily comprehensible language if he had meant it? Was he too muddle-headed to say "two times seven equals fourteen"? Was he too slow-witted to write the speech sensibly and therefore in need of a translator of "superior taste" to exercise his "privilege" of "correcting what appears to him a careless or inaccurate expression of the original, where that inaccuracy seems materially to affect the sense," as Tytler put it?[5]

However, to the Chinese reader who has before his eyes this version only, where is the simple Irish woman who knows no grammar at all but who knows her business well enough to give an account in one breath of what she has supplied and what she is owed? That character with her seemingly chaotic speech (which as a matter of fact gives a perfectly clear idea to her customer of how much he should pay her!) is simply wiped out. And, of course, the fun of it, too.

To consider the issue at a more fundamental level, would Joyce have put such a speech of insipid mediocrity into his text at all, if he had just wanted to provide the "correct" calculations that any schoolboy could make?

[5] Alexander Tytler, *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1791; 1978), 54.

We are not showing any Chinese version that follows Joyce's style closely, for the destructive nature of this self-important approach is obvious enough even without any comparison. And that is a most glaring demonstration of the very serious effect of the Gradgriandian in the translation of style that affects much more than what is involved in colourful names.

(Ex. 1.3) Molly's Internal Monologue (《道路》Ex. 8.3.3; 10.4.2)

Joyce's last episode of *Ulysses,* carrying nearly forty pages of punctuationless text representing Molly Bloom's random thoughts as she lies awake in bed, attracted many lovers of literature as an absolute novelty as soon as it appeared in the first edition of the novel in 1922. Among them was the famous Chinese poet Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1896–1931), who was then studying at Cambridge University, and he wrote of his ecstasy in reading that episode in a foreword to a poem of his own composed then:

> ... The last hundred pages of his book (which has more than seven hundred pages in all) are written in a prose which is absolutely pure: smooth as cream, and clear as the stone font in a church. It is not only free from capital letters, but is totally unburdened with all those tiresome marks like , .... ? : -- ; -- ! ( ) " ". There is neither the division of paragraphs, sentences, chapters or sections. Just a flow of limpid, beautiful, torrential text pouring forward, like a huge bundle of white poplin let loose, a large waterfall coming down without any break. What great masterly art!
>
> (My translation)[6]

The Chinese poet was so carried away by his ecstasy over Joyce's final episode that in this last section of his foreword, which as a whole is his account of how he admired Joyce, he not only mentioned nothing else about *Ulysses* but also expanded the volume of the episode from forty to a hundred pages. But no reader can stay untouched by the poet's passion for Joyce's "flow of limpid, beautiful, torrential text pouring forward."

What exactly, however, was the poet so exultant and exuberant about in these "hundred pages?" If we read his passionate passage carefully again, we will find that his passionate exultation had nothing to do with

[6] Prose foreword to poem "Dusk in the West Suburb of Cambridge" written in 1922 and published in *Shishi Xinbao*《時事新報》, Shanghai, 6 July 1923. See *Xu Zhimo quanji*《徐志摩全集》(*Complete Works of Xu Zhimo*) vol. 1 (Nanning: Guangxi Nationality Publishing House 廣西民族出版社, 1991), 358.

what most literary critics would write about, such as characters, events, motifs, etc. The only thing that excited our poet with such unbound passion about this episode was its punctuationlessness.

And this forty-page punctuationless prose in the last episode of *Ulysses* was indeed an unprecedented stylistic invention that would attract any reader who appreciates stylistic subtleties. Joyce, "the greatest master of the English language since Milton,"[7] as T. S. Eliot described him, and the greatest English stylist of the twentieth century, created this peculiar style on the basis of his observation of life.[8]

And it was to its best advantage that Joyce used this very peculiar style for Molly's long internal monologue. It would have sounded very artificial if Molly's forty-page stuff were presented as speeches, for no human being would have been able to speak so breathlessly for so long, since speaking requires breathing and each breath would become a natural punctuation mark. But since Molly is described as having all those random thoughts while lying awake in bed, their punctuationlessness sounds just natural to readers.

