

Where Theory and Practice Meet

Understanding Translation through Translation

Laurence K. P. Wong

Where Theory and Practice Meet

Where Theory and Practice Meet:

*Understanding Translation
through Translation*

By

Laurence K. P. Wong

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Where Theory and Practice Meet:
Understanding Translation through Translation

By Laurence K. P. Wong

This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

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

Copyright © 2016 by Laurence K. P. Wong

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-9088-X
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-9088-5

CONTENTS

Preface	viii
Acknowledgements	xii
Note on Romanization	xix
Note on Chinese Characters	xx
Note on Chinese Names	xxi
Note on Glossing	xxii
Note on Titles of Works	xxix
 Part One	
The Shifting Nexus: Translation Revisited	2
Centripetality and Centrifugality in Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese	46
 Part Two	
Syntax and Translatability	76
Musicality and Intrafamily Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese	86
From the Page to the Stage: Translating Wordplay for the Eye and Translating Wordplay for the Ear	99
Defying Zeus in German: Goethe's "Prometheus" as a Case of Untranslatability	116

Part Three

The Translation of Poetry 138

Poetry Translation as Critical Fine-Tuning: With Reference to *Hamlet*
and Its Versions in Chinese and in European Languages..... 181

Comprehensibility in Drama Translation: With Reference to *Hamlet*
and Its Versions in Chinese and in European Languages..... 213

Part Four

Translating *La Divina Commedia* for the Chinese Reading Public
of the Twenty-First Century..... 242

The Myriad Voices of *The Divine Comedy*: Its Translations in European
Languages and in Chinese 270

Translating Shakespeare’s Imagery for the Chinese Audience: With
Reference to *Hamlet* and Its Versions in Chinese and in European
Languages..... 304

Translating Shakespeare’s Puns: With Reference to *Hamlet* and Its
Versions in Chinese and in European Languages 331

Translating Garcilaso de la Vega into Chinese: With Reference to His
“Égloga Primera” 371

Part Five

Seeking the Golden Mean: Arthur Waley’s English Translation
of the *Xi you ji* 394

Surprising the Muses: David Hawkes’s *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*..... 438

The Translation of Names in David Hawkes’s English Version
of the *Hong lou meng* 524

Is Martial Arts Fiction in English Possible? With Reference to John Minford's English Version of the First Two Chapters of Louis Cha's <i>Luding ji</i>	572
Lin Shu's Story-Retelling as Shown in His Chinese Translation of <i>La Dame aux camélias</i>	591

PREFACE

The subtitle of this book sounds axiomatic, so much so that many readers may ask, “If one does not understand translation through translation, how else can one understand it?”

To answer this question, one has to browse through a large number of monographs, collections of essays, and journal articles in translation studies published over the past decades. On completion of this arduous task, one will see that the majority of these publications are not aimed at helping readers understand translation through translation, but through something else. This “something else” includes, among other things, assertions, convictions, and speculations: assertions and convictions which are little more than personal opinions; speculations which are not based on practice.

Starting approximately from the 1970s, monographs and collections of essays in translation studies containing such assertions, convictions, and speculations began to be churned out at breathtaking speed, rarely dealing with actual translation. By “actual translation,” I mean the actual process of translating a text from one language into another. No matter how hard novelty-seeking scholars may try to subvert the meaning of *translation*, the following observation made by J. C. Catford in 1965 will remain incontrovertible: “Translation is an operation performed on languages.”¹

¹ J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1. The quotation is from the opening of the book: “Translation is an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language—a general linguistic theory” (1). In just two sentences, Catford has already given us a succinct definition of *translation*, and highlighted the importance of linguistics to translation theories. Scholars who try to formulate translation theories without reference to linguistics are unlikely to be able to come up with anything that is scientific, verifiable, exhaustive, and universally applicable. In other words, their “theories” are unlikely to qualify as theories in the strict sense of the word. For a

For translation to take place, there must be at least two languages on which an operation can be performed. Failing this, we would have neither translation nor translation studies. Whether we like it or not, the translator's "operation on languages" is central to translation. Yet, the trend over the past decades has been to talk and write about things that are hardly related to this central act. Thus, scholar A may produce a thoroughly researched history of translation from St. Jerome to the present day; scholar B may try to prove with evidence culled from various sources that a certain ideology has affected a certain translator's selection of source-language texts; scholar C may argue forcefully that sexism has given rise to a certain age's rendering of a certain classic, so on and so forth. To be sure, publications of this sort can be interesting and worth reading, but they cannot help readers understand the translator's "operation on languages."

Speculations about translation which are not based on practice are not much better. Spawned in a vacuum, they often contradict common sense and reality. Unlike physics, in which speculation could produce the theory of relativity, translation is a practice-oriented subject; translation theories or principles that are not substantiated by actual practice are only unverified hypotheses.

Translation is like surgery: to be able to theorize about surgery meaningfully, one must be able to perform operations on the human body; to be able to theorize about translation meaningfully, one must be fully conversant with the translator's "operation on languages." In saying this, I do not, of course, mean that knowledge of translation in practice alone is a guarantee of a sound theory of translation, but theorizing about translation without reference to actual translation is as untenable as theorizing about surgery without reference to surgery.

Motivated by this belief, I have, over the past twenty years, written nineteen papers in translation studies, which are now collected in this book.² In these papers, whether in formulating theories about translation (as in Part One), in discussing general issues (as in Part Two), in looking at genre-oriented translation in practice (as in Part Three), in talking about my experience as a translator alone or vis-à-vis other translators (as in Part

brief evaluation of many of the "translation theories" put forward in the past decades, see "The Shifting Nexus: Translation Revisited."

² In editing the nineteen papers for publication in this volume, I have revised some of their titles and added abstracts and subheadings to those which did not have abstracts and subheadings when they were first published.

Four), or in closely examining the work of well-known translators (as in Part Five), I always focus on actual translation. Even when I am engaged in abstract reasoning, which is an important step in theory formulation, I always make a point of substantiating with examples what I put forward. To make sure that my inferences are true not only of isolated source- and target-language texts, I have included a large number of language pairs in my discussions, liberally drawing on texts in Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Classical Greek. In so doing, I hope that whatever I say about the translator's "operation on languages" has validity.

In going through the book, readers will also notice that, in discussing, analysing, and comparing translations, I frequently draw on linguistics. This is because linguistics, being the most scientific subject in the humanities, can provide me with a scientific tool. Unlike many translation theories which are nothing but opinions, convictions, claims, and assertions, none of which can be proved right or wrong, any statement made with reference to linguistics can be verified, as is the case with J. C. Catford's *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics* or Eugene A. Nida's *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*.³

³ See J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) and Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964). As I have already pointed out on more than one occasion, a translation theorist with no knowledge of linguistics cannot go very far. Of all the translation theorists I have read over the past decades, not many of them appear to be familiar with linguistics. Of those who disparage Catford and Nida, none appear to have been equipped with sufficient knowledge of linguistics to understand the two theorists' work. Having taught translation students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels for more than thirty years, I notice that students find it much easier to understand André Lefevere, Gideon Toury, Itamar Even-Zohar, Katharina Reiss, and Hans J. Vermeer than to understand Catford and Nida. After attending a couple of seminars on Lefevere, Toury, Even-Zohar, Reiss, and Vermeer, they will be able to produce fairly satisfactory papers on translation and rewriting, on descriptive translation studies, on literature and the "polysystem," and on Skopos theory, whereas the theories of Catford and Nida will remain too advanced for them even by the end of an academic year. This also explains why the non-linguistics-oriented approach is

By adopting the above approach, I hope that I can proceed from the point where theory and practice meet, and that, on finishing reading the nineteen papers, the reader will have acquired a deeper understanding of translation through translation.

—Laurence K. P. Wong
March 2016

far more popular with scholars of translation studies in Hong Kong and mainland China. To be able to write a paper on translation history, on ideology and translation, on gender and translation, and so on, one needs to spend only a month or two in the library; to draw on linguistics, before one begins writing the actual paper, one has to sweat for a long time for some basic knowledge of the subject. To write a paper or a book on translation history, one need not know too much about the translator's "operation on languages"; a history student can do the job equally well—or even better, considering the fact that the paper or the book is more history-oriented than translation-oriented. To get back to the physics-surgery analogy: given time, any university student in the arts faculty can write a well-researched biography of Einstein or a substantial history of Western surgery, but to be able to understand the theory of relativity or to perform an operation on the human body is a totally different matter. As to why the linguistic approach is less popular, Catford has indirectly provided us with the answer in his Preface to *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*: "This book is based on lectures given in the School of Applied Linguistics at Edinburgh University. It was thus originally intended for an audience of students already fairly well-informed about general linguistics" (vii). For many students, scholars, and teachers of translation studies, to be "fairly well-informed about general linguistics" is a formidable hurdle, a hurdle that can be cleared only with a lot of hard work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Almost all the papers collected in *Where Theory and Practice Meet: Understanding Translation through Translation* were presented at conferences and / or published in journals or collections of essays in translation studies over a period of some twenty years.¹ Details of their publication venues and of the conferences at which they were presented are as follows:

“The Shifting Nexus: Translation Revisited,” *Translation Quarterly* 翻譯季刊 (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Translation Society, 2006), No. 39, Special Issue V (2006), pp. 39-92; paper presented on 6 June 2004 at the Second Tsinghua-Lingnan Symposium on Translation Studies, jointly organized by the Department of Translation, Lingnan University and the Department of Foreign Languages, Tsinghua University and held on 5-6 June 2004 at Lingnan University, Hong Kong;

“Centripetality and Centrifugality in Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese,” *Across Languages and Cultures: A Multidisciplinary Journal for Translation and Interpreting Studies* (Budapest, Hungary: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2007), Vol. 8, Issue 1 (June 2007), pp. 55-80;

“Syntax and Translatability,” *Babel: Revue internationale de la traduction / International Journal of Translation* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006), Vol. 52, No. 2 (2006), pp. 124-32; paper presented on 10 August 2002 at the XVI Congrès de la Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs / XVI World Congress of the International Federation of Translators on “Translation: New Ideas for a New Century,” organized by the

¹ The only paper which has neither been published nor presented before is “The Translation of Names in David Hawkes’s English Version of the *Hong lou meng*,” which was written in the 1990s in the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto.

Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs / International Federation of Translators (FIT) and held on 7-10 August 2002 at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada;

“Musicality and Intrafamily Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese,” *Meta: Journal des traducteurs / Translators’ Journal* (Montréal, Canada: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 2006), Vol. 51, No. 1 (March 2006), pp. 89-97; paper presented on 3 May 2003 at the Cuarto Congreso Latinoamericano de Traducción e Interpretación (Fourth Latin American Conference on Translation and Interpreting), organized by the Colegio de Traductores Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina and held on 1-5 May 2003 at the Hotel Crowne Plaza Panamericano, Buenos Aires, Argentina;

“From the Page to the Stage: Translating Wordplay for the Eye and Translating Wordplay for the Ear,” in *Two Voices in One: Essays in Asian and Translation Studies* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), pp. 89-104; paper presented on 4 May 2012 at the Conference on “Translation between Chinese and English: Theory and Practice,” organized by the Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and held on 4-5 May 2012;

“Defying Zeus in German: Goethe’s ‘Prometheus’ as a Case of Untranslatability,” *Revue SEPTET* (Société d’Etudes des Pratiques et Théories en Traduction): Des mots aux actes (France: Anagrammes, January 2009), Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 233-55; paper presented on 25 September 2005 at the Łódź Session of the 4th International Maastricht-Łódź Duo Colloquium on Translation and Meaning / Traduction et Sens / Übersetzung und Bedeutung, held on 23-25 September 2005 at the University of Łódź, Łódź, Poland;

“The Translation of Poetry”, *Translation Quarterly* 翻譯季刊 (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Translation Society, 1997), Nos. 3 and 4 (1997), pp. 1-40; paper presented on 30 March 1995 at a seminar at Lingnan College (later renamed “Lingnan University,” now with its campus in Tuen Mun, New Territories, Hong Kong) on Stubbs Road, Hong Kong;

“Poetry Translation as Critical Fine-Tuning: With Reference to *Hamlet* and Its Versions in Chinese and in European Languages,” *La Tribune internationale des langues vivantes: Magazine d'échanges et de recherches en langues vivantes des grandes écoles, des filières universitaires et des entreprises, dans le cadre européen: La Traduction de la poésie, outil de critique littéraire: Actes du colloque organisé par l'Association Européenne des Linguistes et des Professeurs de Langues (AELPL)* (Perros-Guirec, France, 2009), Nos. 46-47 (May 2009), pp. 147-67; paper presented on 13 September 2008 at the Colloque international: La Traduction de la poésie, outil de critique littéraire (International Conference on “The Translation of Poetry: Tool of Literary Criticism,” jointly organized by the Association Européenne des Linguistes et des Professeurs de Langues (AELPL) (European Association of Linguists and Professors of Languages) and SEPTET: Société d'Etudes des Pratiques et Théories en Traduction (Society for the Study of the Theory and Practice of Translation) and held on 12-13 September 2008 at the Palais des Congrès in Perros-Guirec (Côtes-d'Amor), France;

“Comprehensibility in Drama Translation: With Reference to *Hamlet* and Its Versions in Chinese and in European Languages,” in *The Dancer and the Dance: Essays in Translation Studies* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 92-118; paper (then entitled “Comprehensibility in Drama Translation: With Reference to Versions of *Hamlet* in Chinese and in European Languages”) presented on 12 December 2008 at the International Conference on “Translation Studies and Translation between Chinese and English” (celebrating the 45th Anniversary of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the 60th Anniversary of New Asia College), 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;

“Translating *La Divina Commedia* for the Chinese Reading Public of the Twenty-First Century” (entitled “Translating the *Divina Commedia* for the Chinese Reading Public in the Twenty-First

Century” when first published as a journal article), *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction: Études sur le texte et ses transformations* (Montréal, Canada: 2008), Vol. 21, No. 2, “La formation en traduction: Pédagogie, docimologie et technologie II / Translator Training: Pedagogy, Evaluation, and Technologies II” (2^e semestre 2008), pp. 191-220; paper presented on 7 July 2001 at the International Conference on “Translation and Mediation,” organized by the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Warwick and held on 7 July 2001 at the University of Warwick, U. K.;

“The Myriad Voices of *The Divine Comedy*: Its Versions in European Languages and in Chinese” (now entitled “The Myriad Voices of *The Divine Comedy*: Its Translations in European Languages and in Chinese”), *Revue SEPTET (Société d’Etudes des Pratiques et Théories en Traduction): Des mots aux actes* (Strasbourg, France: Anagrammes, 2009), No. 2, “Traduction et philosophie du langage, Actes du colloque international organisé par SEPTET à l’initiative de Florence Lautel-Ribstein,” 9-10 mars 2007, Université de Strasbourg II, Hommage à Henri Meschonnic, pp. 238-87; paper presented on 10 March 2007 at the Colloque international SEPTET: Traduction et Philosophie du Langage, organized by the Société d’Etudes des Pratiques et Théories en Traduction in collaboration with Le Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur, L’Université de Strasbourg II-Marc Bloch, Le Conseil Régional d’Alsace, and La Ville et la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg and held on 9-10 March 2007 at the Université de Strasbourg II-Marc Bloch in Strasbourg, France;

“Translating Shakespeare’s Imagery for the Chinese Audience: With Reference to *Hamlet* and Its Versions in Chinese and in European Languages,” *Babel: Revue internationale de la traduction / International Journal of Translation* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands / Philadelphia, U. S. A.: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), Vol. 57, No. 2 (2011), pp. 204-225; paper presented on 25 October 2008 at the International Conference on “Translation Studies: Cross-Cultural Communication and Chinese Pedagogy,” jointly organized by Portland State University and Tsinghua University and held on 24-25 October 2008 at Portland State University, Oregon, U. S. A.;

“Translating Shakespeare’s Puns: With Reference to *Hamlet* and Its Versions in Chinese and in European Languages,” paper presented on 19 November 2011 at the First Tsinghua Asia-Pacific Forum on “Translation and Intercultural Studies,” jointly organized by the China Association for Comparative Studies of English and Chinese and the Tsinghua Centre for Translation and Interdisciplinary Studies, sponsored by the School of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics, assisted by the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, and held on 18-20 November 2011 at the Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics, Hangzhou, China;

“Translating Garcilaso de la Vega into Chinese: With Reference to His ‘Égloga Primera’,” *Translation Quarterly* 翻譯季刊 (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Translation Society, 2001), Nos. 21-22 (2001), pp. 11-33; paper presented at Lingnan University on 8 December 2001 at the FIT Third Asian Translators’ Forum: Translation in the New Millennium, Intercontinental Perspectives on Translation, jointly organized by the Hong Kong Translation Society, the Centre of Asian Studies of the University of Hong Kong, and the Centre for Humanities Research of Lingnan University and held at the University of Hong Kong on 6-7 December 2001 and at Lingnan University on 8 December 2001;

“Seeking the Golden Mean: Arthur Waley’s English Translation of the *Xi you ji*,” *Babel: Revue internationale de la traduction / International Journal of Translation* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013), Vol. 59, No. 3 (2013), pp. 360-80; paper presented on 29 April 2011 at the International Conference on “Translation and Asian Studies,” jointly organized by the Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Stanford University and held on 28-29 April 2011 at The Chinese University of Hong Kong;

“Surprising the Muses: David Hawkes’s *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*,” in *Style, Wit and Word-Play: Essays in Translation Studies in Memory of David Hawkes*, eds. Tao Tao Liu, Laurence K. P. Wong, and Chan Sin-wai (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars

Publishing, 2012), pp. 33-113; paper (then entitled “Poetry in Prose: David Hawkes’s *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*”) presented on 15 April 2010 at the International Conference on “Cultural Interactions: Chinese Literature in English Translation,” in Memory of David Hawkes, jointly organized by the Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Institute for Chinese Studies, University of Oxford, and China Centre, University of Oxford and held on 15-16 April 2010 at The Chinese University of Hong Kong;

“Is Martial Arts Fiction in English Possible? With Reference to John Minford’s English Version of the First Two Chapters of Louis Cha’s *Luding ji*,” *Translation Quarterly* 翻譯季刊 (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Translation Society, 1997), Nos. 5 and 6, Special Issue, “Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation” (April 1997), pp. 111-31; paper presented on 23 March 1996 at the Conference on “The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation,” jointly organized by the Centre for Language, Literature and Translation (later renamed “Centre for Literature and Translation”) of Lingnan College, the Centre for Translation Studies of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and the Hong Kong Translation Society, and held on 22-23 March 1996 at Lingnan College (later renamed “Lingnan University”) in Tuen Mun, Hong Kong; collected in *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation*, Monographs Series No. 1, ed. Liu Ching-chih (Hong Kong: Centre for Literature and Translation, Lingnan College, May 1997), pp. 105-124;

“Lin Shu’s Story-Retelling as Shown in His Chinese Translation of *La Dame aux camélias*,” *Babel: Revue internationale de la traduction / International Journal of Translation* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company), Vol. 44, No. 3 (1998), pp. 208-233; paper presented on 3 January 1996 at the International Conference on “Chinese Translations of Western Literature in the Late Qing and the Early Republican Period,” jointly organized by the Department of Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Research Centre for Translation, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and held on 3 January 1996 at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the editors, publishers, and

conference organizers concerned. In going over the volume, I still have fond memories of the warm correspondence I received, of the conferences I attended, of the hospitality I enjoyed, of the scholars I met, and of the beautiful cities I visited.

In respect of conference attendance made possible by conference grants, I am grateful to Lingnan University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong for their generosity, particularly to the two universities' conference grants committees, which were always supportive.

In preparing the manuscript of the book, I have received immense help from Ms. Willie Chan of the Department of Translation, Lingnan University. In scanning and formatting my journal articles as well as in finding rare characters for my Chinese texts, she has made my work much easier. To her I owe a great debt of gratitude.

Help was also readily given me by Mr. Leo Ma, Librarian of New Asia College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Ms. Doris Leung. Meticulous researchers themselves, they always had, at their fingertips, the information I needed. To Leo and Doris, I would like to say a warm "Thank you!"

My thanks also go to Ms. Elisabeth Salverda, whose meticulous proofreading has helped me hunt down typographical and formatting errors lying in ambush.

As in the past few years, I would like to thank the staff of Cambridge Scholars Publishing, particularly Ms. Amanda Millar, Mr. Samuel Baker, Mr. Sean Howley, Mr. Keith Thaxton, Ms. Victoria Carruthers, Ms. Courtney Blades, Ms. Sophie Edminson, and Mr. Anthony Wright, for their efficiency and professionalism.

Finally, I am grateful to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for its acceptance of my book proposal, which has enabled me to share my translating experience with scholars and students of translation studies in the English-speaking world.

—Laurence K. P. Wong
March 2016

NOTE ON ROMANIZATION

Chinese characters are romanized according to the *Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an* 漢語拼音方案 (the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet). Thus, “Cao Xueqin” stands for “曹雪芹,” “*Hong lou meng*” stands for “紅樓夢,” “*Zhonghua shuju*” stands for “中華書局,” and so on. When Chinese characters already romanized in the Wade-Giles (or Wade) System are quoted, the Wade-Giles (or Wade) System is retained. Well-known place names like Peking (instead of Beijing) for 北京 are also retained when publications are cited. In the Wade-Giles System, aspiration is indicated differently by different scholars; thus the Wade-Giles romanization for “曹” can be “Ts’ao,” “Ts’ao,” or “Ts’ao.” In this collection, the mark for aspiration is standardized, that is, only the apostrophe “’” is used.

According to *Hanyu Pinyin*, the name of a person, when it consists of two characters, such as “寶玉,” “黛玉,” “寶釵,” and “熙鳳,” is normally written as one word; thus, when romanized, “寶玉” is written as “Baoyu,” “黛玉” as “Daiyu,” “寶釵” as “Baochai,” and “熙鳳” as “Xifeng.” However, in David Hawkes’s version of the *Hong lou meng*, romanized personal names are hyphenated. When these names are quoted from Hawkes’s version, they are all written as hyphenated names (“Bao-yu,” “Dai-yu,” “Bao-chai,” “Xi-feng,” and so on), that is, following Hawkes’s practice.

NOTE ON CHINESE CHARACTERS

The Chinese characters that appear in this collection of papers are all in *fantizi* 繁體字 ‘traditional Chinese characters.’¹ Quotations which appear in *jiantizi* 簡體字 ‘simplified Chinese characters’ have been standardized, so that they all appear as *fantizi*. Today, *jiantizi* is used in mainland China and Singapore, whereas *fantizi* is used in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and many Chinese communities overseas. To avoid ambiguity in quoting classical Chinese texts, which were always printed in traditional Chinese characters before the People’s Republic of China introduced *jiantizi* in the 1950s, I have opted for *fantizi*. For example, while classical Chinese makes a distinction between “鬱” (as in “憂鬱”) ‘melancholy’ and “郁” (as in “馥郁”) ‘strong fragrance,’ simplified Chinese characters make no such distinction: “鬱” is simplified as “郁.” Similarly, in simplified Chinese characters, no distinction is made between “云” (as in “子云” ‘Confucius said’) and “雲” (as in “白雲” ‘white clouds’). Under normal circumstances, simplified Chinese characters do not give rise to any problems, but when distinctions like the above are essential to the understanding of a passage written in classical Chinese, simplified Chinese characters become “defective.” As this collection contains many quotations from classical Chinese texts, such as the *Shi ji* 史記, the *Lie Zi* 列子, and so on, traditional Chinese characters are used throughout.

¹ The Chinese term *fantizi* 繁體字 is also translated as “the original complex form of a simplified Chinese character.” See Wu Jingrong 吳景榮 et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; New York / Chichester / Brisbane / Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 1983), 185. I have not used this translation—for two reasons. First, it is simplified Chinese character-oriented. Second, it is too wordy and sounds like a detailed explanation rather than a translation.

NOTE ON CHINESE NAMES

In Chinese names, the surname (family name) goes before the given name, which is different from the way names in European languages are written. Thus, the name of the author of the Chinese novel *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 ‘*Dream of the Red Chamber*’¹ is written as “Cao (surname) Xueqin (given name) 曹雪芹” and that of the author of the *Xi you ji* 西遊記 ‘*Journey to the West*’ as “Wu Cheng’en 吳承恩,” not “Xueqin Cao” and “Cheng’en Wu,” which would “chime in” better with English names like “William Shakespeare” and “John Milton.” In this collection, the traditional way of writing Chinese names is retained (in Chinese characters as well as in romanization).

¹ As translators and scholars have pointed out, the widely popular English translation (“*Dream of the Red Chamber*”) of the Chinese novel’s title is problematic; alternatives suggested (like “*Red Chamber Dream*”) are less misleading, less ambiguous. But as “*Dream of the Red Chamber*” is probably the best-known English title of the novel in the West, I have retained it here, risking contributing to its undesirable currency.

NOTE ON GLOSSING

In glossing words, phrases, sentences, and passages in my papers, I have consulted the following dictionaries:

English:

- R. E. Allen, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1st ed. by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, 1911 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 8th ed. 1990).
- Stuart Berg Flexner et al., eds., *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., unabridged (New York: Random House, Inc., 1987).
- Lesley Brown et al., eds., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
- Philip Babcock Gove et al., eds., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1976).
- Philip Babcock Gove et al., eds., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam – Webster Inc., Publishers, 1986).
- William Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 1st ed. 1933 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd ed. with corrections 1970).
- Wendalyn R. Nichols et al., eds., *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, Inc., 2001).
- J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1st ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, and W. A. Craigie, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989). Also referred to as *OED* for short.
- John Sinclair et al., eds., *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995).
- Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English*

- Dictionary*, 1st ed. by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, 1911 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 11th ed. 2004).
- Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed., revised (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); 1st ed. edited by Judy Pearsall and Patrick Hanks.
- Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg, eds., *New Oxford American Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); 1st ed. (2001) edited by Elizabeth J. Jewell and Frank Abate.
- Della Thompson, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th ed. 1995).
- William R. Trumble et al., eds., *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 2 vols., Vol. 1, A – M, Vol. 2, N – Z, 1st ed. 1933 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5th ed. 2002).

French:

- Faye Carney et al., eds., *Grand dictionnaire: français-anglais / anglais-français / French-English / English-French Dictionary* unabridged, 2 vols.; 1: *français-anglais / French-English*; 2: *anglais-français / English-French* (Paris: Larousse, 1993).
- Abel Chevalley and Marguerite Chevalley, comp., *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary: French-English*, 1st ed. 1934 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprinted with corrections 1966). G. W. F. R. Goodridge, ed., *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary: Part II: English-French*, 1st ed. 1940 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprinted with corrections 1964).
- Harrap's *Shorter Dictionary: English-French / French-English / Dictionnaire: Anglais-Français / Français-Anglais*, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd., 2000) [no information on editor(s)].
- Marie-Hélène Corréard et al., eds., *The Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary: French—English • English—French / Le Grand Dictionnaire Hachette-Oxford: français—anglais • anglais—français*, 1st ed. 1994, 4th ed. by Jean-Benoit Ormal-Grenon and Nicholas Rollin (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Paris: Hachette Livre; 4th ed. 2007).
- Louis Guilbert et al., eds., *Grand Larousse de la langue française en sept volumes* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1971-1978). On the title page of Vol. 1, Vol. 2, and Vol. 3, the words indicating the number of volumes are “en six volumes” [in six volumes] instead of “en sept volumes” [in seven volumes]; on the title page of Vol. 4, Vol. 5, Vol. 6, and Vol. 7, the words “en sept volumes” [in seven volumes] are used. As a matter of fact, the dictionary consists of seven volumes instead of six. The

- publication years are 1971 (Vol. 1), 1972 (Vol. 2), 1973 (Vol. 3), 1975 (Vol. 4), 1976 (Vol. 5), 1977 (Vol. 6), and 1978 (Vol. 7).
- Paul Imbs et al., eds., *Trésor de la langue française: Dictionnaire de la langue du XIX^e et du XX^e siècle (1789-1960)*, 16 vols. (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971).
- J. E. Mansion, revised and edited by R. P. L. Ledésert, Margaret Ledésert, et al., *Harrap's New Standard French and English Dictionary*, Part One, French-English, 2 vols., Part Two, English-French, 2 vols., 1st ed. 1934-1939 (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., revised ed. 1972-1980).
- Alain Rey et al., eds., *Le Grand Robert de la langue française*, deuxième édition dirigée par Alain Rey du dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française de Paul Robert, 6 vols., 1st ed. 1951-1966 (Paris: Dictionnaires le Robert, 2001). In the list of “PRINCIPAUX COLLABORATEURS” [“PRINCIPAL COLLABORATORS”], however, the six-volume edition is described as “Édition augmentée” [enlarged or augmented edition] “sous la responsabilité de [under the responsibility of] Alain REY et Danièle MORVAN,” the second edition being a nine-volume edition published in 1985.
- Alain Rey et al., eds., *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, 6 vols. (Paris: Dictionnaires le Robert, 2000).

German:

- Harold T. Betteridge, ed., *Cassell's German and English Dictionary*, 1st ed. 1957, based on the editions by Karl Breul (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 12th ed. 1968).
- Günther Drosdowski et al., eds., *DUDEN: Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, in acht Bänden [in eight volumes], völlig neu bearbeitete und stark erweiterte Auflage herausgegeben und bearbeitet vom Wissenschaftlichen Rat und den Mitarbeitern der Dudenredaktion unter der Leitung von Günther Drosdowski (Mannheim / Leipzig / Wien / Zurich: Dudenverlag, 1993-1995).
- Wolfgang Pfeifer et al., eds., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Akademie – Verlag, 1989).
- W. Scholze-Stubenrecht et al., eds., *Oxford-Duden German Dictionary: German-English / English-German*, 1st ed. 1990 (Oxford University Press, 3rd ed. 2005).
- Gerhard Wahrig et al., eds., *Brockhaus Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch*, in

sechs Bänden [in six volumes] (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus; Stuttgart: Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, 1980-1984).

*In August 1998, a spelling reform began in Germany, of which the 2005 (third) edition of the *Oxford-Duden German Dictionary*, edited by W. Scholze-Stubenrecht et al., has given a succinct account (see page 1727). Part of this account reads: “German spellings in this dictionary are in accordance with the reforms in force since August 1998 and reflect modifications of the reforms agreed in June 2004. Most newspapers and new books use the new spellings. Key points of the reforms are summarized below.” “[T]he most important changes” relate to (1) the *ß* character; (2) nominalized adjectives; (3) words from the same word family; (4) the same consonant repeated three times; (5) verb, adjective and participle compounds; (6) compounds containing numbers in figures; (7) the division of words containing *st*; (8) the division of words containing *ck*; (9) the division of foreign words; (10) the comma before *und*; (11) the comma with infinitives and participles. As four of the five dictionaries I have consulted were all published before 1998, I have not tried to standardize German spellings in my glosses.

Italian:

Maria Cristina Barreggi et al., eds., *DII Dizionario: Inglese Italiano-Italiano Inglese*, in collaborazione con Oxford University Press (Oxford: Paravia Bruno Mondadori Editori and Oxford University Press, 2001).

Cristina Barreggi et al., eds., *Oxford-Paravia Italian Dictionary: English-Italian-Italian-English / Oxford-Paravia: Il dizionario Inglese Italiano-Italiano Inglese*, 1st ed. 2001 (Oxford: Paravia Bruno Mondadori Editori and Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. (seconda edizione aggiornata) 2006).

Salvatore Battaglia et al., eds., *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, 21 vols. (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1961-2002). *Supplemento all'indice degli autori citati: autori, opere, edizioni che compaiono nei volumi X, XI e XII per la prima volta; Supplemento 2004*, diretto da Edoardo Sanguineti, 2004; *Indice degli autori citati nei volumi I-XXI e nel supplemento 2004*, a cura di Giovanni Ronco, 2004; *Supplemento 2009*, diretto da Edoardo Sanguineti, 2009.

Giorgio Cusatelli et al., eds., *Dizionario Garzanti della lingua italiana*, 1st

- ed. 1965 (Milan: Aldo Garzanti Editore, 18th ed. 1980).
- Aldo Duro et al., eds., *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, 4 vols. (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1986-1994).
- Catherine E. Love et al., eds., *Collins dizionario inglese: italiano-inglese inglese-italiano*, imprint issued by HarperResource in 2003 (Glasgow / New York: HarperCollins Publishers; Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore; 2000).
- Vladimiro Macchi et al., eds., *Dizionario delle lingue italiana e inglese*, 4 vols., Parte Prima: Italiano-Inglese, Parte Seconda: Inglese-Italiano, realizzato dal Centro Lessicografico Sansoni sotto la direzione di Vladimiro Macchi, seconda edizione corretta e ampliata, i grandi dizionari Sansoni / *Dictionary of the Italian and English Languages*, 4 vols., Part One: Italian-English, Part Two: English-Italian, edited by The Centro Lessicografico Sansoni under the general editorship of Vladimiro Macchi, second edition corrected and enlarged, The Great Sansoni Dictionaries (Firenze: Sansoni Editore, 1985). With Supplemento to Parte Prima a cura di Vladimiro Macchi, 1985.
- Tullio de Mauro [ideato e diretto da Tullio de Mauro] et al., eds., *Grande dizionario italiano dell'uso*, 6 vols. (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 2000).
- Piero Reborá et al., prepared, *Cassell's Italian-English English-Italian Dictionary*, 1st ed. 1958 (London: Cassell & Company Limited, 7th ed. 1967).

Spanish:

- Martín Alonso, ed., *Enciclopedia del Idioma: Diccionario Histórico y Moderno de la Lengua Española (Siglos XII al XX), Etimológico, Tecnológico, Regional e Hispanoamericano*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1958).
- Joan Corominas and José A. Pascual, eds., *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico Castellano e Hispánico*, 6 vols., Biblioteca Románica Hispánica, dirigida por Dámaso Alonso, V. Dictionarios, 7 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1980-1991).
- Beatriz Galimberti Jarman et al., eds., *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English · English-Spanish / Gran Diccionario Oxford: Español-Inglés · Inglés-Español*, 1st ed. 1994 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th ed. 2008).
- Lidio Nieto Jiménez and Manuel Alvar Esquerra, *Nuevo Tesoro Lexicográfico del Español (S. XIV-1726)*, Real Academia Española

edition, 11 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Arco Libros, S. L., 2007).
 Real Academia Española, ed., *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*,
 vigésima segunda edición [22nd ed.] (Madrid: Real Academia Española,
 2001).

Chinese-English:

Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; New York / Chichester / Brisbane / Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 1983).

Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary / Han-Ying cidian 漢英詞典* (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; San Francisco / London / Melbourne: Pitman Publishing Limited; 1979).

Greek:

Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, compiled, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1st ed. 1843, new edition revised and augmented throughout by Henry Stuart Jones et al., with a revised supplement 1996 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, new (ninth) ed. 1940).

Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, abridged ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

Richard John Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, expanded edition, with a new Preface by James H. Dee (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012); first published by Blackie and Son Limited, London, Glasgow, Bombay, 1924; new edition published 1963 by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Publishing Division of the University; paperback edition published 1977.

Latin:

Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten, *A Latin Dictionary*, founded on Andrews' [sic] edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary, 1st ed. 1879 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, impression of 1962).

D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English-Latin*, 1st ed. 1959 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 5th ed. 1968). The London edition of this dictionary has a different title and a different publisher: *Cassell's New Latin-English / English-Latin*

Dictionary, 1st ed. 1959 (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 5th ed. 1968). In writing the papers collected in this volume, I have consulted both editions.

A. Souter et al., eds., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

With the exception of English, when a lexical item is singled out for discussion, it will be glossed, normally as literally as possible, so as to highlight its semantic content. When a gloss is added, it is put in single quotation marks.

In the case of Chinese lexical items in the Chinese script, their *pinyin* 拼音 (the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet) romanized forms are normally given first. Tone marks are not given when Chinese lexical items are transliterated, unless the tones of the lexical items are relevant to the discussion.

NOTE ON TITLES OF WORKS

To date, there is no consensus as to how the initial “a,” “an,” or “the” in titles of works should be treated when it is preceded by the author’s name in the genitive (or possessive) case or by a possessive adjective (*his*, *her*, or *their*): “Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*” or “Dante’s *Divine Comedy*”? “His *The Divine Comedy*” or “His *Divine Comedy*”? It is possible to get round the problem by rephrasing what has to be said: “Dante’s masterpiece *The Divine Comedy*,” “Dante’s poem *The Divine Comedy*,” and so on. Sometimes, however, one may be compelled to choose between “two evils.”

With respect to this dilemma, Pam Peters has made the following recommendations:

The titles of many publications include **the**, witness Michael Ondaatje’s novel *The English Patient* and reference books such as *The Gentle Art of Flavoring*. In such cases, **The** needs a capital, as an intrinsic part of the title, even when cited in mid-sentence:

Ondaatje’s novel The English Patient became an Oscar-winning movie.

However style guides agree that if retaining the **The** makes an awkward sentence, it can be dropped:

Have you read his Gentle Art of Flavoring?

Likewise it’s accepted that when referring to titles prefaced by *A* or *An* (e.g. *A New English Dictionary*), the indefinite article may be replaced by **the**. It would not be capitalized as part of the title:

*Information on many a cultural question can be found among the words listed in the New English Dictionary.*¹

Two other equally authoritative style guides, the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* and the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, contain no such recommendation. In giving examples of titles with the definite article *the* following a name in the

¹ Pam Peters, *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 536.

genitive case, *the* is retained even though its inclusion makes the style “awkward” by Peters’s standards:

French’s *The Minute Man* (sculpture)²

Another style guide, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which is equally authoritative, has the following to say:

An initial “a,” “an,” or “the” in book titles. An initial *a*, *an*, or *the* in running text may be dropped from a book title if it does not fit the surrounding syntax. When in doubt, or if the article seems indispensable, it should be retained.

Fielding, in his introduction to *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, announces himself as a professional author.

Fielding’s *History of Tom Jones*...

That dreadful *Old Curiosity Shop* character, Quilp...

but

In *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Dickens...

In L’Amour’s *The Quick and the Dead*...³

In *Where Theory and Practice Meet: Understanding Translation through Translation*, I have followed the recommendation of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. This is because it has taken care of the needs of both rigorous scholarship and “stylistic grace.” Thus, while dropping the article *the* in phrases like “In Homer’s *Iliad*” and “In Dante’s *Divine Comedy*,”⁴ I

² *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 3rd ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2008), 118. The same example is also given by the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009), 88. The authority of these two books is suggested by the information given on the copyright page of the 2009 *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*: “The Modern Language Association publishes two books on its documentation style: the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (for high school and undergraduate students) and the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (for graduate students, scholars, and professional writers). These volumes provide the most accurate and complete instructions on MLA style.”

³ *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 1st ed. 1906 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 16th ed. 2010), 452-53.

⁴ Even with Shakespeare, the definite article “*The*” in *The Taming of the Shrew* can be found in scholarly writing when the title is preceded by the playwright’s name in the genitive case: “The real test of the relationship between the poet and

have, in cases where the titles of works are less famous, retained the articles (e.g. “In David Hawkes’s *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*”). In other words, with well-known titles which are almost common knowledge to readers, I drop the articles “in running text” when they “[do] not fit the surrounding syntax” or when retaining them “makes an awkward sentence”; but when the articles are “indispensable” or when omission of them could give rise to ambiguity or confusion, I will retain them. Take the phrase “David Hawkes’s *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*,” for example. Omission of the indefinite article “A” could leave the reader uncertain as to the exact title of the author’s book: “*A Little Primer of Tu Fu*,” “*The Little Primer of Tu Fu*,” or “*Little Primer of Tu Fu*”? One could, of course, take a circuitous route and say such things as “In David Hawkes’s book *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*...” or “In *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, David Hawkes’s book on the great Chinese poet...” and so on, but this kind of circumlocution or “avoidance of the issue” is just as “awkward” as saying “In David Hawkes’s *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*,” even though it is awkward in a different way.⁵ In scholarly writing, it is, of course, desirable to pay attention to both “stylistic grace” and accuracy, but when the two are at odds with each other, accuracy should take precedence over “stylistic grace.”

Having stated my position, I would like to end this note by quoting at length a writer for whom I have great respect. In his *Usage and Abuse*, Eric Partridge has the following to say at the entry “TITLES OF BOOKS AND PERIODICALS”:

This is a question often neglected: I have already discussed it at the entry *the* in my *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (1937; 3rd ed., revised and enlarged, 1948).

Had I chosen the title *Dictionary of Slang*, it would have been incorrect to refer to it either as *A Dictionary of Slang* or as *The Dictionary of Slang* (very pretentious this!, for there are other dictionaries of slang); had the title been *The Dictionary of Slang*, it would have been incorrect (though

the editor, however, can best be assessed by giving a close reading to how citation sits with sense in a dictionary entry, which is what I now turn to with a number of entries supported by Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*.” See John Willinsky, *Empire of Words: The Reign of the OED* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 75.