However, some translators following their own criterion for style[9] simply rejected this continuous flow of thoughts and replaced it with bits of broken stuff, like this:

(Ex. 1.3) Molly's Internal Monologue (*Quest* Ex. 4.4.1)
(Joyce's original) … but I could see him looking very hard at my chest when he stood up to open the door for me it was nice of him to show me out in any case Im extremely sorry Mrs Bloom believe me without making it too marked the first time after him being insulted and me being supposed to be his wife I just half smiled I know my chest was out that way at the door when he said Im extremely sorry and Im sure you were
(*Ulysses* 18.529–34)

(Chinese version A) …可是當他起身[146] 為我打開門的時候 我看得出他死命地盯著我的胸脯 不管怎樣 他把我送*出去* 禮數總是周到的 實在抱歉 布盧姆太太 請相信我 接著就*含糊其詞了*

[7] Marvin Magalaner and Richard M. Kain, *Joyce, the Man, the Work, the Reputation* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 276.
[8] Unfortunately I have lost track of the two-page letter Joyce's wife Nora wrote to him, completely punctuationless just like Molly's internal monologue. But in *Selected Letters of James Joyce* edited by Richard Ellmann (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 116, 135, there are also two completely punctuationless letters, though shorter than that specimen, written by Nora to other people; evidently Joyce often heard Nora talk like this.
[9] See Note 4.

當他頭一次遭到侮辱　*我被錯認作是他的老婆*的時候　我只是微微一笑　我曉得　呆在門口那當兒　我的*乳頭是露出來*的　他正在說著　我非常*抱歉*　我相信你也是的

[Translator's note 146] 「當他起身」和下文 「他死命地……」、「他把我送出去 」、「當他頭一次……」、「他的老婆……」、「他正在說著……」、「由於他……半響」、「他弄得我乾渴……」中的「他」，均指博伊蘭。

For the time being we will leave alone most of their mistranslations, some of which I have italicized, and concentrate on the translators' "creative" misconstruction of Joyce's creative punctuationless prose. Evidently regarding this prose as "unacceptable" by their "criterion" of "easy comprehensibility," they "creatively" inserted a blank (which in traditional Chinese literature works like a line breaker) wherever they found the prose incomprehensible, thus effectively destroying Joyce's punctuationless prose.

But what do readers of this "translation" find when they turn to Molly's internal monologue? Not at all what the great poet Xu Zhimo admired as "a prose which is absolutely pure: smooth as cream, and clear as the stone font in a church... Just a flow of limpid, beautiful, torrential text pouring forward, like a huge bundle of white poplin let loose, a large waterfall coming down without any break" and ecstatically eulogized as "What great masterly art!"

Nothing of the sort! The poor readers of this "translation" or rather "utterly intentional mistranslation," which probably will go into the history of literary translation as a unique specimen of such intentional mistranslation, will never see "a huge bundle of white poplin let loose, a large waterfall coming down without any break," but will find nothing but broken bits of stuff thrown away here and there and little pools of water lying about stagnant!

In fact it is far simpler, technically speaking, to translate the passage in a way loyal to Joyce's style, without resorting to any of the dodges those intentional mistranslators employed, thus:

(Chinese version B)……但是他站起來為我打開門的時候我看見他的眼睛使勁兒地盯住了我的胸脯反正他送我出來挺殷勤的我非常遺憾布盧姆太太請相信我吧他不能說得太露骨了因為他剛受了侮辱而我又是以他妻子的身分去的我只是似笑非笑的我知道我站在門口他說我非常遺

憾的時候我的胸脯是那種鼓鼓的樣子我可以肯定你是非常遺憾的[10]

Without spending too much time on the intentional or unintentional mistranslations the translators of Version A committed to this passage, we can only afford the time to clarify two points for the time being. Firstly, those mistranslations, intentional or unintentional, are closely related to their so-called "criterion" of correct translation. And secondly, a straightforward translation like Version B, without any of the sophisticated manoeuvrings involved with Version A, has been proven to be quite legible to Chinese readers who are interested in Joyce's kaleidoscopic styles. A careful study written by Professor Wang Yougui of the Guangdong University of International Studies and published in the *James Joyce Quarterly* in 1999[11] reported that he had made a survey during which "I invited several 'average' readers, including a second year junior-high school girl, to read Jin's translation from p. 1047 to p. 1056 (Beijing edition 1994). They all found it quite readable."

However, the most startling consequences are perhaps to be found in how their mistranslations glaringly mislead their readers toward an area which does not exist at all in the whole novel. This is what we find in this seemingly simple factual "guidance" offered in their Footnote 146:

> [Translator's note 146] 「當他起身」和下文「他死命地……」、「他把我送出去」、「當他頭一次……」、「他的老婆……」、「他正在說著……」、「由於他……半響」、「他弄得我乾渴……」中的「他」，均指博伊蘭。

Their readers, following this clear-cut "guidance" faithfully, will be puzzled to find that not a single "he" in this passage refers to Boylan!

The poor translators' error may have had something to do with what is actually happening in this passage. Molly's random thoughts will soon be very much involved with Boylan indeed. However, perhaps to the poor translators' astonishment, that is not going to take place until a few moments later!

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[10] Jin Di 金隄, trans., *You li xi si*《尤利西斯》(*Ulysses*), by James Joyce (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House 人民文學出版社), 1994A: 1370; 1994B: 1017; 2005: 1029.

[11] See Wang Yougui, "Translations of the Century: A Careful Reading of Two Chinese Versions of *Ulysses*," trans. Wei Z. Gao, *James Joyce Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1999): 269–79.

# Gain or Loss: Translating English Poetry into Classical Chinese

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I do not know which to prefer
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes

—"Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," *Wallace Stevens*

In his keynote speech "Should Poetry Be Translated by Poets Only?" delivered at the 2008 International Conference on Translation Studies and Translation between Chinese and English at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, poet Yu Kwang-chung 余光中 cited the poem "*Xun yin zhe bu yu*"〈尋隱者不遇〉("Inquiry after an Absent Recluse") by Tang poet Jia Dao 賈島 to illustrate that translating classical Chinese poetry into English necessarily mandates expanding the original text by superimposing prepositions and subjects or speakers here and there to restore the English sentential logic.[1] The result is a "domestication" or "transfiguration" of the original, another proof of Robert Frost's wisdom that "poetry is what is lost in translation."[2]

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[1] Yu Kwang-chung's keynote speech, "Should Poetry Be Translated by Poets Only?", was delivered on 11 December 2008, at the International Conference on Translation Studies and Translation between Chinese and English at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

[2] This famous quote is widely attributed to Robert Frost, although no evidence that Frost ever produced it in writing has surfaced. For a discussion of the possible sources of this quote and its variants, see Peter Robinson, "What is Lost?" in *Poetry and Translation: The Art of the Impossible* (Cambridge: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 23.

By the same logic, translating modern-day English poetry into classical Chinese will require an act of downsizing, getting rid of not only prepositions and real or ostensible speakers but perhaps also other rhetorical bits to fit into the tight metric schemes of classical Chinese poetry. The question is: why does anybody want to do that? Truth be told, there is no absolute reason why a modern-day English poem must be rendered in classical Chinese; it is simply not a dire necessity. The answer, if I could think of any, is that such attempts are largely for poetic pleasure, a "soul-ironing" (*xiaohun* 銷魂) experience and a sort of intellectual fulfilment, a bit of vanity and pride, and a labour of love. It is also a journey of discovery; "poetry," in the words of the Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky, "is what is gained in translation"—a delightful antithesis of Robert Frost's quip.[3]

It all started, some years ago, when I was presented two English poems by a young man called Philip Sung 宋柏鴻,[4] who was educated in the United States and had found poetry writing a perfect distraction to his otherwise "more painful studies,"[5] which happened to be mathematics. He knew I had a penchant for Chinese poetry and asked if I could turn his samples into, in his words, "real Chinese poems." I went through his poems very slowly. They were, in my judgment, as good as any modern lyrics ever written in English, but on top of that there were a distinct freshness and a simplicity of words that struck a chord with those of us who have, at one time or another, been away from home, alone in a strange place, searching for a simple metaphor of consolation. When I finished reading the poems, I decided that my translation would have to read like "real Chinese poetry" because the originals were every bit as real in English.