⁵ The second circumlocution is not only awkward, but also inaccurate, for *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, apart from discussing the poet and his work, also contains translations of his poems; strictly speaking, therefore, it is not exclusively a book on Tu Fu.

excusable) to refer to it as either *A Dictionary of Slang* or *Dictionary of Slang*; but as it is *A Dictionary*, why impute telegraphese by calling it *Dictionary*, or conceit by changing it to *The Dictionary*? Hence I write ‘My *A Dictionary of Slang*’. If the title had been *The Dictionary*...I should have referred to the book as ‘my *The Dictionary of Slang*’.

And let us italicize the initial ‘A’ and ‘The’ or, if the inverted-comma mode is preferred, have inverted commas before them. ‘A correspondent on the *Times*’ or ‘A correspondent on the “Times”’ is, to put it mildly, a feeble substitute for ‘a correspondent on *The Times*’ or ‘a correspondent on “The Times”’. Luckily, few writers fall into the ineptitude of omitting the capital letter in the properly italicized or inverted-comma mode, as in ‘a correspondent on *the Times*’ or ‘a correspondent on “the Times”’.

Admittedly, the general practice is against ‘my *A Dictionary of Slang*’: but should not exactitude overrule a practice that can hardly be classified as idiom? In familiar speech, ‘my *Dictionary of Slang*’ is permissible: it is a colloquialism. But I do recommend that scholars and reputable serious writers (or humorous writers desirous of a reputation for good English as well as for acceptable humour) and cataloguers should retain the *A* and *The* that form the first word in a title. Is it not better to speak of J. M. Barrie’s delightful book as ‘Barrie’s *A Window in Thrums*’ than to refer to it as ‘Barrie’s *Window in Thrums*’? Is not the latter both ambiguous and impertinent – and just a little cheap? After all, we do not speak of ‘Michael Sadleir’s *Foolish Things*’, but of ‘Michael Sadleir’s *These Foolish Things*’; we speak, not of ‘Michael Arlen’s *Charming People*’ but of ‘Michael Arlen’s *These Charming People*’. *A* and *The* have their rights no less than *These* and *Those*.

In the titles of periodicals, however, there is an exception, consecrated by usage and justified by convenience: when the title becomes an adjective, *The* is omitted. ‘A *Times* correspondent’ is more convenient than, and is idiomatic for, ‘A correspondent of (generally, on) *The Times*’. I do not suggest that we should either say or write ‘a *The Times* correspondent’ or ‘the *The Times* correspondent’. But, so far as I can see, there is no excuse for ‘The editor of the *New York Times* snorts balefully on discovering this sorry stratagem’ (Stuart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words*): either ‘The editor of *The New York Times*’ or ‘The editor of “The New York Times”’ is required.⁶

Having made his recommendations for the British, Partridge goes on to

⁶ Eric Partridge, *Usage and Abusage: A Guide to Good English*, new edition edited by Janet Whitcut, Penguin Reference (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 350-351. First published in the USA 1942; first published in Great Britain by Hamish Hamilton 1947; revised edition 1957; published in Penguin Books 1963; reprinted with revisions 1969, 1973; this new edition first published by Hamish Hamilton 1994.

talk about the American practice:

[For the citing of titles the most generally available American authority is probably the University of Chicago Press's *A Manual of Style*. As first words the articles *a* and *the* are part of the titles of books and one would expect them to be so treated – i.e. capitalized and set within quotation marks or in the italic type that distinguishes the title. However, titles that make for awkwardness or misunderstanding – as in 'his *A Dictionary of Slang*' and 'Dr. Vizetelly's *The Standard Dictionary*' – will inevitably be shortened, now and again, when they interfere with the English language.]⁷

What Partridge or Janet Whitcut, who revised *Usage and Abusage* in 1994, says in the above quotation seems to suggest that the University of Chicago Press's *A Manual of Style* is at odds with *Usage and Abusage*. But if Partridge or Whitcut had read the 2010 edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which includes the following clause: “if the article seems indispensable, it should be retained,” Partridge or Whitcut would probably have written about the American practice differently, for, clearly, the “*A*” in Partridge’s “my *A Dictionary of Slang*” is “indispensable,” at least for the sake of scholarly exactitude. Of the four style guides mentioned in this note, Peters’s is the least scholarly.⁸

⁷ Partridge, 351-52. The square brackets are Partridge’s (or Whitcut’s).

⁸ It is interesting to note, that, even in formal writing, which *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* is supposed to be written in, Peters uses contractions (e.g. “Likewise it’s accepted that [...]”), thereby blurring the boundaries between formal and informal writing. On the use of contractions, the 2008 edition of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* has the following to say: “A principal function of apostrophes is to indicate possession. They are also used in contractions (*can’t, wouldn’t*), which are rarely acceptable in scholarly writing [...]” (95). As the counterpart of Peters’s *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*, the *New Oxford Style Manual* does not use contractions in running text. See *New Oxford Style Manual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

PART ONE

THE SHIFTING NEXUS: TRANSLATION REVISITED

[ABSTRACT]

Over the past decades, translation has been variously defined, and pronouncements about what an effective translation should be like have been made by theorists of different schools. However, despite the large number of articles and books on such ideas as “equivalence,” “dynamic equivalence,” “communicative translation,” “skopos,” “différance,” “manipulation,” “domestication,” “foreignizing,” translation between cultures, and so on, some readily comprehensible to the layman, some abstruse, bordering on the metaphysical, not enough has been said about the actual translation process, particularly that between languages of different families, such as the Indo-European and the Sino-Tibetan. Most of the time, theorists are long on generalities but short on specifics. To address this state of affairs, this paper will examine the translation process from a new point of view, putting forward what the author would call “the nexus model of translation.”

I. Chronologically Old and New Translation Theories

The realm of translation theories is like that of literary theories: before a sufficiently long period of time has elapsed, theories put forward at a later date usually enjoy an advantage over those put forward earlier, appearing to undiscerning eyes to be an improvement upon or supersession of those preceding them, very much like Apollo replacing Hyperion in Keats’s unfinished poem, “The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream.”¹ Before the merits or demerits of these theories are put in perspective by time, chronological newness is often equated with progress or refinement. With the twentieth century receding into the background, when the halo bestowed upon certain translation theories by chronological newness is beginning to dim, it should now be easier to evaluate translation theories of the past decades with a higher degree of objectivity.²

¹ In John Keats’s unfinished poem, “The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream,” the Titan Hyperion falls with the coming of Apollo.

² After I had made this point, I came upon Theo Hermans’s thought-provoking book, *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and Systemic Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999), and found in it quite a number of views which I

II. J. C. Catford and Eugene Nida versus Other Modern Translation Theorists

Going over the translation theories put forward since the 1960s, one becomes aware of four major trends: (1) formulating what is self-evident as theories, such as that relating to manipulation on the part of the translator during the translation process; (2) gravitating towards philosophical discussions that are not verifiable, such as those relating to the idea of “*différance*”; (3) moving away from the actual *transfere* process³ to extralinguistic factors that affect the process, such as the role

had shared with my colleagues and students but which I had not yet expressed in writing before I read the book. The following are some of them: “The structuralist-inspired model of empirical-descriptive translation studies as it was elaborated in the 1970s and ’80s, new and exciting as it once was, is now a thing of the past. The relative absence of innovation within the paradigm itself [...] point[s] in that direction. Just as a designation like ‘the Manipulation group’ is tied to a particular historical moment and bound to disappear, so the distinctive identity of the paradigm that formed the subject of this book is unravelling” (Hermans, 160). “Two further things became noticeable by the early 1990s. One bears on Diana Crane’s fourth stage: after the period of consolidation and exponential growth, the rate of innovation declines and the exploration of key ideas loses impetus. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in two volumes brought out by key figures in the paradigm, Even-Zohar’s essays collected as ‘Polysystem Studies’ in a special one-man issue of *Poetics Today* (Even-Zohar 1990), and Toury’s *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995). Both books revised, refined and redefined earlier positions (Even-Zohar 1978 and Toury 1980 respectively), but contained disappointingly little that was new in theoretical or methodological terms, and scarcely any engagement with competing views and ideas” (14). “[...] Peter Newmark, writing in 1991, dismissed the Manipulation group for their lack of interest in the criticism and evaluation of translation, and lambasted, not unreasonably, for their ‘turgid style’ [...] and a paucity of translation examples” (13). “For Even-Zohar, polysystem theory is about writing cultural history, but not only that. Like Toury, he is in search of universal laws and principles. The boldness of the abstract thought here has as its flip-side—an eagerness to rush into generalizations. [...] As was the case with Toury’s laws of translational behaviour in the previous chapter, Even-Zohar’s quest leaves me unconvinced. His laws, it seems to me, take the form of pronouncements that are either trivial because self-evident, or problematic.” (110-11).

³ The word *translate* is derived from the Latin *translatu*s, past participle of *transfere*, which means “to carry over or across”; “to transfer, transport, convey.” See D. P. Simpson, *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English-Latin* (New

played by ideology, gender, and so on; (4) paying undeserved homage to random observations made by scholars of other disciplines which, though novel and couched in apparently learned language, are amateurish or cannot be substantiated.⁴ For knowledge to develop, branching out in different directions is necessary, and attempts to shed light on a particular discipline by drawing on the findings of other disciplines can only be constructive, since untrodden paths can lead to unexpected results. But if one is to evaluate theories in terms of academic rigour, originality, verifiability, and scientific precision, which, I believe, are some of the most important criteria for evaluating theories in the strict sense of the word,⁵ two theorists will have a better chance of standing the test of time

York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1968), 611.

⁴ In the light of these major trends, the oft-heard remark made by critics who can evaluate translation theories on their merits may not be unjustified: “many translation theorists and scholars have concerned themselves with anything but translation during the past decades.”

⁵ Just like its counterpart in mathematics and physics, a proposition in translation studies should meet the following criteria before it can qualify as a theory: (1) whether it is verifiable; (2) whether it is universally applicable; (3) whether it is original; (4) whether it is scientifically precise; and (5) whether it is exhaustive. Judged by these standards, many so-called translation theories should be classified differently. For example, Yan Fu’s 嚴復 idea about “fidelity” (“*xin* 信”), “expressiveness,” or, to be more precise, “communicatedness” (“*da* 達”), and “elegance” (“*ya* 雅”) is only a belief, a conviction, or a pronouncement, the manipulation theory a description of the self-evident, the polysystem theory an observation of isolated cases true only of certain places during certain periods of time, and deconstructionism a piece of “clever” but vague philosophical speculation, leaving plenty of room for different interpretations—unless one is willing to redefine *theory*. All the beliefs, pronouncements, or observations published in the past decades may be more accurately put under the broader umbrella of *translation studies*. If one insists on granting them the status of theory, they should be classified as *meta theories*, and the *non-meta theories* as *theories proper*. This point can be best illustrated by what has happened in literary studies: over the past decades, T. S. Eliot’s critical writings have been regarded as literary criticism rather than theory; yet they are held in much higher esteem than many literary theories in the strict sense of the word. In this regard, it may be worth pointing out that, in approaching translation from a linguistic point of view, one has a better chance of coming up with a theory that meets the above criteria, since linguistics as a discipline comes closer to the exact sciences, with which theories in the strictest sense of the word are closely associated. If we go by more rigorous standards, even linguistics cannot pass muster. On this Holmes writes: “It is not

than others: J. C. Catford and Eugene Nida. Unlike many other theorists of the past decades, Catford and Nida have broken new ground, not just belabouring the obvious, clothing well-worn concepts in new garb, describing phenomena which do not deserve to be lifted to the status of theory, basing their theories on just the case study of one or two short texts, whether poetry or prose,⁶ or making general pronouncements with few

that I object to the term *Übersetzungswissenschaft*, for there are few if any valid arguments against that for the subject in German. The problem is not that the discipline is not a *Wissenschaft*, but that not all *Wissenschaften* can properly be called sciences. Just as no one today would take issue with the terms *Sprachwissenschaft* and *Literaturwissenschaft*, while more than a few would question whether linguistics has yet reached a stage of precision, formalization, and paradigm formation such that it can properly be described as a science, and while practically everyone would agree that literary studies are not, and in the foreseeable future will not be, a science in any true sense of the English word, in the same way I question whether we can with any justification use a designation for the study of translating and translation that places it in the company of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, or even biology, rather than that of sociology, history, and philosophy—or for that matter of literary studies.” See James Holmes, “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies,” in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000), 175. For the entire article, see 172-85.

⁶ I had this impression when I read the work of theorists like Toury and Lefevere. On this point, Hermans has again expressed what I have been wanting to say: “In his case studies, however, Lefevere focused mostly on translations as merely reflecting the impact of a dominant poetics or ideology and therefore as providing little more than ‘an unflinching barometer of literary fashions ([‘Translation and Comparative Literature: the Search for the Center’] 1991: 129). This barely takes us beyond, say, Reuben Brower’s ‘Seven Agamemnon’s’ essay of 1959, which sought to demonstrate that translations of poetry ‘show[...] [us] in the baldest form the assumptions about poetry shared by readers and poets’ ([‘Seven Agamemnon’s’, in Reuben Brower, *On Translation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), 175; for the entire article, see 173-95] 1959a:175). It rarely grants translation more than a passive role, instead of seeing it as simultaneously determined and determining. The one-sidedness may stem from Lefevere’s tendency to flit from one case study to another without ever digging very deep, but perhaps also from an inconsistency in his own theory. As we saw above, he puts rewriters, including translators, with the ‘experts’ who form part of the control mechanism of the literary system. But we are simultaneously to imagine the system as accommodating both writing and rewriting. This leaves it unclear whether rewriting is part of the system or of the system’s control system” (129).

examples to substantiate them.⁷ Compared with Catford's original, lucid, and unpretentious *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, with Nida and Taber's *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, and with Nida's *Toward a Science of Translating*,⁸ the works of many other theorists appear thin, "clever," wilfully obscure, or dodging the central issues of translation studies.⁹ In going through Catford's or Nida's

⁷ This kind of inadequacy has been touched on by Holmes: "In the field of culture-restricted theories, there has been little detailed research. [...] It is moreover no doubt true that some aspects of theories that are presented as general in reality pertain only to the Western culture area." See Holmes, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, 179.

⁸ Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969) and Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964).

⁹ Unless we want to redefine *translation* or subscribe to the many "redefinitions" already current, some of which border on redefining *orange* as *apple*, there is no denying the fact that "[t]ranslation is [and will always be] an operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another." See J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, *Language and Language Learning* 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1. Although the following remark was made some fifty years ago, it has by no means been vitiated by the passage of time: "Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language—a general linguistic theory" (1). This is because translation theories that draw upon a theory of language are more likely to meet the requirements theories are expected to meet. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why many translation "theories" to date are just beliefs, views, convictions, and unsubstantiated assertions, a state of affairs already pointed out by Holmes: "Most of the theories that have been produced to date are in reality little more than prolegomena to such a general translation theory. A good share of them, in fact, are not actually theories at all, in any scholarly sense of the term, but an array of axioms, postulates, and hypotheses that are so formulated as to be both too inclusive (covering also non-translatory acts and non-translations) and too exclusive (shutting out some translatory acts and some works generally recognized as translations)" (Holmes, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, 178). By "a general translation theory," Holmes means "a full, inclusive theory accommodating so many elements that it can serve to explain and predict all phenomena falling within the terrain of translating and translation, to the exclusion of all phenomena falling outside it" (ibid.).

works, one is convinced that the authors are versed in language / languages and the nature of translation;¹⁰ that their findings are the result of solid research; and that they are tackling the central, not peripheral, issues relating to the study of translation.¹¹ Indeed, few theorists in the past decades have shed as much light on the *transfere* process as Catford and Nida have done.¹² To this day, for example, no other theories have

¹⁰ Over the past decades, many translation theorists do not give one the impression that their theories are based on an adequate understanding of language / languages or of translation. Because of this inadequacy, they fail to come to grips with issues that are central to translation, taking refuge in a world of jargon and woolly conceptions.

¹¹ From a theoretical point of view, there are at least two approaches to the study of translation: to look at the *transfere* process and to look at extralinguistic factors that may affect this process, such as the translator's ideology, gender, and religion, as well as patronage, and so on. Although it may be argued that the two approaches sometimes intertwine and do not readily lend themselves to clear-cut categorization, one can, generally speaking, easily see the difference between the two. For the sake of theoretical precision, it would be helpful, following what I have proposed in footnote 5, to classify theories relating to the former approach as *translation theories proper* and those relating to the latter as *meta translation theories*. In putting forward the two terms, I have no intention of exalting one above the other; as a matter of fact, the two types should be able to complement each other. I only want to emphasize that, in studying translation, the *transfere* process is central, for other factors would be irrelevant if there were no such thing as the *transfere* process. On this basis, one could perhaps go a step further and make another point: to study the non-central issues, one does not need to have much experience of translating, nor does one need to have a deep understanding of the nature of language; scholars of many other disciplines, such as historians, sociologists, and statisticians can be equally competent.

¹² Catford's case is especially noteworthy. As far as I know, this theorist has only written one little book of 103 pages about translation; yet he has succeeded, from a linguistic point of view, in leaving little unsaid about the *transfere* process that is worth saying. Indeed, in respect of the translation theories I have read over the past decades, I have not come across any other book which has said so much in so few words, often to the point of exhaustiveness—and in a style so succinct and unpretentious, using technical terms only when they are really necessary. Even some fifty years after its publication in 1965, the description on its back cover has lost none of its validity: "This is an important work which brings a new degree of precision into the analysis of what is involved in translation from one language to another. Starting from the assumption that any process concerned with human language can be illuminated by applying to it the latest insights into the nature of language, the author outlines a current British framework of descriptive linguistics

explained the principle that underlies idiomaticity in translation as scientifically as Catford's theory of translation shifts.¹³ As for Nida, his integration of the work of Chomsky with translation studies has enabled teachers and students to X-ray unidiomatic TL (target-language) texts¹⁴—even TL texts in Chinese.¹⁵

III. The Shifting Nexus

Superior as they are in shedding light on the *transfere* process, Catford's and Nida's theories have not covered the translation between Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan languages.¹⁶ To be sure, in putting

and applies it to the analysis of translation. Translation is shown to be a much more complex matter than is commonly realized, while at the same time the author indicates important new ways of approaching it. The book is a valuable addition to the literature of a subject which has only recently begun to receive the scientific treatment it deserves." Words like "the nature of language," "descriptive," and "scientific" all suggest—and rightly suggest—that its claim to the status of theory in the strict sense of the word cannot be disputed. Almost fifty years after its publication, it is still unsurpassed in its descriptive approach. Because of its rigorous language-oriented analysis, and of the fact that it presupposes considerable in-depth knowledge of linguistics on the part of the reader, it is not an easy primer for beginners. With the average undergraduate, or postgraduate, for that matter, Lefevere's *Translating, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Fame*, for example, would prove to be much easier reading.

¹³ For a detailed discussion of translation shifts, see Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 73-82.

¹⁴ One could argue, of course, that the approach of Catford and Nida is largely linguistic; as such, it is in a better position to come close to the kind of precision associated with theories relating to the exact sciences, such as mathematics and physics. In putting forward this argument, one has identified precisely the superiority of the linguistic approach over approaches that give rise to unsubstantiated assertions and unverifiable convictions, like those expressed by Benjamin and Derrida.

¹⁵ I say "even TL texts in Chinese" to emphasize that Nida's theory is applicable even to languages not specifically covered in his discussions, which is a step towards Holmes's idea of "a general theory of translation": "including so many elements that it can serve to explain and predict phenomena falling within the terrain of translating and translation" (Holmes, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, 178).

¹⁶ Catford and Nida have covered Japanese and African languages in their

forward the ideas of “equivalence”¹⁷ and “dynamic equivalence,”¹⁸ the two theorists have come to grips with the *transfere* process instead of drifting into generalities.¹⁹ Yet, because the languages they deal with are mostly Indo-European, they have not given examples of translation between Indo-European languages on the one hand and Chinese (a member of the Sino-Tibetan family) on the other. By just reading Catford and Nida, one may not be aware that something more complicated can happen in the translation between an Indo-European language and Chinese. In the translation between an Indo-European language (such as English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Latin, or Greek) and Chinese, what I would call a shifting nexus becomes dominant, which goes far beyond one-to-one equivalence.²⁰

discussions, but have not dealt with translation between Indo-European languages on the one hand and Chinese on the other.

¹⁷ Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 27-31; 49-55.

¹⁸ Nida and Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 22-24. In using the word “equivalence,” Nida may have been influenced by Catford. Taber, being the co-author of *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, should, of course, also be given credit for the idea of “dynamic equivalence.” It should be noted here that the term “dynamic equivalence” was replaced by “functional equivalence” in Nida’s later publications.

¹⁹ Although the ideas of “equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence” have been criticized as inaccurate or inadequate representations of the translation process, I have not, to date, found anything more comprehensive or scientific that can replace them. As it is not possible to discuss thoroughly in this paper whether the terms *equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence* have any validity, I will not go into details. Yet it is instructive to note that Gideon Toury, one of those who had most vehemently objected to the notion of equivalence, turned out later to find the term indispensable. Thus, Hermans writes: “[...] Gideon Toury introduced the idea of translation as a norm-governed activity in an attempt to redefine the vexed notion of equivalence. [...] In other words, equivalence has been reduced to a ‘historical concept’ or ‘a functional-relational concept’ ([*Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*] 1995:86, Toury’s emphasis) [...] Having thoroughly hollowed out the notion, Toury nevertheless hangs on to it. Indeed he expresses ‘a clear wish to retain the notion of equivalence’ (1995: 61). The study of individual translations, he explains, will ‘proceed from the assumption that equivalence does exist between an assumed translation and its assumed source,’ adding again that ‘[w]hat remains to be uncovered is only the way this postulate was actually realized’ (Toury 1995: 86)” (Hermans, *Translation in Systems*, 96-97).

²⁰ This does not mean, of course, that the shifting nexus can only be found in translation between an Indo-European language and Chinese; in translation

By “nexus,” I mean “the connection in the form of a 1→1 (one-to-one), 1→1+ (one-to-one-plus), 1→0 (one-to-zero), etc. relationship set up between SL (source-language) text and TL (target-language) text in the translation process”: the more accurate the nexus, the more adequate the translation.²¹ Thus in translating the French *livre* as “book,” we have set up a 1→1 nexus between SL and TL texts, which, for all practical purposes, can be regarded as accurate.²² In the simplest type of translation, the nexus is generally monolinear, that is, the relationship between SL text and TL text exists on a one-to-one basis. In the case of translation between languages of closer kinship, such as languages of the same family or of the same branch, which have closer resemblances in grammar and lexis, this one-to-one relationship can be found in long, sometimes very long, segments, such as groups, clauses, and sentences. Thus, between the

between Indo-European languages themselves, say, between English and French, or between German and Italian, the nexus also shifts, but much less frequently—and with a much smaller amplitude.

²¹ The term *nexus* (which is both singular and plural) used in this paper should not be confused with *nexus* in Otto Jespersen’s classic, *The Philosophy of Grammar*. In discussing subordination in 1924, Jespersen identified two kinds of combination of words: “In any composite denomination of a thing or person [...] we always find that there is one word of supreme importance to which the others are joined as subordinates. [...] If now we compare the combination *a furiously barking dog* (*a dog barking furiously*) in which *dog* is primary, *barking* secondary, and *furiously* tertiary, with *the dog barks furiously*, it is evident that the same subordination obtains in the latter as in the former combination. Yet there is a fundamental difference between them, which calls for separate terms for the two kinds of combination: we shall call the former kind *junction*, and the latter *nexus*.” See Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar*, 1st ed. 1924 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 96-97.

²² I say “for all practical purposes” because even in the translation of a sememe, a completely accurate nexus may sometimes be impossible. Take the English *red* and the Chinese “紅,” for example. Under most circumstances, the two words can translate each other adequately, but when, in certain contexts, cultural factors are involved, *red* in English may not convey the same associations to English readers as those conveyed by “紅” to Chinese readers. In view of this, David Hawkes in his English translation of the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 has to render “*Yi Hong* 怡紅” ‘Red Delights’ in “*Yi Hong Yuan* 怡紅院” ‘Court of Red Delights’ as “Green Delights.” For a detailed discussion of the word “紅,” see David Hawkes and John Minford, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin, 5 vols., Vols. 1-3, trans. David Hawkes, Vols. 4-5, trans. John Minford (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973-86), Vol. 1, 45.

French sentence *À Besançon, où Victor-Marie Hugo est né, vous pouvez trouver le peuple en qui le poète avait pleine confiance* and its English translation, “In Besançon, where Victor-Marie Hugo was born, you can find the people in whom the poet had full confidence,” we have a series of eighteen one→one nexus,²³ which can be shown as follows:

À→In
 Besançon, →Besançon,
 où→where
 Victor-Marie Hugo→Victor-Marie Hugo
 est→was
 né, →born,
 vous→you
 pouvez→can
 trouver→find
 le→the
 peuple→people
 en→in
 qui→whom
 le→the
 poète→poet
 avait→had
 pleine→full
 confiance→confidence.

When the above SL text is translated into Chinese, the nexus will shift as a result of the more pronounced linguistic differences between the two languages. With languages of close kinship, the 1→1 nexus can often exist at the morphemic level, as can be seen between any two of the following words: *philosophy* (English), *Philosophie* (German), *philosophie* (French), *filosofia* (Italian), *filosofía* (Spanish), *philosophia* (Latin), *φιλοσοφία* (Greek), of which the first six are derived from the Greek word *φιλοσοφία*, in which *φιλο-* is derived from *φιλεῖν*, meaning “to love,” and *-σοφία* from *σοφός*, meaning “wise.” Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that translating between the major European languages is often like going next door. Given the English word *insensitive*, for example, a translator can readily translate it as *insensible* (French),

²³ The French sentence is given at random to show how relatively straightforward the nexus between languages of close kinship can be.

insensible (Spanish), and *insensibile* (Italian), thereby establishing a 1→1 nexus which can remain stable in most contexts, such as “He is an insensitive boss,” “The teacher is insensitive about her student’s problem,” “The government is insensitive to the woes of single parents,” and so on. This is because the three words are all descended from the Latin *sentire*, meaning “to feel,” sharing the same prefix *in-* which is used “to express negation or privation,”²⁴ and which “continues the Latin *in-* (corresponding to the Greek *a-* privative).”²⁵ Translating between English and Chinese, a translator would have to pause to decide whether he should use “*ganjue chidun de* 感覺遲鈍的” ‘dull in sensitivity,’ “*bu mingan de* 不敏感的,” ‘not sensitive,’ “*bu lingmin de* 不靈敏的” ‘not intellectually quick,’²⁶ or “*wu ganjue de* 無感覺的” ‘having no feeling.’²⁷ Very often, English-Chinese dictionaries may not be able to help him, because in certain contexts he may have to be creative and come up with “*mamu buren* 麻木不仁” ‘callous and unkind,’ a challenge his counterparts translating between English and French, or between English and Italian, or between any other two major European languages need not face.

Take another word that gives even more trouble to speakers of Chinese—or, more precisely, to speakers of Cantonese in Hong Kong: the word *justify*. In Hong Kong, one can often hear people mixing codes as follows:²⁸ “你點樣可以 justify 你嘅做法呢?” ‘How can you justify

²⁴ William Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 1st ed. 1933 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd ed. with corrections 1970), 974.

²⁵ English translation of part of an entry in Cusatelli, *Dizionario Garzanti della lingua italiana*: “prefisso negativo, che continua il lat. *in-* (corrispondente al gr. *a-*privativo) [...]” See Giorgio Cusatelli et al., eds., *Dizionario Garzanti della lingua italiana*, 1st ed. 1965 (Milan: Aldo Garzanti Editore, 18th ed. 1980), 826.

²⁶ *Xin Ying-Han cidian* 新英漢詞典 (*A New English-Chinese Dictionary*), ed. Editorial Group of *A New English-Chinese Dictionary* (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店, 1975), 655.

²⁷ Zheng Yili 鄭易里 and Cao Chengxiu 曹成修, eds., *Ying-Hua da cidian* 英華大詞典 (*A New English-Chinese Dictionary*) (Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), 712.

²⁸ In this connection, what Crystal says about “code-switching” and “code-mixing” is illuminating: “The linguistic behaviour referred to as **code-switching** (sometimes **code-shifting** or, within a language, **style-shifting**), for example, can be illustrated by the switch BILINGUAL or BIDIALECTAL speakers may make (depending on who they are talking to, or where they are) between STANDARD and regional forms of English, between Welsh and English in parts of Wales, or

your action / what you have done / the way you did it?’ They have to do so apparently for two reasons. First, thinking in English, or in both English and Cantonese, they are fettered by the foreign language, so that their ability to pick the right Cantonese expression from their active vocabulary becomes hamstrung. Second, the word “justify” is troublesome, for, to the chagrin of these people, there is no *single-word* equivalent in idiomatic Cantonese or, for that matter, in idiomatic Mandarin that can come in handy as a transitive verb!²⁹ In consulting English-Chinese dictionaries, they cannot get much help; information like the following will only lead to unidiomatic renderings: “*zhengming shi zhengdang de (huo youli de)* 證明...是正當的 (或有理的) ‘to prove [that it is] proper (or reasonable)’; “*wei...bianhu* 為...辯護” ‘to speak in defence of...’;³⁰ “*zhengming...you daoli* 證明...有道理” ‘to prove [that it is] reasonable / [that it] has reason,’ “*wei...bianhu* 為...辯護” ‘to speak in defence of...’³¹ Provided with information which is not very helpful, they can only come up with TL texts like: “*Nei⁵ dim² jœŋ² ho²ji⁵ dziŋ³miŋ⁴ nei⁵ ge³ dzou⁶fat⁸ hei⁶ dziŋ³dœŋ³ ne¹ / jœu⁵lei⁵ ne¹* 你點樣可以證明你嘅做法係正當呢/有理呢?” ‘How can

between occupational and domestic varieties. **Code-mixing** involves the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another: a sentence begins in one language, then makes use of words or grammatical features belonging to another. Such mixed forms of language are often labelled with a hybrid name, such as (in the case of English) Spanglish, Franglais and Singlish (Singaporean English), and attract attitudes ranging from enthusiastic community support (as an expression of local identity) to outright condemnation (from some speakers of the related standard languages).” See David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, The Language Library, Series editor: David Crystal, 1st ed. published 1980 by André Deutsch (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 5th ed. 2003), 79. In the case of Cantonese and English, the hybrid word to label the mixed form of language concerned would be “Cantonglish”; the better known hybrid word *Chinglish* would be more appropriate for describing the form of language in which standard Chinese and English are mixed.

²⁹ The word “idiomatic” is important, for, in translating “justify” as “合理化,” people have deviated from idiomatic Chinese.

³⁰ *Xin Ying-Han cidian* 新英漢詞典, 691. In the English-Chinese dictionary, there is, of course, neither romanization nor gloss; the romanization and gloss are added to give readers who do not read Chinese a rough idea of what the dictionary entries say. As the gloss is a kind of back translation in English, conforming to idiomatic English usage, it cannot really show the problem underlying the Chinese translations.

³¹ Zheng and Cao, eds., *Ying-Hua da cidian* 英華大詞典 *A New English-Chinese Dictionary*, 753.

you prove that the way you did it is proper / reasonable?’ or “*Nei⁵ dim² jæŋ² wei⁶ nei⁵ ge³ dzou⁶fat⁸ bin⁶wu⁶ ne¹* 你點樣為你嘅做法辯護呢?” ‘How can you speak in defence of the way you did it?’ The result is a distorted or unnatural nexus between the original and the translation.³² To be able to set up an appropriate nexus for *justify*, the English-Chinese translator would have to acquire immunity, as it were, from linguistic interference, which is a demanding requirement when compared with the requirements his counterpart translating between, say, English and French, has to meet, for the French word *justifier* is, all the time, waiting to be of service: “Comment est-ce que vous pouvez justifier votre action?” or “Qu’est-ce qui justifie votre action / ce que vous avez fait?” To translate the English sentence into idiomatic Cantonese or Mandarin, one has no choice but to have recourse to a translation shift: “*Nei⁵ gem² jæŋ² dzou⁶, dim² gœŋ² dek⁷ gwœ³ hæŋ³ ne¹?* 你咁樣做，點講得過去呢?” / “*Ni zheyang zuo, zenme shuo de guoqu ne?* 你這樣做，怎麼說得過去呢?” The circuitous route the English-Chinese translator has to take is something the English-French translator can hardly imagine. If a speaker of English, having used *justify*, wants to switch from the verb to the abstract noun *justification*, the English-French translator can easily follow suit, helping himself to the readily available French equivalent *justification* without racking his brains in another complicated shift, as his counterpart

³² To switch from prescriptive to descriptive grammar and to use current terminology, one should say that the dictionary entries have led to “foreignized” renderings. The “foreignization” is not, of course, by choice on the part of the speaker / translator; it is involuntary, not motivated by the speaker’s / translator’s deliberate or conscious adherence to Lawrence Venuti’s call to resist imperialism or hegemony through translation. In other words, the speaker / translator, like the vast majority of incompetent translators who take shelter under the Venuti aegis, is not able to “not foreignize.” To be able to “not foreignize,” a translator must have attained a high degree of competence in both the source and target languages, has rich linguistic resources at his disposal, and is able to comprehend the source-language text with great precision and to write the target language idiomatically, which are requirements beyond the reach of many language-users and translators. For the idea of “foreignizing,” see Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995). For my discussion of Venuti’s position with regard to translation, see the Introduction to Laurence K. P. Wong, *Dreaming across Languages and Cultures: A Study of the Literary Translations of the Hong lou meng* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

translating from English to Chinese would have to do.³³ Thumbing through an English-French / French-English, English-German / German-English, English-Italian / Italian-English, or English-Spanish / Spanish-English dictionary, one is amazed at the large number of expressions that can be literally translated: “he laughs best who laughs last” = “rira bien qui rira le dernier” (French) = “wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten” (German); “rire aux dépens de X (French) = “to laugh at X’s expense”; “one of these fine days” = “eines schönen Tages” (German) = “un beau jour” (French); “to cross the Rubicon” = “franchir le Rubicon” (French) = “den Rubikon überschreiten” (German) = “passare il Rubicone” (Italian) = “cruzar el Rubicón” (Spanish); “tomarse las cosas con filosofía” (Spanish) = “to be philosophical about things” (English) = “être philosophe à propos de quelque chose” (French) = “prendere qualcosa con filosofia” (Italian); “das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten = throw the child out with the bath-water”; “little pitchers have long ears” (English) = “kleine Pötte haben große Ohren” (German); “the pitcher goes often to the well but is broken at last” (English) = “der Krug geht so lange zum Brunnen bis er bricht” (German); “wie der Herr so der Knecht” (German) = “like master like man” (English). Translate them literally into Chinese, and you risk producing bizarre, outlandish Chinese expressions, unless, of course, you want to shock readers of the TL text, to create a special stylistic effect, or to invoke Lawrence Venuti in your defence.

³³ It should be noted, though, that in English-French or French-English translation, adjustments also have to be made. Thus the *Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary* (2007 edition) has given the following examples: “**justify** [...] **how can you ~ such cruelty?** qu’est-ce qui justifie une telle cruauté? **what justifies its inclusion in the collection?** qu’est-ce qui justifie qu’on le mette dans la collection? [...] **the end justifies the means** la fin justifie les moyens [...]” (1365) “**justification** raison [...] **to have some ~ for doing** avoir des raisons de faire; **you have no ~ for being so rude** rien ne vous autorise à être aussi impoli; **in ~ of sth** en justification à qch; **what can they say in ~ of his behaviour?** qu’est-ce qu’ils peuvent dire pour justifier sa conduite?; **with some ~** non sans raison; **without any ~** sans aucune raison valable [...]” (1365) From the dictionary entries, it can be seen that even translation between European languages is not mechanical. See Marie-Hélène Corréard et al., eds., *The Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary: French-English · English-French / Le Grand dictionnaire Hachette-Oxford: français-anglais · anglais-français*, 1st ed. 1994, 4th ed. by Jean-Benoit Ormal-Grenon and Nicholas Rollin (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Paris: Hachette Livre; 4th ed. 2007).

IV. Nexus in the Translation between Languages of Close Kinship

In general, the nexus in the translation between languages of close kinship is relatively simple; the closer the kinship, the simpler the nexus. Take the opening lines of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and their Latin and Spanish translations by Seravalle and Mitre respectively:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
ché la diritta via era smarrita.³⁴

In medio itineris vita nostrae
Reperi me in una silva obscura,
Cuius recta via erat devia.³⁵

En medio del camino de la vida,
errante me encontré por selva oscura,
en que la recta vía era perdida.³⁶

As the target languages are closely linked to the source language etymologically, morphologically, and syntactically, the translation process is largely a simple unloading operation.

Moving from intrabranched translation (such as translation between Spanish and Italian) to interbranched translation (such as translation between French and English),³⁷ one can still set up a series of rather straightforward nexuses. Take the opening of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* and its English translation:³⁸

La petite ville de Verrières peut passer pour l'une des plus jolies de la

³⁴ Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia: Inferno*, Canto 1, ll. 1-3. Quoted from Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, a cura di M. Barbi et al., 2nd ed. (Firenze: Nella sede della Società, 1960).

³⁵ Fratris Iohannis de Seravalle, trans., *Translatio et comentum totius libri Dantis Aldigherii*, by Dante Alighieri, cum textu italico Fratris Bartholomaei a Colle nunc primum edita (Prati: Ex Officina Libraria Giachetti, Filii et Soc., 1891), 27.

³⁶ Bartolomé Mitre, trans., *La Divina Comedia*, by Dante Alighieri, traducción en verso, Biblioteca Mundial Sopena (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sopena, 1938), 9.

³⁷ Although English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish all belong to the Indo-European language family, French, Italian, and Spanish belong to the Italic branch, while English and German belong to the Germanic.

³⁸ "Stendhal" is the pen name of Marie-Henri Beyle (1783-1842).

Franche-Comté. Ses maisons blanches avec leurs toits pointus de tuiles rouges s'étendent sur la pente d'une colline [...] Le Doubs coule à quelques centaines de pieds au-dessous de ses fortifications, bâties jadis par les Espagnols, et maintenant ruinées.³⁹

The little town of Verrières must be one of the prettiest in the Franche-Comté. Its white houses with their steep, red tile roofs spread across a hillside [...] The Doubs flows a couple of hundred feet below the town's fortifications, built long ago by the Spaniards and now fallen into ruins.⁴⁰

The individual nexus are still largely 1→1, and the word order of the SL text is kept almost intact in the TL text. Reading the above French and English passages, one has the impression of seeing them dancing “in sync,” moving and turning in the same direction, pausing and going on at the same pace.⁴¹

V. Translation between Chinese and a European Language

When one reads a TL text in *idiomatic* Chinese⁴² against an SL text in any one of the above European languages, one immediately gets a totally different impression: the impression of two gymnasts performing two different kinds of gymnastics or, to change the metaphor, of a kaleidoscope being turned, yielding the same colours in a widely different

³⁹ Stendhal [Henri Beyle], *Le Rouge et le Noir* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1964), 33.

⁴⁰ Robert M. Adams, trans. and ed., *Red and Black*, by Stendhal (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1969), 1.

⁴¹ This does not mean, of course, that the nexus does not shift in the translation between languages of close kinship. Even with languages of close kinship, the nexus can shift from time to time, as can be seen, for example, in the English sentence, *All that was, is, and is to be*, and its German equivalent: *Alles was war, ist und sein wird*; the word order of *is to be* is reversed as *sein wird*, resulting in what one would call a criss-cross nexus. In the rest of this paper, I shall discuss the different types of nexus in detail, referring to translation between European languages on the one hand and Chinese on the other as well as to translation between European languages themselves.

⁴² It is necessary to emphasize the word “*idiomatic*,” for, in the hands of an incompetent translator, a target-language text in Chinese could be as “English” as an English source-language text, as “French” as a French source-language text, and so on, though many incompetent translators today can “defend” their unidiomatic translations by saying that they are “source text-oriented.”

configuration.⁴³ To see how the English-Chinese kaleidoscope works, one has only to compare the opening sentences of Washington Irving's "Westminster Abbey" and its Chinese translation by Xia Ji'an 夏濟安:

On one of those sober and rather melancholy days, in the latter part of Autumn, when the shadows of morning and evening almost mingle together, and throw a gloom over the decline of the year, I passed several hours in rambling about Westminster Abbey. There was something congenial to the season in the mournful magnificence of the old pile; and, as I passed its threshold, seemed like stepping back into the regions of antiquity, and losing myself among the shades of fo[r]mer ages.⁴⁴

時方晚秋，氣象肅穆，略帶憂鬱，早晨的陰影和黃昏的陰影，幾乎連接在一起，不可分別，歲將云暮，終日昏暗，我就在這麼一天，到西敏大寺去散步了幾個鐘頭。古寺巍巍，森森然似有鬼氣，和陰沉沉的季候正好調和；我跨過大門，覺得自己已經置身遠古，相忘於古人的鬼影之中了。⁴⁵

Although the colours remain unaltered after the turning of the kaleidoscope, the configurations could not have differed more widely in terms of syntax, word order, class, and so on.