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[3] Quoted by Regina Grol in "Introduction" to her translation of Anna Frijlich's *Between Dawn and the Wind* (Austin, Texas: Host Publications, 2006), iv. For Brodsky's idea of translation as a "fluke," see Cynthia L. Haven, ed., *Joseph Brodsky: Conversations* (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 162–65.

[4] Philip Sung's two English poems and my translation appear in his English-Chinese bilingual autobiography *Qianjin MIT—Tiancai xiaozi Philip zhi shuxue meili jingjie* 《前進 *MIT*—天才小子 Philip 之數學美麗境界》 (*March to MIT: The Beauty of Philip's Mathematical World*) (Taipei: Beta Multimedia Publishing 貝塔語言出版有限公司, 2004).

[5] The American Puritan Cotton Mather considered poetry "a little recreation in the midst of your more painful studies," by which he meant the study of the Bible. See *Manuductio ad Ministerium* (Boston, 1726), 42.

What impressed me most in Philip's poems was the seemingly unemotional voice of the poet-turned-commentator who managed, as it were, to speak calmly *about* his feelings or capture them objectively in a few simple words. I decided that I would re-create that aesthetic distance in my translation, so the speaker, like a master painter or photographer, does not have to own those feelings. In other words, I was keenly aware of the internal syntax that delegates meaning in modern English, which is governed by a grammar of logic void of emotion, unlike modern-day Chinese, which is largely an analogical language capable of extreme beauty but can sometimes be wild with emotion and therefore imprecise. To create a translation that was capable of a logical distance to "muffle" the speaker while keeping those feelings as aesthetically pleasing and as surgically clean and detached as possible, I had to tap into classical or learned Chinese, which rivals English in its internal logic as well as its precision of words. Here I am using a sweeping definition of the term "classical Chinese," which includes the general writing style predating modern-day Chinese or *Putonghua* and which especially refers to the prosody of classical Chinese poetry. It did not take me long to do the actual translation, but that was the easy part.

The difficult part was this: I have taken the poetic licence to alter purposely the appearance of the poems to give birth to a more holistic and indigenous poetic experience to construct an aesthetic equivalence that a modern vernacular rendition based on the logic of *Putonghua* cannot easily imitate. The question is: is a classical Chinese rendition indeed superior to a plain Chinese translation, or am I abusing my authority as a translator by doing the original text an injustice? Before answering these questions, let us look at the following examples by Professor Serena Jin 金聖華, who has managed to translate Michael Bullock's last and newest volume of poetry *Colours* into beautiful modern-day Chinese:[6]

| *Pale Blue* by Michael Bullock | 布邁恪：〈淺藍〉 |
|---|---|
| Pale blue flows through my mind | 淺藍流過我心中 |
| wiping out everything | 抹去一切 |
| leaving only faint traces | 只剩下隱約的痕跡 |
| to be deciphered by birds | 留待鳥兒去辨識 |

[6] All references to Michael Bullock's poems are from the English-Chinese bilingual edition of Bullock's *Colours: Poems and Drawings* translated by Jin Sheng-hwa under the title *Cai meng shijie*《彩夢世界》(Beijing: Commercial Press 商務印書館, 2008).

| *Blue* by Michael Bullock | 布邁恪：〈藍〉 |
|---|---|
| Blue is the love of the bird for the sky | 藍是鳥兒對天空 |
| of the fish for the sea | 魚兒對海洋的愛 |
| the blue flower | 藍色的花 |
| the bride of night | 夜之新娘 |
| wears a ring of blue stars on her finger | 佩戴滿藍星的指環 |

What do I or the reader stand to gain (or lose) if the same poems are rendered in classical Chinese, loosely rhymed, as in the following examples?

| *Pale Blue*<br>〈淺藍〉 | *Blue*<br>〈藍〉 |
|---|---|
| 淡藍抹盡 | 鳥戀蒼穹是蔚藍 |
| 心頭事 | 魚潛大海意相關 |
| 尚有餘蹤 | 藍花新婦如今夜 |
| 任鳥知 | 同佩藍星在指間 |