VI. The Unwary Translator Translating between Chinese and a European Language

As the nexus shifts more often in the translation between any one of the major European languages and Chinese, sometimes in ways that translators working in European languages can hardly imagine, an unwary or incompetent translator can easily get caught in a labyrinth without being

⁴³ Because of the great differences between Chinese and any one of the European languages under discussion, it is much more difficult to set up an accurate series of nexus between English and Chinese, or between German and Chinese, than between, say, English and French or between French and German. Because of this, it takes much more time to train an English-Chinese translator than to train an English-French / French-German / German-Italian translator. In view of this, it may not be facetious to say that a competent English-Chinese translator deserves a much higher salary than his counterpart translating between any two of the above-mentioned major European languages.

⁴⁴ Xia Ji'an 夏濟安, *Mingjia sanwen xuandu* 名家散文選讀 (Hong Kong: Jinri shijie chubanshe 今日世界出版社, 1972), 54.

⁴⁵ Xia Ji'an 夏濟安, *Mingjia sanwen xuandu* 名家散文選讀, 54.

aware of it. Take the English word *channel*, for example. According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, the word has, as a noun, three major categories of meanings:

1 a : the hollow bed where a natural body or stream of water runs or may run **b** : the deeper part of a moving body of water [...] where the main current flows or which affords the best passage [...] **d** : a means or instrumentality aiding communication or expression or commercial exchange [...] **e channels pl** : a fixed, accustomed, or official course of communication or transmission of information or of commercial interchange <submitting material to the Defense Department without going through prescribed [...] Army ~s [...]> [...] **2 a** : an esp. tubular enclosed passage [...] **3** : a long gutter, groove, or furrow: as **a** : a street or road gutter **b** : CANAL [...] ⁴⁶

A story was told that, in the 1970s, when Richard Nixon visited China, a communiqué was issued after diplomats of the United States and the host country had held several rounds of talks, acknowledging the progress made in Sino-U.S. relations, while at the same time agreeing to resolve their differences “through diplomatic channels.” In the Chinese translation of the English original, the equivalent of the phrase “through diplomatic channels” was “*touguo waijiao qudao* 透過外交渠道,” in which the word “*qudao* 渠道,” at the time of Nixon’s visit to China, could, idiomatically, mean only sense 3 of *channel* in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (“a long gutter, groove, or furrow: as **a** : a street or road gutter”), and had hitherto never meant sense **1 e** (“**channels pl** : a fixed, accustomed, or official course of communication or transmission of information or of commercial interchange <submitting material to the Defense Department without going through prescribed [...] Army ~s [...]>”). During the drafting stage of the communiqué, an experienced sinologist in Nixon’s diplomatic corps politely asked the Chinese translators whether “through diplomatic channels” should not be translated as “*xun waijiao tujing* 循外交途徑,” thereby tactfully calling the translation “*waijiao qudao* 外交渠道” into question. However, either because of their misguided eagerness to “adhere” to the SL text or of their misconception about “fidelity,” the Chinese translators rejected the American sinologist’s polite suggestion, and stuck

⁴⁶ Philip Babcock Gove, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*. (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1971), 374.

to “*touguo waijiao qudao* 透過外交渠道,” which they apparently considered to be a more accurate Chinese version of “through diplomatic channels.” At the time the communiqué was drafted, there was no recorded evidence of native speakers of English ever equating “channels” (in the sense in which it was used in the English version of the communiqué) with what is signified by the Chinese collocation “*qudao* 渠道” (“a long gutter, groove, or furrow: as **a** : a street or road gutter”). In using “channels” in the phrase “through diplomatic channels,” the American diplomats obviously had definition **1 e** in mind: “**channels** *pl*: a fixed, accustomed, or official course of communication or transmission of information or of commercial interchange,” not definition **2 a** or definition **3**, both of which would have justified “*qudao* 渠道” as the correct translation. In translating “channels,” the Chinese translators had obviously pounced upon definition **2 a** or definition **3**, which may have been the only definitions of “channels” they were familiar with, thereby establishing a misnexus between SL and TL texts.⁴⁷ From the point of view of descriptive linguistics or descriptive grammar, the question of whether a usage is right or wrong simply does not exist. Any usage, no matter how “wrong,” how “outrageous” from the point of view of prescriptive grammar, can establish itself as “idiomatic” and “grammatical” when it gets sanctioned by a large enough number of users of the language. When the “wrong” or “outrageous” usage begins to have the blessing of the majority, it may even replace the original idiomatic usage as the only legitimate signifier of what was originally signified by the older word or phrase, rendering the latter old-fashioned, archaic, or obsolete. In the realm of language, might is right.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, it must be pointed out

⁴⁷ Similarly, it can be shown that at the time the Chinese translation was prepared, “*touguo* 透過” was not the idiomatic Chinese equivalent of “through,” either. Traditionally, one would have used “*xun* 循” to express the sense of “through” as it was used in the English version. In English-Chinese translation, there are many similar examples of misplaced nexus. The English words *warn* and *envy*, for example, are normally translated as “*jinggao* 警告” and “*duji* 妒忌” respectively. In the majority of cases, these are correct translations; however, in some cases, depending on the contexts, *warn* may have to be translated as “*tixing* 提醒,” “*gaojie* 告誡,” or “*yuxian tongzhi* 預先通知,” and *envy* as “*xianmu* 羨慕.” Tied to the first, and most common, senses of these words, translators may be caught unawares when the nexus begins to shift, that is, when *warn* and *envy* no longer mean, respectively, “*jinggao* 警告” and “*duji* 妒忌.”

⁴⁸ Judging by the large number of people (whether those holding responsible positions in the mass media or those I have met) who use, in written or spoken

that, by the standards of idiomatic Chinese at the time the communiqué was drafted, the relationship between “diplomatic channels” and “*waijiao qudao* 外交渠道” was a misnexus.⁴⁹

The inability of the Chinese translators to establish an accurate nexus between English and Chinese when they were rendering “channels” was due to their inability to choose or identify the correct definition of the word. In English-Chinese translation, this kind of inability is by no means rare. Take the word *great*, for example. For those whose knowledge of English is inadequate, the word may have only the first two senses recorded in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*: “**1 a** of a size, amount, extent, or intensity considerably above the normal or average; big (*made a great hole; take great care; lived to a great age*); **2 a** (of a person) remarkable in ability, character, achievement, etc. (*great men; a great thinker*).”⁵⁰ In the case of *great thinker*, the natural, and correct, translation is, of course, “*weida de sixiangjia* 偉大的思想家.” Coming across the phrase “a great reader,” an English-Chinese translator with the great-偉大 nexus firmly embedded in his mind is likely to translate it as “*yige weida de duzhe* 一個偉大的讀者,” not knowing that a more accurate version would be “*ku'ai kanshu de ren* 酷愛看書的人”⁵¹ or “*shumi* 書迷.” If he looks the word up in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, he will learn that “great” can also mean “fully

form, “*waijiao qudao* 外交渠道” in preference to “*waijiao tujing* 外交途徑,” this rule seems to have been confirmed once again.

⁴⁹ Similarly, at the time the communiqué was drafted, “*xun* 循” was to be preferred to “*touguo* 透過” as a translation of “through” in the phrase “through diplomatic channels.” It has to be admitted, though, that, perpetuated by the almost omnipotent and omnipresent mass media over the years, the originally unidiomatic “*touguo* 透過” and “*qudao* 渠道” appear already to have ousted “*xun* 循” and “*tujing* 途徑” as the “legitimate” and idiomatic translations of “through” and “channels” respectively. For a detailed discussion of how “ungrammatical” and “unidiomatic” usages can get established or replace originally “grammatical” and “idiomatic” usages, see Huang Guobing 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), “*Shi qiang ling ruo, yi zhong bao gua: cong zuixinban Xiandai Hanyu cidian shuo dao yuyan fazhan de guilü* 恃強凌弱，以眾暴寡—從最新版《現代漢語詞典》說到語言發展的規律,” in Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Yuyan yu fanyi* 語言與翻譯 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, 2001), 19-46.

⁵⁰ R. E. Allen, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 517.

⁵¹ *Xin Ying-Han cidian* 新英漢詞典, 548.

deserving the name of; doing a thing habitually or extensively,”⁵² which is the sense of “great” in the phrase “a great reader.” Similarly, to be able to translate “great occasion” in a *great occasion* as “*shengda de changhe* 盛大的場合,”⁵³ or “*shengdian* 盛典,” not as “*weida de changhe* 偉大的場合,” and *great friends* as “*zhengzheng de hao pengyou* 真正的好朋友,”⁵⁴ “*zhijiao* 至交,” or “*zhiyou* 摯友,” he must be accurately tuned, as it were, to the correct frequencies.

VII. Deceptive Simplicity of Single Words in Translation

At first sight, the setting up of a nexus between single words may appear straightforward in English-Chinese / Chinese-English translation. An experienced practitioner translating between these two languages should be able to tell us that, even in the translation of single Chinese or English words, the operation can prove formidable, sometimes incredibly so. Ask an experienced practitioner to render the Chinese word “*renao* 熱鬧,” and he will have to marshal all his linguistic resources as well as his knowledge of Chinese culture to tackle the word. In translating this word in Lao She’s 老舍 novel *Luotuo Xiangzi* 駱駝祥子, Perry Link has come up with admirable renderings, trying to pin down its semantic content as well as its cultural nuances in different contexts:

甚至天壇，孔廟，與雍和宮，也在嚴肅中微微有些熱鬧。⁵⁵

Even the austere atmospheres of the Altar of Heaven, the Confucian Temple, and the Palace of Harmony were tinged with **revelry**.⁵⁶

寒苦的人也有地方去，護國寺，降福寺，白塔寺，土地廟，花兒市，都比往日熱鬧 [...] ⁵⁷

There were places the impecunious could go, too, such as the Temple of National Preservation, the Temple of Prosperity, the White Tower Temple,

⁵² Allen, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 517

⁵³ *Xin Ying-Han cidian* 新英漢詞典, 548.

⁵⁴ *Xin Ying-Han cidian* 新英漢詞典, 548.

⁵⁵ *Renditions*, No. 10 (autumn 1978), 168. The Chinese word and its English translation in this and the following quotations are put in boldface for ease of reference.

⁵⁶ *Renditions*, No. 10, 84.

⁵⁷ *Renditions*, No. 10, 168.

the Earth-God Shrine, and the Flower Market, all of which were **livelier** than usual.⁵⁸

到處好玩，到處熱鬧。⁵⁹

Fun was everywhere. **Bustle** was everywhere.⁶⁰

在這麼熱鬧的時節 [...] ⁶¹

During this **festive** season [...] ⁶²

那熱鬧的天津在半夜裏也可以聽到低悲的『硬麵一餛飩』 [...] ⁶³.

[...] and in the **bustling** Tientsin, late at night, the sad low tones hawking Peiping's "hard flour...rolls!" could be heard.⁶⁴

Still, total success has proved hard to achieve. And one doubts whether any other translators can do better. The difficulty is due, I believe, not to any inability to appreciate the complexity of the Chinese word on the part of Link, but to the absence of a word in English which contains the same amount of semantic content, including, but not limited to, associations and cultural nuances. When the word "*renao* 熱鬧" is used, a whole range of senses are signified, some primary, some secondary, and some on the periphery of the core meaning, referring to or suggesting "bustling," "festivity," "jubilation," "pleasant 'noise'," "bustling activity," and so on. If, in a certain context, the Chinese word means one of the above senses, an accurate nexus can easily be set up, but when the word is intended to carry more than one—sometimes all—of the above senses, as is the case with the above examples, it will exhibit what Catford describes as "polysemy,"⁶⁵ which is one of the causes of untranslatability. When this happens, even the most competent translator would have to throw up his hands in despair, and settle for a less appropriate nexus.

⁵⁸ *Renditions*, No. 10, 84.

⁵⁹ *Renditions*, No. 10, 168.

⁶⁰ *Renditions*, No. 10, 85.

⁶¹ *Renditions*, No. 10, 169.

⁶² *Renditions*, No. 10, 87.

⁶³ *Renditions*, No. 10, 170.

⁶⁴ *Renditions*, No. 10, 88. Words in bold type in the quotations are highlighted for ease of reference.

⁶⁵ Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 95.

The shifting nature of nexus in English-Chinese / Chinese-English translation can be seen even in everyday conversation. In Hong Kong, many native speakers of Cantonese have the habit of interspersing their conversations with English words or phrases. Although an exhaustive list of reasons for this habit is the subject for another paper, one reason related to the present discussion can be given: during the conversation, the speaker's mind is constantly moving between Cantonese and English; when he is unable to express what he has in mind in Cantonese, he immediately switches to English. Thus in describing her boyfriend, a girl may say, “*kæy⁵ hou² mean ga³* 佢好 mean 㗎” ‘He is very mean.’ During the split second before the utterance was made, a mini-translation process had already taken place: the speaker wanted to single out a quality of the person being mentioned for criticism, but she had only a vague idea of what this was in Chinese, an idea to which she could not give expression; consequently, she was forced to use a word which is equally vague, or, more precisely, a word which covers a wide range of meanings, one or two or three...of which were intended by the speaker, such as “*kebo* 刻薄,” “*linse* 吝嗇,” “*xiaoqi* 小氣,” “*xiaoxinyan* 小心眼,” “*beixia* 卑下,” “*beilie* 卑劣,” “*beibi* 卑鄙,” “*beiwu* 卑污,” or, in Cantonese, “*sæy¹* 衰,” but at the time of her utterance, she had no Chinese signifier for the signified, because she did not have an active enough vocabulary in Chinese to rise to the challenge.⁶⁶ As a result, an elusive nexus arose between an aborted SL text⁶⁷ and English. As an aborted SL text, the idea existed—if one may use the word “existed” at all—only in a twilight zone, which can scarcely be described as language, much less as Chinese. Yet it is interesting to note that “communication” between two Cantonese speakers can go on indefinitely, apparently unhampered by the performer's inability to supply the SL text in the translation process. If one studies the

⁶⁶ Strictly speaking, this is not a translation process in the strict sense of the word, for translation presupposes an SL text as well as a TL text. However, in switching to the English “mean,” which is the TL text, the speaker herself might not know precisely what she was switching from. To distinguish this incomplete mental translation process taking place in the performer's mind from translation proper, it is perhaps necessary to call it “an aborted translation process,” a process in which the SL text remains unformulated, vague, or elusive, not pinned down or grasped by the translator (in this case the performer) herself.

⁶⁷ In this case, the SL text is the speaker's vague idea about the quality of the person she was talking about, which had not succeeded in emerging from her consciousness—or subconsciousness—to the level of language.

communication between performer and addressee further, one will see a second translation process taking place: upon hearing the performer's utterance, the addressee will translate "mean" in accordance with his or her own understanding of the word, though no one knows whether his or her understanding of the word coincides with that of the performer.⁶⁸

VIII. Cultural Factors

Sometimes, what may appear to be a 1-1 nexus between SL and TL texts can be complicated by cultural factors. Examples well known to practitioners of English-Chinese / Chinese-English translation are words describing family relations, such as *uncle* and *aunt*, the first of which can be translated by "bofu 伯父" 'father's elder brother,' "shufu 叔父" 'father's younger brother,' "gufu 姑父" 'the husband of one's father's sister,' "yifu 姨父" 'the husband of one's maternal aunt,' or "jiufu 舅父" 'mother's brother,' and the second by "bomu 伯母" 'wife of father's elder brother,' "shennian 孀娘" 'wife of father's younger brother,' "shenmu 孀母" 'wife of father's younger brother,' "gumu 姑母" 'father's sister (married),' "yimu 姨母" 'mother's sister' or 'maternal aunt,' "guma 姑媽" 'father's sister (married),' or "jiumu 舅母" 'wife of mother's brother.'⁶⁹ Translating from Chinese to English, the translator has little difficulty in setting up the appropriate nexus: if there is no need to be specific, "uncle" and "aunt" will do; if specification is necessary, he has only to add phrases like "on the paternal side" or "on the maternal side." If further specification is called for, expressions like "father's elder brother" or "mother's younger brother" will suffice. However, when the writer of the English SL text "uncle" is deliberately vague, the translator will be cornered, as it were, not knowing whether to use "bofu 伯父," "shufu 叔

⁶⁸ Here, one is reminded of Zhuang Zi's 莊子 famous dictum in his "Qi wu lun 齊物論" 'On the Parity of Things': "Wo yu ruo bu neng xiangzhi ye 我與若不能相知也" 'I and you cannot understand each other.' See Zhuang Zi 莊子, *Xinyi Zhuang Zi duben 新譯莊子讀本 'A Newly Translated Text of the Zhuang zi,* trans. and annotated by Huang Jinhong 黃錦鉉 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju 三民書局, 1974), 66. Pursued further, the above situation could lead to an interminable discussion à la Derrida or à la Benjamin. It should be noted that the gloss 'I and you cannot understand each other' should be replaced, in idiomatic English, by 'You and I cannot understand each other.'

⁶⁹ For the English glosses, see the various entries in Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; New York / Chichester / Brisbane / Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 1983).

父,” “*gufu* 姑父,” “*yifu* 姨父,” or “*jiufu* 舅父.” In cases like this, it may not be possible to set up an appropriate nexus, since Chinese does not have a word which covers all the senses.⁷⁰

An example which involves even more subtle cultural differences can be found in the “translation”⁷¹ between English and Cantonese, or, more precisely, between English and the Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong, in respect of the word *woman*. To native speakers of English, *woman* means “an adult human female,”⁷² which can normally be translated as “*chengnian nüzi* 成年女子,” “*chengnian nüren* 成年女人,” “*funü* 婦女,” or “*nüren* 女人.” When *woman* is used among native speakers of English to mean “an adult human female,” it does not carry any disrespect or pejorative connotations. On the contrary, as *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* has pointed out, “many adult women today are offended if referred to as girls.”⁷³ But the opposite is true in Hong Kong. When a group of Hong Kong “adult human female[s]” get together, one is more likely to hear them referring to themselves as

⁷⁰ In respect of the minutely differentiated forms of address in Chinese family relations, English has, in the terminology of linguistics, “a lexical gap.” Thus David Crystal writes: “The way lexical items are organized in a language is the **lexical structure** or **lexical system**. A group of items used to identify the network of contrasts in a specific semantic or **lexical field** (e.g. cooking, colour) may also be called a ‘lexical SYSTEM’. Specific groups of items, sharing certain FORMAL or semantic features, are known as **lexical sets**. The absence of a lexeme at a specific STRUCTURAL place in a language’s lexical field is called a **lexical gap** (e.g. *brother* v. *sister*, *son* v. *daughter*, etc., but no separate lexemes for ‘male’ v. ‘female’ *cousin*). In comparing languages, it may be said that one language may **lexicalize** a contrast, whereas another may not – that is, the contrast is identified using lexemes [...]” See the entry “**lexis**” in David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, 1st ed. 1980, The Language Library, Series editor: David Crystal (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 5th ed. 2003), 268. In a recently published book, I have discussed this aspect in considerable detail and shown how it gives rise to untranslatability. See Chapters 2 and 7 in Laurence K. P. Wong, *Dreaming across Languages and Cultures: A Study of the Literary Translations of the Hong lou meng* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). Because of this lexical gap, untranslatability can arise in both the Chinese-English and English-Chinese directions.

⁷¹ As the following discussion will show, this is not translation in the conventional sense of the word.

⁷² Allen, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1409.

⁷³ Stuart Berg Flexner et al., eds., *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., unabridged (New York: Random House, Inc., 1987), 808.

“*nœy²dzei²* 女仔” (literally “girls”), not as “*nœy⁵jen²* 女人,” because “*nœy⁵jen²* 女人” in Cantonese carries pejorative connotations and can be offensive in the context in which the “adult human female[s]” are referring to each other.⁷⁴ Thus, while an American or English professor has no difficulty referring with a clear conscience to female university students in the United States or in Britain as “women students,” a professor who is a native speaker of Cantonese would hesitate to refer to female university students in Hong Kong as “women students,” especially when he is speaking in the presence of these “adult human female[s].” This is because at the back of his mind, the connotations of the Cantonese “*nœy⁵jen²* 女人” are very much alive even when he is speaking English; in other words, his knowledge or consciousness of the connotations, associations, and emotive colour of the word in Cantonese, not having been “switched off” when he is speaking English, interferes with his choice of words in English. As a result, he will consciously or unconsciously avoid using “women,” which, as far as his own reception of the word is concerned, has

⁷⁴ It is interesting to note that native speakers of Mandarin more readily refer to a group of adult human females as “*nüren* 女人” without causing offence, largely because the connotations, associations, and emotive colour carried by “*nüren* 女人” in Mandarin are different from the connotations, associations, and emotive colour carried by “*nœy⁵jen²* 女人” in Cantonese. To represent Cantonese pronunciation, I have, in this paper, romanized the Chinese characters concerned in accordance with the romanizing system used by the (*Putonghua · Yueyin*) *Zhonghua xin zidian* (普通話·粵音) 中華新字典, [no editor’s name], 1st ed. August 1976 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju Xianggang fenju 中華書局香港分局, 2nd ed. April 1981), which is based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The nine tones of the Chinese dialect are represented by the superscript Arabic numerals ¹ to ⁹. Published in 1981, though, the dictionary could use only the IPA current at the time. It should also be pointed out that the editor(s) of the dictionary do not seem to be able to distinguish the /n/ and /l/ consonant sounds. For example, under the entry “女” (121), after the Cantonese pronunciation “*nœy⁵*” is given, the character “呂” follows in square brackets; the same is true of the entry “你”: after the IPA transcription of the Cantonese pronunciation “*nei⁵*” of the character is given, the character “里” follows in square brackets, indicating that the characters “你” and “里” have the same pronunciation. While the editor(s) cannot be faulted for equating “女” with “呂” or “你” with “里,” since many native speakers of Cantonese, perhaps including the editor(s) himself / themselves, pronounce “女” and “你” with an initial consonant /l/, so that “女” and “呂” or “你” and “里” (/lei⁵/) have exactly the same pronunciation, equating “呂” with “*nœy⁵*” or “里” with “*nei⁵*” is certainly wrong, for, in doing so, the editor(s) is / are equating /n/ with /l/.

already been “tainted” by the connotations, associations, and emotive colour of the Cantonese word “*næy⁵jen²* 女人.” Yet, proficient in both English and Cantonese, he cannot bring himself to use “girls,” knowing that the word is offensive in the context of idiomatic English. Consequently, instead of saying “women students,” the professor, torn between two languages⁷⁵ as well as between two cultures, may start mixing codes and say “*nǚ tóngxué* 女同學” or, in Cantonese, “*næy⁵tun⁴hok⁹* 女同學” in the midst of his otherwise impeccable English utterance.⁷⁶ In substituting “*nǚ tóngxué* 女同學” or “*næy⁵tun⁴hok⁹* 女同學” for the English phrase “women students,” he has already engaged in a translation process: translating a culturally “tainted” SL text (“women students”) into Chinese.

In the translation between Indo-European languages, such as that between English and French, problems arising from such cultural differences are rare. Take *uncle* again. The French language has the readily available *oncle*, from which *uncle* is descended, and *oncle* is itself descended from the Latin *avunculus* (meaning “maternal uncle”) through the Late Latin *aunculus*.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ People who do not recognize Cantonese as a language may insist that I should say “torn between a language and a dialect.”

⁷⁶ Considerations like these can change with time, though. Fifty years ago, an educated woman in Hong Kong referring to her husband as “*ŋo⁵ lou⁵gun¹* 我老公” ‘my husband’ in the presence of educated friends with whom she was not too familiar would be considered vulgar. To comply with standard and polite usage, she would have to say “*ŋo⁵ sin¹saŋ¹* 我先生.” Today the “vulgarity” of “*ŋo⁵ lou⁵gun¹* 我老公” has already worn off; any educated young woman referring to her husband as “*ŋo⁵ sin¹saŋ¹* 我先生” in the presence of her friends would be in danger of appearing old-fashioned or priggish. The once “vulgar” expression “*ŋo⁵ lou⁵gun¹* 我老公” is now standard usage in everyday conversation, and “*ŋo⁵ sin¹saŋ¹* 我先生” is, on most occasions, considered “out,” even though it may still be heard on formal occasions. It is worth noting, too, that “*lou⁵gun¹* 老公,” all along a dialectal expression from the point of view of standard Chinese, that is, Mandarin (Putonghua), has already made its way into the vocabulary of native speakers of Mandarin and is gradually dislodging—or perhaps has already dislodged—the standard lexical item “*zhàngfu* 丈夫” ‘husband’ from everyday conversations among native speakers of Mandarin; when spoken by these users of standard Chinese, though, the expression “*lou⁵gun¹* 老公” is normally pronounced in Mandarin: “*lǎogōng*.”

⁷⁷ Allen, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1328. It is true that, in English-French / French-English translation, one has to watch out for what

IX. The Merging of Cultural and Linguistic Factors

Sometimes, what appears to be a translation problem arising only from cultural differences can be more complicated; it may be a problem due as much to cultural as to linguistic factors. A case in point can be found in Harold Shadick's English translation of Liu E's 劉鶚 *Laocan youji* 老殘遊記. In rendering the scene that describes Little Jade Wang's 王小玉 singing, Shadick tries to convey as much imagery of the original as possible by going literal:

王小玉便啟朱唇，發皓齒，唱了幾句書兒。聲音初不甚大，只覺入耳有說不出來的妙境：五臟六腑裏，像熨斗熨過，無一處不伏貼；三萬六千個毛孔，像吃了人參果，無一個毛孔不暢快。⁷⁸

linguists and grammarians call *les faux amis* (literally “the false friends”), that is, English and French words which look alike but mean different things, such as the English *inhabitable* and the French *inhabitable*. While the former means “Able to be inhabited, suitable for habitation” (Lesley Brown et al., eds., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 2 vols., Vol. 1, A – M, Vol. 2, N – Z, 1st ed. 1933 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), Vol. 1, 1368), “Capable of being inhabited, occupied, or tenanted” (J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, first ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, and W. A. Craigie, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989), Vol. 7, 966), the latter means just the opposite: “uninhabitable” (Marie-Hélène Corréard et al., eds., *The Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary: French—English • English—French / Le Grand Dictionnaire Hachette-Oxford: français—anglais • anglais • français*, 1st ed. 1994, 4th ed. 2007 by Jean-Benoit Ormal-Grenon and Nicholas Rollin (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Paris: Hachette Livre; 2007), 451. Although the English “inhabitable” once also meant “Not habitable, not adapted to human habitation” (Brown et al., eds., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 1368), “Not habitable, not adapted to human habitation, uninhabitable” (J. A. Simpson et al., eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 7, 966), the earlier meaning is now considered “obsolete” by both dictionaries. In other words, the English word *inhabitable*, once the “true friend” of the French word *inhabitable*, has now become its “false friend.” For this reason, the French *inhabitable* has to be translated by the English *uninhabitable*, and the English *inhabitable* by the French *habitable*; it would be wrong to give the French *inhabitable* as the equivalent of the English *inhabitable*.

⁷⁸ Liu E 劉鶚, *Laocan youji* 老殘遊記 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1958), 16.

Little Jade Wang then opened her vermilion lips, displaying her sparkling white teeth, and sang several phrases. At first the sound was not very loud, but you felt an inexpressible magic enter your ears, and it was as though the stomach and bowels had been passed over by a smoothing iron, leaving no part unrelaxed. You seemed to absorb ambrosia through the thirty-six thousand pores of the skin until every single pore tingled with delight.⁷⁹

On the whole, Shadick has achieved considerable success. In translating “*qi zhuchun, fa haochi* 啟朱唇, 發皓齒” as “opened her vermilion lips, displaying her sparkling white teeth,” he has preserved the visual effect of the original. However, perhaps unaware of how native speakers of Chinese respond to the original, he appears to have been unable to gauge the degree of “literalness” to be preserved. The example which stands out most conspicuously is his translation of “*wuzang liufuli, xiang yundou yun guo, wu yi chu bu futie* 五臟六腑裏, 像熨斗熨過, 無一處不伏貼”: “it was as though the stomach and bowels had been passed over by a smoothing iron, leaving no part unrelaxed.” Although Shadick should be given credit for not going a hundred per cent literal, in that he has substituted “the stomach and bowels” for an even more literal enumeration of the eleven internal organs (“*wuzang* 五臟” plus “*liufu* 六腑”),⁸⁰ the rendering is unsatisfactory, for the impact of “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑” on native speakers of Chinese differs widely from that of its translation on readers of English,⁸¹ who are supposed to have no knowledge of Chinese culture or of the Chinese language. With the average native speaker of Chinese, the phrase “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑” is unlikely to evoke the concrete image of “*wuzang* 五臟,” much less the image of “*liufu* 六腑,” of which he may only have a vague idea, for nine out of ten native speakers of Chinese would most likely have difficulty naming “*liufu* 六腑” accurately when asked to do so. Coming across the sentence “*wuzang liufuli, xiang yundou*

⁷⁹ Harold Shadick, trans., *The Travels of Laots'an*, by Liu T'ieh-yün [Liu E 劉鶚] (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 27.

⁸⁰ See Shadick's note on “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑”: “the five *tsang* [heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys], and the six *fu* [gall bladder, stomach, bladder, large and small intestine, and another group of organs, probably imaginary, called the *san chiao*]” (Shadick, *The Travels of Laots'an*, 240-41).

⁸¹ To be able to discuss translation, it is necessary to put aside the philosophical question of whether it is possible to compare the response of the source-language-text reader with that of the target-language-text reader. Here, I am playing two roles: that of the source-language-text reader and that of the target-language-text reader.

yun guo, wu yi chu bu futie 五臟六腑裏，像熨斗熨過，無一處不伏貼，” the average Chinese reader will take it to mean that the inside of the person or, less literally, the spirit, the being, or the mental state of the person feels just great or super, or is extremely comfortable or gratified; he will make no mistake about its figurativeness; the actual picture of a smoothing iron passing over a man’s internal organs (“the stomach and bowels”) is at most peripheral, touching, if at all, the reader’s consciousness only tangentially. Not so in English. With a native speaker of English, the literal English translation is likely to evoke the grisly image of an iron actually passing over “the stomach and bowels,” an image with which he can hardly associate the soothing effect of Little Jade Wang’s singing. Although this difference in response between Chinese and English readers is largely cultural, it is also linguistic. Being a stock four-character phrase having lost much of the freshness of its biological images (“*zang* 臟” and “*fu* 腑”) as a result of what I would call linguistic inuring through the ages, “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑” is unlikely to evoke vivid pictures of internal organs in the minds of Chinese readers. However, “stomach” and “bowels,” not being a stock phrase, but carrying the freshness of the images intact, will strike native speakers of English literally as internal organs. To make things worse, Shadick has reinforced this effect by focusing the reader’s attention on the picture of “the stomach and bowels” being “passed over” by “a smoothing iron.” As a result, the response evoked from English readers will be widely different from that evoked from Chinese readers.

To explain the difference in terms of linguistic and cultural reception, it may be helpful to employ an analogy. With native speakers of Chinese, the four-character phrase “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑” is like a capsule prescribed by a doctor, in which the bitter ingredients “*zang* 臟” and “*fu* 腑” are packed together. When the capsule is taken, it is taken as a whole, with the bitterness of the ingredients insulated from the patient’s taste buds; once the phrase is literally translated,⁸² the capsule is ripped open, and

⁸² Strictly speaking, “stomach” and “bowels” are not totally literal, for “*wuzang* 五臟” in Chinese refers to “*xin* 心” ‘heart,’ “*gan* 肝” ‘liver,’ “*pi* 脾” ‘spleen,’ “*fei* 肺” ‘lungs,’ and “*shen* 腎” ‘kidneys,’ and “*liufu* 六腑” to “*wei* 胃” ‘stomach,’ “*dan* 膽” ‘gall bladder,’ “*sanjiao* 三焦” ‘the three visceral cavities housing the internal organs,’ “*panguang* 膀胱” ‘bladder,’ “*dachang* 大腸” ‘large intestine,’ and “*xiaochang* 小腸” ‘small intestine.’ For detailed explanations of the relevant terms, see *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yuyan yanjiusuo cidian bianjishi 中國社會科學院語言研究所詞典編輯室, 1st ed.

readers of the English text are forced to taste the bitter ingredients; the effect is, of course, contrary to what is intended by the author of the original.

X. Different Forms of Nexus

As far as individual units are concerned, an appropriate nexus between SL and TL texts can take one of the following forms:⁸³

1. 1→1 (one SL unit to one TL unit);
2. 1/1↔0 (one or one SL unit plus to zero TL unit);
3. 0→1/1+ (zero SL unit to one or one TL unit plus);
4. 1→1+ (one SL unit to one TL unit plus);
5. 1↔1 (one SL unit plus to one TL unit);
6. 1↔1+ (one SL unit plus to one TL unit plus).

In 1, one unit in the SL text is translated by one unit in the TL text, which is neatly illustrated by the nexus between the French sentence about Victor-Marie Hugo and its English translation, both of which have been quoted above.

In the following example:

Where are **you** going? [你]去哪兒?

I am going to wash my hands. [我]去洗手。⁸⁴

the English words in bold type on the left (SL texts) are theoretically linked to the Chinese words in bold type on the right; but, as idiomatic Chinese requires the omission of “你” and “我,” there is a 1→0 nexus between “you” and “[你]” as well a 1→0 nexus between “I” and “[我].” If we go in the opposite direction, taking the TL texts as SL texts, there will be a 0→1 nexus between “[你]” and “you” as well as a 0→1 nexus between

December 1978 (Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, revised 3rd ed. July 1996) and Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; New York / Chichester / Brisbane / Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 1983).

⁸³ The word “appropriate” must be emphasized, since, apart from appropriate nexus, there are also misnexus or aborted nexus, which were mentioned earlier in this paper.

⁸⁴ Bold type added for ease of reference.

“[我]” and “I”, since “你” and “我” are not normally required in idiomatic Chinese.

In the following English-French translation, we can see the same kind of nexus:

I am a teacher.

Je suis [**un** / **une**] professeur.

If we look for formal correspondence, “a” in English is “un” or “une” in French, but since French grammar requires no indefinite article (“[un / une]”) before “professeur,” there is a 1→0 nexus between “a” and “[un / une].” If we move in the opposite direction, the nexus will be 0→1.

When the nexus is 1→0, more than one unit in the SL is translated by 0 unit in the TL, as can be seen in the following SL and TL texts:

“You must leave.”

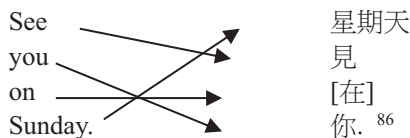
“你必須離開。”

“What if I won’t?”

“[要是我]不離開又怎麼樣?”

“if I” (two units) in the SL text is translated by zero unit in the TL text, that is, with the semantically corresponding units “if I” [要是我] understood. Going in the opposite direction, we will get a 0→1+ nexus.⁸⁵

When the SL text containing more than one unit has to be translated as a whole into the TL by more than one unit, the nexus will be 1→1+, which covers the translation of a sentence, a paragraph, or even a chapter into a sentence, a paragraph, or a chapter. When differences in syntax and word order have to be taken care of, the series of nexus between SL and TL texts may criss-cross one another:



With reference to the nexus model, which is relatively simple, translation techniques like addition, omission, amplification, substitution, rearrangement

⁸⁵ Examples of the remaining nexus can easily be supplied by the average practitioner of translation.

⁸⁶ Depending on the context, the English sentence can also be translated as “Xingqitian jian 星期天見” or “Xingqitian zaijian 星期天再見.”

of word order, translation shift, and so on, as well as linguistic and cultural considerations (endocentricity, exocentricity, dynamic or functional equivalence, and so on) can all be accounted for.

Unlike the other nexus, the 1+→1+ nexus is the most complex. When the SL text contains two units or more, ranging from two words to a passage, and has to be rendered not as individual units but as a whole, the translator will have to set up a 1+→1+ nexus between SL and TL texts. In setting up this nexus, he may have to perform all kinds of operations, including those involving syntactic and cultural adjustments, as well as translation shifts. At this level, the abilities of a translator are taxed to the utmost; failure to set up an appropriate 1+→1+ nexus will result in unidiomatic translations.⁸⁷ Take a clause from the lyrics of a pop song, entitled “Constantly,” sung by Cliff Richard in the 1960s: “[...] your memory haunts me constantly.” A translator who cannot grasp the deep-structure meaning of “memory” or does not know how to use the appropriate translation shift is likely to render the SL text as “*Nide jiyi / huiyi yizhi chanzhe wo* 你的記憶 / 回憶一直纏着我,” not as “*Wo yizhi xiangnian / huainian ni* 我一直想念 / 懷念你,” thereby setting up a misnexus.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Today, it is possible to explain away unidiomatic translations by saying that they are “foreignized,” although “foreignized translations” are often the result of incompetence on the part of the translator, serving neither stylistic nor non-stylistic purposes. (Venuti and his followers could, of course, say that “foreignized translations” serve to “resist imperialism.”) As a matter of fact, many so-called “foreignized translations” are simply unidiomatic translations. For this reason, it is necessary to distinguish between unidiomatic translations produced involuntarily or unconsciously by incompetent translators and functional deidiomatized translations produced by translators who are capable of producing idiomatic translations.

⁸⁸ If one wants to retain the “haunting” image in the original, one could say “*Wo dui ni de sinian, yizhi yingrao xinzhong* 我對你的思念，一直縈繞心中”；or, if one wants to revitalize “haunting,” to equate it with something really evocative and striking in Chinese, one could say, “*Wo dui ni de sinian, yizhi suizhe wo* 我對你的思念，一直崇着我。” Mistranslations like “*Ni de jiyi / huiyi yizhi chanzhe wo* 你的記憶 / 回憶一直纏着我” or “*Makesi Zhuyi zai Zhongguo de jieshou* 馬克思主義在中國的接受” can be scientifically analysed from the point of view of Chomsky’s transformational grammar. See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), “*Sanyan liangyu bian Zhong Ying*” 三言兩語辨中英, in C. C. Liu 劉靖之, ed., *Fanyi xin jiaodian* 翻譯新焦點, 209-47.

XI. Examples of Appropriate 1+→1+ Nexus

As a matter of fact, the appropriate 1+→1+ nexus is often vital to adequate translation. Going through the translations by Xia Ji'an 夏濟安, Si Guo 思果, Yu Kwang-chung 余光中, David Hawkes, and Arthur Waley, one can see how much these translators' success depends on their ability to set up the appropriate 1+→1+ nexus. Let us look at a few sentences from Si Guo's 思果 translation of Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* together with the original:

'Ha! poor Baby!' mused Miss Betsey, with her frown still bent upon the fire. 'Do you know anything?'

'I beg your pardon, ma'am,' faltered my mother.⁸⁹

呀，可憐的小娃娃！」姨婆一面沈吟，一面繼續對著爐火皺眉說。「你懂甚麼事嗎？」

「姨媽，您意思是？」我母親畏怯地問。⁹⁰

Coming across "I beg your pardon," the average translator will know better than to render it as "*Wo qingqiu ni yuanliang / raoshu / kuanshu* 我請求你原諒 / 饒恕 / 寬恕"; yet the highly accurate "*Nin yisi shi?* 您意思是?" is mostly likely beyond him. With the majority of translators, one would expect the following rendering: "*Duibuqi, qing zai shuo yibian* 對不起，請再說一遍。"⁹¹ Although one should not regard the above translation as the product of a misnexus, it is certainly not an accurate rendering. To be able to translate "I beg your pardon" in the above quotation as "*Nin yisi shi* 您意思是," the translator must be conversant not only with the novel, the source language, and the target language, but also with English and Chinese culture. In the SL text, David Copperfield's mother is speaking timidly and reverently to her deceased husband's aunt. While the formula "I beg your pardon" is appropriate for the occasion in English society, the translation "*Duibuqi, qing zai shuo yibian* 對不起，請再說一遍" is not appropriate for an equivalent occasion in Chinese

⁸⁹ Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9. My emphasis.

⁹⁰ Si Guo 思果 (Frederick Ts'ai), trans., *Dawei Kaobofei'er* 大衛·考勃菲爾 '*David Copperfield*,' by Charles Dickens, 2 vols. (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe 聯經出版社, 1993), 11. My emphasis.

⁹¹ Zheng and Cao, eds., *A New English-Chinese Dictionary* 英華大詞典, 1005.

society, for the response, though by no means rude or impolite, fails to suggest the speaker's timidity; it is more like the response from a self-assured woman speaking politely to her peer. In coming up with “*Nin yisi shi* 您意思是,” Si Guo has shown how accurate his feel for language and culture is.

To show that this competence is not within every translator's reach, we have only to look at another translation of the same SL text:

“啊，可憐的孩子！”貝萃小姐沈吟着說，一面仍舊緊衝着爐火直皺眉頭。“你都會甚麼？”
“對不起，你剛才說甚麼來着？”我母親結結巴巴地問。⁹²

What with the casual tone and the non-honorific “*ni* 你,” the response has become frivolous—indeed cheeky and provocative, which is at odds with the description that follows: “*wo muqin jiejiébaba de wen* 我母親結結巴巴地問。”

In the translation of drama, the ability to set up an appropriate 1+→1+ nexus between SL and TL texts is equally important, sometimes much more important, since the stage is the most unlikely venue for unidiomatic utterances. In Yu Kwang-chung's Chinese version of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, we can see the 1+→1+ nexus set up everywhere. In the following example:

Jack. You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.
Algernon. **I haven't the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind.**⁹³

傑克 你還是陪你的歐姨媽吃晚飯好了。
亞吉能 **我根本不想去。**⁹⁴

the sentence “I haven't the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind” could, in the hands of a less competent translator, turn into something like

⁹² Zhang Ruogu 張若谷, trans., *Dawei Kaobofei* 大衛·考坡菲 ‘*David Copperfield*,’ by Charles Dickens (Shanghai: Shanghai yuwen chubanshe 上海譯文出版社 1989), 15. My emphasis.

⁹³ Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, ed. W. S. Bunnell (London: University of London Press, 1958), 54. My emphasis.

⁹⁴ Yu Kwang-chung (Yu Guangzhong) 余光中, trans., *Bu ke erxi* 不可兒戲 ‘*The Importance of Being Earnest*,’ by Oscar Wilde, 3rd ed. (Taipei: Dadi chubanshe 大地出版社, 1992), 40. My emphasis.

“*Wo meiyou zuo renhe zhei lei shiqing de zuixiao yitu* 我沒有做任何這類事情的最小意圖,” a stiff, bookish, and unidiomatic rendering from which no amount of theorizing could exonerate the translator.⁹⁵ The lower-level nexus is unlikely to be received well in a novel, much less on stage, where dialogue has to approximate spoken language.⁹⁶

Like Si Guo and Yu, Hawkes is also a master-hand at setting up accurate 1+→1+ nexus, which is one of the major reasons for the success of his English translation of the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢. Take the following source- and target-language texts:

合族中雖有許多妯娌，也有言語鈍拙的，也有舉止輕浮的，也有羞口羞腳不慣見人的，也有懼貴怯官的，越顯得鳳姐灑爽風流，典則俊雅，真是『萬綠叢中一點紅』了〔……〕⁹⁷

There were, to be sure, a number of other young married women in the clan, but all were either tongue-tied or giddy, or they were so **petrified by bashfulness or timidity that the presence of strangers or persons of higher rank threw them into a state of panic**. Xi-feng’s vivacious charm and social assurance stood out in striking contrast—a touch of scarlet in a

⁹⁵ Catford would have described this kind of translation as rank-bound (Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 24-25). Thus, a rank-bound translation of the opening phrase of Washington Irving’s “Westminster Abby” would be something like: “*Zai qiutian de houbu, zai naxie sumu he powei youyu de rizhong de yi ri* 在秋天的後部，在那些肅穆和頗為憂鬱的日子中的一日…”

⁹⁶ Translated into a language which has a closer kinship with English, such as French, one may move at a lower level in setting up nexus; one may, for example, follow the English text closely in respect of semantic and syntactic units, and render it as “*Je n’ai pas la moindre intention de faire quelque chose comme ça.*” In other words, word-for-word translation between two European languages is much easier and more acceptable than between a European language and Chinese, although there are exceptions to this rule. In translating the English saying “be born with a silver spoon in one’s mouth” into German, one would have to say “*ein Glückskind or Sonntagskind sein,*” which literally means “be a lucky child or Sunday’s child.” In translating “I can drink you under the table” into French, one would have to come up with something like “*Je tiens mieux l’alcool que toi*” (literally “I withstand alcohol better than you do”). Similarly, “It’s the early bird that catches the worm” has to be translated by “*Chi dorme non piglia pesci*” (literally “He who sleeps does not catch fish”) in Italian.

⁹⁷ Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢, 4 vols. (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1971), 159-60. As the page numbers in the original *Hong lou meng* are continuous, volume numbers are not given.

field of green.”⁹⁸

The lexical items “*ye you xiu kou xiu jiao bu guan jian ren de, ye you ju gui qie guan de* 也有羞口羞脚不惯见人的，也有懼貴怯官的” are translated as a whole by “petrified by bashfulness or timidity that the presence of strangers or persons of higher rank threw them into a state of panic,” very much like the contents of a container being unloaded into another container. If we analyse the 1+→1+ nexus, we will see that, within it, there are intertwining nexus set up at a lower level: “*xiu kou xiu jiao bu guan jian ren* 羞口羞脚不惯见人” is translated by “petrified by bashfulness [...] that the presence of strangers [...] threw them into a state of panic”; “*ju gui qie guan* 懼貴怯官” is translated by “petrified by bashfulness or timidity that the presence [...] of persons of higher rank threw them into a state of panic.” The word “bashfulness” is shared by “*buguan* 不惯” and “*qie* 怯,” that is, “*buguan* 不惯” and “*qie* 怯” are translated as “bashfulness” (1+→1 nexus); “petrified [...] threw them into a state of panic” is shared by “*xiu kou xiu jiao* 羞口羞脚” and “*ju* [...] *qie* 懼 [...] 怯,” that is, “*xiu kou xiu jiao* 羞口羞脚” and “*ju* [...] *qie* 懼 [...] 怯” are translated as “petrified [...] threw them into a state of panic” (1+→1+ nexus); “persons of higher rank” is shared by “*gui* 貴” and “*guan* 官,” that is, “*gui* 貴” and “*guan* 官” are translated as “persons of higher rank” (1+→1+ nexus). If we go further, we will see that the individual nexus can become so complex that they begin to defy analysis: we cannot say, for example, whether “*ju* 懼 + *qie* 怯” as a set of units are translated by “petrified by bashfulness or timidity [...] a state of panic” or by “petrified by bashfulness or timidity [...] threw [...] into a state of panic.” In setting up the 1+→1+ nexus, Hawkes has demonstrated how intricate nexus at this level can be; it is a level at which only translators of the highest calibre can operate with ease.

XII. The 1+→1+ nexus as a Supernexus

Sometimes, the 1+→1+ nexus, when applied to longer texts, can hardly be identified, because the total relationship between SL and TL texts has become what I would call a *supernexus*, that is, a nexus containing a large complex of lower-level nexus.⁹⁹ Take the following passage from Waley’s

⁹⁸ Hawkes, *The Story of the Stone*, Vol. 1, 283. My emphasis.

⁹⁹ For convenience, it would be desirable to describe a 1+→1+ nexus which contains a large complex of other nexus as a *supernexus*.

Monkey, an abridged English translation of Wu Chêng-ên's 吳承恩 *Xi you ji* 西遊記, which describes Monkey (Sun Wukong 孫悟空) rescuing an innocent girl called Blue Orchid and trying to subdue Pigsy (Zhu Bajie 朱八戒):

行者却弄神通，搖身一變，變得就如那女子一般，獨自坐在房裏等那妖精。不多時，一陣風來，真個是走石飛砂。〔……〕那陣狂風過處，只見半空裏來了一個妖精，果然生得醜陋：黑臉短毛，長喙大耳；穿一領青不青、藍不藍的梭布直裰，繫一條花布手巾。行者暗笑道：『原來是這個買賣！』好行者，却不迎他，也不問他，且睡在牀上推病，口裏哼哼嚕嚕的不絕。那怪不識真假，走進房，一把摟住，就要親嘴。行者暗笑道：『真個要來弄老孫哩！』即使個拿法，托着那怪的長嘴，叫做個小跌。漫頭一料，撲的攢下牀來。那怪爬起來，扶着牀邊道：『姐姐，你怎麼今日有些怪我？想是我來得遲了？』行者道：『不怪！不怪！』那妖道：『既不怪我，怎麼就丟我這一跌？』行者道：『你怎麼就這等樣小家子，就摟我親嘴？我因今日有些不自在，若每常好時，便起來開門等你了。你可脫了衣服睡是。』那怪不解其意，真個就去脫衣。行者跳起來，坐在淨桶上。那怪依舊復來牀上摸一把，摸不着人，叫道：『姐姐，你往那裏去了？請脫衣服睡罷。』

〔……〕

〔……〕行者道：『他要請法師來拿你哩。』那怪笑道：『睡着！睡着！莫睬他！我有天罡數的變化，九齒的釘耙，怕甚麼法師、和尚、道士？就是你老子有虔心，請下九天蕩魔祖師下界，我也曾與他做過相識，他也不敢怎的我。』行者道：『他說請一個五百年前大鬧天宮姓孫的齊天大聖，要來拿你哩。』那怪聞得這個名頭，就有三分害怕道：『既是這等說，我去了罷。兩口子做不成了。』行者道：『你怎的就去？』那怪道：『你不知道。那鬧天宮的弼馬溫，有些本事，只恐我弄他不過，低了名頭，不像模樣。』說罷，套上衣服，開了門，往外就走；被行者一把扯住，將自己臉上抹了一抹，現出原身。喝道：『好妖怪，那裏走！你抬頭看看我是那個？』那怪轉過眼來，看見行者咬牙切齒，火眼金睛，磕頭毛臉，就是個活雷公相似，慌得他手麻腳軟，劃刺的一聲，掙破了衣服，化狂風脫身而去。行者急上前，掣鐵棒，望風打了一下。那怪化萬道火光，徑轉本山而去。行者駕雲，隨後趕來，叫聲『那裏走！你若上天，我就趕到斗牛宮；你若入地，我就追至枉死獄！』¹⁰⁰

Left alone, Monkey used his magic arts to change himself into the exact image of Blue Orchid, and sat waiting for the monster [Pigsy] to

¹⁰⁰ Wu, Chêng-ên [Wu Cheng'en] 吳承恩, *Xi you ji* 西遊記, 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju Xianggang fenju 中華書局香港分局, April 1972), Vol. 1, 209-11.

return. Presently there was a great gust of wind; stones and gravel hurtled through the air. When the wind subsided there appeared a monster of truly terrible appearance. He had short bristles on his swarthy cheeks, a long snout, and huge ears. He wore a cotton jacket that was green but not green, blue but not blue, and had a spotted handkerchief tied round his head. 'That's the article,' Monkey laughed to himself.

Dear Monkey! He did not go to meet the monster or ask him how he did, but lay on the bed groaning, as though he were ill. The monster, quite taken in, came up to the bed and grabbing at Monkey tried to kiss him. 'None of your lewd tricks on old Monkey!' laughed Monkey to himself, and giving the monster a great clout on the nose sent him reeling.

'Dear sister,' said the monster, picking himself up, 'why are you cross with me today? Is it because I am so late?'

'I'm not cross,' said Monkey.

'If you're not cross,' said the monster, 'why do you push me away?'

'You've got such a clumsy way of kissing,' said Monkey. 'You might have known that I'm not feeling well today, when you saw I did not come to the door to meet you. Take off your clothes and get into bed.' Still suspecting nothing the monster began to undress. Monkey meanwhile jumped up and sat on the commode. When the monster got into bed he felt everywhere but could not find his bride. 'Sister,' he called, 'what has become of you? Take off your clothes and get into bed.'

[...]

'They are looking for an exorcist to drive you away,' he [Monkey] said to the monster.

'Go to sleep,' said Pigsy [to Monkey], 'and don't worry about them any more. Am I not strong enough, with my nine-pronged muck-rake, to frighten off any exorcist or priest or what-not? Even if our old man's prayers could bring down the master of all devils from the Ninth Heaven, as a matter of fact he's an old friend of mine and wouldn't do anything against me.'

'He's done more than that,' said Monkey. 'He has called in the Great Sage, who five hundred years ago made turmoil in Heaven.'

'If that's so,' said Pigsy, 'I'm off! There'll be no more kissing tonight!'

'Where are you going?' asked Monkey.

'You don't know,' said Pigsy. 'That chap is terribly powerful, and I don't know that I could deal with him. I'm frightened of losing my reputation.' He dressed hastily, opened the door, and went out. But Monkey caught hold of him and making a magic pass changed himself back into his true form. 'Monster, look round,' he cried, 'and you will see that I am he.'

When Pigsy turned and saw Monkey with his sharp little teeth and grinning mouth, his fiery, steely eyes, his flat head and hairy cheeks, for all the world like a veritable thunder-demon, he was so startled that his hand fell limp beside him and his legs gave way. With a scream he tore himself free, leaving part of his coat in Monkey's hand, and was gone like a whirlwind. Monkey struck out with his cudgel; but Pigsy had already

begun to make for the cave he came from. Soon Monkey was after him, crying, 'Where are you off to? If you go up to Heaven I will follow you to the summit of the Pole Star, and if you go down into the earth I will follow you to the deepest pit of hell.'¹⁰¹

In going through the English quotation, one feels that a comic spirit informs the whole text in respect of its narrative language and dialogue in the same way as it does in the original. Just as there is hilarity everywhere in the original, so there is hilarity everywhere in the English translation. Going over the SL and TL texts, one is aware, if one is allowed to use a modified version of Catford's or Nida's terminology, of a *global dynamic / functional equivalence*, that is, equivalence not only between sentences or between paragraphs, but also between longer stretches of discourse. To return to my own terminology, the translator has set up a highly complex and functional nexus between the Chinese original and its English translation, which is not a nexus between two words or two sentences; it is a large-scale nexus that takes care of the total effect of whole paragraphs, or even whole chapters in respect of style, register, and other features, linguistic or otherwise. This does not mean, however, that nexus at the lower levels are overlooked; when one analyses the SL and TL texts closely, one will see that, in setting up lower-level nexus within the supernexus, Waley has been equally competent. For example, if one tries to see how word A, group A, clause A, or sentence A in the source-language text is translated into English, one will see that the nexus at these lower levels are also highly accurate.

XIII. Subnexus^s and Subnexus^t

To arrive at "a secondary degree of delicacy"¹⁰² in my analysis of the translation process, it is necessary at this point to introduce two new terms: *subnexus^s*, which stands for "nexus between units in the SL text," and *subnexus^t*, which stands for "nexus between units in the TL text." In discussing such ideas as *equivalence*, *fidelity*, *faithfulness*, or *adequacy*, translation theorists have, so far, concentrated only on the relationship between SL and TL texts; there has been little, if any, attention paid to the relationship between units in the SL text as well as between units in the TL text. In overlooking the subnexus, they have failed to present a full picture

¹⁰¹ Arthur Waley, trans., *Monkey*, by Wu Chêng'ên (London: Penguin Books, 1961), 172-75.

¹⁰² Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 79.

of the translation process. This is because in the translation process, there is a dynamic not only between SL and TL texts, but also between units in the SL text as well as between units in the TL text. In the case of Waley's translation of the *Xi you ji*, we see not only appropriate nexus between A, B, C, D, E...(SL units as words, groups, clauses, or sentences) and A¹, B¹, C¹, D¹, E¹...(equivalent TL units) respectively, but also subnexus^{t1}, subnexus^{t2}, subnexus^{t3}, subnexus^{t4}...between A¹ and B¹, B¹ and C¹, C¹ and D¹, D¹ and E¹...respectively, which are set up with reference to the subnexus^{s1}, subnexus^{s2}, subnexus^{s3}, subnexus^{s4}...between A and B, B and C, C and D, D and E...respectively, even though the translator may not be aware of these two types of subnexus during the process of translation. To achieve global dynamic / functional equivalence, the translator should, ideally,¹⁰³ make sure that the nexus and subnexus^t at every level serve the overall purpose of the supernexus.¹⁰⁴

To illustrate how subnexus work, let us return to Shadick's translation of “*wuzang liufuli, xiang yundou yun guo, wu yi chu bu futie* 五臟六腑裏，像熨斗熨過，無一處不伏貼”：“it was as though the stomach and bowels had been passed over by a smoothing iron.” With native speakers of Chinese, the words “*zang* 臟” and “*fu* 腑” standing alone may well evoke the image of an internal organ / internal organs. Once they stand together in the four-character phrase “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑,” a subnexus^s is set up between “*wuzang* 五臟” and “*liufu* 六腑,” which drastically reduces the literalness of the words “*zang* 臟” and “*fu* 腑,” and shifts them to a figurative level. As a result, the two words, together with the lexical items “*wu* 五” ‘five’ and “*liu* 六” ‘six,’ have come to mean something like “the inside of a person,” “the being of a person,” or “the innermost part of one’s being.” When the four-character Chinese phrase is translated as “the stomach and bowels,” there is no subnexus^t in the target text to shift “stomach” and “bowels” from the literal to the figurative level. The result is an inappropriately startling, unduly visual, and excessively striking physical image of a person’s internal organs, the impact of which on TL readers fails to correspond accurately to the impact of “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑” on readers of the SL text; in other words, it elicits a response which is different from that elicited by the SL text from readers of Chinese. Furthermore, as readers of the SL text have been properly tuned to the figurative level of “*wuzang liufu* 五臟六腑,” they are unlikely to take the

¹⁰³ I use the word “ideally” because in real life, there is no perfect translation, only the least imperfect translation.

¹⁰⁴ Subnexus^s is a given, a constraint which the translator has to work under.

simile “*xiang yundou yunguo* 像熨斗熨過” literally. Not so with the TL text: as readers of the TL text have not been tuned to the figurative level, their response to the description “had been passed over by a smoothing iron” is still largely a response on the literal level despite the presence of the simile-indicator “as though.” As a result, the accuracy of both the subnexus^t and the nexus is affected.

Compared with Shadick’s literalness under discussion, Waley’s literalness in the passage quoted above creates no such problem. Take the translation “If you go up to Heaven I will follow you to the summit of the Pole Star, and if you go down into the earth I will follow you to the deepest pit of hell,” for example. The literalness of the rendering evokes a freshness and vividness of imagery equivalent to that evoked by the original without sounding outlandish or weird. Together with the accurate transference of images in other parts of the passage, this appropriate presence of literalness helps to create the right degree of exoticness, which makes the translation fascinating to readers of the TL text.¹⁰⁵

XIV. Going Beyond the Semantic, Syntactic, and Cultural Levels

When a translator has taken semantic and cultural factors into consideration, he will, of course, be in a better position to set up the appropriate nexus between SL and TL texts, but total success is not yet guaranteed, for other factors may still crop up from time to time. If he is translating poetry, or a text in which the phonological level plays an important role, he will have to go beyond the semantic, syntactic, and cultural levels. Take Cohen’s English translation of the first stanza of Gil Vicente’s¹⁰⁶ Spanish poem “Vilancete”:

Vilancete

¡A la guerra,
caballeros esforzados!

¹⁰⁵ There are other features that contribute to the success of the translation, among them simplicity of language, which is also skilfully made use of in Waley’s English translation of the *Shi jing* 詩經 ‘*The Book of Songs*.’

¹⁰⁶ Gil Vicente (1465?-1537) was a Portuguese dramatist who had written some poems in Castilian, “the official standard form of Spanish as spoken in Spain, based on” “the dialect of Spanish spoken in Castile” (Flexner et al., eds., *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, 324).

Pues los ángeles sagrados
a socorro son en tierra,
¡a la guerra!¹⁰⁷

Carol

To war, gallant knights! For the holy angels have come on earth to help us.
To war!¹⁰⁸

The translation has preserved the semantic but not the phonological content of the original, such as the prominent echoing between the vowels “a,” “e,” and “o,” as well as the rhyme.¹⁰⁹ The rhyme in the last two lines (“tierra,” “guerra”), for example, reinforces the battle cry, an effect which the English translation has not reproduced or re-created.

Cohen is one of the finest practitioners translating from Spanish to English, but because of the inherent differences between the two

¹⁰⁷ J. M. Cohen, trans. and ed., *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 125.

¹⁰⁸ Cohen, trans. and ed., *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*, 124.

¹⁰⁹ “Rhyme,” as Cuddon has succinctly put it, “has two main functions: (a) it echoes sounds and is thus a source of aesthetic satisfaction. There is pleasure in the sound itself and in the coincidence of sounds, and this pleasure must be associated with the sense of music, of rhythm [...] and beat; the pulse sense which is common to all human beings. Part of the pleasure often consists of the surprise that a successful and unexpected rhyme evokes; this is especially true of comic verse where ingenious rhymes make an important contribution to the humour; (b) rhyme assists in the actual structure of verse. It helps to organize the verse, simultaneously opening up and concluding the sense. Thus it is a rhythmical device for intensifying the meaning as well as for ‘binding’ the verse together. The rhythmical effects are particularly noticeable with head and internal rhyme. [...]” (J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 797). To see how “ingenious rhymes make an important contribution to the humour,” one has only to read Edward Lear’s “The Pobble Who Has No Toes” and Jacques Prévert’s “Familiale,” two outstanding specimens of delightful nonsense verse. In fact, how phonological aspects can “make an important contribution” to the meaning of a text can be seen even in assonance, as in Tennyson’s “Lotos-Eaters,” and in consonance, as in many of Emily Dickinson’s poems, such as poems 1072, 1551, 1670, and so on (numbering according to *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, 3 vols., ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955). See George McMichael et al., eds., *Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. 1, *Colonial Through Romantic* (New York: Macmillan, 5th ed. 1993), 2300, 2303, 2304; 2 vols.

languages, differences which cannot be overcome, he has to sing in different notes, notes which can only translate part of the original's phonological meaning. In cases like this, the nexus set up between SL and TL texts is, at best, approximate.¹¹⁰ For this reason—and for reasons which have been discussed above, the nexus between SL and TL texts remains, for ever, a shifting nexus that eludes even the greatest of translators.

¹¹⁰ When the phonological factor becomes functional, even a short sentence like *I love you* in English can only have an approximate nexus set up between it and the French *Je t'aime*, the German *Ich liebe dich*, or the Italian *Ti amo*. As far as English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish are concerned, the closest nexus is perhaps that between Italian and Spanish, for, in terms of pronunciation, the Spanish "Te amo" is very close to the Italian "Ti amo." Even so, the Italian-Spanish nexus is not perfect, for the Spanish "Te" and the Italian "Ti" have different phonological qualities. Once the phonological qualities differ, the associations, the emotive responses, and so on evoked by the two words are bound to differ, albeit infinitesimally. The different versions have the same *signifié* (signified), to be sure, but they are like the same notes played on different musical instruments. This could, in turn, give rise to the question of whether translation is really possible, thereby leading us to interminable speculation à la Derrida, fascinating to some theorists, but of little or no use to practitioners of translation.

CENTRIPETALITY AND CENTRIFUGALITY IN TRANSLATION: WITH REFERENCE TO EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND CHINESE¹

[ABSTRACT]

Practitioners of translation who have had the experience of translating between any two major European languages as well as between Chinese and any one of these European languages will be aware that the former type of translation is much less complex than the latter. With reference to English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, and Chinese, this article examines translation in various directions, and shows how centrifugality and centripetality account for the complexity or otherwise of the translation process.

I. Centripetality and Centrifugality in Relation to Translation

As a practitioner of translation, I have translated texts in a number of directions: English-Chinese, Chinese-English, Italian-Chinese, French-Chinese,

¹ I discussed the same topic in Chinese on 25 November 2006 at the Hong Kong Central Library in a public lecture entitled “*Xiangxin fanyi yu lixin fanyi* 向心翻譯與離心翻譯” ‘Centripetal Translation and Centrifugal Translation,’ being one of a series of Distinguished Lectures on “Language, Culture, and Translation” organized by the Hong Kong Translation Society and the Hong Kong Public Libraries. The lecture was later published in the *Hong Kong Translation Quarterly*. See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), “*Xiangxin fanyi yu lixin fanyi* 向心翻譯與離心翻譯,” *Translation Quarterly* 翻譯季刊, No. 47 (March 2008), 1-47. Although the two papers are on the same topic, they were written separately; neither is the translation of the other. In terms of both completion and publication dates, the English one (completed on 4 May 2005 and published in June 2007), preceded the Chinese one (completed on 27 April 2007 and published in March 2008). For this reason, the Chinese paper can be regarded as a fine-tuned version of the English one. When I gave the public lecture in Chinese on 25 November 2006, what I said was largely based on the 4 May 2005 English version.

German-Chinese, Spanish-Chinese, and Italian-English. As a translation critic and instructor of courses in translation studies, I have examined the above-mentioned languages plus Latin and Greek as source or target languages. If I were asked to say impromptu in everyday English how translation between any two of the above European languages (hereafter referred to as U-U translation) differs from translation between Chinese and any one of the above European languages (hereafter referred to as C-U / U-C translation),² I would say: “U-U translation is much less complex than C-U / U-C translation.” By saying this, I have not, of course, shed much light on the difference between the two types of translation, for it may be further asked: “Why is the former ‘much less complex’ than the latter?” To make my point clear, it is necessary to introduce two technical terms that can be verified and precisely explained: “U-U translation is predominantly centripetal while C-U / U-C translation is predominantly centrifugal;³ whereas centripetality reduces the complexity of the translation process, centrifugality increases it.”

II. Centripetality and Centrifugality Defined and Illustrated

By “centripetality,” I mean the tendency for units in the source-language (SL) text to have readily identifiable semantic, syntactic, or grammatical equivalence in the target language (TL). By “centrifugality,” I mean the opposite: the tendency for units in the SL text to have no readily identifiable semantic, syntactic, or grammatical equivalence in the TL.⁴ While centripetality is directly proportional to the affinity between two languages in linguistic and non-linguistic terms, which helps to set the parameters of the translation process, centrifugality is inversely

² C stands for Chinese and U stands for any one of the European languages mentioned.

³ The word “predominantly” must be emphasized, for it can be shown that centripetality and centrifugality are present in both types of translation.

⁴ Just as there is no absolute adequacy, accuracy, or fidelity in translation, so there is no absolute equivalence. Nevertheless, for discussion purposes, the terms “equivalence” and “equivalent” can stand translation theorists in good stead. This is comparable to discussions in geometry: though fully aware that a point has no thickness, breadth, or length, geometers still draw points on paper when they want to expound or prove a theorem. Theorists who rejected these terms earlier either had to fall back on them later, finding them still useful, as is the case with Gideon Toury, or failed to come up with alternative terms which are more precise and usable, as is the case with Mary Snell-Hornby.

proportional to it. In the light of the above definitions, centripetality and centrifugality can each be divided into three types: semantic centripetality, syntactic centripetality, and grammatical centripetality on the one hand and semantic centrifugality, syntactic centrifugality, and grammatical centrifugality on the other.

Let me begin with semantic centripetality. When the English *water*, the French *eau* ‘water,’ the German *Wasser* ‘water,’ and the Italian *acqua* ‘water,’ and the Spanish *agua* ‘water’ are translated by one another, the direction of the translation process is one of semantic centripetality, since the SL text (in this case a single lexical item) can be readily matched by its equivalent. The equivalence between any two of these words is readily identifiable because they can experientially relate to each other: whether one uses the signifier *water*, *eau*, *Wasser*, *acqua*, or *agua*, one refers to the same signified, which is common to all human beings on earth.⁵ When the German question *Was ist das?* ‘What is this?’ is translated by the English question *What is this?*, or vice versa, the direction of the translation process is one of syntactic centripetality, in which the syntax of the SL text has an equivalent syntax in the TL.⁶ Centripetality, however, is not confined to U-U translation; C-U / U-C translation also exhibits centripetality. Thus there is semantic centripetality in the translation between the Chinese *shui* 水 ‘water’ and *water* or between the Chinese *shu* 樹 ‘tree’ and *tree*, and syntactic centripetality in the translation between the Chinese sentence *Ta shi Faguo ren* 他是法國人 ‘He is French’ and the French sentence *Il est français* ‘He is French.’⁷ When the focus is on grammar, there is grammatical centripetality in the translation between the English sentence *When I was in France, I lived in Paris* and the French

⁵ Having no experience of water, an intelligent being on a planet without water would not be able readily to relate *water*, *eau*, *Wasser*, *acqua*, or *agua* to any word of that planet’s language; in order to translate any one of these words, this intelligent being would have to coin a new word. Thus, because of the absence of a common signified, centripetality would be absent in the translation of *water*, *eau*, *Wasser*, *acqua*, or *agua* into that planet’s language.

⁶ If the focus is on individual lexical items, one can also see semantic centripetality in the translation between *Was ist das?* and *What is this?*, since the SL and TL texts have a word-for-word relationship: *Was* = *What*, *ist* = *is*, *das* = *this*.

⁷ If the focus is on individual lexical items, one can also see semantic centripetality in the translation between “他是法國人” and “Il est français,” since the SL and TL texts have a word-for-word relationship: “他” = “Il”; “是” = “est”; “法國人” = “français.”

sentence *Quand j'étais en France, j'habitais à Paris* 'When I was in France, I lived in Paris,' since the simple past tense, first person singular, and so on in the SL text have readily identifiable equivalents in the TL.⁸ Once the readily identifiable equivalence in semantic, syntactic, or grammatical terms disappears, centrifugality takes over. In the translation between the English phrase *deceptively easy* and the Chinese phrase *si yi shi nan* 似易實難 'appears to be easy, but is actually difficult,' for example, we have a case of semantic centrifugality: in the SL and TL texts, there is direct equivalence only between two pairs of lexical items: *yi* 易 'easy' and *easy*, *nan* 難 'difficult' and *difficult*;⁹ because of the presence of the word "deceptively," which cannot be literally translated into Chinese, it is not idiomatically possible to achieve sememe-to-sememe equivalence; as a result, the translation process has to be centrifugal. In other words, when the Chinese-English or English-Chinese translation process is set in motion, the semantic units in the SL text begin to "fly" in different directions in the translator's mind, with their equivalent units remaining uncertain and unpredictable until the TL text comes into being, by which time operations of the most intricate nature, including, but not limited to, the use of various translation shifts, will have taken place. When the English sentence *He is a teacher* and the French sentence *Il est professeur* 'He is [a] teacher' are translated by each other, we also have a case of semantic centrifugality, even though the centrifugality consists only in the "deletion" of the French article *un* or the addition of the English article *a*.¹⁰ When the syntax of the SL text changes—however

⁸ The English simple past tense in the sentence is translated by the French imperfect (called "imparfait" in French). It can be seen, too, that, together with grammatical centripetality, the translation also exhibits semantic and syntactic centripetality.

⁹ Linguistically, it is possible to translate "deceptively easy" as "*qipian de rongyi* 欺騙地容易" 'deceptively easy,' but this translation, though most likely to be "sanctioned" and, indeed, applauded by Venuti as a good specimen of "foreignization," goes against Chinese idiom, and is not comprehensible to native speakers of the language who have no knowledge of the English SL text. Similarly, "*si yi shi nan* 似易實難," when taken as an SL text, can be translated as "apparently easy but actually difficult," which, even though comprehensible to native speakers of English, is less idiomatic than "deceptively easy," and fails to match the original in terms of conciseness.

¹⁰ As idiomatic French does not use *un*, the phrase "the deletion of the French article *un*" is not really accurate. Hence the inverted commas. If we regard the English article *a* merely as a grammatical feature, the centrifugality can also be

slightly—during the translation process, we have a case of syntactic centrifugality, as can be seen in the translation between the Chinese sentence *Ta gang cong Lundun huilai* 他剛從倫敦回來 ‘He has just from London come back’ and the English sentence *He has just come back from London*, since *cong Lundun* ‘from London’ and *from London* do not have corresponding positions in the two sentences. When the English sentence *I was only six* and the Chinese sentence *Wo dangshi zhi you liu sui* 我當時只有六歲 ‘I then had only six years’ are translated by each other, we have a case of grammatical centrifugality, in which a grammatical feature (the English past tense, of which the lexical item “was” is an exponent) of the English sentence is translated by a lexical item (“*dangshi* 當時” ‘then’) in the Chinese sentence and vice versa. When the translation process is set in motion in the English-Chinese direction, the past tense carried by *was* begins to fly off, landing in a language which does not have the past tense as a grammatical feature, thereby exemplifying grammatical centrifugality, which can be overcome only by grammar-to-lexis translation, not by grammar-to-grammar translation, though part of the semantic value of “was” is translated by “*you* 有” ‘had’. When the translation process moves in the Chinese-English direction, in which “*dangshi* 當時” ‘then’ is translated by the past tense carried by “was,” we have a case of lexis-to-grammar translation, not lexis-to-lexis translation.¹¹

III. Cognation, Centripetality, and Centrifugality

From the above examples, we can see that centripetality and centrifugality occur in both U-U and C-U / U-C translation. However, if we examine U-U and C-U / U-C translation extensively, we will see that U-U translation is predominantly centripetal while C-U / U-C translation is predominantly centrifugal. Thumbing through authoritative U-U dictionaries, we can easily come across words of European languages that can readily—in many cases literally—translate each other without violating the rules of idiomatic usage in the TL, often without any adjustment on the part of the translator, as can be illustrated with the

classified as grammatical centrifugality.

¹¹ In some contexts, “*Wo dangshi zhi you liu sui* 我當時只有六歲” can be translated as “I was then only six,” in which “當時” is translated by “then,” and the past tense carried by “was” can be regarded as a necessary adjustment after “只有” has been semantically translated by “be (the infinitive from which ‘was’ is derived) only”.

following examples:

aggressive (English) = agressif (French) = aggressiv (German) =
 aggressivo (Italian) = agresivo (Spanish)
 aggression (English) = agression (French) = aggressione (Italian) =
 agresión (Spanish)
 aggressor (English) = agresseur (French) = aggressore (Italian) = agresor
 (Spanish)
 liberty (English) = liberté (French) = libertà (Italian) = libertad (Spanish) =
 libertas (Latin)
 vulnerability (English) = vulnérabilité (French) = vulnerabilità (Italian) =
 vulnerabilidad (Spanish)

The reason for this intertranslatability is not far to seek: the words that can readily translate each other are cognates: aggressive (English), agressif (French), aggressiv (German), aggressivo (Italian), and agresivo (Spanish) are descended from the Latin *aggredi aggress-* through the noun *aggressio*; liberty (English), liberté (French), libertà (Italian), and libertad (Spanish) are descended from the Latin *libertas*; vulnerability (English), vulnérabilité (French), vulnerabilità (Italian), and vulnerabilidad (Spanish) are descended from the Latin *vulnus* (meaning “wound”) through the Latin verb *vulnerare* (meaning “to wound”) and the Late Latin adjective *vulnerabilis* (meaning “vulnerable”). To be sure, the degree of cognation among these European languages may vary. Languages of the Italic branch (Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish), for example, share a closer affinity among themselves than with languages of the Germanic branch (English and German) or with Greek, which forms a branch of its own (the Greek branch). Nevertheless, whatever the difference in cognation between themselves, the cognation among these European languages, which are all members of the Indo-European family, is generally absent in the relationship between any one of these languages and Chinese,¹² which is a language of the Sino-Tibetan family.

Depending on the presence or absence of cognation, translation on the lexical level exhibits varying degrees of centripetality or centrifugality;

¹² I say “generally absent” because in these European languages, we can still find words of Chinese origin, such as the English *tea*, which is descended ultimately from the Chinese *cha* 茶 through *t’è* in the Amoy dialect. The same can be said of the French *thé*, the German *Tee*, the Italian *tè*, and the Spanish *té* in respect of their relationship with the Chinese word. Compared with cognation among the European languages, this kind of cognation is tenuous, if it can be called cognation at all, since it does not contribute very much to semantic centripetality in the translation process.

with cognate languages, the closer the cognation, the higher the degree of centripetality and the lower the degree of centrifugality between the languages concerned. When the English *aggressive* is to be translated into French, German, Italian, and Spanish, or when the Spanish *agresivo* is to be translated into English, French, German, and Italian, the task is already accomplished by perfect semantic centripetality before the translator goes about his business: he does not even have to ponder which words from his active vocabulary he should choose, for readily identifiable equivalents are waiting in bilingual dictionaries to be of service to him.¹³ In the course of the development of cognate languages, words descended from the same source may shift in their semantic fields, gradually departing from each other, taking on different connotations or even denotations, resulting in what the French call *les faux amis* ‘false friends.’ Take the French word *divinité*, which is descended from the Latin *divinitas*. In most cases, the French word overlaps in semantic terms with its English cognate *divinity*. However, unlike the English *divinity*, it “has not [...] the sense of theology”; to translate this sense of the English cognate, the French would have to use *théologie*.¹⁴ As far as the sense of “theology” is concerned, then, the French *divinité* is the “false friend” of the English *divinity*. Nevertheless, cognation between European languages readily provides the U-U translator with a track or, to sustain the centripetality-centrifugality metaphor, a predictable trajectory which guides him with a high degree of accuracy through the translation process, so that, very often, the translation of a word in the SL that has a cognate in the TL can be almost effortless as long as the translator is on guard against “false friends.” Given the English SL text “aggressive,” for example, a translator whose TL is French, German, Italian, or Spanish will readily find “agressif” (French), “aggressiv” (German), “aggressivo” (Italian), or “agresivo” (Spanish) standing by.

Not so with C-U / U-C translation. In the case of U-C translation, for example, given the word *aggressive*, the English-Chinese translator will have to spend a considerable amount of time trying to figure out what the word means in the context. By looking it up in an English-Chinese dictionary, he will find the various Chinese translations not very helpful:

¹³ Though lexicographers have warned us against “[t]he fallacy of one fundamental sense for each word, from which all others are derived,” and called our attention to the fact that “[w]ords are not used according to their historical, but according to their immediate and practical, value” (A. Chevally and M. Chevalley, *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary*, first published 1934 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), xi), the clue or guidance that cognation can give to U-U translators is highly valuable, something that every U-C translator would wish for.

¹⁴ Chevalley and Chevalley, 268.

侵略 [...] 愛尋釁的; (行為等)過分的, 放肆的 [...] 敢作敢為的, 不是縮手縮腳的; 有進取心的 ‘invading [...] fond of provoking; (behaviour etc.) going too far, wanton [...] daring, not vacillating; with an ambitious heart.’¹⁵

侵犯的; 侵略的; 挑釁的 [...] 活躍有為的; 積極進取的 [...] 過分自信的, 放肆的 ‘making incursions; invading; provocative [...] energetic and likely to achieve great things; active and enterprising [...] overweening, wanton’.¹⁶

For, in his mind, none of the translations can describe the “aggressive” person he has met or the “aggressive” behaviour he has witnessed. Consequently, to “pin down” the meaning of “aggressive,” he may have to look up the word in an English-English dictionary, which may give him the following definitions: “**1** of a person: **a** given to aggression; openly hostile. **b** forceful; self-assertive. **2** (of an act) offensive, hostile. **3** of aggression.”¹⁷ At this point, he is certain that definition **1 b** is what he is looking for, but still, he needs to “pin down” “forceful” and “self-assertive” before he can actually try to translate “aggressive.” In order to determine more precisely the semantic value of “self-assertive,” he may have to look up, in the same dictionary, the word “self-assertion,” which means: “the aggressive promotion of oneself, one’s views, etc.” In the end, his voyage in quest of the “golden fleece” has “come full circle”: starting with “aggressive” and ending with “aggression,” which is just another way of saying “aggressive,” that is, in a different part of speech. Again, the dictionary has not proved to be of much help. Somewhat frustrated, he may decide to consult another dictionary:

ag·gres·sive...adj. **1.** characterized by or tending toward unprovoked offensives, attacks, invasions, or the like; militantly forward or menacing [...] **2.** making an all-out effort to win or succeed; competitive...**3.** vigorously energetic, esp. in the use of initiative and forcefulness [...] **4.**

¹⁵ *A New English-Chinese Dictionary* 新英漢詞典, ed. Editorial Group of *A New English-Chinese Dictionary* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co. (HK) 三聯書店香港分店, 1975), 23.

¹⁶ Lu Gusun 陸谷孫 et al., eds. *The English-Chinese Dictionary (Unabridged)* 英漢大詞典, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai yiwén chubanshe 上海譯文出版社, 1991), Vol. 1, 62.