Or in the following translation:

| *Yellow 2* by Michael Bullock | 布邁恪：〈黃 之二〉 |
|---|---|
| Yellow rings a plangent bell | 疊疊黃音起亮鐘 |
| sings in a high-pitched voice | 鐘聲驚處鳥巢空 |
| that startles birds from their nests | 琉璃乍破朱帘轉 |
| shatters glass and turns silk curtains inside out | 蜷伏屋隅曝影蹤 |
| laying bare the shadows that lurk in the corners | |

Obviously, there is no easy answer, as there is plenty of room for reconstruction and deconstruction—sins of commission and omission, respectively—in either translation. In the absence of reliable, undisputed benchmarks of quality, as is often the case in literary translation, what is clear is that, paired against master translators such as the poet Yu Kwang-chung and Professor Jin, everything else pales. In other words, we need these "industry beacons" to shine the guiding light on us. Another frequently used criterion or yardstick is that, in modern times, *Putonghua* is already the norm. Classical Chinese, now frequently relegated to a mere footnote annotation or appendix in the Chinese curriculum, should remain

in the closet, an obscure hobby reserved only for the esoteric few. Unless there is a pressing motive, one should switch to the normal tongue.

But before you decide to side with the modern camp, let us look at the following popular examples by Thomas Moore (1779–1852), set to Irish music and translated into Chinese:[7]

| *'Tis the Last Rose of Summer*<br>by Thomas Moore | 〈夏日最後的玫瑰〉<br>無名氏譯 |
|---|---|
| Tis the last rose of summer,<br>Left blooming alone,<br>All her lovely companions<br>Are faded and gone,<br>No flow'r of her kindred<br>No rosebud is nigh<br>To reflect back her blushes,<br>Or give sigh for sigh | 夏日最後的玫瑰，<br>入秋猶自紅，<br>所有可愛的伴侶，<br>無復舊時容，<br>殘花片片悲凋謝，<br>新花望裡空，<br>欲把嬌顏留住，<br>長歎誰與共。 |
| I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,<br>To pine on the stern,<br>Since the lovely are sleeping,<br>Go sleep thou with them.<br><br>Thus kindly I'll scatter<br>Thy leaves o'er the bed,<br>Where thy mates of the garden<br>Lie scentless and dead. | 何須留汝在枝頭，<br>遺汝獨消瘦，<br>既然好友盡長眠，<br>去去相與守，<br>我將掃葉成香塚，<br>為汝殷勤覆，<br>從此芳菲難再復，<br>惆悵使人愁！ |
| So soon may I follow<br>When friendship decay;<br>And from love's shining circle<br>The gems drop away!<br>When true hearts lie wither'd,<br>And fond ones are flow'n<br>Oh! Who would inhabit<br>This bleak world alone? | 面對隨花傷往事，<br>往事成空虛，<br>半生珍惜良友情，<br>消失已無餘，<br>更有那人間歡愛，<br>飛去如飄絮，<br>似這般淒涼的世界，<br>索居向誰語！ |

[7] "The Last Rose of Summer" and "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," two poems by the eighteenth-century Irish poet Thomas Moore and their Chinese translations, were published in the 4 October 2002 and 18 October 2002 editions of the English Corner of *Zhongyang ribao*《中央日報》(*Central Daily News*) (Taipei), p. 12, respectively.

It is clear that the translator made every effort to polish the semi-classical rendition, but at times it became too much of a challenge as in the third line of the first stanza ("*suoyou ke'ai de banlü* 所有可愛的伴侶") and in the last line but one ("*si zheban qiliang de shijie* 似這般淒涼的世界"), where *Putonghua* expressions were inserted. The following example, also by Thomas Moore, shows a half-hearted attempt by the little known translator Hai Zhou 海舟 to lodge some classical Chinese into the finished translation, most notably in the near-rhyming and in the last couplet of each stanza, although no explanation is given as to why the second half of the original poem precedes the first in the Chinese rendition:

*Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms*
by Thomas Moore

Believe me if all those endearing young charms
Which I gaze on so fondly today
Were to change by tomorrow and fleet in my arms
Like fairy gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.
It is not while beauty and youth are thine own
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervour and faith of a heart may be known,
To which time will not make thee more dear.
No, the heart that truly loves never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look which she turned when he rose.