¹⁷ R. E. Allen, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 23.

boldly assertive and forward; pushy [...] 5. emphasizing maximum growth and capital gains over quality, security, and income [...]¹⁸

After scanning the entry, he knows that definition 4 is what he is looking for. In his attempt to come up with as accurate a translation as possible, he looks up the word “pushy” in the same dictionary: “obnoxiously forward or self-assertive.”¹⁹ Another “circle game”—leading him from “self-assertive” back to “self-assertive.” By now, he has been sufficiently tossed about on the sea of semantics by the centrifugality of the translation process and—alas!—become not much wiser in the end. As a translator, he cannot give up; he has to do his best to come up with a translation—if not an equivalent, at least a near equivalent. Yet, try as he may, he has difficulty producing a version which he himself finds satisfactory, because the would-be translation exists, if at all, only vaguely in a semantic nebula which he cannot precisely give expression to. Pressed by the need to produce something, he diffidently puts forward such versions as *badao* 霸道 ‘acting like a bully,’ *qianghan* 强悍 ‘forward and ferocious,’ *duoduo bi ren* 咄咄逼人 ‘acting in a pushy manner,’ or the like, each of which is, in terms of semantic equivalence or overlap, a far cry from the English word’s French, German, Italian, or Spanish equivalent. Unlike his counterparts engaging in U-U translation, he is keenly aware that he has not succeeded in accomplishing the task to his own satisfaction. Like the English-Chinese lexicographers who have difficulty finding a precise rendering for “aggressive” and who cannot help him, he has to settle for the “second best.”

The word “aggressive” is not the only “trouble-maker” that constantly harasses those engaging in U-C translation. Anyone who has had some experience of translating in this direction will be able to cite an endless list of similar examples. Take *cynical*, another sphinx-like poser. Looking at some of the most popular English-Chinese dictionaries, any competent user of Chinese and English will be able to tell us that, as far as the translation of phrases like “a cynical remark, attitude, smile” or “cynical about democracy”²⁰ is concerned, the following translations just will not do:

憤世嫉俗的; 玩世不恭的, 冷嘲熱諷的 ‘detest[ing] the world and its

¹⁸ Stuart Berg Flexner et al., eds., *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., unabridged (New York: Random House, 1987), 39.

¹⁹ Flexner et al., 1571.

²⁰ A. P. Cowie, ed., *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 1st ed. 1948 by A. S. Hornby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th ed. 1989), 297.

ways;²¹ frivolous about the world and lacking in seriousness, sneering and full of scorn.²²

愛嘲笑人的, 冷嘲熱諷的, 譏諷的; 玩世不恭的, 憤世嫉俗的 ‘given to sneering, sneering and full of scorn, given to jeering; frivolous about the world and lacking in seriousness, detest[ing] the world and its ways.’²³

Nor will the translation of the sentence given by way of illustration: “*be ~ about* (sincerity) *bu xiangxin* (*ren de chengshi*) 不相信(人的誠實)” ‘not believing (in a person’s sincerity).’²⁴ In the Chinese translation of the example, *bu xiangxin* 不相信 ‘not believing in’ simply fails to convey to the reader the pejorative nuance of *cynical*. By looking up the original in English-English dictionaries, he will find the following definitions:

Resembling the C. [Cynic] philosophers; surly, currish, misanthropic, captious; now *esp.* disposed to deny human sincerity and goodness; dog-like.²⁵

1 : having the qualities of a cynic: given to faultfinding, sneering, and sarcasm [...] **2** : given to or affecting disbelief in commonly accepted human values and in man’s sincerity of motive or rectitude of conduct: accepting selfishness as the governing factor in human conduct [...] **3** : exhibiting feelings ranging from distrustful doubt to contemptuous and mocking disbelief [...]²⁶

Etymologically tracing the word back to its origin, the Greek κύων ‘dog’

²¹ The gloss, being adjectival, is based on Wu Jingrong et al.’s translation (“detest the world and its ways”), which, being verbal, is the TL text of “憤世嫉俗”. See Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary / Han-Ying cidian 漢英詞典* (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; San Francisco / London / Melbourne: Pitman Publishing Limited; 1979), 202.

²² William Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 446.

²³ Zheng Yili 鄭易里 and Cao Chengxiu 曹誠修, eds., *A New English-Chinese Dictionary 英華大詞典*, 2nd rev. ed. (Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), 334.

²⁴ Zheng and Cao, 334.

²⁵ Little et al., 446.

²⁶ Philip Babcock Gove et al., eds., *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. and C. Merriam Company, 1976), 566.

and κύνος (genitive case of κύων ‘dog’) under the entry “Cynic,”²⁷ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is highly scholarly in its approach. Needless to say, when the translator tries to render *cynical*, he will have to decide what it means in the context in which it is used. In trying to come to a decision, he may also become a victim of centrifugality, a fate someone translating from English to French, German, Italian, or Spanish does not have to share, for French, German, Italian, and Spanish have neat equivalents available for use: *cyrique* (French), *zynisch* (German), *cinico* (Italian), *cinico* (Spanish).²⁸

Once the English-Chinese translator is sure that the word “cynical” in the sentence “but people nowadays are so ~—they sneer at everything that makes life worthwhile—L. P Smith”²⁹ means definition 3 in the Webster dictionary, he will find the translations provided by most English-Chinese dictionaries not really usable, unless he does not mind violating Chinese idiom. As a conscientious translator who respects idiomatic usage, he will have to rack his brains, tax his linguistic competence, and, using all the techniques he has learnt, force himself to come up with something like *dui...chi huaiyi / bu xiangxin / jiqiao taidu* 對...持懷疑 / 不相信 / 譏誚態度 ‘holding a doubting / unbelieving / sneering attitude towards,’ breaking free from the strait-jacket of the adjective-to-adjective translation mode by making use of a translation shift. Yet, despite such a large-scale operation, his success, if it can be called success at all, is only partial, paling miserably before the French, German, Italian, and Spanish translations of the same English word. This kind of centrifugality can be found not only in adjectives, but also in other parts of speech. Take the English verb *update*. The word is defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* as “bring up to date.”³⁰ As it is a transitive verb, it can be used before a direct object in sentences like *Please update your curriculum vitae*. When this word is to be translated into French, German, Italian, or Spanish, the process is relatively simple: “mettre or remettre [qch] à jour” [*database, information, catalogue, figure*];³¹

²⁷ Little et al., 446.

²⁸ If the English-French, English-German, English-Italian, or English-Spanish translator is translating the noun *cynicism*, he will find his job just as easy, for the equivalent nouns are already there waiting to be picked: “cynisme” (French), “Zynismus” (German), “cinismo” (Italian), “cinismo” (Spanish).

²⁹ Gove et al., 566.

³⁰ Allen, 1350.

³¹ Marie-Hélène Corréard et al., eds., *The Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary*:

“(bring up to date) aktualisieren; auf den neuesten *od.* Aktuellen Stand bringen”;³² “(revise) aggiornare [*database, information, catalogue, figure, price, value*]”;³³ “(manual / report / information) poner al día, actualizar.”³⁴ However, in the English-Chinese direction, the translator will have to go about his business in a most circuitous manner, a manner that yields what his counterpart translating in the U-U direction would consider an unnecessary circumlocution: “(通過修訂、增補) 使 (書等) 成為最新式的 [現代化的], 使 (書等) 與 (當前條件) 相適應” ‘(through amendment, addition) to make (books etc.) up-to-date [modernized], to make (books etc.) conform to (current requirements).’³⁵ If one wishes to achieve economy of expression, one will have to sacrifice semantic precision, coming up with a translation that would distort the original meaning: “使現代化” ‘to modernize.’³⁶ Even if the dictionary translations are correct, they are too clumsy or outlandish to harmonize with idiomatic usage when they are incorporated into a Chinese sentence.

Another example is the English transitive verb *discredit*. Translating in the English-French, English-Italian, English-German, and English-Spanish directions, one can easily enlist the help of the following equivalents: *discrediter* (French), *discreditare* (Italian), *diskreditieren* (German), *desacreditar* (Spanish). The sentences given by way of illustration, too, are instructive, as can be seen in Scholze-Stubenrecht et al.: “**be ~ed** diskreditiert werden”;³⁷ and in Galimberti Jarman et al.: “**to be**

French-English · English-French / Le Grand dictionnaire Hachette-Oxford: français-anglais · anglais-français, 1st ed. 1994, 4th ed. by Jean-Benoit Ormal-Grenon and Nicholas Rollin (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Paris: Hachette Livre; 4th ed. 2007), 1854.

³² W. Scholze-Stubenrecht et al., eds., *Oxford-Duden German Dictionary: German-English / English-German*, 1st ed. 1990 (Oxford University Press, 3rd ed. 2005), 1676.

³³ Cristina Bareggi et. al., eds., *Oxford-Paravia Italian Dictionary: English-Italian · Italian-English / Oxford-Paravia: Il dizionario Inglese Italiano · Italiano Inglese*, 1st ed. 2001 (Oxford: Paravia Bruno Mondatori Editori and Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 2006), 1325.

³⁴ Beatriz Galimberti Jarman et al., eds., *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English · English-Spanish / Gran Diccionario Oxford: Español-Inglés · Inglés-Español*, 1st ed. 1994 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th ed. 2008), 1851.

³⁵ Zheng and Cao, 1529.

³⁶ *A New English-Chinese Dictionary*, 1547.

³⁷ Scholze-Stubenrecht et al., 1067.

discredited estar desacreditado.”³⁸ The general structure of each of the translations is similar to that of the English original.

Given the word *discredit*, the English-Chinese translator will have to wrestle with the following circumlocutions: “不信, 懷疑; 使成為不可信” ‘not to believe, to doubt; to make [something] dubious’ [...] “損害...的信譽” ‘to damage the credibility of [somebody, something],’ “丟...的醜” ‘to bring shame on [somebody].’³⁹ When he is called upon to render English phrases or sentences containing the word *discredit*, he will have to go further by making all kinds of adjustments, including the use of translation shifts: “an effort to discredit certain politicians 設法使某些政界人士喪失信譽 ‘to attempt to cause certain politicians to lose credibility’”; “His behaviour discredits him. 他的行為使他名譽掃地 ‘his behaviour caused his credibility to go bankrupt’”; “There was good reason to discredit the witness. 有充足的理由懷疑證人 ‘There was sufficient reason to doubt the witness’.”⁴⁰

IV. Code-Mixing in Chinese Speech Communities Arising from the Inability to Go Centrifugal

Because of the predominance of centrifugality in English-Chinese translation, a phenomenon which is rare in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish speech communities is often found in Chinese speech communities, whether in Hong Kong, Taiwan, or mainland China: the tendency for those who have various levels of competence in English to mix codes when they are called upon by the situation to “translate” an English word into Chinese during a conversation or speech in their mother tongue.⁴¹ Thus, we can often hear sentences like the following in conversations between native speakers of Chinese: “他這個人很 aggressive” ‘He is very aggressive’; “他這個人很 cynical” ‘He is very cynical’; “請你 update 一下你的 c.v.” ‘Please update your c.v.’; “他這樣

³⁸ Galimberti Jarman et al., 1113.

³⁹ Zheng and Cao, 378.

⁴⁰ Zheng and Cao, 378.

⁴¹ As Keith Johnson and Helen Johnson have pointed out, there is code-switching in European speech communities, too. However, the frequency of code-switching in Chinese speech communities is far higher than in European speech communities. See Keith Johnson and Helen Johnson, eds., *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (Oxford / Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 49-50.

做只會 discredit 自己” ‘His behaviour will only discredit himself.’⁴² While one should not rule out the possibility that these code-mixing speakers consciously or unconsciously equate the insertion of English words or phrases into a Chinese utterance with status in view of the pre-eminence of English in the world today, centrifugality is certainly one of the reasons behind this kind of code-mixing. The speaker, having the neat, readily available English word in his mind, just cannot, on the spur of the moment, translate it into Chinese, which is widely different from English, for Chinese does not have a word with a meaning equivalent to that of “aggressive,” “cynical,” “update,” or “discredit”; to translate it into idiomatic, comprehensible Chinese, he would have to go on a circuitous journey, which is too arduous a task for him; as a result, he is compelled to choose the easy way out: to use the English verb instead of its Chinese translation in his utterance. With the English *discredit*, for example, had the Chinese language a transitive verb with an equivalent meaning as the French language does, the necessity for the speaker to resort to code-mixing would be radically reduced.⁴³ This point will be better

⁴² Between Cantonese-speaking people in Hong Kong, this phenomenon is even more common. Spoken in Cantonese, the code-mixing sentences would be: “佢個人好 aggressive” ‘He is very aggressive’; “佢個人好 cynical” ‘He is very cynical’; “請你 update 一下你嘅 c.v.” ‘Please update your c.v.’; “佢咁樣做只會 discredit 自己” ‘His behaviour will only discredit himself.’ Other words that commonly spur a Chinese-speaking person to mix codes are, to give just two more examples, *justify* and *fault* in the following sentences: “你怎麼可以 justify 你的行為呢?” ‘How can you justify your behaviour?’ “你不能在這方面 fault 他的。” ‘You cannot fault him on this.’ Sometimes, code-mixing may simply be due to the speaker’s laziness, sloppiness, or lack of proficiency in his mother tongue, as when someone in Hong Kong says, “你 hap 唔 happy 呀?” ‘Are you happy?’ for anyone with the most basic level of proficiency in Cantonese should be able to say “你快樂嗎?” ‘Are you happy?’ or “你幸福嗎?” ‘Are you happy?’ without much effort. In other words, unlike such words as “aggressive”, “cynical”, and so on, “happy” is not a word likely to give rise to semantic centrifugality in translation.

⁴³ The translation of the English *justify* can further illustrate this point. English dictionaries translate the word as: “證明...是正當的 (或有理的); 為...辯護” ‘To prove [that something] is right (or reasonable); to mount a defence [for somebody]’ (*New English-Chinese Dictionary* 1975: 691); “證明...有道理, 為...辯護” ‘To prove [that something] is reasonable, to mount a defence [for somebody]’ (Zheng and Cao, 753). Yet these dictionary translations are not always usable, unless the translator does not mind violating idiomatic Chinese usage. Given a sentence like “How can you justify your action?” he would be an incompetent translator who came up with something like: “你怎麼證明你的行為是正當的呢 / 有理性的呢?”

understood with reference to European speech communities, where code-mixing also occurs. The French, the Germans, and the Italians use English words, too, in everyday conversation. For example, French speakers use the English words *match* (as in the phrase “un match de tennis”), *sport*, *sportsman*, *sportswoman*, and so on; Italian speakers use *match*, *bowling*, *box*, *boy-friend*, *boy-scout*, *data base*, and so on. As for English, borrowing words, whether from Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, or Spanish, is one of its prominent characteristics, which accounts for the richness and diversity of its vocabulary. However, as importing foreign words or loanwords into a language and naturalizing them is a universal linguistic phenomenon, this kind of borrowing is different from the code-mixing practised in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China. Even if the Europeans do mix codes as the Chinese do, the frequency of

‘How can you prove that your behaviour is right / reasonable?’ or “你怎麼證明你的行為有道理呢?” ‘How can you prove that your behaviour is reasonable?’ Stiff and unidiomatic, both Chinese sentences lack the naturalness of the original. To translate the English sentence adequately, one would have to rely on translation shifts, saying something like “你這樣做, 怎麼說得過去呢?” ‘In behaving this way, how can you explain your conduct away?’ Unfortunately, such a complex operation, undoubtedly beyond the average native speaker of Chinese with no adequate training in English-Chinese translation, is not normally dealt with in English-Chinese dictionaries. As the English word “justify” has to be rendered flexibly, depending on the various contexts, the average English-Chinese dictionary naturally fails to foresee the “shape” the “phantasmagoric” word is likely to take under myriads of circumstances. With the English-French or English-Italian translator, we have a very different story: the translator would only need to use “justify” in French or Italian, and his task is accomplished: “Comment est-ce que tu peux justifier ton action?” (French) “Come puoi giustificare la tua azione?” (Italian) With the English word *justify*, we can see a host of sayings that can directly translate each other, further exemplifying centripetality: “the end justifies the means”; “la fin justifie les moyens” (French); “der Zweck heiligt die Mittel” (German); “il fine giustifica i mezzi” (Italian); “el fin justifica los medios” (Spanish). When the Chinese say, “只要目的正確, 可以不擇手段” ‘As long as the end is right, one can resort to all means,’ they are saying something in a completely different structure. Code-mixing in Chinese speech communities is not, of course, always due to centrifugality; sometimes a person, perhaps because of laziness or force of habit, may switch codes, too, even when the translation is simple. Thus, instead of saying “可以幫我核對一下這些數字嗎?” ‘Can you check these figures for me?’ such a person may say, “可以幫我 check 一下這些數字嗎?” or, to go a step further, “可以幫我 check 一 check 這些數字嗎?” in which Chinese and English codes are mixed.

their doing so is much lower.⁴⁴

V. Centripetality and Centrifugality beyond Single Lexical Items

If semantic centripetality or centrifugality were confined to the word level, the difference between C-U / U-C translation and U-U translation would be negligible. Fortunate for the U-U translator but unfortunate for the U-C / C-U translator, semantic centripetality and centrifugality in everyday translation extend beyond the word level. A case in point is the English idiom derived from *liberty*: *to take liberties with*. Forming part of a set phrase, *liberties* has effortlessly moved from the literal to the metaphorical level. When this change from one level to the other takes place, all the translations of *liberties* in corresponding phrases in the major European languages—if one may use the word “translations” at all, since these “translations” are just as entitled as the English *liberties* to claim SL-text status—move simultaneously to the metaphorical level:

to take liberties with grammar (English)
 prendre des libertés avec la grammaire (French)
 Freiheiten erlauben gegenüber die Grammatik (German)
 prendersi delle libertà con la grammatica (Italian)
 tomarse la libertad con la gramática (Spanish)

In translating between any two of the above European languages, the translator has only to say “open sesame,” and his task is instantly accomplished. However, when a translator wants to translate any one of

⁴⁴ In discussing grammatical and lexical translation, Catford observes: “Thus our same text, *This is the man I saw*, translated *lexically* into French and Arabic would be: Fr. *This is the homme I voi-ed* and *This is the rajul I shuf-ed*. [...] Now it is at once evident that, unlike grammatical translation, this process, or one very like it, occurs in real life. British soldiers in the Middle East have often produced utterances not unlike ‘This is the rajul I shufed.’ In other words, the process of ‘picking up a few words’ of the language, and then throwing them into utterances in the speaker’s primary language involves lexical translation—rarely, if ever, grammatical translation” (J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Stevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 72). In the light of this observation, one may say that lexical translation takes place much more often in Chinese speech communities.

the above expressions into Chinese, he is left with no magic formula to help him; he would have to give up *ziyou* 自由 ‘freedom,’ which is the “standard” literal equivalent of *liberties*, *libertés*, *Freiheiten*, *libertà*, or *libertad*, since the Chinese word does not have the same metaphorical value on the phrase level. When he comes up with an acceptable rendering like: “講話或寫文章不合語法” ‘not to comply with grammar in speech or writing,’⁴⁵ which is the Chinese translation of “prendre des libertés avec la grammaire,” he has already travelled by a different route. In other words, whereas *liberties*, *libertés*, *Freiheiten*, *libertà*, and *libertad* can automatically and simultaneously move from the literal to the metaphorical level when they become part of an idiomatic phrase, the Chinese equivalent cannot, so much so that the translator would be faulted if he were so bold as to supply such an unidiomatic equivalent on the phrase level as “對語法採取自由” ‘to take liberties with grammar,’ which would make no sense to native speakers of Chinese. Whereas the U-U translator can effortlessly move between languages because of the presence of similar expressions in the European languages, an English-Chinese translator would have to make a lot of adjustments, coming up with translations like “對於語法，他是不管三七二十一” ‘he plays havoc with grammar’ or “對於語法，他隨便得很” ‘he is very sloppy about grammar,’ which is the result of quite an effort on the part of the translator.

What many a C-U / U-C translator would consider enviable centripetality in the above examples is equally common in the translation between the classical languages, Latin and Greek, or, for that matter, between either Latin or Greek and any one of the major European languages under discussion.⁴⁶ To verify this point, one has only to browse through a Greek or Latin dictionary:

ἄγειν καὶ φέρειν *to carry off the spoil of a land, both cattle and movables, like Lat. agere et ferre: ἄγειν εἰς δίκην or δικαστήριον, or ἄγειν ἐπὶ τοὺς δικαστάς, to carry before a court of justice, Lat. rapere in jus. [...] ἄγειν βίον, Lat. agere vitam, to lead a life, live. [...] ἐν τιμῇ ἄγειν or ἄγεσθαι, to hold in honour, etc. [...] ἄγεσθαι γυναῖκα, Lat.*

⁴⁵ *Dictionnaire français-chinois* 法漢詞典, ed. Editorial Group of *Dictionnaire français-chinois* (Shanghai: Shanghai yiwén chubanshe 上海譯文出版社, 1979), 731.

⁴⁶ Though it can be easily shown that a high degree of semantic, syntactic, and grammatical centripetality also exists in the translation between Latin or Greek and any one of the European languages discussed in this paper, detailed examples will not be given because of space limitations.

*uxorem ducere, to take to oneself a wife [...]*⁴⁷

By reading just part of the entry “*ΑΓΩ*”, which means “*to lead, lead away, of persons [...] to lead on, lead towards [...] to bring up, train, educate [...] to draw out in length [...] to hold, celebrate [...] to hold, consider [...] to weigh,*”⁴⁸ one can already see how Greek, Latin, and English words can “dance” in harmony: a Greek expression can often be translated word for word—and literally—into Latin and English, which is evidence of a high degree of centripetality.

VI. The Elusiveness of Centrifugality

Without the advantage of the same degree of centripetality, a C-U / U-C translator can only try to make the best of a bad job, sometimes battling with centrifugality in ways a U-U translator can hardly imagine, for centrifugality can be much more tricky than has been discussed so far: instead of allowing the translator to capture it by means of some minor adjustments, a word in the SL may take on an elusive meaning which cannot be expressed by a single word or phrase in the TL; to get the full message across, the translator has to cast a wide semantic “net,” as it were. Take Arthur Waley’s translation of the Chinese word “*xiao* 孝” ‘filial’ in the following passage:

猴王道：『據你說起來，乃是一個行孝的君子，向後必有好處。〔……〕』⁴⁹

‘From what you tell me,’ said Monkey, ‘I can see that you are a **good** and **devoted** son, and your **piety** will certainly be rewarded. [...]

⁵⁰

To convey the Chinese concept “*xiao* 孝” to readers of English, the translator has departed from one-to-one equivalence and used three words, namely “good,” “devoted,” and “piety.”

⁴⁷ Liddell and Scott, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 9.

⁴⁸ Liddell and Scott, 9.

⁴⁹ Wu Cheng’en 吳承恩, *Xiyouji* 西遊記 ‘Journey to the West’ (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1994), 11.

⁵⁰ Arthur Waley, trans., *Monkey*, by Wu Ch’êng-ên 吳承恩, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 1961), 16; first published by Allen & Unwin 1942. My emphasis.

VII. Centrifugality and Culture

In discussing the Chinese word “*xiao* 孝” ‘filial,’ we have already moved to semantic centrifugality that involves the cultural element. Those who have some knowledge of the Chinese classics, such as the *Lao Zi* 老子, the *Analects* 論語, or the *Mencius* 孟子 in the original must already have come across words like *dao* 道 ‘way,’ *ren* 仁 ‘benevolence,’ *yi* 義 ‘righteousness,’ and *junzi* 君子 ‘gentleman.’ Though the Chinese words are normally translated as “the Way,” “benevolence,” “righteousness,” and “gentleman” respectively, the English versions are not ideal equivalents of the originals because of cultural divergence.

Because of cultural divergence, even an apparently simple word can cause considerable trouble. Take the Chinese colour word “*hong* 紅” ‘red’ in the great Chinese novel, *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 ‘*Dream of the Red Chamber*.’ In most cases, one would expect the Chinese word to be adequately—indeed perfectly—translated by the English *red*, which is generally considered to be the standard equivalent of “*hong* 紅.” Yet, David Hawkes, one of the greatest translators of the Chinese masterpiece, has warned us against this kind of facile equivalence:

One bit of imagery which *Stone*-enthusiasts [that is, *Hong lou meng* enthusiasts] will miss in my translation is the pervading *redness* of the Chinese novel. One of its Chinese titles is red, to begin with, and red as a symbol – sometimes of spring, sometimes of youth, sometimes of good fortune or prosperity – recurs again and again throughout it. Unfortunately – apart from the rosy cheeks and vermeil lip of youth – redness has no such connotations in English and I have found that the Chinese reds have tended to turn into English golds or greens (‘spring the green spring’ and ‘golden girls and boys’ and so forth). I am aware that there is some sort of loss here, but have lacked the ingenuity to avert it.⁵¹

With respect to U-C translation, the cultural element can complicate the question of centripetality and centrifugality further. Take the English word *godless*. To all Christians, *godless* is a word of condemnation. When Christians describe a person or a people as “godless,” the word is meant to suggest disapproval or even contempt. As recorded in the latest edition of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, *godless* means: “lacking or not

⁵¹ David Hawkes and John Minford, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin, 5 vols., Vols. 1-3, trans. David Hawkes, Vols. 4-5, trans. John Minford, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973-1986), Vol. 1, 45.

recognizing God. ▶profane; wicked.”⁵² To Christians, “lacking God” is a serious and, indeed, piteous deprivation, which characterizes the fallen angels in *Paradise Lost*, who were “[h]urlled headlong flaming from th’ ethereal sky / With hideous ruin and combustion down / To bottomless perdition.”⁵³ In English-German translation, the translator has a readily available word that can match the original almost sememe for sememe: *gottlos*. This kind of happy centripetality is just natural considering the fact that English and German are both members of the Germanic branch of languages. As far as the translation between *godless* and *gottlos* is concerned, then, there is practically no centrifugality.

When we move from German to French, Italian, and Spanish, languages of the same family as English but belonging to a different branch, some degree of centrifugality becomes apparent: the English word has to be translated respectively as “impie” ‘impious’ (French),⁵⁴ “empio” ‘impious’ (Italian),⁵⁵ and “impío” ‘godless’ (Spanish)⁵⁶ respectively.⁵⁷ For the majority of Chinese people, who are not Christians, or for Marxists, whether in Europe, Asia, or South America, to be described as “godless” would evoke very different feelings, which could range from indifference among non-Christian Chinese to pride among the Marxists, who believe in dialectical materialism, and deny the existence of God. Therefore, when the English *godless* or the German *gottlos* is translated into Chinese as “*bu xin shen de; wu zongjiao xinyang de; wu shen de* 不信神的; 無宗教信仰的; 無神的” ‘not believing in God; with no religious beliefs; without God,’⁵⁸ the connotations of the original simply fail to get across; when it

⁵² Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1st ed. 1911 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 11th ed. 2004), 610.

⁵³ John Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Douglas Bush, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 213.

⁵⁴ Corréard et al., 1270.

⁵⁵ Bareggi et. al., 507.

⁵⁶ Galimberti Jarman et al., 1248.

⁵⁷ Like the English *impious*, the French, Italian, and Spanish words are all cognates descended from the Latin *impius*, which means “*regardless of obligation, undutiful, disloyal*; hence *godless, unfilial, unpatriotic*, etc.” See D. P. Simpson, comp., *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English-Latin* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1968), 290.

⁵⁸ Lu Gusun 陸谷孫 et al., eds., *The English-Chinese Dictionary (Unabridged)* 英漢大詞典, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai yiwén chubanshe 上海譯文出版社, 1989), Vol. 1, 1366.

is translated as “*zui’e de, xie’e de*” 罪惡的, 邪惡的 ‘wicked, evil,’⁵⁹ the inclusiveness of the original, that is, the capacity for signifying two meanings (“lacking or not recognizing God. ▶profane; wicked”) at the same time, is lost. To handle this kind of centrifugality, one would have to provide something bolder: “*shenqi de*” 神棄的 ‘forsaken by God’ or “*shenbi de*” 神鄙的 ‘despised by God,’ which is, of course, only a partial solution to the centrifugality arising from religious or ideological differences between source and target languages.

VIII. Invisible Source-Language Text

So far, in the discussion of C-U / U-C translation, every TL text—be it a word, a phrase, or a sentence—has an unmistakable SL text. However, in some cases, the SL text can be unspoken or unwritten, that is, implied, “lurking” in the context or in the tone; the translator has to be sensitive to the overall effect of the sentence before he can grasp the hidden SL text and come up with the appropriate TL text. Take the following stage direction from Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* and its Chinese translation, for example:

Linda, his wife, has stirred in her bed at the right. She gets out and puts on a robe, listening. Most often jovial, she has developed an iron repression of her exceptions to Willy’s behavior—**she more than loves him, she admires him**,⁶⁰ as though his mercurial nature, his temper, his massive dreams and little cruelties, served her only as sharp reminders of the turbulent longings within him, longings which she shares but lacks the temperament to utter and follow to their end.⁶¹

他的妻子林達在床上翻動了一下。她起床，披上一件睡袍，傾耳聽著。她通常是個樂呵呵的人，但多年來已經形成克制自己的習慣，決不允許自己對威利的表現有任何不滿，——她不僅僅是愛威利，她崇拜他 [……] ⁶²

In the sentence “she more than loves him, she admires him,” there is a

⁵⁹ Lu et al., Vol. 1, 1366.

⁶⁰ My emphasis.

⁶¹ Ying Ruocheng 英若誠, trans., *Tuixiaoyuan zhi si* 推銷員之死 ‘*Death of a Salesman*,’ by Arthur Miller (Peking: Zhongguo duiwai fanyi chuban gongsi 中國對外翻譯出版公司, 1999), 6.

⁶² Ying, 7. My emphasis.

transition between the first and the second half, with the second half bringing the sentiment one step further, creating a climax. However, the Chinese translation (“*ta bu jinjin shi ai Weili, ta chongbai ta* 她不僅僅是愛威利, 她崇拜他” ‘she not only loves him, she admires him’) has not succeeded in preserving this feature: being negative, “*bu jinjin* 不僅僅” ‘not only’ cannot match “more than” in terms of force and emphasis, thus failing to bring the reasoning to a higher pitch. As a result, the second half of the Chinese translation (“*ta chongbai ta* 她崇拜他” ‘she admires him’) sounds rather weak. To convey the same amount of emphasis and force, the translator would have to add “*jianzhi* 簡直” ‘simply’ before “*chongbai ta* 崇拜他” ‘admires him,’ together with some modification to the first half for the sake of conciseness and readability: “*ta bujin ai Weili; jianzhi shi chongbai ta* 她不僅愛威利, 簡直是崇拜他” ‘she not only loves Weili, [she] simply adores him.’

IX. Going Centrifugal

In the above discussion, it can be seen that, to be able to overcome semantic centrifugality in translation, the translator must be able thoroughly to understand the SL text, digest it as a whole, and perform a more demanding task in respect of the TL than does his counterpart engaging in U-U translation. Only then will he be able to translate, for example, *to fight for every inch of land* as “*cun tu bi zheng* 寸土必爭” ‘every inch of land [one] must fight for,’ not as “*qu wei le mei yi cun tudi douzheng / zhanzheng* 去為了每一寸土地鬥爭 / 戰爭” ‘for every inch of land to fight for / to wage war,’ or, worse still, as “*qu da, wei le mei yi cun tudi* 去打, 為了每一寸土地” ‘to fight, for every inch of land’; to translate *give one the benefit of the doubt* as “*guqie xin zhi* 姑且信之” ‘might as well believe,’ not as “*gei ta huaiyi de liyi* 給他懷疑的利益” ‘give him doubt’s advantage’; to translate *lip service* as “*kouhui* 口惠” ‘lip service,’ not as “*zuichun de fuwu* 嘴唇的服務” ‘service of the lip’; to translate *couch one’s refusal in polite terms* as “*wan yan jujue* 婉言拒絕” ‘refuse with polite words,’ not as “*ba juejue zai limao de cuoci li anshi* 把拒絕在禮貌的措詞裏暗示” ‘hint at refusal in polite terms’; to translate *die in (one’s) bed* as “*shou zhong zheng qin* 壽終正寢” ‘die a natural death,’ not as “*zai chuangshang siwang* 在牀上死亡” ‘die in bed.’ In other words, a simple, straightforward operation in U-U translation can often turn out to be a highly complex one in U-C translation, which calls for a high level of language proficiency on the part of the translator.

X. Syntactic Centripetality versus Syntactic Centrifugality

As has been shown in the foregoing paragraphs, semantic centripetality or centrifugality can be dealt with on the basis of relatively small units. When the English phrase *to take liberties with grammar* is translated into Chinese, the problem, manifested on the phrase level, is tackled on the phrase level. With syntactic centripetality or centrifugality, the units involved can range from two words to more than one simple sentence.⁶³ When the French question *Parlez-vous français?* is translated by the English question *Do you speak French?* instead of *Speak you French?*, there is a relatively simple kind of syntactic centrifugality. However, in actual practice, syntactic centripetality and centrifugality extend beyond simple phrases or sentences, as can be seen in the following SL and TL texts:

Quand j'étais à Paris, j'habitais dans une maison achetée d'un politique qui travaillait pour le président.

When I was in Paris, I lived in a house bought from a politician who worked for the president.

In actual translation, such neat syntactic centripetality is rare; for, very often, the translation process may involve both syntactic centripetality and syntactic centrifugality. Generally speaking, while U-U translation is characterized by syntactic centripetality, C-U / U-C translation is characterized by syntactic centrifugality. By looking at the following SL and TL texts, we will see how English can follow German closely in terms of syntactic structure because of syntactic centripetality, so that the SL and TL texts can almost dance in synchrony, pausing and picking up speed almost at the same time and at the same point:

Wohl möglich, daß Aschenbach es bei seiner halb zerstreuten, halb inquisitiven Musterung des Fremden an Rücksicht hatte fehlen lassen, denn plötzlich ward er gewahr, daß jener seinen Blick erwiderte, und zwar so kriegerisch, so gerade ins Auge hinein, so offenkundig gesonnen, die Sache aufs Äußerste zu treiben und den Blick des andern zum Abzug zu zwingen, daß Aschenbach, peinlich berührt, sich abwandte und einen Gang die Zäune entlang began, mit dem beiläufigen Entschluß, des Menschen nicht weiter achtzuhaben.⁶⁴

⁶³ For discussion purposes, word order will be subsumed under syntax.

⁶⁴ Thomas Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig und andere Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1954), 9-10.

Aschenbach's gaze, though unawares, had very likely been inquisitive and tactless; for he became suddenly conscious that the stranger was returning it, and indeed so directly, with such hostility, such plain intent to force the withdrawal of the other's eyes, that Aschenbach felt an unpleasant twinge, and turning his back, began to walk along the hedge, hastily resolving to give the man no further heed.⁶⁵

This kind of syntactic centripetality is found not only in German-English translation, but also in the translation between any two of the European languages under discussion. Take the following speech by Hamlet in Act 4, Scene 4, ll. 56-65 of Shakespeare's play of the same name:

How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain?⁶⁶

With the liberal use of subordination made possible by conjunctions, relative pronouns, and so on common to European languages, the quotation effortlessly runs to ten lines, taking pauses here and there at leisure. When it is translated into Spanish, because of syntactic centripetality, the TL text retains more or less the same structure and movement, very much like one sentence replicated from another:

¿Cómo quedo entonces yo, si me han matado un padre e infamado una madre, para excitarme la razón y la sangre, y lo dejo dormir todo, mientras veo, para mi vergüenza, la muerte inminente de veinte mil hombres, que por una fantasía y trampa de la fama, van a sus tumbas como a la cama, luchando por un terreno sobre el cual sus multitudes no pueden poner a prueba su causa, y que no es sepulcro bastante para contenerles y esconder

⁶⁵ H. T. Lowe-Porter, trans., *Death in Venice* • Tristan • Tonio Kröger, by Thomas Mann (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in Association with Secker & Warburg, 1955), 9.

⁶⁶ William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, Oxford Standard Authors, ed. W. J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 896.

los muertos?⁶⁷

When syntactic centripetality is absent, the translator will have to perform a much more complex operation. Take lines 25-26 of Canto 3 of Dante's *Divina Commedia: Purgatorio*:

Vespero è già colà dov'è sepolto
lo corpo dentro al quale io facea ombra [...]⁶⁸

Translated into French:

Le soir tombe là-bas où est enseveli
le corps d'où je faisais de l'ombre [...]⁶⁹

or Spanish:

Es ya la tarde donde sepultado
está aquel cuerpo en el que sombra hacía [...]⁷⁰

or English:

It is evening now in the place where the body is buried within which I cast
a shadow [...]⁷¹

the structure and movement of the original remain almost intact because of the high degree of centripetality in the translation process resulting from the similarities between Italian and French, between Italian and Spanish, and between Italian and English. Of these similarities, the most prominent are subordination (which allows a sentence to contain, in theory, an

⁶⁷ José María Valverde, trans., *Hamlet / Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2000), 83-84.

⁶⁸ Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società dantesca italiana*, 2nd ed. (Firenze [Florence]: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 570.

⁶⁹ Jacqueline Risset, trans., *La Divine Comédie: le Purgatoire*, by Dante Alighieri (Paris: GF Flammarion, 1988), 33.

⁷⁰ Luis Martínez de Merlo, trans., *Divina comedia*, 6th ed., by Dante Alighieri, Letras universales (Madrid: Cátedra, 2000), 304.

⁷¹ John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso* (London, Oxford University Press, 1971), Vol. 2, 45.

infinite number of subordinate clauses introduced by relative pronouns and other linking nuts and bolts, as it were), the insertion of parenthetical constructions, and the use of various rhetorical devices, such as inversion and so on. In the above Italian quotation of only two lines, there are already two subordinate clauses (“dov’è sepolto / lo corpo” ‘where is buried / the body’; “dentro al quale io facea ombra” ‘within which I cast a shadow’) governed by the main clause (“Vespero è già colà” ‘Evening is already there’), both of which give the sentence elasticity and flexibility. As these features are common to all the European languages quoted above, the structure and movement of the Italian sentence can be easily replicated.

Given the same sentence, the translator whose TL is Chinese would be faced with a much more complex task. With no relative pronouns and other linking nuts and bolts at his disposal, he would have to make do with what is available in Chinese:

我在吾軀內投過身影。此刻，
埋葬吾軀的地方已經日暝。⁷²

‘I have in my body cast my shadow. At this moment,
in the place which buries my body, it is already evening.’

Because of syntactic centrifugality, the syntax of the original has to be reversed.

If we examine Latin and Greek, we see that a certain degree of centrifugality can be found in the translation between either of these classical languages and any one of the modern European languages discussed in this paper. Going through translations of Latin and Greek works, such as Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Cicero’s *De senectute*, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Rhodius’ *Argonautica*, one can easily see how the syntax of either of the two classical languages differs from that of any one of the modern European languages.⁷³ Take just a few

⁷² Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*La Divina Commedia*,’ by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ *Jiuge Wenku* 九歌文庫 927, 928, 929 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, September 2003), Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian*, 42.

⁷³ If one wants to be more precise, one will have to add that, in respect of syntax, no two languages are identical. Thus, Latin syntax can be found to have more room for “shuffling and reshuffling” than Greek syntax. If a further distinction is to be made, one can say that there are differences in syntax even between writers of the same language. For example, Milton’s syntax is certainly more complex than T. S.

lines at random from the *Aeneid*:

Hic patris Aeneae suspensam blanda vicissim
gaudia pertemptant mentem; iubet ocius omnis
attolli malos, intendi bracchia velis. (Book V, ll. 827-29)⁷⁴

At this, soothing joys in their turn thrill father Aeneas' anxious heart.
He bids all the masts be raised with speed and the yards spread with sails.⁷⁵

With a word-for-word translation indicating the case of the nouns and adjectives where necessary to make the structure of the Latin sentence more readily comprehensible, we will be able to see more clearly how Latin syntax differs from English syntax:

Hic (At this) patris (father's: genitive) Aeneae (Aeneas') suspensam (anxious: accusative) blanda (soothing: nominative) vicissim (in their turn) / gaudia (joys: nominative) pertemptant (thrill) mentem (heart: accusative); iubet (He bids) ocius (with speed) omnis (all: accusative) / attolli (be raised) malos (masts: accusative), intendi (to be spread)⁷⁶ bracchia (yards: accusative) velis (with sails).

To native speakers of English, the syntax of the Latin passage has distorted English syntax almost beyond recognition. Yet, because of the natural affinity between Latin and English, the centrifugality in terms of translation is still smaller than that between Latin and Chinese syntax.

The same can be said of Greek. The opening lines of Homer's *Odyssey*, together with its English translation by Murray and a word-for-word translation for explanatory purposes, will show how Greek syntax works:

Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν.⁷⁷

Eliot's; Henry James's syntax is more involved than Hemingway's; and Garcilaso de la Vega's Spanish syntax is closer to Dante's Italian syntax than to the syntax of the average sixteenth-century Spanish poet.

⁷⁴ H. Rushton Fairclough, trans., *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI*, revised by G. P. Goold, revised edition, by Virgil, The Loeb Classical Library 63 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1999), 528.

⁷⁵ Fairclough, 529.

⁷⁶ Idiomatically, one has to say, in English, "bid [something] be raised"; however, the Latin word "attolli" in Virgil's poem, being the passive infinitive of *attollere* 'to raise,' means, literally, "to be raised."

⁷⁷ A. T. Murray, trans., *The Odyssey*, by Homer, 2 vols., The Loeb Classical Library

Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices, who wandered full many ways after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy.⁷⁸

Literally translated, the syntax is as follows:

The man (Ἄνδρα) me (μοι) tell (ἔννεπε), O Muse (μοῦσα), of many devices (πολύτροπον), who (ὅς) full (μάλα) many (πολλά) / wandered (πλάγχθη), after (ἔπει) of Troy (Τροίης) sacred (ιερόν) citadel (πολιτεῖον) he had sacked (ἔπερσεν).⁷⁹

This kind of syntax, which can be easily reproduced in Latin, is alien to English—even Milton’s Latinate English as used in *Paradise Lost*. But still, with some basic affinities between Greek and English in terms of word order and syntax as well as with the presence of the relative pronoun in both languages (“ὅς” in Greek and “who” in English), Murray has succeeded in preserving to some extent the elasticity of Greek syntax in his English translation. Translated into Chinese, all elasticity would have to disappear because of the vast differences between source and target languages in terms of syntax, as can be illustrated with the first line and its Chinese translation:

繆斯(Muse) 呀 (O), 請你 (literally “please you,” going with “tell” in Chinese) 向我 (me) 講述 (tell) 那 (literally “that,” going with “man” in compliance with Chinese idiom) 多謀 (of many devices) 英雄的 (man’s, accusative in Greek changed to genitive in compliance with Chinese idiom) 事跡 (“deeds,” added to “man” in compliance with Chinese idiom).⁸⁰

XI. Grammatical Centripetality versus Grammatical Centrifugality

While focusing on syntax, we were, in the preceding paragraphs, already moving into the realm of grammar. Although it is not possible to give an exhaustive list of grammatical features common to English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek that contribute to centripetality

104 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), Vol. 1, 2.

⁷⁸ Murray, 3.

⁷⁹ My literal translation. “O” before “Muse” (“μοῦσα”) is added to indicate the Greek vocative case of “μοῦσα”; the subject (“he”) of “had sacked” is understood in the Greek “ἔπερσεν” (third person first aorist active of *πέρθω* ‘I ravage’ or ‘I destroy.’)

⁸⁰ My literal translation.

in the translation between any two of these languages, or to give a similar list of differences between Chinese and the European languages in terms of grammar that are responsible for centrifugality in the translation between Chinese and any one of these European languages, one aspect will suffice to illustrate my point: the presence of tenses in the European languages and their absence in Chinese can make a world of difference in translation. Take the German saying *alles was war, ist und sein wird*. To translate the sentence, one whose TL is English will have one's translation almost ready-made: "all that was, is, and is to be."⁸¹ Because of the presence in German and English of the three tenses, namely, the present, the past, and the future, there is a high degree of centripetality in the translation process. Given the same SL, the German-Chinese translator would, again, be mercilessly tossed about by centrifugality on the sea of semantics, syntax, and grammar before he can come up with a satisfactory version. By the time the task is completed, he will, again, have performed a highly complex operation, drawing on all his linguistic resources.

XII. Conclusion

In U-U translation, because of its high degree of centripetality, what Newmark calls "semantic translation" and "communicative translation" can easily overlap, so that the translator can "have his cake and eat it."⁸² In other words, whereas a U-U translator can obtain a highly adequate translation with the snap of his fingers, the U-C translator has to sweat for it, often achieving much less than his counterpart does in translating in the U-U direction.

⁸¹ See Harold T. Betteridge, rev. and re-ed., *Cassell's German and English Dictionary*, 12th ed., based on the edition by Karl Breul (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1976), 424, "sein."

⁸² "Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original" (Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation*, English Language Teaching (New York: Prentice Hall, 1988), 39.

PART TWO

SYNTAX AND TRANSLATABILITY

[ABSTRACT]

This paper discusses the relationship between syntax and translatability, particularly in respect of literary texts. By translatability is meant the degree of ease with which one language lends itself to translation into another language. Through practice in the translation between Chinese and some of the major European languages, such as English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Latin, and Greek, as well as between the European languages themselves, it can be found that translating between the European languages is much easier than translating between Chinese and any one of the European languages. Of all the factors that determine whether a language translates more readily or less readily into another language, syntactic differences constitute one of the most decisive. This is because the translator is, during the translation process, constantly dealing with syntax in two directions: the syntax of the source language on the one hand and the syntax of the target language on the other. As a result, problems arising from the syntactic differences between the two languages are bound to figure more prominently than those arising from the differences between individual lexical items and phrases or between cultures. In this paper, syntax will be studied and analysed with reference to Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek texts. Finally, it will be shown that, mainly because of syntactic differences, there is a higher degree of translatability between any two of the above European languages (which are members of the Indo-European family) than between Chinese (which is a member of the Sino-Tibetan family) and any one of these European languages, and that the syntax of any one of these European languages can cope comfortably with Chinese syntax, but not the other way round.

I. J. C. Catford's Discussion of Translatability

For those who do not evaluate translation theories by chronological “newness,” Catford's discussion of translatability,¹ put forward thirty-seven years ago, is still one of the most convincing and comprehensive on the subject. Clear, concise, and unpretentious, measuring up to the rigour expected of a theory, it has stood the test of time. Working within the

¹ J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 93-103.

framework of Indo-European languages, however, Catford has focused only on the lexical level, leaving the macro, syntactic level untouched, apparently because syntax does not pose too much of a problem in the translation between Indo-European languages. Not so in the translation from an Indo-European language into a language of a different family. In the translation between an Indo-European language and Chinese, which is a member of the Sino-Tibetan family, for example, syntax plays a decisive role in determining the translatability in either direction.

II. Translatability with Respect to Syntactic Features

In using the word *translatability*, Catford has in mind only semantic, not syntactic, features. In this paper, *translatability* means something slightly different: the degree of ease with which one language lends itself to translation into another. In this connection, it may be useful to refer briefly to the etymology of *translate*, which is derived from the Latin *translatus*, the past participle of *transfere*,² meaning “to carry over or across”; “to...transport.”³ While it must be admitted that *polysemy*, *shared exponence*, and cultural differences as explained by Catford⁴ do hinder the process of “carrying over,” “carrying across,” or “transporting,” syntactic differences between source and target languages are even more “troublesome.”

When the syntactic differences between two languages are small, long stretches of the source-language text can be readily “transported” into the target language with minimum disruption to the word order, logical sequence, or flow of thought in the original, as can be seen from the following quotation from *Don Quijote de la Mancha* and its English version:

En fe del buen acogimiento y honra que hace Vuestra Excelencia a toda suerte de libros, como príncipe tan inclinado a favorecer las buenas artes, mayormente las que por su nobleza no se abaten al servicio y granjerías del vulgo, he determinado de sacar a luz al INGENIOSO HIDALGO DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA al abrigo del clarísimo nombre de Vuestra Excelencia, a quien, con el acatamiento que debo a tanta grandeza, suplico

² R. E. Allen, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1297.

³ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English-Latin*, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1968), 611.

⁴ Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 94-99.

le reciba agradablemente en su protección, para que a su sombra, aunque desnudo de aquel precioso ornamento de elegancia y erudición de que suelen andar vestidas las obras que se componen en las casas de los hombres que saben, ose parecer seguramente en el juicio de algunos que, no conteniéndose en los límites de su ignorancia, suelen condenar con más rigor y menos justicia los trabajos ajenos; que, poniendo los ojos la prudencia de Vuestra Excelencia en mi buen deseo, fio que no desdenará la cortedad de tan humilde servicio.⁵

*TRUSTING in the favourable reception and honour your Excellency accords to all kinds of books, as a Prince so well disposed to welcome the liberal arts, more especially those which, out of nobility, are not abased to the service and profit of the vulgar; I have decided to publish the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha under the shelter of your Excellency's most illustrious name, begging you with the respect I owe to such greatness to receive him graciously under your protection; so that, although naked of that precious adornment of elegance and erudition in which works composed in the houses of the learned usually go clothed, in your shadow he may safely venture to appear before the judgment of some who, undeterred by their own ignorance, are in the habit of condemning the works of others with more rigour than justice. For when your excellency's wisdom takes account of my good intentions, I trust that you will not disdain the poverty of so humble an offering.*⁶

“Shadowed” closely by their English counterparts, Spanish adjuncts (“En fe del buen acogimiento [...]” “como príncipe tan inclinado [...]”), parenthetical constructions (“mayormente las que [...] del vulgo,” “con el acatamiento [...] a tanta grandeza,” “aunque desnudo de [...] que saben,” “no conteniéndose en los límites de su ignorancia,” “poniendo los ojos [...] en mi buen deseo”), parenthetical constructions within parenthetical constructions (such as “por su nobleza” within the parenthetical construction “mayormente [...] del vulgo”), and, above all, subordinate clauses of various kinds (“que hace [...] libros,” “que [...] no se abaten [...] del vulgo,” “a quien [...] suplico,” “para que a su sombra [...] ose parecer [...] algunos,” “que suelen andar [...] las obras,” “que se

⁵ Miguel Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Texto y notas de Martín de Riquer, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, 1985), Vol. 1, 17.

⁶ J. M. Cohen, trans., *The Adventures of Don Quixote*, by Miguel Cervantes Saavedra (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950), 23. In the quotation, while “Excellency’s” in “your Excellency’s most illustrious name” is capitalized, “excellency’s” in “For when your excellency’s wisdom takes account of my good intentions” is not.

component [...] los hombres,” “que saben,” “que [...] suelen condenar [...] ajenos,” “que [...] ffo [...],” “que no desdeñará la cortedad de tan humilde servicio”), including subordinate clauses within subordinate clauses (“que debo a tanta grandeza,” “que suelen andar [...] las obras,” “que se componen en las casas de los hombres,” “que saben”), have almost been directly “downloaded” into the target language, scarcely needing any adjustment.

In French-English translation, one can see the same principle at work. By looking at the following lines from Paul Valéry’s “Au platane” (“To the Plane-tree”) and their English prose translation by Anthony Hartley, one can easily see the high translatability in the French-English direction:

Mais toi, de bras plus purs que les bras animaux,
 Toi qui dans l’or les plonges,
 Toi qui formes au jour le fantôme des maux
 Que le sommeil fait songes,

Haute profusion de feuilles, trouble fier
 Quand l’âpre tramontane
 Sonne, au comble de l’or, l’azur du jeune hiver
 Sur tes harpes, Platane,
 Ose gémir! ...⁷

But you, with arms purer than animal arms, you who plunge them in gold, you who form by day the ghost of evils that slumber makes dreams,
 Tall abundance of leaves, proud tumult when the harsh north wind sounds, at the height of the gold, the young winter’s azure on your harps, O plane-tree,
 Dare to groan! [...] ⁸

In the original, the poet makes full use of relative clauses (“qui dans l’or les plonges,” “qui formes au jour le fantôme des maux,” “Que le sommeil fait songes”) and parallel structures (“songes, / Haute profusion de feuilles, trouble fier [...]” “Mais toi, de bras [...] / Toi qui dans [...] / Toi qui formes [...]”) to build up tension and delay the climax (“l’azur du jeune hiver / Sur tes harpes, Platane, / Ose gémir!”), which, when unleashed, bursts upon the reader with irresistible force. With an equally malleable

⁷ Anthony Hartley, ed., *The Penguin Book of French Verse 4: The Twentieth Century*, with plain prose translations of each poem (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 49.

⁸ Anthony Hartley, ed., *The Penguin Book of French Verse 4: The Twentieth Century*, 49.

syntax at his disposal, Hartley has little difficulty in preserving the same stylistic effects.⁹

When the syntactic affinity between a modern and a classical language is close, one can expect the same result. Take the following quotation from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and its English translation by Herbert Smyth:

πρῶτον μὲν Ἄργος καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους
 δίκη προσειπεῖν, τοὺς ἐμοὶ μεταίτιους
 νόστου δικαίων θ' ὧν ἐπραξάμην πῶλιν
 Πριάμου.¹⁰

Argos first, as is right and due, I greet, and the gods that dwell therein who have helped me to my safe return and to the justice I exacted from Priam's town.¹¹

We can see that, apart from minor adjustments,¹² the English version is able to reproduce the same kind of structure and movement.

Even with the extremely involved syntax of Latin, a high translatability can be ensured when a Latin text is rendered into English, as can be seen in the "shadowing" of Cicero's *De amicitia* by Falconer's version:

Plus apud me antiquorum auctoritas valet, vel nostrorum maiorum, qui mortuis tam religiosa iura tribuerunt, quod non fecissent, profecto, si nihil ad eos pertinere arbitrantur, vel eorum qui in hac terra fuerunt magnamque Graeciam, quae nunc quidem deleta est, tum florebat, institutis et praeceptis suis erudierunt, vel eius, qui Apollinis oraculo sapientissimus

⁹ It can be shown, too, that there is the same degree of translatability in the English-French direction.

¹⁰ Aeschylus, *Aeschylus in Two Volumes, Vol. 2: Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides, Fragments*, trans. Herbert Weir Smyth, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 68.

¹¹ Aeschylus, *Aeschylus in Two Volumes, Vol. 2: Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides, Fragments*, trans. Herbert Weir Smyth, 69.

¹² The adjective "ἐγχωρίους" (accusative plural masculine) is declined from "ἐγχώριος" (nominative singular masculine), which means "in or belonging to the country" (Liddell and Scott, *A Lexicon*, abridged from Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, impression of 1989), 192), is translated by a relative clause: "that dwell therein"; another adjective, "μεταίτιος" (nominative "μεταίτιος"), which means "being in part the cause" (Liddell and Scott, 437), is translated by another relative clause: "who have helped me."

est iudicatus, qui non tum hoc tum illud, ut in plerisque, sed idem semper, animos hominum esse divinos eisque, cum ex corpore excessissent, reditum in caelum patere optimoque et iustissimo cuique expeditissimum.¹³

I give greater weight to the old-time view, whether it be that of our forefathers, who paid such reverential rites to the dead, which they surely would not have done if they had believed those rites were a matter of indifference to the dead; or, whether it be the view of those who lived in this land and by their principles and precepts brought culture to Great Greece, which now, I admit, is wholly destroyed, but was then flourishing; or, whether it be the view of him who was adjudged by the oracle of Apollo to be the wisest of men, who, though he would argue on most subjects now on one side and now on the other, yet always consistently maintained that human souls were of God; that upon their departure from the body a return to heaven lay open to them, and that in proportion as each soul was virtuous and just would the return be easy and direct.¹⁴

In the original, the main clause (“Plus apud me antiquorum auctoritas valet”) is followed by three parallel phrases (“vel nostrorum maiorum,” “vel eorum,” “vel eius”), each of which gives rise to a series of subordinate clauses. For example, out of “vel nostrorum maiorum” grow: “qui [...] tribuerunt” (relative clause 1), “quod non fecissent” (relative clause 2, which is contained in relative clause 1), “si nihil [...] arbitrarentur” (conditional clause subordinate to relative clause 2, which, while being subordinate to relative clause 1, functions as a main clause in relation to “si nihil [...] arbitrarentur”).¹⁵ Apart from some minor adjustments required by idiomatic English,¹⁶ the translation almost “dances” in complete synchrony with the original.

¹³ Cicero, *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*, Vol. XX, trans. William Armistead Falconer, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), 120, 122.

¹⁴ Cicero, *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*, Vol. XX, trans. William Armistead Falconer, 121, 123.

¹⁵ With the other two “vel” phrases, the same kind of detailed analysis can be made.

¹⁶ For example, the three “vel” phrases have all been turned into clauses; the Latin accusative “me” in “plus apud me” has become the English nominative “I”; “magnam [...] Graecum” (“Great Greece”), which precedes “erudierunt,” has been made to follow “brought culture to” (the English translation of “erudierunt”).

III. From Intrafamily to Interfamily Translation

When one looks beyond intrafamily translation (that is, translation between languages within the same family) to interfamily translation (that is, translation between languages of different families), the syntactic complexity of the source language can drastically reduce translatability; what is taken for granted in intrafamily translation will become something that the translator could only dream of. A case in point is the presence of relative pronouns in the Indo-European languages quoted above: *who, whom, which, what...* in English; *der, die, das...* in German; *qui, que, lequel, dont...* in French; *chi, che...* in Italian; *que, quien, cuyo, cuya...* in Spanish; *qui, quae, quod...* in Latin; *ὅς, ἡ, ὅ, οὗ, ἧς, οὖ...* in Greek. With all these relative pronouns at his disposal, the intrafamily translator can be sure that, in whatever direction he moves, he can cope comfortably with long relative clauses as well as relative clauses within relative clauses without doing too much “structural damage” to the original. With no relative pronouns to depend on, a translator translating from an Indo-European language into Chinese is obliged to rearrange, sometimes very drastically, the word order of the original, extensively employing what Catford calls translation shifts.¹⁷ To make things worse, the standard Chinese sentence, unlike its counterpart in a European language, is normally short and linear, with an extremely small capacity to carry subordinate clauses, parenthetical constructions, and so on, so that it can never aspire to the syntactic complexity, malleability, or tortuosity of its counterpart in a European language.

To illustrate my point, let us look at *The Divine Comedy*:

Quali si stanno ruminando manse
 le capre, state rapide e proterve
 sovra le cime avante che sien pranse,
 tacite a l'ombra, mentre che 'l sol ferve,
 guardate dal pastor, che 'n su la verga
 poggiato s'è e lor poggiato serve;
 e quale il mandriano che fori alberga,
 lungo il peculio suo queto pernotta,
 guardando perché fiera non lo sperga;
 tali eravam noi tutti e tre allotta,
 io come capra, ed ei come pastori,
 fasciati quinci e quindi d'alta grotta.

(Dante, *La Divina Commedia: Purgatorio*, Canto 27, ll. 76-87)¹⁸

¹⁷ See Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 73-82.

¹⁸ Dante Alighieri, *Le Opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società Dantesca*

Making use of the malleability of Italian syntax, Dante is able to build up tension by piling detail upon detail in the goat-shepherd image (“Quali si stanno [...] non lo sperga”) without breaking the flow of thought in the first half of the extended simile, creating a mini-drama that holds the reader’s attention until the very end.

As members of the same language family, English and German have no difficulty bringing over the poetically functional structure of the source-language text:

Like goats that, when they grazed, were swift and tameless
 along the mountain peaks, but now are sated,
 and rest and ruminates—while the sun blazes—
 untroubled, in the shadows, silently,
 watched over by the herdsman as he leans
 upon his staff and oversees their peace;
 or like the herdsman in the open fields,
 spending the night beside his quiet flock,
 watching to see that no beast drives them off;
 such were all three of us at that point—they
 were like the herdsman, I was like the goat;
 upon each side of us, high rock walls rose.¹⁹

Gleichwie in widerkäun sich ruhn und zähmen
 die geissen, die gefreveltet und gewüetet
 auf schrofen, ehe denn sie satt bekämen,
 Im schatten still, dieweil die sonne brüetet:
 gewahrt vom hirtten, der auf seinen stecken
 gebogen steht, und ihrr gebogen hüetet—
 Und wie der sömmerer, den die sterne decken,
 nebstbei sein viechlein wolgemut betrachte,
 hüetend dass sie kein untier dürfe schrecken:
 So warn da wir selbdritt, und mich bewachte
 da hirt und hirt, und war ichs da die geisse,
 weil hin und her uns hoch gebirg bedachte.²⁰

In the German version, because of the need to follow Dante’s *terza rima*,

Italiana, eds., M. Barbi et al., seconda edizione [2nd ed.] (Firenze: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 656.

¹⁹ Allen Mandelbaum, tran., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, a verse translation, 3 vols. (New York: Bantam Books, 1984), Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, 253.

²⁰ Rudolf Borchardt, trans., *Dantes Comedia Deutsch*, by Dante Alighieri (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag. 1967), 285-86.

Borchardt has made some slight adjustments. For example, in order to find a rhyme for “stecken” and “schrecken,” he has used the phrase “den die sterne decken” ‘whom the stars cover’ to translate “che fori alberga [...] pernotta” ‘who lodges in the open [...] passes the night,’²¹ summarizing and paraphrasing at the same time, and introducing an image that is not in the original. Nevertheless, because of the syntactic affinities shared by German and Italian, the poetic effects created by means of the original’s syntactic structure are brought over with a high degree of fidelity.

In translating Dante’s lines into Chinese, which is syntactically widely different from Italian, one can no longer count on direct “downloading”; instead, one has to spend a lot of time sorting out the original sense-units and rearranging them in a widely different syntactic structure:

反芻前，高山的羊群迅疾而狂野；
 反芻的時候，就會靜靜地俯伏，
 在烈日曬不到的陰涼處一邊安歇，
 一邊溫馴地咀嚼口裏的食物。
 看守羊群的牧人，則倚著木杖
 在旁看管，讓它們歇得安舒。
 有時候，牧人會露宿野外的空曠，
 在安靜的羊群旁通宵不寐，
 防止猛獸把它們驅往四方。
 我們三個人，此刻的情形也相類：
 我像山羊，由兩位牧者照看，
 兩邊都叫高峻的岩壁包圍 [....]²²

The sense-units have been brought over, but the steady mounting of tension in the original, made possible by the continuous flow of language, is no longer there. To “transport” all the original sense units into Chinese, one has to “ferry” them over stage by stage, taking a break here and there before one can start again, so that the uninterrupted flow in the original

²¹ John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, 1st ed. 1939 (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, revised ed. 1948), Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, 355.

²² My translation. See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ *Jiuge wenku* 九歌文庫, 927, 928, 929, 1st ed. September 2003 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, rev. ed. February 2006), Vol 2, 416.

has to be sacrificed. As a result, much of the poetic effect is lost. To borrow a figure from astronomy, translating the syntax of a European language into Chinese is like rearranging the stars of a constellation differently in a different sky: all the stars are there, but the original configuration is nowhere to be found.

The same is not true, however, of translating from Chinese into the European languages under discussion. Syntactic malleability, a feature common to all the European languages, very much like the euro to members of the European Union, makes it possible to “transport” the sense units of a Chinese text readily in the opposite direction with little disturbance to the original configuration. In the English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, or Greek sky, a Chinese Ursa Major often remains an Ursa Major, seldom transformed into an Ursa Minor, much less a Piscis Austrinus.

IV. Syntactic Considerations in the Formulation of Translation Strategies

Psychologists have told us that individuals acting alone do not normally cause too much trouble; it is only when they form into crowds that they become unmanageable. Similarly, individual lexical items, be they armed with *polysemy* or *shared exponence*, can only stage sporadic strikes; it is when they group into long syntactic stretches that they begin really to launch all-out assaults on the translator.

In the past decades, *strategy* has become a buzzword; it has been used, perhaps too often, in discussions, papers, and books about translation. In view of the close relationship between syntax and translatability, *strategy* would mean very little if attention were paid only to individual lexical items, not to aspects of syntax; for this would, to sustain the military metaphor, be tantamount to training a rifle on individual troops without looking at entire battle formations.

MUSICALITY AND INTRAFAMILY TRANSLATION: WITH REFERENCE TO EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND CHINESE

[ABSTRACT]

Most practitioners of translation agree that translation is at best an ersatz, able to get across only part of the source-language text's meaning, which is meaning on two levels: the semantic and the phonological. Even in translating an apparently simple lexical item—to say nothing of long stretches of discourse—they must be keenly aware of what cannot be translated. On the semantic level, the denotation of a lexical item may sometimes be preserved almost intact. However, its connotations, associations, or nuances, which elicit subtle responses from readers of the original, often defy the process of *carrying over* or *across*, which is what *transfere*, the Latin word from which *translate* is derived, means. Yet, compared with musicality, a feature on the phonological level, all features on the semantic level will become relatively easy. With reference to translations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in Spanish, French, Latin, English, German, and Chinese, as well as translations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Italian, this paper discusses musicality as the most recalcitrant of all features in a source-language text, and attempts to show how, depending on factors to be examined in detail, intrafamily translation, that is, translation between languages of the same family, can capture the original music with varying degrees of success.

I. Musicality in Language

When practitioners and theorists of translation talk about translatability or untranslatability, what is uppermost in their minds is often the semantic level. They generally agree that, while the denotations of the original readily lend themselves to the process of “carrying over or across,” which is the meaning of *transfere* (“to carry over or across”), the Latin word from which the English *translate* is derived,¹ connotations, associations, and nuances relating to the semantic level prove more elusive. Yet, compared with musicality, all semantic features are easy fare.

By “musicality,” I mean phonological features that contribute to the

¹ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English-Latin*, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1968), 611.

sum total of the original's meaning. It can be "music" in the conventional sense of the word, with all those qualities associated with what is mellifluous, melodious, or pleasing to the ear; at the same time, it can encompass phonological features that are deliberately cacophonous or discordant, employed by the addresser to get his message across more effectively, more memorably, or with greater emphasis. When a Frenchman says, "*Quand on est cantonais, on est né à Canton*" (literally "When one is Cantonese, one was born in Canton," meaning "Cantonese were born in Canton"), the communication of the message depends as much on the echoing of the same sounds in "*Quand on est cantonais, on est né [...] Canton*" as on the *signifiés* of the individual lexical items on the semantic level. When the target language has no corresponding phonological items to reproduce the same effect, the translation cannot be considered to have adequately carried over the total meaning of the message. Similarly, when a Spaniard says, "*Del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho*" (literally "From the word to the deed, there is much distance," meaning "It is easier said than done"),² a large part of the meaning is conveyed by the interplay of phonological features, such as the repetition of the vowels "e" and "o" and of the voiceless post-alveolar affricate "-ch-" (/tʃ/), which requires more physical effort on the part of the addresser when making the utterance, suggesting strenuousness and conditioning the addresser in such a way that he is compelled, through kinaesthesia, to *feel* the *distance* ("trecho") between the "word" ("dicho") and the "deed" ("hecho"). In the English translation, there are no such phonological features. Saying it aloud without much physical effort, one is aware of a suggestiveness opposite to that of the original: instead of feeling "much distance" ("mucho trecho"), one feels "little distance" ("poco trecho"). Similarly, translating the Spanish sentence "No tuve arte ni parte en el asunto" as "I had nothing whatsoever to do with it"³ leaves much functional musicality unattended to.

With respect to the significance of phonological features in the communication of a message, Italian can provide us with a large number of everyday examples. Thumb through an Italian dictionary, and we will find saying after saying in which the communication of the message

² See the entry "dicho"³ in Beatriz Galimberti Jarman et al., eds., *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English · English-Spanish / Gran Diccionario Oxford: Español-Inglés · Inglés-Español*, 1st ed. 1994 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th ed. 2008), 283 for two other translations of the proverb: "it's one thing to say something and another to actually do it, there's many a slip twixt cup and lip."

³ Galimberti Jarman et al., 68.

depends heavily—or even hinges—on phonological features: “*Poca brigata, vita beata*” (literally “Fewer people, blessed life,” meaning “Small company makes for happy life”); “*Patti chiari, amici cari*” (literally “Clear agreements, dear friends,” meaning “Terms clearly defined in advance prevent quarrels later”); “*Cielo a pecorelle, acqua a catinelle*” (literally “A sky with fleeces, water in washhand basins,” meaning “A sky with fleece-clouds forebodes plenty of rain, that is, raining cats and dogs”); “*Moglie e buoi dei paesi tuoi*” (literally “Wife and oxen of your hometown,” meaning “If you must marry, marry a woman of your hometown”); “*Aprile, dolce dormire*” (literally “April, sweet sleep,” meaning “In April, one sleeps best”); “*Il soverchio rompe il coperchio*” (literally “Excess breaks the cover,” meaning “Excess is harmful”); “*Chi di spada ferisce, di spada perisce*” (“He who hurts with the sword dies by the sword”); “*Casa mia, casa mia, per piccina che tu sia, tu mi sembri una badia*” (literally “My home, my home, small as you are, to me you seem an abbey,” meaning “Home, sweet home”). With a master translator, it may be possible to reproduce in the target language certain phonological features approximating to those of the original; yet, no matter how ingenious the translator is, the success is bound to be partial because no two languages are phonologically identical.

II. Musicality as a Translation Problem

For this reason, therefore, of all the problems posed by a source-language text, musicality is certainly one of the most recalcitrant—perhaps *the* most recalcitrant—a translator has to face. When the writer of the source-language text confines himself to linguistic devices on the semantic level, translation can be relatively easy; when he draws heavily on phonological features of the language with which he is working, especially in longer stretches of discourse, the abilities of the translator can be taxed to the utmost. With masters of language like Dante and Shakespeare, the problem can border on the insurmountable. Take the following passage from Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, for example:

A l’alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
 ma già volgeva il mio disio e il velle,
 sì come rota ch’igualmente è mossa,
 l’amor che move il sole e l’altre stelle.⁴

⁴ Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, seconda edizione [2n ed.], eds. M. Barbi et al. (Firenze: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 798.

As the climax and concluding lines of the Italian masterpiece, the quotation works powerfully not only on the semantic level, but also on the phonological level, making full use of the interplay of vowels (“a,” “i,” “o,” “e”), especially in the last line, where “a,” “o,” and “e” set off a pleasing resonance, echoing one another in a rich, mellifluous pattern of sounds that drives home through its suggestiveness the harmony which the Pilgrim has reached with the Holy Trinity in the Empyrean.

For a translator, this kind of musicality, which is musicality of the first order, is the most formidable,⁵ especially in respect of interfamily translation, that is, translation between two different language families, such as the Indo-European and the Sino-Tibetan. In translating the four lines quoted above into Chinese, I have retained Dante’s *terza rima*, and re-created a metre of my own to complement what is conveyed by the semantic *signifiés* in the original:

高翔的神思，至此再無力上攀；
不過這時候，吾願吾志，已經
見旋於大愛，像勻轉之輪一般；
那大愛，迴太陽啊動群星。⁶

However, because of the vast gap between Italian and Chinese, which belong respectively to the Indo-European and the Sino-Tibetan family, a large part of the original’s musicality is lost, particularly with respect to the last line of the translation, in which one can no longer hear the chord-like echoing of the vowels so consummately drawn on by Dante.⁷

Moving from interfamily to intrafamily translation, one will see the linguistic gap narrowing:

⁵ Of all language uses, the poetic function of language as postulated by Jakobson is the most intricate; the musicality of poetry, especially poetry by a great master, is, therefore, the most difficult to translate. See Roman Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*, Vol. 3 of *Selected Writings*, ed. with a preface by Stephen Rudy (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), 22-25; 4 vols.

⁶ See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ *Jiuge wenku* 九歌文庫, 927, 928, 929, 1st ed. September 2003 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiu Ko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, rev. ed. February 2006), Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian*, 511.

⁷ It must be pointed out, though, that the sounds in a chord are heard simultaneously, whereas the sounds in a line of poetry are heard sequentially.

Here force failed my high fantasy; but my
 desire and will were moved already—like
 a wheel revolving uniformly—by
 the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.⁸

In the English translation, one can hear an echo, albeit faint and remote, of the original's music in "fantasy" (for "*fantasia*"), "will" (for "*velle*"), "were moved" (for "*move*"), "revolving" (for "*mossa*," but echoing "*volgeva*"), and "stars" (for "*stelle*"), an echo which becomes more audible especially when compared with the sound effects of the Chinese version. However, compared with those members of the same language family that have a closer affinity with Italian, English is still not too competent a "performer." This is because English is still one or two degrees removed from Italian: while Italian belongs to the Italic branch, English belongs to the Germanic.

For the same reason, German, another member of the Germanic branch, fares no better:

Der hohen fantasieîn brach hie verträuen:
 doch schon bewog mein ›sehnen‹ und mein ›gerne‹
 rade geleich, das rollt auf bahnen neuen:
 Minne, di wiegt die sonne und andern sterne.⁹

To be sure, one can hear a faint echo of the original in "*fantaseîn*" (for "*fantasia*") "*sonne*" (for "*sole*"), and "*sterne*" (for "*stelle*"), but the grating "*brach*," "*doch*," "*geleich*," and, particularly, the guttural "*rade*" (for "*rota*") have all but destroyed the original's mellifluousness and harmony.

By looking closely at the German version, one can see that the "infelicity" is due not to some personal "failing" on Borchardt's part;

⁸ Allen Mandelbaum, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: A Verse Translation*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, a Bantam classic, notes by Anthony Oldcorn and Daniel Feldman, with Giuseppe Di Scipio (New York / Toronto / London / Sydney / Auckland: Bantam Books, 1982-1984), Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, 303. Allen Mandelbaum's translation was first published by the University of California Press (Vol. 1: *Inferno* in 1980; Vol.2: *Purgatorio* in 1982; Vol. 3: *Paradiso* in 1984). It was published in the Bantam Classic edition with the following dates of publication: *Inferno* in February 1982, *Purgatorio* in January 1984, *Paradiso* in February 1986.

⁹ Rudolf Borchardt, trans., *Dantes Comedia Deutsch* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967), 467.

working within the “limitations” of German,¹⁰ Borchardt has proved to be a competent translator. However, because of the great difference between the German and Italian phonological systems, the translator has no alternative but to make the best of an impossible job. This point will be better illustrated if we look at another German version of the same lines:

Die hohe Bildkraft mußte hier versagen,
Doch schon bewegte meinen Wunsch und Willen,
So wie ein Rad in gleichender Bewegung
Die Liebe, die bewegt Sonn und Sterne.¹¹

The harsh-sounding “Bildkraft,” “versagen,” and “Rad,” the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ in “versagen,” “So,” and “Sonn,” the voiceless velar fricative /x/ in “Doch,” the voiceless post-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ in “**schon**,” “**Wunsch**,” “gleichender,” and “Sterne,” and the voiced labio-dental fricative /v/ in “**Wunsch**” and “**Willen**” all “conspire” effectively to “sabotage” the translator’s attempt to bring over the melody of the original.¹² It is clear, then, that any inability on Borchardt’s part to replay the original music is due to linguistic rather than personal factors.

When one enters the Italic branch, one will immediately be greeted by less “alien” sounds, sounds in which one can recognize a closer kinship with Italian. Take Jacqueline Risset’s French translation of the same lines:

Ici la haute fantaisie perdit sa puissance;
mais déjà il tournait mon désir et vouloir
tout comme roue également poussée,
l’amour qui meut le soleil et les autres étoiles.¹³

¹⁰ For lack of a more precise word, I have to use the word “limitations” to describe the absence of the phonological features of one language in another. Strictly speaking, “limitations” is not an accurate word, since every language has its own genius, and can perform all the functions expected of it by its own speech community.

¹¹ Hermann Gmelin, trans., *Die göttliche Komödie*, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Die Hölle*, Vol. 2, *Der Läuterungsberg*, Vol. 3, *Das Paradies* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ernst Klett, 1949), 401.

¹² I have used bold type in the quoted words to indicate the sounds being discussed.

¹³ Jacqueline Risset, trans., *La Divine Comédie*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *L’Enfer / Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Le Purgatoire / Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Le Paradis / Paradiso* (Paris : GF Flammarion, 1992), 315.

In addition to “fantaisie” (for “fantasia”), which plays more or less the same role as the English “fantasy” and the German “fantaseîn,” “désir” (for “disio”), “vouloir” (for “velle”), “également” (for “igualmente”), “l’amour” (for “l’amor”), and “soleil” (for “sole”) have moved much closer to the Italian music than their counterparts in the English and German versions do. With exactly the same pronunciation as its Italian counterpart “e” (/e/), the French conjunction “et” (/e/) reminds the reader that he is listening to a gamut with a frequency not dissimilar from that of the original. If one reads the English, German, and French versions aloud, one will also be aware that, as a whole, the French version is softer, more “feminine,” and more in tune with the mood and spiritual plane to which Dante the Pilgrim has risen, by virtue, no doubt, of the fact that both Italian and French are Romance languages descended from Latin.

Nevertheless, despite the more competent “performance” of French in replaying Dante’s tune, it is in Spanish and Latin that one finds the frequency closest to that of Dante’s celestial music. Take the following Spanish version, for example:

ya mi alta fantasia fué impotente;
 mas cual rueda que gira por sus huellas,
 el mío y su querer movió igualmente,
 el amor que al sol mueve y las estrellas.¹⁴

The similarity between Spanish and Italian can instantly be recognized even by someone who speaks neither language: “alta,” “igualmente,” and “amor” have the same spelling as their Italian counterparts; “fantasía” (for “fantasia”) and “mío” (for “mio”) differ from the Italian words only in the presence of an accent; “movió,” “sol,” and “mueve,” though spelt differently, can readily be linked to the Italian “move” and “sole” (“movió” and “mueve” to “move,” “sol” to “sole”). Because of this close kinship, the Spanish music is just as mellifluous and harmonious as the Italian original, suggesting with equal effectiveness the beatitude granted to Dante the Pilgrim, a state which is best described by the famous line spoken by Piccarda Donati in the sphere of the Moon: “E ’n la sua volondade è nostra pace.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Bartolomé Mitre, trans., *La Divina Comedia*, by Dante Alighieri, traducción en verso, Biblioteca Mundial Sopena (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sopena, 1938), 307.

¹⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante*, 690. Sinclair’s English translation is as follows: “And in His will is our peace.” See John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Vol. 3,

To see whether the musicality reproduced by Mitre is accidental or due to some other factors, we can look at another version in the same language. Published in 1968, the following Spanish version, in prose, is by Arce:

Pero a mi fantasía faltó fuerza; y ya deseo y voluntad giraban como rueda con uniformidad, impulsados por el Amor que mueve al sol y al las demás estrellas.¹⁶

Words like “Pero” ‘But,’ “a” ‘with regard to,’ “mi” ‘my,’ “fantasía” ‘imagination,’ “deseo” ‘wish,’ “voluntad” ‘will,’ “giraban” ‘were revolving,’ “como” ‘like,’ “rueda” ‘wheel,’ “uniformidad” ‘uniformity,’ “impulsados” ‘driven,’ “por” ‘by,’ “el” ‘the,’ “Amor” ‘Love,’ “que” ‘that,’ “mueve” ‘moves’...readily remind the reader that he is listening to almost the same piece of music as *The Divine Comedy*. To those who read both German and Spanish, the word “rueda” (meaning “wheel,” for the Italian “rota”) is especially instructive: the gliding from “u” to “e,” which is highly mellifluous in the context, contrasts sharply with the German “Rad,” which, being guttural and harsh, fails to fit in with the celestial music intended by Dante. Working with German, which has a phonetic pattern suited to a different kind of music, a translator rendering the last canto of the *Paradiso* has very little room for manoeuvre.¹⁷ Working with Spanish,

Paradiso, 53.

¹⁶ Joaquín Arce, trans., *La Divina Comedia*, by Dante Alighieri (Barcelona: Ediciones Nauta, 1968), 451.

¹⁷ This does not mean, however, that German is inferior to Italian in performing all kinds of verbal music. When harsh sounds are required to suggest the discordant, German is a better choice than Italian, as can be inferred from the opening of Canto 32 of the *Inferno*:

S’io avessi le rime aspre e chioce,
 come si converrebbe al tristo buco
 sovra ’l qual pontan tutte l’altre rocce,
 io premerei di mio concetto il suco
 più pienamente; ma perch’io non l’abbo,
 non sanza tema a dicer mi conduco [.]
 (Dante, *Le opere di Dante*, 551)

Had I the harsh and grating rhymes that would be fitting for the dismal hole on which all the other rocks bear down I would press out more completely the sap of my conception; but since I have not it is not without fear I bring myself to speak [.] (Sinclair, trans., *Inferno*, 395)

a translator has a phonological system made up of very similar musical notes to Dante's Italian: when he is called upon to sing the heavenly music of the last canto of the *Paradiso*, he will be able to rise to the challenge with little effort.

With Latin, the story is more or less the same, except that, while Spanish is related to Italian like one sibling to another, Latin is related to Italian like a father to his child. For this reason, one can expect to hear music of a frequency very similar to that of Italian when the great lines of the *Paradiso* are translated into Latin:

Alte phantasie hic defecit posse;
Sed iam involvebat meum velle, [divinum] velle,
Sicut rota que equaliter movetur,
Amor qui movet solem et alias stellas.¹⁸

Except for a few words like "hic" 'here,' "iam" 'already,' and "sicut" 'just as,' all the other words are either similar to or identical with their counterparts in the Italian original. As Latin is Italian's father, it is just natural to see in it the image of the son.

III. Musicality and the Characteristics of Individual Languages

In the preceding paragraphs, the discussion has centred on Italian as the source language, which has made English and German appear to be incompetent candidates for the task of reproducing musicality. When the source language is English, we will see the situation reversed: in translating musicality in the English-Italian direction, it will be the turn of the Italian language to have its "inadequacies" "exposed."

For the sake of a more objective comparison, let us look at the work of

Here Dante is indirectly admitting that the Italian language is too musical (in the conventional sense of the word) to suggest the "harsh" ("aspre") and "grating" ("chiocce"). Were the poet writing in German at the time, he would not have had such a problem, since German would have provided him with all the "harsh" and "grating" words (like "Rad," for example) he needed.