〈依然在我心深處〉

海舟譯

當你的青春美麗漸漸消除，
當你雙頰被清淚沾濡，
我的熱情依然在我的心頭深處，
還增添了對你愛慕。
誠信真摯的愛，從來不輕吐露，
只是隱在心深處常駐，
有如葵花向日，一片癡情何與，

任今朝明朝，日晞日暮。

眼看你的嫵媚花容，兮已萎枯，
眼看仙侶無法將你讓，
我這誠信真摯雙睛，依然凝住，
要向你作無言傾訴。
我的深情縈繞，在這心頭如許，
縈繞心頭似春藤常綠，
遮莫是香斷紅消，減盡歡娛，
矢當初愛盟，永不辜負。

The following are my translations of the two Thomas Moore poems in classical Chinese. They are presented side by side with the two previous Chinese attempts for easy comparison:

*'Tis the Last Rose of Summer*
by Thomas Moore

〈夏盡一玫瑰〉
梁欣榮譯

夏盡一玫瑰
孤苞向客紅
親朋俱去矣
悵望失同鄉
誰憐故舊遠
何以賞嬌顏
嗟歎勿復道
孤芳不可留

徒然長消瘦
寧與一同歸
眾芳今長睡
爭教汝獨眠

為憐君掃葉
為汝葬花魁
同行諸女伴
紅袖賸香殘

此身亦將去

〈夏日最後的玫瑰〉
無名氏譯

夏日最後的玫瑰，
入秋猶自紅，
所有可愛的伴侶，
無復舊時容，
殘花片片悲凋謝，
新花望裡空，
欲把嬌顏留住，
長歎誰與共。

何須留汝在枝頭，
遺汝獨消瘦，
既然好友盡長眠，
去去相與守，
我將掃葉成香塚，
為汝殷勤覆，
從此芳菲難再復，
惆悵使人愁！

面對隨花傷往事，
往事成空虛，

人事漸凋寧
一朝恩愛絕
旭日復西沈
山盟若海誓
轉眼一無蹤
淒涼話人世
愁獨寄餘生

半生珍惜良友情，
消失已無餘，
更有那人間歡愛，
飛去如飄絮，
似這般淒涼的世界，
索居向誰語！

*Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms*
by Thomas Moore

〈但教韶華遠去〉
梁欣榮譯

但教韶華遠去
花顏落盡無蹤
一回消瘦竟成空
未許端詳似夢
眾裡尋她依舊
音容恍惚而今
剪不斷摧殘心緒
依然眷戀深深

莫道青春往日
朱顏歡笑如新
知君長醉似狂生
荏苒光陰誰問
此心從今不老
迢迢異日同歸
信有人間須折柳
明朝比翼齊飛

〈依然在我心深處〉
海舟譯

當你的青春美麗漸漸消除，
當你雙頰被清淚沾濡，
我的熱情依然在我的心頭深處，
還增添了對你愛慕。
誠信真摯的愛，從來不輕吐露，
只是隱在心深處常駐，
有如葵花向日，一片癡情何與，
任今朝明朝，日晞日暮。

眼看你的嫵媚花容，兮已萎枯，
眼看仙侶無法將你讓，
我這誠信真摯雙睛，依然凝住，
要向你作無言傾訴。
我的深情縈繞，在這心頭如許，
縈繞心頭似春藤常綠，
遮莫是香斷紅消，減盡歡娛，
矢當初愛盟，永不辜負。

I will leave the reader to judge which translations are better, but I believe there is an aesthetic finesse in the language of the classical Chinese translation that cannot be missed. The subjects of these two English poems resonate with similar yearnings 1,000 years ago in China, when such articulations were typically written in classical Chinese. This does not mean that they cannot be rendered into beautiful modern-day Chinese dialects or *Putonghua*, and indeed I look forward to more enlightening examples from expert translators like Yu Kwang-chung, a master poet himself, and Professor Jin.