¹⁸ Fratr̄is Iohannis de Saravalle, *Translatio et comentum totius libri Dantis Aldigherii*, by Dante Alighieri, cum textu italico Fratr̄is Bartholomaei a Colle nunc primum edita (Prati: Ex Officina Libraria Giachetti, Filii et Soc., 1891), 1213. It should be noted that the genitive case of the nouns on the title page of the translation is retained.

Shakespeare, a poet comparable to Dante in stature.¹⁹ In one of his great tragedies, *Macbeth*, the Bard of Avon has three witches prepare a charm with all sorts of horrid ingredients that can give the audience the creeps. The setting is a cavern. When the three witches enter, there is thunder, as is the case with Act 1, Scene 1, Act 1, Scene 3, and Act 3, Scene 5. The world evoked is the antipode of the *Paradiso*:

Sec[ond] Witch.	Fillet of a fenny snake, In the cauldron boil and bake; Eye of newt, and toe of frog, Wool of bat, and tongue of dog, Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting, Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing, For a charm of powerful trouble, Like a hell-broth boil and bubble. [...]
Third Witch.	Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf, Witches' mummy, maw and gulf Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark, Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark [...]

¹⁹ The relative stature of Dante and Shakespeare is aptly summed up by Eliot in his classic essay, "Dante":

And take the *Comedy* as a whole, you can compare it to nothing but the *entire* dramatic work of Shakespeare. [...] Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them; there is no third. (T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951), 264-65)

Shakespeare gives the greatest *width* of human passion; Dante the greatest altitude and greatest depth. They complement each other. It is futile to ask which undertook the more difficult job. (Eliot, *Selected Essays*, 265)

Coming from one who was voted the most influential poet and critic of the twentieth century by *Time* magazine in 1999, the judgement carries more weight than those pronounced by any other poet or critic of the same century. By comparing two poets who have brought their respective mother tongues to the highest level of perfection, we can be sure that the comparison will be methodologically sounder than a comparison of two poets whose achievements are clearly unequal.

²⁰ William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, ed. W. J. Craig (London / New York / Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974), 860.

As soon as they are spoken, the lines start working simultaneously on two levels: the semantic and the phonological. On the semantic level, the *signifiants*, through the *signifiés*, evoke a complex of images, associations, and connotations that complement and reinforce one another, thereby contributing to the eerie and bizarre atmosphere intended by Shakespeare. Phonologically, the sounds, from whole lines down to a single phoneme, co-operate to suggest what the semantic units are powerfully evoking. Take the sharp monosyllabic words “snake” (/sneɪk/), “bake” (/beɪk/), “frog” (/frɒg/), “bat” (/bæt/), “tongue” (/tʌŋ/), “dog” (/dɒg/), “fork” (/fɔ:k/), “sting” (/stɪŋ/), “leg” (/leg/), “shark” (/ʃɑ:k/), and “dark” (/dɑ:k/). Apart from the vowels, the velar plosives /k/ and /g/, the alveolar plosive /t/, and the velar nasal /ŋ/, together with the strenuous “[-]zard” (/zəd/) in “lizard” (/ˈlɪzəd/), the explosive “bub[-]” (/bʌb/) in “bubble” (/ˈbʌb(ə)l/), the jarring “[-]lock” (/lɒk/) (with the open vowel /ɒ/) in “hemlock” (/ˈhemlɒk/), and the sharp, short “dig[-]” (/dɪg/) in “digged” (/dɪgd/), all help the audience “hear” the eerie, the bizarre, the mysterious, and the horrid;²¹ what is abstract on the semantic level has become something concrete, something clearly audible because of the phonological suggestiveness in the context. In his *The Four Quartets: Little Gidding*, Eliot describes “every phrase / And sentence that is right” as one in which “every word is at home, / Taking its place to support the others, / [...] The complete consort dancing together.”²² After listening to the quotation from Shakespeare, one is tempted to conclude that it must have been the kind of “phrase” and “sentence” Eliot had in mind when he was writing the above lines.

As the greatest English poet, Shakespeare is able to exploit the phonological system of the English language more skilfully than any other English poet. In writing the witches’ lines, he must have had complete mastery of his tools, namely, all the sounds of the English language available to him. When called upon to translate the musicality created by these sounds into Italian, the translator may employ phonological features that appear to correspond to those of the original, using poetic devices common to both the source and target languages, such as rhyme and alliteration.²³ However, since Italian has a different phonological system,

²¹ For the sake of analysis, the phonemes are discussed separately here. When the lines are heard, all the sounds (vowels and consonants) will work together as an organic whole, making an impact that defies phonetic analysis.

²² T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems: 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), 221.

²³ He can, for example, reproduce the alliteration in “Fillet of a fenny snake,”

its “limitations” will immediately become obvious in the translation:

- 2a STREGA Bolli e cuoci nella pentola
 tu, filetto di serpente;
 ramarro occhiuto, pollici di rana,
 vampiro peloso e lingua di cane.
 Forca di serpe, aculeo d’orbetto
 zampe ed ali, ramarri e civette,
 magie potenti, gorgogli del male,
 bollite tutti nel brodo infernale.
 [...]
- 3a STREGA Dente di lupo, dragone a scaglie,
 mummia di strega, gonfie frattaglie
 del pescecane d’acqua salata,
 cicuta al buio disradicata [...]²⁴

In terms of sound effect, the Italian version makes a widely different impact on the listener: the vowels (“o,” “i,” “u,” “e,” and “a”), forming a rich pattern, resonate across the lines and echo one another in a music that is full and mellow, deviating drastically from Shakespeare’s: there is no longer the discordance that works in unison with the semantic level;²⁵ the Stravinskian cacophony in the original has given way to a Mozartian harmony. While Mozartian harmony has its proper place in Canto 33 of Dante’s *Paradiso*, with respect to the *Macbeth* scene, it is just too “beautiful,” too pleasing to the ear.

“boil and bake,” “Lizard’s leg,” “hell-broth boil and bubble,” “mummy, maw,” and “salt-sea” (my italics).

²⁴ Vittorio Gassman, trans., *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare, Oscar classici (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1983), 92-93.

²⁵ It should be pointed out that the translator has also deviated from the original on the semantic level. “Eye of newt” and “Wool of bat,” for example, have been translated respectively as “ramarro occhiuto” and “vampiro peloso,” which, in back-translation, would mean “sharp-sighted green lizard” (Piero Rebor, prepared with the assistance of Francis M. Guercio and Arthur L. Hayward, *Cassell’s Italian-English / English-Italian Dictionary* (London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1972), 343, 413) and “hairy vampire” (Rebor, 367, 553), thereby shifting the focus from the part to the whole. As the semantic level is not an area covered in my paper, deviations like these have been left out in my discussion.

IV. Musicality in Intrafamily Translation

From the above discussion, it can be seen that, in respect of musicality, intrafamily translation is much easier than interfamily translation. In interfamily translation, musicality of a different kind may be created by the translator's ingenious handling of a different phonological system, but it is no longer musicality of the same gamut, much less musicality of the same notes. When one moves from interfamily to intrafamily translation, a higher degree of phonic fidelity can be achieved: the closer the affinity, the higher the phonic fidelity. Within the same family of languages, it can be further seen that intrabranch translation, as is the case with Italian-Spanish translation, yields musicality of an even higher degree of phonic fidelity. Lastly, if one wishes to make even finer distinctions, one can say that, within the same branch, musicality lends itself most readily to translation between languages with the closest kinship, such as Italian and Spanish.

In Florence, there is a church called Santa Maria Novella. Even to one who is not a native speaker of Italian, the musicality of the name comes across through the pleasing interplay of vowels. Say it in English: "New St. Mary" (/nju:/ /sənt/ /'mɛəri/), or, worse still, in Chinese: "新聖瑪利亞" (/ɕin/ /ʒəŋ/ /ma/ /li/ /ia/),²⁶ and the music vanishes into thin air. "*Così la neve al sol si disigilla; / così al vento ne le foglie levi / si perdea la sentenza di Sibilla*"²⁷—"Thus the snow loses its imprint in the sun; thus in the wind on the light leaves the Sibyl's oracle was lost."²⁸ Say it in Spanish: "*Santa Maria Novela*," and the music remains intact. In the light of this difference, then, translators working between languages that belong to two different families or branches can only hope to produce a musical ersatz.

²⁶ It should be noted that the five Chinese syllables have respectively the first, the fourth, the third, the fourth, and the fourth tone when spoken in Mandarin.

²⁷ Dante, *Le opere di Dante*, 796.

²⁸ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 481.

FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE: TRANSLATING WORDPLAY FOR THE EYE AND TRANSLATING WORDPLAY FOR THE EAR

[ABSTRACT]

Following Delabastita's definition of *wordplay*, this paper discusses the differences between translating wordplay for the eye, which is printed on the page, and translating wordplay for the ear, which is spoken on stage. Beginning with everyday examples of wordplay, it proceeds to examine wordplay as found in *Hamlet*, and shows how it is translated into the major European languages and Chinese and why translating English wordplay into Chinese is especially challenging.

I. *Wordplay* Defined

Before we proceed, it is first necessary to know what is meant by "wordplay," which, for all practical purposes, is a synonym for *pun*. Of all the definitions of the term I have come across to date, the most precise, most comprehensive is that given by Dirk Delabastita in his in-depth study of the subject, *There's a Double Tongue: An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay, with Special Reference to Hamlet*:

wordplay [or pun] is the general name indicating the various textual phenomena (i.e. on the level of performance or *parole*) in which certain features inherent in the structure of the language used (level of competence or *langue*) are exploited in such a way as to establish a communicatively significant, (near)-simultaneous confrontation of at least two linguistic structures with more or less dissimilar meanings (signifieds) and more or less similar forms (signifiers)¹

While most definitions of the term found in dictionaries are either sketchy

¹ Dirk Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue: An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay, with Special Reference to Hamlet*, *Approaches to Translation Studies*, Vol. 11, eds. Raymond van den Broeck and Kitty M. van Leuven-Zwart (Amsterdam / Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993), 57.

or put in the language for the general reader, Delabastita's has taken into consideration the distinction between "performance" and "competence," made by Noam Chomsky, as well as the distinction between "*parole*" and "*langue*," made by Ferdinand de Saussure. At the same time, expressions like "communicatively significant," "(near)-simultaneous confrontation," "more or less dissimilar meanings (signifieds)," and "more or less similar forms (signifiers)" help to fine-tune the definition, giving it further precision.

II. Four Types of Wordplay

According to Delabastita,² there are four types of puns, each of which is subdivided into the horizontal and the vertical type:

(1) **Homonymic:** = sound, = spelling

Horizontal:

e.g. We must be *neat*; not *neat*, but cleanly, captain: / And yet the steer, the heifer, and the calf are / All call'd *neat*. (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.123-25)

Vertical:

e.g. In the old age black was not counted *fair* [...] (Sonnet 127.1)

(2) **Homophonic:** = sound, ≠ spelling

Horizontal:

e.g. Indeed, I am in the *waist* two yards about—but I am now about no *waste*; I am about thrift. (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* 1.3.39-41)

Vertical:

e.g. O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow, / Nor draw no lines there with thine *antique* [*antic*] pen [...] (Sonnet 19.9-10)

(3) **Paronymic:** ≠ sound, ≠ spelling

Horizontal:

e.g. You [...] made her serve your uses both in *purse* and in *person*. (*The Second Part of Henry IV* 2.1.114-16)

Vertical:

e.g. Come thou mortal wretch, / With thy sharp teeth this knot *intrinsicate* [intricate, intrinsic] / Of life at once untie. (*Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.301-3)

² Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 80-81.

(4) **Homographic:** ≠ sound, = spelling*Horizontal:*e.g. <How the *US* put *US* to shame>*Vertical:*

e.g. <The-rapist>

III. Translating English Wordplay into Chinese

The classification is comprehensive, dealing with all kinds of wordplay, and covering almost all aspects of the rhetorical device. I say “almost all aspects,” not “all aspects,” because, based only on Indo-European languages, it has not dealt with wordplay in Chinese and the translation of wordplay between the Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan language families. In discussing actual translation, Delabastita shines in respect of the translation of wordplay from English into Dutch, into French, and into German; but no mention is made of the translation between English, a language of the Indo-European family, and Chinese, a language of the Sino-Tibetan family. Given the limited ability and time of all theorists and translators with regard to language acquisition, this is understandable, for no one, even if he is the greatest of polyglots, can be expected to know all the languages in use in the world. Nevertheless, by studying wordplay in Chinese and wordplay in translation in the English-Chinese direction, we will discover: (1) that Chinese lends itself more readily to homophonic wordplay than the major European languages; and (2) that translating wordplay for the eye is widely different from translating wordplay for the ear, or, to describe the difference in respect of drama, that translating wordplay for the page is widely different from translating wordplay for the stage.

Let us first see why Chinese lends itself more readily to homophonic wordplay than the major European languages. Substituting “writing” or “script” for “spelling” in Delabastita’s classification, we will find that there are far more words in Chinese than in English that share the same sound, that is, = sound, ≠ writing. This is because Chinese words, particularly Chinese words in classical Chinese, are largely monosyllabic, sharing a very limited number of syllables, a phenomenon already pointed out by Huang Qingxuan 黃慶萱 in his *Xiucixue* 修辭學 ‘*Rhetoric*’:³

³ Huang Qingxuan 黃慶萱, *Xiucixue* 修辭學 ‘*Rhetoric*,’ University Texts Series (Taipei: Sanmin shuju gufen youxian gongsi 三民書局股份有限公司, 2002), 215.

以聲音言：我國字音僅四百十九種，乘上四聲及輕聲讀法，也不過一千二百種左右。（有些音四聲不全，或沒有輕聲讀法。）而我國文字，《中華大字典》所收單字，計四萬四千九百零八字，平均每個讀音有三十七個字〔……〕

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 or the light tone.) However, according to the *Zhonghua da zidian* 中華大字典 ‘*The Comprehensive Chinese Dictionary*’, the Chinese language has 44,908 characters; on the average, each syllable is shared by 37 characters [...]⁴

As a result, each syllable has, on the average, thirty-seven homophones. When a writer wants to introduce wordplay of the homophonic type, he has many words / characters at his disposal; with the exception of only a small number of characters, such as *hú* 蝴 in *húdié* 蝴蝶 and *·bo* 蔔 in *luó·bo* 蘿蔔,⁵ each Chinese character in the Chinese language can function independently as a word; that is to say, each character can have at least one meaning. The syllable *yì* in the *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典 ‘*Modern Chinese Dictionary*,’ for example, is shared by eighty-nine characters, ranging from “一” to “懿.”⁶ When the syllable is pronounced with the script concealed, it is simply impossible to decide which of the eighty-nine characters the speaker has in mind.

In the English language or other European languages, the same syllable can also be shared by more than one word, as is the case with *meet* and *meat*, *feet* and *feat*, and so on. But generally speaking, the average number of words sharing the same syllable in English or in other major European languages is much smaller than the average number of characters sharing the same syllable in Chinese. Furthermore, while disyllabic and polysyllabic words make up a much larger number than monosyllabic words in English,⁷ the vast majority of words in Chinese are monosyllabic.

⁴ My translation.

⁵ Where necessary, in romanizing Chinese characters in this paper, I have indicated their tones with tone marks.

⁶ In the case of larger dictionaries, such as the *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 ‘*The Comprehensive Chinese Dictionary*’ or the *Hanyu da zidian* 漢語大字典 ‘*The Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Characters*,’ the number is certainly much larger.

⁷ Even when an English word is monosyllabic, it often has consonants or consonant clusters to facilitate recognition or comprehension by the listener when

As a result, the meaning of the average word in English can be much more easily perceived by the ear than its counterpart in Chinese. Although one may have to pause to decide whether *feet* or *feat* is meant when one hears the sound /fi:t/ uttered, the uncertainty facing the addressee who hears the *pinyin* syllable “yì” pronounced is much greater, for, in theory, the addresser may be referring to any one of the eighty-nine characters / words in the *Xiandai Hanyu cidian*, so much so that reception of the meaning depends much more on the eye than on the ear.

Proceeding from this major difference between English and Chinese, one can say that the perception of a pun in Chinese, especially a pun of the homophonic type, is almost always through the eye rather than the ear when no hint or context is supplied. Let us look at some everyday examples:

yǐnshí hǎo zhǔyì 飲食好煮 (主) 意 (from a commercial advertising cooking)

wǒ céng gūdú 我曾孤毒 (獨) (the title of a feature article in a local Chinese newspaper about a drug addict who succeeded in kicking her drug habit)

chāobài kuángmó 潮 (朝) 拜狂魔 (the title of a TV programme)

wū dài tóng táng 五代同糖 (堂) (the name of a shop selling sweet foods)

xiāngchún mǐjiǔ 鄉 (香) 純米酒 (the brand of a rice wine)

In each of the above puns, one syllable is shared by two differently written words / characters having different meanings; the word / character (put in brackets) which is normally collocated with the rest of the idiom / phrase / sentence is replaced by its homophone. If each pun is just read aloud on stage, the audience will not be able to perceive it; what they think they hear will be “飲食好主意” ‘good ideas about food and drink,’ “我曾孤獨” ‘once I was lonely,’ “朝拜狂魔” ‘paying homage to a mad demon,’ “五代同堂” ‘five generations living as one family,’ and “香純 (or 醇) 米酒” ‘fragrant and mellow rice wine,’ not “飲食好煮意” ‘good cooking ideas about food and drink,’ “我曾孤毒” ‘I was once a lone drug addict,’ “潮拜狂魔” ‘the tide of paying homage to a mad demon,’ “五代同糖” ‘five generations sharing the same sweet things,’ and “鄉純米酒” ‘country-mellow rice wine.’ To be able to function as a pun, each of the

spoken. Examples are *pit* (with a terminal consonant *t*), *spit* (with a consonant cluster *sp* and a terminal consonant *t*), *split* (with a consonant cluster *spl* and a terminal consonant *t*); so even with monosyllabic words, English is less likely to give rise to ambiguity or confusion than Chinese.

punning words needs extra information as a clue to lead the listener to the double meaning. Printed on the page, each of the puns can function perfectly without extra information; though the word / character normally used in the collocation is suppressed, with its place taken over by a homophone, and though a twist is given to the idiom / phrase / sentence, the word / character normally used still remains identifiable in the background or in the reader's consciousness, able to set up, almost automatically, "a communicatively significant, (near)-simultaneous confrontation of at least two linguistic structures with more or less dissimilar meanings (signifieds) and more or less similar forms (signifiers)."⁸ Communicated through the ear, they cease to function as puns. They are, therefore, only puns for the page, meant to be read rather than heard.

IV. Translating Wordplay for the Ear

A pun that can function effectively on stage—that is, through the ear—works differently. A case in point is the famous pronouncement made by Gelett Burgess about women, which contains a homophonic pun: "A woman and a mouse, they carry a tale wherever they go." The way the sentence is structured makes the pun not only visible when seen, but also audible when heard. Thus, when the sentence is read on the page, the full effect of the pun is immediately conveyed to the reader through the eye; when it is spoken aloud on stage, the punning effect created by the homophonous pair of words ("tale / tail") can be as easily conveyed to the audience. This is because the context has set the parameters for the audience's imagination, or, to be more specific, for the audience's ear: once the word "mouse" is heard, the listener can immediately associate it with *tail*, since the tail is a dominant feature of a mouse; at the same time, when the word "woman" is spoken, the word "tale" can almost automatically present itself to the audience, since women are generally thought to be fond of telling tales. As a result, when the syllable /teɪl/ is uttered on stage, it can immediately trigger both *tale* and *tail* in the mind of the listener.

In quoting the above saying more than twenty years ago in one of my Chinese essays, I translated the sentence as follows: "nǚrén hé lǎoshǔ, qù dào nǎ-lǐ jiù zài nǎ-lǐ yán yáo qí wēi 女人和老鼠，去到哪裏就在哪裏言謠其媿。" As the translation of puns in the English-Chinese /

⁸ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 57.

Chinese-English direction is especially formidable,⁹ I had a hard time trying to preserve the punning effect, which is conveyed by “*yán yáo qí wěi* 言謠其媿”: “*yán yáo* 言謠” reverses the word order of “*yáo yán* 謠言” ‘tale’ or ‘rumour’; together with “*wěi* 媿,” which often appears in the collocation “*wěiwěi* 媿媿” (talk) tirelessly,¹⁰ and is normally associated with sweet words, it translates *tale*; at the same time, “*yán* 言” is a *yuzhuci* 語助詞 (an auxiliary word that indicates mood),¹¹ and “*yáo qí wěi* 謠其媿” is homophonous with “*yáo qí wěi* 搖其尾” ‘wags its tail,’ sensitizing the reader to the mouse-carrying-a-tail image; together, “*yán* 言” and “*yáo qí wěi* 謠其媿” make up the phrase “*yán yáo qí wěi* 言謠其媿,” which, modelled on a formulaic line typical of the *Shi jing* 詩經 ‘*The Book of Songs*,’¹² translates *tail*, introducing what Catford calls a “translation shift.”¹³

My translation is far from ideal—for at least two reasons. First, it is meant for the eye, not for the ear; when spoken on stage, the audience, hearing the syllables “*yán yáo qí wěi*,” might have difficulty even in comprehending the surface layer of their meaning, to say nothing of their punning effect. Second, even on the page, its punning effect can perhaps be grasped only by those who are conversant with the *Shi jing*. Yet, even then, it may still sound contrived to these learned readers. Not so with the original: once it is spoken on stage, its message will immediately come across to the audience in its entirety. Judged in this light, then, my Chinese translation, lacking the directness and simplicity of Gelett Burgess’s quotable quote, can only qualify as wordplay for the eye, not wordplay for the ear.

⁹ Later in this paper, I shall explain how pun translation between European languages is less formidable.

¹⁰ The gloss is by Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1983), 718.

¹¹ Wu et al., 849.

¹² In the poem “*Wo xíng qí yě* 我行其野,” for example, we have five such formulaic lines: “*yán jiù ěr jū* 言就爾居”; “*yán cǎi qí zhú* 言采其蓫”; “*yán jiù ěr sù* 言就爾宿”; “*yán guī sī fù* 言歸斯復”; “*yán cǎi qí fù* 言采其蓫”. (Li Chendong 李辰冬, *Shi jing tongshi* 詩經通釋, Vol. 3 (Taipei: Shuniu chubanshe 水牛出版社, 1977), 1206. “*The Book of Songs*” is Arthur Waley’s translation. David Hawkes’s translation, “the *Poetry Classic*,” though less widely used, is a more accurate rendering.

¹³ See J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 73-82.

V. Translating Wordplay into the Major European Languages with Reference to *Hamlet*

To enable a pun for the eye to function also as a pun for the ear, or, to put it differently, to transfer a pun from the page to the stage, a number of requirements have to be met. First, the pun must be simple and straightforward. Second, it must be instantly comprehensible. The third requirement is closely related to the second: that information facilitating the comprehension of the pun must, in most cases, be supplied. To illustrate my point, I shall refer to *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's most famous play.

First, let us look at the following sentences spoken by the hero:

HAMLET Let her not *walk i'th' sun*. *Conception* is a blessing, but as your daughter may *conceive* – friend, look to't.
(2.2.184-86)¹⁴

In this passage, there are two puns: “walk i'th' sun” (in which “sun” is homophonous with *son*); “conception” / “conceive.” The first is glossed by Thompson and Taylor¹⁵ as follows: “The suggestion is that the sun will cause her to breed, as it encourages the breeding of maggots in a dead dog. Hamlet may also allude to the sun / son pun (see 1.2.67), indicating that a son(-in-law) will make Ophelia pregnant.” Hibbard, commenting on the same pun, has a slightly different interpretation: (1) “walk i'th' sun” = “go about in public”; (2) “run the risk of becoming pregnant by the sun / son.”¹⁶ In the second pun (“conception / conceive”), two meanings (“to become pregnant” and “to grasp with the mind; to apprehend”)¹⁷ are signified; Hibbard's annotation reads: “conception” = “(1) the ability to form ideas (2) becoming pregnant. The same quibble is carried further in *conceive*.”¹⁸

¹⁴ My italics. Quotations from Shakespeare's plays in this paper are based on Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan, and H. R. Woudhuysen, eds., *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*, by William Shakespeare (London: Cengage Learning, 2001).

¹⁵ Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, eds. *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 251.

¹⁶ G. R. Hibbard, ed., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 213.

¹⁷ William Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 3rd ed., revised with addenda (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

¹⁸ Hibbard, ed., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, 213. *The Oxford English Dictionary's* (the dictionary is hereafter also referred to as *OED*) definitions of

The *sun / son* pun is homophonic, to which the audience's ear has already been tuned by an earlier pun in 1.2.64-67 of the same play:

[King]	But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my <i>son</i> –
Hamlet	A little more than <i>kin</i> , and less than <i>kind</i> .
King	How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
Hamlet	Not so, my lord, I am too much <i>in the sun</i> . ¹⁹

conceive and *conception* are even more precise and comprehensive: “**conceive** [...] **I**. To conceive seed or offspring; with extensions of this sense. [...] **1**. *trans.* Of a female: To receive (seed) in the womb; to become pregnant with (young). [...] **b**. *pass.* To be created or formed in the womb; to be engendered. [...] **c**. *loosely.* To cause to be conceived, to beget. [...] **2**. *intr.* To become pregnant. [...] **3**. *pass.* To be made pregnant; to become or be pregnant, or with child. [...] **II**. To take into, or form in, the mind. **6**. To take or admit into the mind; to become affected or possessed with. [...] **b**. To form and entertain (an opinion). [...] **7**. To form (a purpose, design, etc.) in the mind; to plan, devise, formulate in idea. [...] **b**. To form or evolve the idea of (any creation of skill or genius). [...] **8**. To form a mental representation or idea of; to form or have a conception or notion of; to think of, imagine. [...] **9**. To grasp with the mind, ‘take in’; to apprehend, understand, comprehend. [...] **a**. a thing. [...] **b**. with *obj. clause*. [...] **c**. To understand, take the meaning of (a person). [...] **d**. *absol.* [...] **10**. To perceive (by the senses), observe. [...] **11**. To take into one’s head, form an opinion, be of opinion; to fancy, imagine, think: also used as a modest way of expressing one’s opinion, or a depreciative way of characterizing the opinion of another. [...] **b**. with *obj.* and *infin.* (or equivalent) *complement*: To imagine, think (a thing to be so and so). [...] **III**. In various senses, mostly after Latin. **12**. To take in, comprise, comprehend” (*OED*, Vol. 3, 649-50); “**conception** [...] **1**. **a**. The action of conceiving, or fact of being conceived, in the womb. [...] **3**. *concr.* That which is conceived: **a**. The embryo, foetus. [...] **b**. Offspring, child [...]. [...] **5**. **a**. The action or faculty of conceiving in the mind, or of forming an idea or notion of anything; apprehension, imagination. [...] **6**. [...] **c**. The forming of a CONCEPT or general notion; the faculty of forming such. [...] **7**. **a**. That which is conceived in the mind; an idea, notion. [...] **c**. An opinion, notion, view. [...] **9**. **a**. Origination in the mind; designing, planning. [...] **b**. Something originated in the mind; a design, plan; an original idea (as of a work of art, etc.); a mental product of the inventive faculty” (*OED*, Vol. 3, 654). See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 20 vols., 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), first edited by James A. H. Murray, Henry Bradley, W. A. Craigie, and C. T. Onions, combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, edited by R. W. Burchfield and reset with corrections, revisions, and additional vocabulary.

¹⁹ The “kin” / “kind” pun is more complicated. As Delabastita has pointed out, “[s]ome [...] commentators [Wurth, Wilson, etc.] argue that s2 [sense 2 of “kin”]

The second pun, a homonymic one, hinges on the two senses of *conceive* (noun: *conception*), and is made comprehensible by the context. When read aloud on stage, both puns can readily be conveyed to the audience.

In rendering the two puns, the translator should make them stage-oriented, not page-oriented. Let us see whether this effect is preserved in the following French, German, Italian, and Spanish translations:

French:

HAMLET Qu'elle n'aille pas au soleil! Concevoir est une bénédiction, mais, mon ami, veillez à la façon dont votre fille peut concevoir.²⁰

HAMLET Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil. Concevoir est une bénédiction, mais la façon dont votre fille peut concevoir, ami, veillez-y.²¹

HAMLET Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil. C'est une bénédiction de concevoir; mais comme votre fille le conçoit. Ami, veillez-y.²²

HAMLET. – Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil: la conception est une bénédiction du ciel; mais, comme votre fille peut

actually forms a polysemic cluster of distinct meanings ('loving, affectionate' v. 'united through blood relationship, son' v. 'belonging to nature, natural'), thus superimposing a vertical play on 'kind' upon the horizontal 'kin' / 'kind' pun. Even though the passage is obviously cryptic, its punning character has usually been recognized (see e.g. FURNESS 1877: I, 33-34)" (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 352). As for "the 'sun' / 'son' pun," it "has been acknowledged at least from the eighteenth century onwards (FURNESS 1877: I, 34-35)" (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 352). For ease of reference, I have italicized the puns in this and other source-language texts to be discussed.

²⁰ Yves Bonnefoy, trans., *Hamlet • Le Roi Lear*, by William Shakespeare (Saint-Amand (Cher): Gallimard, 2001), 83.

²¹ Jean-Michel Déprats, trans., *La Tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark*, by William Shakespeare, in *Shakespeare: Tragédies I (Oeuvres complètes, I)*, édition publiée sous la direction de Jean-Michel Déprats avec le concours de Gisèle Venet (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 771; 2 vols.

²² André Gide, trans., *La Tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark / Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. d'Henri Fluchère. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Vol. 2: *Tragédies* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1959), 640.

concevoir, ami, prenez garde.²³

German:

HAM. Lasst sie nicht in der Sonne gehn. Empfänglichkeit ist ein Segen: doch nicht wie eure Tochter empfangen könnte [...] Seht euch vor, Freund.²⁴

Hamlet. Laßt sie nicht in der Sonne gehn. Gaben sind ein Segen; aber da Eure Tochter empfangen könnte—seht Euch vor, Freund.²⁵

Italian:

AMLETO E allora non fatele prender sole. Concepire é una benedizione; ma non come potrebbe farlo lei. Attenzione, amico.²⁶

Spanish:

HAMLET No la dejes pasear al sol: concebir es una bendición, pero no tal como lo puede concebir tu hija. Amigo, ojo a ello.²⁷

HAMLET.— Pues no la dejes pasear al sol. La concepción es una bendición del cielo, pero no del modo como tu hija podría concebir. Cuida mucho de eso, amigo mio.²⁸

²³ François-Victor Hugo, trans., *Hamlet*, in *Shakespeare: Théâtre complet*, by William Shakespeare, Tome II [Vol. 2] (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1961), 754.

²⁴ Friedrich Gundolf, trans., *Shakespeare in Deutscher Sprache* (Berlin: Ei Georg Bondi, 1925), Bd. [Vols.] 5-6, 37; 3 vols.

²⁵ A. W. v. Schlegel and L. Tieck, trans., *Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark*, in *Shakespeares dramatische Werke*, by William Shakespeare, herausgegeben und revidiert von Hans Matter, Erster Birkhäuser-Klassiker 13, Erster Band [Vol. 1] (Basel: Verlag Birkhäuser, 1943), 141; 12 vols.

²⁶ Eugenio Montale, trans., *Amleto: Principe di Danimarca*, by William Shakespeare (Milano: Enrico Cederna, 1949), 68.

²⁷ José María Valverde, trans., *Hamlet / Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2000), 38.

²⁸ R. Martínez Lafuente, trans., *Hamlet, Principe 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), 111; 12 vols.

In all the versions, with the notable exception of the two by Gundolf and Schlegel and Tieck, the “sun / son” pun is missing. In the two German versions, “Sonne” ‘sun’ echoes “Söhne” ‘sons.’ Although the punning effect is only paronymic, not homophonic, as is the case in the original, it is at least a partial success, and it can readily remind the German audience of the two words in German. However, as the following paragraphs will show, the two German translators’ partial success is not necessarily due to their resourcefulness; it is due largely to the fact that German happens to have a pair of similar-sounding words which can match the “sun / son” pair in English, and which is readily at the disposal of the average German translator.²⁹ In translating puns, resourcefulness certainly plays an important role, but the degree of cognation between source and target languages is equally—if not more—important.

This point will become clearer when we look at the “conception / conceive” pun. The English word *conceive* derives from the Old French *concevoir*, which, in its turn, derives from the Latin *concipere*,³⁰ meaning “to receive, take in, grasp by senses or intellect [...] to form inwardly, conceive, imagine.”³¹ It is, therefore, semantically cognate with the French *concevoir*,³² the Italian *concepire*,³³ and the Spanish *concebir*; and all these words, namely, *conceive*, *concevoir*, *concepire*, and *concebir*, overlap in the two major senses in which *conceive* is used in the original, meaning “1. *trans.* To receive (seed) in the womb; to become pregnant with (young) [...] 2. *intr.* To become pregnant [...] 7. To form or have a conception of [...] 8. To grasp with the mind; to apprehend [...].”³⁴ Apart from *konzipieren*, which derives also from the Latin *concipere*, German, which is closer to English than French, Italian, or Spanish is in terms of

²⁹ The fact that German has a pair of words that can readily translate the English “sun / son” pun is due, in its turn, to a higher degree of cognation between English and German than between English and French, or, for that matter, between English and Italian, or between English and Spanish.

³⁰ Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 360.

³¹ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English-Latin* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1968), 127.

³² Abel Chevalley and Marguerite Chevalley, comp., *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary*, French-English compiled by A. Chevalley and M. Chevalley, English-French compiled by G. W. F. R. Goodridge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 188.

³³ Giorgio Cusatelli, ed., *Dizionario Garzanti della lingua italiana* (Milano: Aldo Garzanti Editore, 1980), 413.

³⁴ Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 360. 1 and 2 make up the first major sense, 7 and 8, the second.

cognition,³⁵ has yet another word which generally overlaps semantically with the English *conceive*, namely, *empfangen*, which means: “take, receive [...] conceive, become pregnant.”³⁶

Because of the close cognation between these European languages, no one should be surprised, then, to see Shakespeare’s “conception / conceive” pun almost automatically transplanted into French (Bonnefoy, Déprats, Gide, Hugo), German (Gundolf), and Spanish (María Valverde, Martínez Lafuente). With reference to the translations under discussion, however, two points are worth noting. First, although German has a perfect match in *Empfänglichkeit* and *empfangen* for Shakespeare’s “conception / conceive” pun, Schlegel and Tieck have chosen to use “Gaben,” the plural form of *Gabe*, meaning “gift, present, donation [...] talent, endowment,”³⁷ thereby giving up a golden opportunity to render the pun with enviable precision. Second, Italian has in the *concezione / concepire* pair a perfect match for Shakespeare’s “conception / conceive” pun.³⁸ Instead of making use of this readily available pair of words, Montale has chosen to use “Concepire” and “farlo” (literally “do it”), substituting “farlo” for “concepire,” thereby forgoing his advantage as a native user of Italian. As a result, the echoing punning effect in Shakespeare’s “conception / conceive” pair is lost.

VI. Translating Wordplay into Chinese with Reference to *Hamlet*

When it comes to translating Shakespeare’s puns in the English-Chinese direction, the reader will see a widely different picture. To illustrate my point, let us look at the Chinese versions by Bian Zhilin 卞之琳, Cao Weifeng 曹未風, Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, Lin Tongji 林同濟, and Zhu Shenghao 朱生豪:

³⁵ English and German belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family, whereas French, Italian, and Spanish, though of the same family as English and German, belong to the Italic branch.

³⁶ Harold T. Betteridge, ed., *Cassell’s German and English Dictionary* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1968), 129.

³⁷ Betteridge, ed., *Cassell’s German and English Dictionary*, 171.

³⁸ In translating *concepire*, Rebora has given the following entry: “**concepire**, *v.t.* To conceive (in all senses) [...]” See Pier Rebora et al., eds., *Cassell’s Italian-English English-Italian Dictionary*, 7th ed. (London: Cassell & company Ltd., 1972), 117.

- 哈 別讓她走到太陽底下。肚子裏搞得出名堂是一種福氣，可是你的女兒也會在肚子裏搞得明白的，朋友，當心啊。³⁹
- 漢姆萊特 不要叫她在太陽底下走路；懷孕雖然是一件有福氣的事；但是如果你的女兒懷了孕，——朋友，還是當心點好。⁴⁰
- 哈 那麼可別教她在太陽底下走路；受胎固然是福氣；但是別教你的女兒受胎；——朋友，留神點罷。⁴¹
- 哈姆雷 別讓她走到太陽下吧。有喜是福氣，——可也許給您搞出個女兒得喜呢，老朋友，留神吧。⁴²
- 哈 有就莫教她在太陽底下行走；懂事固然好，但是你不要叫你的女兒懂那些事。——朋友，你要注意她呢。⁴³
- 哈姆萊特 不要讓她在太陽光底下行走。懷孕是一種幸福，可是你的女兒要是懷了孕，那可糟了。朋友，留心哪。⁴⁴

Apparently, all the translations are meant for the stage. Unfortunately, the translators have not, stage-wise, been very successful in rendering the puns. With the “sun / son” pun, all have left out the “son” component, so that the double meaning of the original has been reduced to a single meaning, that is, with only the “sun” component retained.

As for the “conception / conceive” pun, Cao, Liang, Lin, and Zhu have

³⁹ Bian Zhilin 卞之琳, trans., *Hamuleite* 哈姆雷特 ‘*Hamlet*,’ by William Shakespeare (Peking: Zuojia chubanshe 作家出版社, 1956), 59.

⁴⁰ Cao Weifeng 曹未風, trans., *Hanmulate* 漢姆萊特 ‘*Hamlet*,’ by William Shakespeare (Shanghai: Xinwenyi chubanshe 新文藝出版社, 1955), 57.

⁴¹ Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, trans., *Hamuleite* 哈姆雷特 ‘*Hamlet*,’ 2nd ed., Vol. 3 of *Shashibiya quanji* 莎士比亞全集 ‘*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*,’ by William Shakespeare (Taipei: Yuandong tushu gongsi 遠東圖書公司, 1968), 70.

⁴² Lin Tongji 林同濟, trans., *Danmai Wangzi Hamulei de beiju* 丹麥王子哈姆雷特的悲劇 ‘*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*,’ by William Shakespeare (Peking: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe 中國戲劇出版社, 1982), 54.

⁴³ Tian Han 田漢, trans., “*Hamengleite*” 哈孟雷特 ‘*Hamlet*,’ 7th ed., by William Shakespeare, *Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui wenxue yanjiuhui congshu* 少年中國學會文學研究會叢書, *Shaweng jiezuo ji* 莎翁傑作集 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1932), 51.

⁴⁴ Zhu Shenghao 朱生豪, trans., *Hanmulate* 哈姆萊特, in *Shashibiya quanji* 莎士比亞全集 ‘*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*,’ by William Shakespeare, Vol. 5 (Nanjing: Yilin chubanshe 譯林出版社, 1998), 313; 8 vols.

preserved only the sense of “becoming pregnant”:

懷孕雖然是一件有福氣的事；但是如果你的女兒懷了孕 [...] (Cao)

受胎固然是福氣；但是別教你的女兒受胎 [...] (Liang)

有喜是福氣，
——可也許給您搞出個女兒得喜呢 [...] (Lin)

懷孕是一種幸福，可是你的女兒要是懷了孕，那可糟了。(Zhu)

In hearing the above versions spoken on stage, the audience will in no way be able to sense the presence of a pun in the original.

Of all the translators, only Bian and Tian have tried, although not with much success, to convey the original punning effect:

肚子裏搞得出名堂是一種福氣，可是你的女兒也會在肚子裏搞得明白的 [...] (Bian)

懂事固然好，但是你不要叫你的女兒懂那些事。(Tian)

In hearing the above sentences spoken on stage, the audience may be aware that, in both, there is a sexual innuendo typical of Shakespeare’s bawdy language. Yet, it is hard for them to equate either “*Dù·zi·li gǎo·de míng·bai* 肚子裏搞得明白” or “*jiào nǚ·de nǚ·ér dǒng nàxiē shì* 叫你的女兒懂那些事” with “becoming pregnant.” In other words, while the Chinese audience may know vaguely that Hamlet is saying something obscene, they will not be able to grasp the pun as their counterparts do in an English theatre. In the case of Bian, his failure to stick to the same phrase (either “*gǎo·de·chu míng·tang* 搞得出名堂” or “*gǎo·de míng·bai* 搞得明白,” but not both) has broken the required pattern,⁴⁵ making the sentence sound less like a pun.