It is time to look at the two poems by Philip Sung together with my translations. Below I have prepared them in parallel-text format for easy reading:

| *Far Removed* | 〈羈旅〉 |
|---|---|
| Miles from home, | 家鄉迢迢 |
| The city numbs me: | 京華冷冷 |
| I freeze in daytime | 白日奇寒 |
| Among frosty people. | 人間漠漠 |
| Gasping, I hurry | 匆匆遊子 |
| Past frigid stares | 不耐凝睇 |
| On slick sidewalks. | 閑階滑足 |
| Cold strangers | 異客寒心 |
| Chill my soul. | |
| In quiet night, I sit | 獨夜無寐 |
| On my window ledge; | 慵坐窗檯 |
| Warm images of home | 緬懷故里 |
| Melt icy stillness. | 一解寒冰 |
| Darkness blazes | 夜闌話寂 |
| With bright sparks | 尤憶當年 |
| Of conversations past. | 思緒釋懷 |
| Memory thaws my heart | 家鄉迢遞 |
| Miles from home. | |
| *Last Warmth* | 〈秋日餘薰〉 |
| A chorus of crickets | 起落蛩鳴 |
| Sing to autumn | 唱和秋頌 |
| Under a canopy | 俯仰蒼穹 |
| Of brittle leaves. | 遮天黃葉 |
| Mossy stones rest | 潺潺流水 |
| By gurgling water. | 繞道荒苔 |
| Whistling winds | 瑟瑟風號 |
| Rustle branches. | 蕭然木落 |
| Now silence sweeps | 天地茫茫 |
| Across the world. | 乾坤寂寂 |
| On open plains | 曠野空無 |
| In crisp coolness, | 清寒肅殺 |
| Moonlight clings | 淡月光華 |
| To bare trees. | 油然棲木 |

| | |
|---|---|
| A muted breeze | 輕風起處 |
| Brushes old stalks | 悄渡殘枝 |
| On its journey | 今朝去罷 |
| To the horizon. | 明日天涯 |
| | |
| The world waits | 塵寰寂靜 |
| For life's return. | 來盼重生 |

The reason I decided to use classical Chinese is that I do not want any of my attempts to read like a poem in translation, when it may be subject to the unfamiliar sentential logic and syntax of the original. Instead, I want every poem I translate to stand on its own feet, a poem in its own right. But that may also be wishful thinking, as there is no clear norm to dictate a superior target language in translation. Nevertheless, the merits of a translation using classical Chinese as a medium speak loudly for themselves. In addition to the very subjective values such as elegance and style, the output is a poem and reads like a poem fair and square, and a sense of rhythm, even when it is not rhymed, runs through the entire translation—a small effort to recover some of that poetry that might otherwise have been "lost in translation."

In his keynote speech Yu Kwang-chung listed three things that are untranslatable and that can only be delivered in one's mother tongue. To that list must now be added a fourth category: the profound feelings that accompany the tune of classical Chinese poetry when chanted with emotion. In its highest state, one experiences a feeling of being transported. This feeling, a homogeneous mixing of sound and meaning not uncommon in classical Chinese poetry, cannot be linguistically duplicated in another language, even when the translation is deemed exceptionally competent.

Many of you have read and admired the excellent modern-day Chinese translations of Tennyson's "The Eagle" by Yu Kwang-chung on the one hand and by Perng Ching-hsi 彭鏡禧 and Hsia Yen-sheng 夏燕生 on the other. All three attempted to manipulate the words to trigger some sort of rhyming effect, which is not a standard feature of modern Chinese poetry. I am offering my translation below, rendered in the tradition of Kerson Huang's 黃克孫 poetic Chinese translation of Edward Fitzgerald's English rendition of the Persian poet Omar Khayyam's *The Rubaiyat* (*Lubai ji*《魯拜集》), for comparison:

*The Eagle*
by Alfred Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

The same poem translated by Yu Kwang-chung:[8]

〈鷹〉
余光中 譯

他用彎手抓在岩際：
傍著落日，在漠漠的荒地，
背負著長空一碧，他危立

蒼皺的大海在他腳下爬；
他從峰壁上悄然俯察
像一閃霹靂他驀地衝下

and by Perng Ching-hsi and Hsia Yen-sheng:[9]

〈鷹〉
彭鏡禧　夏燕生 譯

他彎曲的手鈎住峭壁；
緊鄰太陽於孤寂之地，
青天環抱中，他挺立。

紋皺的海在下面蠕動；
他在山垣上伺機欲攻，
然後雷霆一般他俯衝。

[8] Yu Kwang-chung, *Yingshi yizhu*《英詩譯註》(*Selected English Poetry Translated and Annotated*) (Taipei: Book World Co.文星書店, 1968), 42.
[9] Perng Ching-hsi and Hsia Yen-sheng, trans. with annotation, *Hao shi dajia du*《好詩大家讀》(*Poems for Everyone*) (Taipei: Bookman Books 書林出版有限公司, 2007), 21.

Below is my translation in the tradition of classical Chinese poetry:

〈鵰〉
梁欣榮 譯

獨立危崖爪鑄鉤
高懸碧落鎮藍溝
波濤叠轉驕陽下
忽見驚雷撲浪頭

It is said that in translation there are no one hundred percent correct answers, but there are always one hundred percent wrong choices. In the end it may just boil down to a matter of personal preference and erudition; once the sheer facts in the original are all taken care of, any one of the thirteen ways to look at a black bird—or an eagle—would be, in varying degrees of adequacy, equally acceptable.

# CONTRIBUTORS

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**Lynne Long** was Associate Professor in the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Warwick until its closure in 2009. She has published a monograph on Bible translation, edited a collection of essays on Translation and Religion (*Translation and Religion: Holy Untranslatable*) and has contributed to several other volumes on the subject. She ran an option course on Translation, Religion and Culture and is particularly interested in the way that comparative analysis of translated religious texts (both medieval and modern) from a translation theory point of view can reveal the politics and ideology of the translator(s) or translating institution.

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**Ching-hsi Perng** 彭鏡禧, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English and Drama at National Taiwan University, is currently a Visiting Professor of Cross-Cultural Studies at Fu Jen Catholic University. Of some thirty books to his credit, four are studies on Shakespeare, plus Chinese translations of *Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice*, and *Measure for Measure*. He has also co-authored (with Fang Chen) *Bond* and *Measure, Measure!*, Yuju opera adaptations respectively of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*, which have been staged in Taiwan, China, London, and the United States.

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He has published more than thirty books and numerous journal articles, covering such research areas as literary translation, translation studies, classical and modern Chinese literature, European literature, and comparative literature. His translations (between Chinese and European languages) include a three-volime Chinese *terza rima* version of Dante's *La Divina Commedia* (2003) and a two-volume Chinese version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2013).

**Yu Kwang-chung** 余光中, born in Nanjing in 1928, first studied foreign languages at Jinling University in 1947 and transferred to Xiamen University in 1949, when he started writing poetry. During the civil war, Professor Yu fled to Hong Kong with his family and in 1950 settled in Taiwan. There he continued his university education and graduated from Taiwan University in 1952. After obtaining a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from Iowa State University in 1959, he returned to Taiwan and taught at

Taiwan Normal University. As a Fulbright Scholar, he visited and gave lectures in the United States twice, in 1964–1966 and 1969–1971. In 1972, Professor Yu became the Chairman of the Department of English of Chengchi University, Taiwan. He joined The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1974 as Reader in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature. In 1985, he returned to Taiwan and became Dean of the College of Liberal Arts of Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan and is currently Professor Emeritus of Sun Yat-sen University.

Professor Yu is a writer of great influence, especially resourceful in poetry and prose. His poetry crystallizes his feelings and his love for the motherland; and it captures, reflects, and expresses the life of a modern society. Professor Yu also writes critiques, edits books, and translates. A prolific writer involved in literary creative work for over forty years, Professor Yu enjoys a high reputation in literary circles and has been awarded numerous prestigious prizes and honours, including the National Award for Literature (poetry), the Wu San-lian Award (prose), and the Taiwan *United Daily*'s Best Book of the Year Award (1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000).