Given the formidableness of pun translation and in view of the lack of cognation between English and Chinese, the less than successful performance of the Chinese translators in handling Shakespeare’s puns is

⁴⁵ In Delabastita’s words, the two components of a pun must be “more or less similar forms (signifiers).” Bian’s translation would have sounded more like a pun if he had stuck either to “*gǎo·de·chu míng·tang* 搞得出名堂” or to “*gǎo·de míng·bai* 搞得明白,” not first introducing the phrase “*gǎo·de·chu míng·tang* 搞得出名堂,” then switching to “*gǎo·de míng·bai* 搞得明白.”

excusable. Nevertheless, considering the dramatic effect of wordplay in the theatre, any pun meant for the stage is worth preserving. In rendering the above passage, it is possible to reproduce part, if not all, of Shakespeare's punning effect:

哈姆雷特： 別讓她去陽台：肚中有數是福氣，不過你女兒也可能肚中有數；要小心哪，朋友。⁴⁶

The phrase “*Bié ràng tā qù yángtái* 別讓她去陽台” is what Delabastita calls a “semi-parallel pun translation,”⁴⁷ that is, of the two meanings in the original, only one is retained, in this case the “sun” component, expressed in “*yáng* 陽,” a component of the collocation “*yángtái* 陽台” ‘balcony,’ which signifies the part of a building on which one can bask in the sun. As an allusion, it refers to the famous story about the King of Chu 楚 having sexual intercourse with the Goddess of Mount Wu (Wūshān Shénnǚ 巫山神女 on “*yángtái* 陽台” and, by extension, signifies any place where a man and a woman have sexual intercourse. Although the “son” component is not directly captured in the Chinese translation, the allusive power of “*yángtái* 陽台” does hint at an amorous relationship between Ophelia and Polonius's would-be son-in-law, that is, Hamlet.

⁴⁶ Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans. and annotated, *Jiedu Hamuleite—Shashibiya yuanzhu Hanyi ji xiangzhu* 解讀哈姆雷特—莎士比亞原著漢譯及詳註 ‘*Reading and Interpreting Hamlet: A Fully Annotated Chinese Translation of Shakespeare's Play*,’ 2 vols., *Fanyi yu kuaxueke xueshu yanjiu congshu* 翻譯與跨學科學術研究叢書 (Peking: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, January 2013), Vol. 1, 301.

⁴⁷ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 192-221 divides pun-translation techniques into nine types, some of which are further divided into sub-types: (1) pun>pun ((a) parallel pun translation, (b) semi-parallel pun translation, (c) non-parallel pun translation); (2) pun>non-pun translation (non-selective non-pun, selective non-pun, diffusive paraphrase); (3) pun>punoid ((a) repetition, (b) imagery, (c) assonance, alliteration, rhyme, (d) referential vagueness or ambiguity, (e) irony, understatement, (f) allusion); (4) pun>zero ((a) omission of a phrase or sentence, (b) omission of single speech, (c) omission of a piece of dialogue, (d) omission of a scene or act); (5) direct copy: pun S. T. = pun T. T.; (6) transference; (7) addition: non-pun>pun; (8) addition (new textual material): zero>pun; (9) editorial techniques (footnotes, anthological translation). In Delabastita's discussion, not all types have examples. Judged by dramatic effect, “parallel pun translation” is the best, since this type of translation can reproduce the punning effect of the source-language text with the highest degree of precision.

As for the “conception / conceive” pun, “*dù zhōng yǒu shù* 肚中有數,” echoing “*xīn zhōng yǒu shù* 心中有數,” can literally mean “to comprehend with one’s mind,” which is one sense of “conception”; when applied to “*nǐ nǚ’ér* 你女兒” (“*nǐ nǚ’ér yě kěnéng dù zhōng yǒu shù* 你女兒也可能肚中有數”), the phrase triggers an innuendo, taking on bawdy overtones, hinting at Ophelia becoming pregnant. Thus, the translation can, in Delabastita’s terminology, be regarded as a parallel pun translation.

VII. Conclusion

In the theatre, where communication between actors and actresses on stage on the one hand and the audience on the other takes place through the voice, comprehension on the part of the audience has to be instant. When the message conveyed from the stage is simple, instant comprehension is easier to achieve. However, wordplay is by no means simple: having two or more than two meanings simultaneously, it can function effectively only when all the meanings are grasped instantly. And the problem is compounded by the fact that finding, under the constraints imposed by the source-language text, a syllable or syllables in the target language that has / have two or more than two signifieds corresponding to those in the original is never easy. When the source and target languages are cognate, the possibility of hitting upon a word or words that can enable the translator to come up with a parallel pun translation may be higher. When the source and target languages are non-cognate, as is the case with the English-Chinese language pair, translating wordplay for the stage becomes a huge challenge. But once the translator achieves even a modest degree of success, his joy is doubled, which is denied to those who are translating in the English-French, English-German, English-Italian, or English-Spanish direction.

DEFYING ZEUS IN GERMAN: GOETHE'S "PROMETHEUS" AS A CASE OF UNTRANSLATABILITY

[ABSTRACT]

Whether in practice or in theoretical studies, there is a widespread misconception that the total meaning of a source-language (SL) text is equivalent to its semantic content, a misconception that stems from an inaccurate understanding of *meaning*, which has at least two levels: the semantic and the phonological. In carrying over the semantic content of an SL text, the translator has only succeeded in dealing with one level. This should not, however, lead one to believe that, as long as one is aware of this fact, one can readily cope with both levels adequately, since the phonological level of an SL text is not always translatable. With special reference to Goethe's "Prometheus," this paper attempts to show how the phonological level of the SL text defies translation. In the discussion, English, French, and Italian versions of the German poem will be examined, with their phonological features analysed in detail, to show how a large amount of the original's meaning can be lost in the translation process. At the same time, the German original will be compared with similar passages from Dante's *Inferno* in Italian, Statius' *Thebais* in Latin, Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* in Classical Greek, and Milton's *Paradise Lost* in English, in each of which a rebel figure speaks defiantly to or about his master. Through the comparison, it will be demonstrated that German, because of its unique phonological system, is *the* language in which the rebel figure can most effectively get his message across.

I. A Source-Language Text and Its Three Levels of Meaning

When thinking of the *meaning* of a source-language (SL) text, most practitioners of translation or translation theorists tend to equate the word with the text's semantic content. For most practical purposes, that is, with cases where only the non-poetic functions of language as defined by Jakobson are involved,¹ one has to make do with this interpretation of the

¹ The six functions of language postulated by Jakobson are: the emotive function, the conative function, the phatic function, the referential function, the metalingual

word, otherwise it would not be possible to compile bilingual dictionaries that tell their users what a certain word “means.” Thus, ignoring the phonological level, one can say that the English *tree*, the French *arbre*, the German *Baum*, the Italian *albero*, the Spanish *árbol*, and the Latin *arbor* all “mean” the same thing, capable of “translating” one another “adequately.” However, when it comes to the sixth—that is, the poetic—function of language as postulated by Jakobson, meaning begins to move beyond the semantic to the phonological level; the sound effects of the text, which may have remained silent or barely audible hitherto, will increase in volume until they render the SL text untranslatable.²

II. Goethe’s “Prometheus” as a Case of Untranslatability

In this paper, I shall discuss Goethe’s “Prometheus” as a case of untranslatability from the phonological point of view with reference to three of its translations in three languages, namely, English, French, and Italian, and to four passages taken respectively from Dante’s *Inferno* in Italian, Statius’ *Thebais* in Latin, Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* in Classical Greek,³ and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* in English, in each of which a rebel figure (Capaneus, Prometheus, or Satan), speaks defiantly to or about his master, who, whether as Zeus or as the Christian God, is the supreme ruler of the universe.

function, and the poetic function. 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, 1981), 22-25; for the entire article, see 18-51; 4 vols.

² In discussing translatability or untranslatability, one finds it hard not to quote from Catford’s *Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, which has become a classic in translation studies: “Indeed, translatability here appears, intuitively, to be a *cline* rather than a clear-cut dichotomy. SL texts and items are *more or less* translatable rather than absolutely *translatable* or *untranslatable*” (J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 93).

³ The title of Aeschylus’ play appears as *Prometheus* on the title page of the book, a collection of four plays by the author, but as *Prometheus Bound* on the page preceding the play. As the Greek title is *Προμηθεύς Δεσμώτης*, which means “Prometheus in chains” or “Prometheus fettered” (Liddell and Scott, *A Lexicon Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 155), I have followed the latter version.

When one reads “Prometheus” in the original German, apart from its semantic content, its imagery, and so on, one is struck by its highly suggestive sound effects:

<p>Bedecke deinen Himmel, Zeus, Mit Wolkendunst! Und übe, Knaben gleich, Der Diesteln köpft,</p> <p>An Eichen dich und Bergeshöhn!</p> <p>Mußt mir meine Erde</p> <p>Doch lassen stehn, Und meine Hütte, Die du nicht gebaut, Und meinen Herd, Um dessen Glut Du mich beneidest.</p>	<p>Cover your sky, Zeus with vaporous clouds, and try out, like a boy knocking the heads off thistles, your strength against oak trees and mountain-tops: you still must leave me my earth standing, and my hut which you did not build, and my hearth for whose warm glow you envy me.</p>
--	---

[stanza break]

<p>Ich kenne nichts Ärmer's Unter der Sonn' als euch Götter. Ihr nähret kümmerlich Von Opfersteuern Und Gebetshauch Eure Majestät Und darbtet, wären Nicht Kinder und Bettler</p> <p>Hoffnungsvolle Toren.</p>	<p>I know of no poorer thing under the sun than you gods! Wretchedly you feed your majesty on sacrificial offerings and the breath of prayers, and you would starve if children and beggars were not fools full of hopes.</p>
--	---

[stanza break]

<p>Da ich ein Kind war, Nicht wußt', wo aus, wo ein,⁴</p> <p>Kehrte mein verirrtes Aug'</p>	<p>When I was a child and did not know which way to turn, I would raise my misguided</p>
--	--

⁴ In David Luke, trans. and ed., *Goethe: Selected Verse*, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Penguin Classics, first published 1964, reprinted in Penguin Classics 1986 (London: Penguin Books, 1986), 18 and Lavinia Mazzucchetti, ed., *Johann Wolfgang Goethe: Opere*, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 5 vols. (Firenze: Sansoni, 1956), Vol. 5, 758, “wo aus noch ein” is given instead of “wo aus, wo ein.”

Zur Sonne, als wenn drüber wär'
 Ein Ohr, zu hören meine Klage,
 Ein Herz wie meins,
 Sich des Bedrängten zu erbarmen.

eyes
 to the sun, as though up
 beyond it
 there were an ear that would
 hear my complaint,
 a heart like my own
 that would have pity on me in
 my anguish.

[stanza break]

Wer half mir wider
 Der Titanen Übermut?
 Wer rettete vom Tode mich,
 Von Sklaverei?
 Hast du's nicht alles selbst vollendet,
 Heilig glühend Herz?
 Und glühtest, jung und gut,
 Betrogen, Rettungsdank
 Dem Schlafenden dadoben?

Who helped me against
 the overweening Titans?
 Who saved me from death,
 from slavery?
 Did you not accomplish all
 this yourself,
 oh my holy glowing heart?
 And in your youthful
 well-meaning
 error did you not glow with
 gratitude, for your
 deliverance,
 to that Sleeper up there?

[stanza break]

Ich dich ehren? Wofür?
 Hast du die Schmerzen gelindert
 Je des Beladenen?
 Hast du die Tränen gestillet
 Je des Geängsteten?
 Hat nicht mich zum Manne geschmiedet
 Die allmächtige Zeit
 Und das ewige Schicksal,
 Meine Herrn und deine?

I, honour you? Why?
 Did you ever allay the agony
 that weighed me down?
 Did you ever dry
 my terrified tears?
 Was I not forged into
 manhood
 by almighty Time
 and everlasting Destiny,
 my masters and yours?

[stanza break]

Wähtest du etwa,
 Ich sollte das Leben hassen,
 In Wüsten fliehn,
 Weil nicht alle Knabenmorgen-
 Blüenträume reifen?

Perhaps you thought
 I should find life hateful,
 and run away into
 wildernesses,
 because not all my dreams
 blossomed to maturity?

[stanza break]

Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen
Nach meinem Bilde,
Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,
Zu leiden, weinen,

Genießen und zu freuen sich,
Und dein nicht zu achten,
Wie ich.⁵

(Goethe, *Gedichte*, 44-46)⁶

Here I sit, making men
in my own image,
a race that shall resemble me,
a race that shall suffer and
weep,

and know joy and delight,
and be heedless of you,
as I am!

(Luke, 17-19)⁷

Written during the Sturm and Drang period, which lasted from 1771 to 1778, the poem exhibits a number of qualities characteristic of the movement: a “stormy” atmosphere, “free rhythms,”⁸ “[p]ower and strength, conceived both in emotional and physical terms,”⁹ and informed by “trends of European thought exemplified in the exaltation of freedom and nature.”¹⁰ It portrays a rebel figure (Prometheus) that defies the supreme ruler of the universe (Zeus). On the semantic level, Goethe has used rhetorical devices to create a ferociously defiant character who is fearless, pours contempt on Zeus, compares him to a boy (“Knaben gleich”), attributes to him the meanness of mortals (“[...] Um dessen Glut / Du mich beneidest”), belittles him as somebody depending on children and beggars (“Kinder und Bettler”) for nourishment, asserts his heart’s independence (“Hast du’s nicht alles selbst vollendet, / Heilig glühend

⁵ The SL text in Luke’s edition has an exclamation mark instead of a full stop (“Wie ich!”).

⁶ See Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Gedichte*, herausgegeben und kommentiert von Erich Trunz (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1982), 44-46.

⁷ See Luke, 17-19. Luke’s English translation is in prose. Each stanza in the original corresponds to a paragraph in the prose translation. To show approximate line-to-line equivalence, I have arranged it in verse-form. However, because of syntactic differences between German and English, absolute line-to-line equivalence is not possible; thus, a certain word in the original may sometimes appear not in the corresponding line in the translation, but in the line that follows or precedes it.

⁸ Henry Garland and Mary Garland, eds., *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 302.

⁹ Garland and Garland, 877.

¹⁰ Garland and Garland, 876.

Herz?"), calls Zeus "that Sleeper up there" ("Dem Schlafenden dadroben"), takes him down not just a peg or two—but many pegs—by putting him under the jurisdiction of "almighty Time and everlasting Destiny" ("Die allmächtige Zeit / Und das ewige Schicksal, / Meine Herrn und deine"), and lifts himself to the status of Almighty God, who "sit[s], making men in [his] own image" ("Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen / Nach meinem Bilde").

The total meaning of "Prometheus"—if the total meaning of a poem can be summed up at all—consists of several components: the semantic content of the words and of the phrases, the interaction between the words and between the phrases, the direct, forceful, *in-medias-res* opening, the effective use of uneven line-length that suggests the spontaneous outburst of emotion, the headlong rush of rhetorical questions in stanzas 4, 5, and 6, and the skilful use of the phonology of the German language. As the focus of my paper is on phonological untranslatability, I shall, in the following paragraphs, concentrate on the sound effects of individual words and phrases as well as on the contribution of these effects to the total meaning of the poem. At the same time, I shall show how the sound effects in the original can only be partially reproduced in English, French, and Italian, so much so that a greater part of the original meaning is lost, thereby exemplifying a case of untranslatability.¹¹

If one compares German with other major modern European languages, such as English, French, Italian, and Spanish, one will be struck by the predominance in German of the palatal fricative /ç/ (as in *ich* (/ɪç/)), the voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/ (as in *elf* (/ɛlf/)), the voiced labio-dental fricative /v/ (as in *wer* (/ve:ɐ̯/) and *wie* (/vi:/)), the alveolar plosive /t/ (as in *mit* (/mit/) and *Kind* (/kɪnt/)), the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ (as in *das* (/das/)), the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ (as in *Sie* (/zi:/)), the voiceless post-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ (as in *hübsch* (/hypf/)), the alveolar affricate /ts/ (as in *Zeit* (/tsait/) and *zu* (/tsu:/)), the voiceless velar fricative /x/ (as in *Bach* (/bax/)), and so on that stand out as initial consonants, final consonants, consonants within words, or consonants that combine with other consonants instead of vowels or diphthongs.¹² When skilfully used in poetry, as Goethe has done in "Prometheus," such sounds can effectively suggest contempt, hatred, and defiance through a kind of kinaesthesia,

¹¹ The best way to discuss phonological features is, of course, to do it orally or by means of a tape recording of all the syllables; as this is not possible in a written paper, I shall have to rely on detailed phonetic analysis, making extensive use of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

¹² My emphasis.

compelling the reader to feel the phonetic suggestiveness—whether he reads the poem aloud or silently. Take line 20 of Goethe's thirteenth Roman elegy, for example: "Altklug lieb' ich dich nicht!"¹³ The palatal fricative /ç/ in "**ich**" (/iç/), "**dich**" (/diç/), and "**nicht**" (/niçt/), articulated three times in a row and working together with /t/ in "nicht,"¹⁴ enables the reader literally to "hear" the dislike of the speaker, so that the semantic meaning of the utterance is reinforced on the auditory level. In "Prometheus," this close co-operation between semantics and phonology works on a much larger scale, suggesting a character gnashing his teeth and hurling abuse at Zeus through harsh-sounding consonants or consonant clusters that pack the lines: "**K**naben gleich," "E**ich**en dich," "mu**ß**t mir," "D**och** lassen st**eh**n," "Die du n**icht** gebaut," "Du m**ich** beneidest," "I**ch** kenne n**ichts** Ärm**e**r's," "U**nter** der S**onn**' als e**uch** G**öt**ter," "k**ü**mmer**lich**," "O**pf**er**st**euern," "G**e**bets**sh**auch," "w**ä**ren / n**icht** K**in**der," "da **ich** ein K**in**d war, / N**icht** w**u**ß**t**," "Z**ur** S**onn**e," "z**u** h**ö**ren," "Ein H**erz** w**ie** m**e**ins," "S**ich** des B**e**dr**äng**ten z**u** erbarmen," "W**er** rettete vom Tode m**ich**," "n**icht** alles selb**st**," "H**e**ilig gl**üh**end H**erz**," "Dem S**chl**afenden," "I**ch** dich ehren," "S**ch**merzen," "g**e**stillet," "H**at** n**icht** m**ich** zum Manne g**esch**miedet / Die allm**ä**chtige Z**e**it / Und das ewige S**ch**icksal," "I**ch** soll**t**e das L**e**ben h**ass**en," "W**e**il n**icht**," "H**ier** s**itz**' **ich**," "N**ach** m**e**inem B**il**de," "Ein G**esch**lecht, das mir g**leich** sei," "Z**u** l**e**iden [...] / [...] z**u** fr**e**uen s**ich**," "Und dein n**icht** z**u** a**ch**ten, / W**ie** **ich**."¹⁵

III. "Prometheus" in Comparison with Its English Translation

In English, a language that belongs to the same branch as German,¹⁶ similar consonants are also prevalent, but they do not occur with such frequency. In particular, English does not have the palatal fricative /ç/, which, when preceded by the short upper frontal vowel /ɪ/ (as in *ich* (/iç/), *dich* (/diç/), and *mich* (/miç/)), requires the speaker to make a strenuous effort when articulating it, thereby suggesting resolve, determination, or attitudes, emotions, and moods not associated with harmony; nor does it have the consonant cluster /çt/ (as in *nicht*), which reminds one of a snake

¹³ Goethe, *Gedichte*, 166. The line means: "I do not like you to have an old head on young shoulders!" (Luke, trans., *Goethe: Selected Verse*, 99).

¹⁴ My emphasis.

¹⁵ My emphasis.

¹⁶ Both English and German belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family of languages.

hissing in defiance when threatened or attacked. By virtue of their harshness and the effort required of the speaker to pronounce them, these German sounds are especially suited to the task of suggesting a defiant Prometheus; during the process of articulation, they help to draw special attention to the signified through a kind of “auditory highlighting”—if one may use a mixed metaphor. To verify this point, one has only to read the German original aloud. In the process of reading, the reader can feel himself transformed, as it were, by the consonants and consonant clusters mentioned above (including /ç/ and /çt/) into a Prometheus, denouncing Zeus in the strongest possible terms. When he reads the English translation aloud, he can still sense the contempt and defiance through what is signified on the semantic level, but he will become aware that the phonological effects of the original are only partially preserved—in such sounds as the fricatives /s/ (“sky,” “Sleeper up there,” “sit”), /z/ (“Zeus,” “clouds,” “heads,” “trees,” “you gods,” “beggars,” “fools,” “tears”), /v/ (“vaporous”), /θ/ (“thistles,” “strength,” “hearth,” “poorer thing,” “breath of prayers,” “death”), and /ʃ/ (“anguish”), the affricates /tʃ/ (“Wretchedly”) and /dʒ/ (“forged into manhood,” “image”), the plosive /k/ (“oak”), the consonant clusters /st/ and /ŋθ/ (“strength”), and the forceful stressed syllables in “**leave** me my **earth standing**,” “**feed** your **majesty**,” “**anguish**,” “**suffer and weep**,” and “**know joy and delight**, and be **heedless of you**,”¹⁷ but the overall phonological effect is a far cry from that of the original.¹⁸

IV. “Prometheus” in Comparison with Its French Translation

Given the Romance languages, one will find “Prometheus” more untranslatable. Take “Prométhée,” the French version by Henri Blaze:

Couvre ton ciel, ô Zeus! des vapeurs des nuages, et, semble à l'enfant
qui abat les têtes des chardons, exerce-toi contre les chênes et les

¹⁷ My emphasis.

¹⁸ In Michael Hamburger’s verse translation, perhaps because of the constraints imposed by prosodic requirements, Prometheus’ defiance becomes even less full-blooded. For example, the last two lines (“And never to heed you, / Like me!”) are much weaker than Luke’s because of the somewhat muted “you,” and “me,” both of which, as the last words of a line, do not carry the clinching force expected of them; and “never to heed you” is not comparable to “heedless of you,” in which the /s/ sound in “heedless” (/’hi:dɪs/ or /’hi:dɪs/) effectively suggests defiance. See Michael Hamburger, trans., *Roman Elegies and Other Poems*, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1996), 23-24.

montagnes. Il faudra bien cependant que tu me laisses ma terre, à moi, et ma hutte que tu n'as point bâtie, et mon foyer dont tu m'envies la flamme.

Je ne sais rien sous le soleil de plus misérable que vous autres dieux! Votre majesté se nourrit péniblement d'offrandes, de victimes, de fumée, de prières, et déprimerait s'il n'y avait là des enfants et des mendiants, pauvres fous qui se bercent d'espérances!

Quand j'étais enfant, que je ne savais que devenir, je tournais mon œil égaré vers le soleil, comme s'il y avait eu par-derrrière une oreille pour entendre ma plainte, un cœur comme le mien pour prendre en pitié les opprimés.

Qui m'est venu en aide contre l'arrogance des Titans? Qui m'a sauvé de la mort, de l'esclavage? N'as-tu pas tout accompli toi-même, ô cœur saintement embrasé! et, dupe que tu étais, ne brûlais-tu pas d'un jeune et naïf sentiment de reconnaissance pour le dormeur de là-haut?

Moi t'adorer, et pourquoi? As-tu jamais adouci les douleurs de l'opprimé? as-tu jamais essuyé les larmes de celui qui souffre? L'éternité toute-puissante et l'éternel destin, mes maîtres et les tiens, ne m'ont-ils pas forgé homme?

Croirais-tu par hasard que je doive haïr la vie et fuir au désert, parce que toutes les fleurs de mes rêves n'ont pas donné?

Ici je reste à fabriquer des hommes à mon image, une race qui me ressemble pour souffrir et pleurer, et te dédaigner, toi, comme je fais!¹⁹

Because of the phonological characteristics of the French language, which has no /ç/ sound, very few /s/ sounds as final consonants even though the letter *s* appears in many words, words in which *s* is, unfortunately, silent. Thus, in the version being analysed, “vapeurs,” “des,” “chardons,” “chênes,” “montagnes,” “as,” “envies,” “sais,” “sous,” and so on are all denied the highly effective /s/ sound despite the ubiquitous presence of the letter *s*. The attempt, if any, on the part of the translator to re-create the defiance suggested in the original is, therefore, seriously hampered.²⁰ To be sure, the

¹⁹ Henri Blaze, trans., *Poésies de Goethe*, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe (Paris: Charpentier, Libraire-Éditeur, 1843), 98-99.

²⁰ One may add that the plosive consonant /t/, which can suggest contempt and defiance by virtue of its similarity to the sound of spitting, is also rare in French even though the letter *t*, which is supposed to represent the /t/ sound phonetically, frequently appears in French words. Thus at the beginning of the translation, though the letter *t* appears in “et,” “enfant,” “abat,” and “cependant,” it is silent; the reader has to wait quite a while before he can hear the plosive /t/ in “têtes” (/tɛt/) and “hutte” (/yt/). As far as the suggestion of defiance is concerned, therefore, French has voluntarily blunted some of its most effective weapons. Were all its *s*'s and *t*'s articulated wherever they appear, the French Prometheus would sound much more defiant.

translation does have sounds that go some way towards suggesting Prometheus' emotion: the velar fricative /R/ ("Couvrez ton ciel," "contre," "pauvres," "vers," "cœur," "dormeur," "haïr," "fuir," "désert," "fleurs," "rêves," "reste," and so on), which suggests ferocity by means of a guttural growl,²¹ the voiced post-alveolar fricative /ʒ/ ("nuages," "l'esclavage," "image"), which is similar to the voiceless post-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ in German, and the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ in such words as "miserable" (/mizerabl/) and "hasard" (/azar/), but the overall auditory suggestiveness of the translation is by no means comparable to that of the original.

V. "Prometheus" in Comparison with Its Italian Translation

Translating "Prometheus" into Italian, one simply has to give up hope of ever adequately reproducing the sound effects of the original, as can be seen in the following Italian version, "Prometeo":

Copri il tuo cielo, Giove,
 di torbida caligine
 e sfogati, a bimbo simile
 che cardi stronca,
 su querce e vette montane:
 ma la mia terra
 non puoi toccarla,
 né la mia casa, che non tu costruisti,
 né il mio focolare
 la cui fiamma
 ti desta invidia.

Nulla conosco, o dèi,
 sotto il sole di voi più misero!
 Nutrite stentatamente
 d'estorti sacrifici
 e d'alito implorante
 la vostra maestà
 e vivreste da poveri, non fossero
 i bimbi ed i pezzenti
 sciocchi pieni di speranza.

Quand'ero fanciullo,

²¹ The word "désert" (/dezER/) is especially effective, particularly because of the /z/ and the /R/ sound. My emphasis.

né sapevo dove dar di capo,
 volgevo l'occhio smarrito
 al sole, quasi lassù ci fosse
 un orecchio a udire il mio lamento,
 un cuore come il mio
 che dei miei triboli s'impietosisse.

Chi m'aiutò
 contro la prepotenza dei Titani?
 Chi mi salvò da morte,
 dal servaggio?
 Non fosti solo in ogni impresa,
 santo, fervido cuore?
 E non ardesti puro e giovine,
 illuso! di gratitudine
 per il dormiente lassù?

Io, onorarti? E perché?
 Hai tu mai lenito i dolori
 del sopraffatto?
 Hai calmato le lacrime
 dell'atterrito?
 Uomo non fui forgiato
 dal Tempo onnipossente,
 dal Fato eterno,
 di me e di te padroni?

Vaneggiavi per caso
 che dovessi odiar la vita,
 fuggire nel deserto,
 perché non tutti
 i sogni giovanili maturarono?

Ma io sto qui, plasmo uomini
 fatti a mia immagine,
 una stirpe che mi sia simile
 per soffrire, per piangere,
 per gioire e per rallegrarsi
 e che di te non si curi,
 come me!²²

²² Lavinia Mazzucchetti, ed., *Johann Wolfgang Goethe: Opere*, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, 5 vols. (Firenze: Sansoni, 1956), Vol. 5, 757-59. The name of the translator does not appear alongside the Italian translation. On the copyright page facing the "Indice" page, the names of the volume's translators are given:

Italian does not have fricatives like /s/, /ʃ/, and /z/ or affricates like /tʃ/ and /dʒ/—much less the typically German /ç/—as final consonants, except in a small number of words borrowed from other languages, such as *box* (/bɒks/), *match* (/mætʃ/), and so on from English. Because of this phonological limitation, instead of uttering words highly suggestive of defiance like “Und dein nicht zu achten, / Wie ich” (‘*unt dain nriçt tsu: ‘axtɪ vi: iç/*), as Prometheus in Goethe’s poem does, the Italian Prometheus can only say “e che di te non si curi, / come me” (/e ke di te non si ‘kuri ‘kome me/), which, being mellifluous by virtue of the repetition of the vowels /e/, /i/, and /o/, fails to echo what is signified on the semantic level. Worse still, as a phonological system, Italian, as can be seen in the translation or in any discourse of considerable length in the language, is extremely rich in final vowels (/a/ in “stronca,” “terra,” “toccarla,” and “fiamma”, /e/ in “Giove,” “caligine,” “simile,” and “montane”, /i/ in “rallegrarsi” and “curi”, /o/ in “fanciullo” and “capo”).²³ As a result, whether deliberate or indeliberate on the part of the translator, these syllables often happen to rhyme with one another, giving the translation an undesirable euphony when the phonological system is called upon to sound harsh, jarring, and discordant, so as to suggest defiance.²⁴

“Ferruccio Amoroso, Emilio Castellani, Roberto Fertonani, Rinaldo Küfferle, Bruno Maffi, Lavinia Mazzucchetti, Rodolfo Paoli, Raffaello Prati, Gianna Ruschena Accatino, Liliana Scalero, Bonaventura Tecchi, Bice Tibiletti, Camillo Ugoni, Giuseppe Zamboni.” However, it is not possible to know who translated Goethe’s “Prometheus.”

²³ My emphasis.

²⁴ With reference to such modern European languages as English, French, German, and Spanish, Italian is perhaps matched only by Spanish when called upon to suggest harmony and musicality. A case in point is the last line of Dante’s *Paradiso*: “l’amor che move il sole e l’altre stelle” (“the Love that moves the sun and the other stars”) (John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, by Dante Alighieri (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, 485), in which the vowels /a/ (amor, altre), /o/ (move, sole), and /e/ (che, move, sole, altre, stelle) (my emphasis) resonate across the line, echoing one another and setting off a non-simultaneous but mellifluous chord. However, when called upon to suggest the discordant, Dante finds Italian incapable of measuring up to his expectations: “S’io avessi le rime aspre e chioce, / come si converrebbe al tristo buco / sopra ’l qual pontan tutte l’altre rocce, / io premerei di mio concetto il suco / più pienamente; ma perch’io non l’abbo [...]” (*Inferno*, Canto 32, ll. 1-5). See Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, eds. M. Barbi et al., seconda edizione [2nd ed.] (Firenze: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 551. In English, the

VI. Prometheus Speaking German in Comparison with Rebel Figures Speaking Other European Languages in Original Writing

In comparing German as a source language with English, French, and Italian as target languages, I may not have been fair in evaluating the relative merits of the non-Germanic languages, since translators have to work within the constraints imposed by the source language, from which writers are free. To show that German *is* the language to suggest Prometheus' kind of defiance, a comparison of German as used in Goethe's poem with other languages used in original writing, particularly in poetry, may yield more convincing proof. My proposed task is made easy by the fact that there are comparable rebel figures in Italian, Latin, Greek, and English poetry defying Zeus or a figure analogous to Zeus: Capaneus in Dante's *Divina Commedia* and in Statius' *Thebais* defying Zeus, Prometheus in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* defying Zeus, and Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost* defying the Christian God. It is methodologically sound, too, that the authors of these works have more or less the same stature as Goethe, each being a master of his own mother tongue, so that a comparison of the relevant passages in which the rebel figure appears will not amount to a comparison of apples with oranges.

In the *Inferno* of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Capaneus, one of the Seven against Thebes, speaks of Zeus as follows:

[...] «Qual io fui vivo, tal son morto.
Se Giove stanchi 'l suo fabbro da cui
 crucciato prese la folgore aguta
 onde l'ultimo dì percosso fui;
o s'elli stanchi li altri a muta a muta
 in Mongibello a la focina negra,
 chiamando 'Buon Vulcano, aiuta aiuta!'
sì come fece a la pugna di Flegra,

lines read: "Had I the harsh and grating rhymes that would be fitting for the dismal hole on which all the other rocks bear down I would press out more completely the sap of my conception; but since I have not [...]" (Sinclair, trans., *Inferno*, 395). Spanish, which can render the last line of the *Paradiso* as "Aquel que mueve el sol y las estrellas" (Luis Martínez de Merlo, trans., *Divina comedia*, by Dante Alighieri, Letras Universales, 6th ed. (Madrid: Catedra, 2000), 742), which is as mellifluous as the original, has similar limitations when it comes to the rendering of the discordant, for, like Italian, Spanish lacks "the harsh and grating rhymes that would be fitting for [the translator's] conception."

e me saetti con tutta sua forza;
 non ne potrebbe aver vendetta allegra».
 (*Inferno*, Canto 14, ll. 51-60)²⁵

‘What I was living, that am I dead. Though Jove wear out his smith from whom in rage he seized the keen bolt with which, the last day, I was smitten—though he wear out the rest by turns at the black smithy in Mongibello, shouting “Help, help, good Vulcan!” as once on the field of Phlegra, and hurl his shafts at me with all his force, he should not so have the joy of vengeance.’²⁶

Semantically, the defiance is effectively conveyed, especially in Capaneus’ taunt, in which the hero mimics Jove calling for help, “Buon Vulcano, aiuta aiuta!” (“Help, help, good Vulcan!”). However, the phonological system of Italian has few phonemes that can effectively suggest defiance by auditory means: apart from the reinforcement made possible by the affricate /tʃ/ in “[–]cia[–]” (/tʃa/ in “**crucciato**” ‘in rage’), by the alveolar trill /r/ and the voiceless alveolar affricate /ts/ (called “z sorda” ‘voiceless or unvoiced z’ in Italian) in “**forza**” (“force”), and by the stressed syllable in “**vendetta**,”²⁷ there is little sound effect that can help drive home the semantic message.

The Latin Capaneus is not much better off:

Iamque Iovem circa studiis diversa fremebant
 Argolici Tyriique dei [...]
 [...]
 non tamen haec turbant pacem Iovis: ecce quierunt
 iurgia, cum mediis Capaneus auditus in astris.
 “nullane pro trepidis” clamabat, “numina Thebis
 statis? ubi infandae segnes telluris alumni,
 Bacchus et Alcides? pudet instigare minores.
 tu potius venias—quis enim concurrere nobis
 dignior? en cineres Semeleaque busta tenentur—,
 nunc age, nunc totis in me conitere flammis,
 Iuppiter! an pavidas tonitru turbare puellas
 fortior et soceri tures excindere Cadmi?”
 (Statius, *Thebais*, Book 10, ll. 883-84, ll. 897-906)²⁸

²⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Le Opere di Dante: Testo critica della Società Dantesca Italiana*, seconda edizione, 489-90.

²⁶ Sinclair, trans., *Inferno*, 183.

²⁷ My emphasis.

²⁸ J. H. Mozley, trans., *Statius*, by Publius Papinius Statius, 2 vols., Vol. 1, *Silvae · Thebaid I-IV* [*Silvae · Thebais I-IV*], Vol. 2, *Thebaid V-XII · Achilleid* [*Thebais*

Meanwhile about Jove's throne the Argive and the Tyrian deities were clamouring in diverse factions [...]. Yet undisturbed is the peace of Jove; and lo! their quarrels ceased when in mid-heaven Capaneus was heard: "Are there no gods among you," he cries, "who stand for panic-stricken Thebes? Where are the sluggish sons of this accursed land, Bacchus and Alcides? Any of lesser name I am ashamed to challenge. Rather come thou—what worthier antagonist? For lo! Semele's ashes and her tomb are in my power!—come thou, and strive with all thy flames against me, thou, Jupiter! Or art thou braver at frightening timid maidens with thy thunder, and razing the towers of thy father-in-law Cadmus?" (Stattius, *Thebais*, Book 10, ll. 883-84, ll. 897-906)²⁹

The passage describes Capaneus first challenging Bacchus and Alcides (Heracles) and then Zeus himself, taunting the supreme ruler of the universe about his adultery with Semele. In semantic terms, few characters in Western literature have been portrayed with so much arrogance; phonologically, however, apart from the repetition of "nunc," the fricative /s/, and the stressed vowel /e/ ("nunc age, nunc totis in me conitere flammis, / Iuppiter!"),³⁰ which draw the reader's attention to Capaneus' determination, very little is suggestive of defiance. As a rebel figure, Stattius' Capaneus is, again in phonological terms, less memorable than Goethe's Prometheus.

In Aeschylus' famous play, *Prometheus Bound*, one can hear the prototype of the rebel figure speak, also defying Zeus:

εἰδότει τοῖ μοι τάσδ' ἀγγελίας
 ὄδ' ἐθώξε· πάσχειν δὲ κακῶς
 ἐχθρὸν ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν οὐδὲν ἀεικές.
 πρὸς ταῦτ' ἐπ' ἐμοὶ ῥιπτέσθω μὲν
 πυρὸς ἀμφήκης βόστρυχος, αἰθὴρ δ'
 ἐρεθίζέσθω βροντῇ σφακέλω τ'
 ἀγρίων ἀνέμων· χθόνα δ' ἐκ πυθμένων
 αὐταῖς ῥίζαις πνεῦμα κραδαῖνοι,
 κύμα δὲ πόντου τραχεῖ ῥοθίῳ
 συγχάσειεν τῶν οὐρανίων
 ἄστρον διόδου· εἷς τε κελαινὸν
 Τάρταρον ἄρδην ῥίψειε δέμας
 τοῦμόν ἀνάγκης στερραῖς δύναις·
 πάντως ἐμέ γ' οὐ θανατώσει.

V-XII · *Achilleis*], The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), Vol. 2, 382, 384.

²⁹ Mozley, trans., Vol. 2, *Thebaid* V-XII · *Achilleid*, 383, 385.

³⁰ My emphasis.

(Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 1040-53)³¹

No news to me, in truth, is the message this fellow hath proclaimed so noisily. Yet for foe to suffer ill from foe is no disgrace. Therefore let the lightning's forked curl be cast upon my head and let the sky be convulsed with thunder and the wrack of savage winds; let the hurricane shake the earth from its rooted base, and let the waves of the sea mingle with their savage surge the courses of the stars in heaven; and let him lift me on high and hurl me down to black Tartarus with the swirling floods of stern Necessity: do what he will, *me* he shall never bring to death. (Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 1040-53)³²

As the first three lines are, in semantic terms, dispassionately informative, they need not, phonologically, carry too much auditory suggestiveness. From the fourth to the last line, however, the reader is meant to hear all of Prometheus' defiance poured out, in which the protagonist's "come-what-may" attitude is given full expression. Unlike French and, in particular, Italian, Greek has a whole array of consonants to reinforce the semantic level of the message: /s/ in "πρὸς ταῦτ'" ("Therefore"), "πυρὸς ἀμφίκτης βόστρυχος" ("the lightning's forked curl"), "ἐκ πυθμῆνων / αὐταῖς ῥίζαις" ("from its rooted base"),³³ "διόδους" ("courses"), "εἷς" ("down to"), "δέμας" ("body"), "ἀνάγκης" ("of Necessity"), "στερραῖς" ("stern" or "cruel"), "δίναις" ("swirling floods"), and "πάντως" ("do what he will," "at all events"), the consonant clusters /khθ/ in "ἐχθρὸν ὕπ' ἐχθρῶν" ("foe [...] from foe"), /sθ/ in "ῥίπτεσθω" ("let [...] be cast"), /str/ in "βόστρυχος" ("curl"), and /sf/ in "σφακέλω" ("with [...])

³¹ Herbert Weir Smyth, trans., *Aeschylus*, 2 vols., Vol. I, *Suppliant Maidens, Persians, Prometheus, Seven Against Thebes*, Vol. 2, *Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides, Fragments*, by Aeschylus, The Loeb Classical Library, first published 1922 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, reprinted 1988), Vol. 1, 310.

³² Smyth, Vol. 1, 311.

³³ The Greek "πυθμῆνων" (genitive masculine plural) is declined from "πυθμῆν" (nominative masculine singular), which means "generally, *base, foundation*" (Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, compiled, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1st ed. 1843, new edition revised and augmented throughout by Henry Stuart Jones et al., with a revised supplement 1996 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, new (ninth) ed. 1940), 1551); "ῥίζαις" (nominative feminine plural), is declined from "ῥίζα" (nominative feminine (Ion. nom. "ῥίζη")), which, in plural, means "the *roots* or *foundations* of the earth" (Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* [unabridged], 1570).

the wrack”),³⁴ and the especially forceful consonant cluster /zd/ in “ἐρεθίζεσθω” (“let [...] be convulsed”)³⁵ and “ῥίζαις” (“rooted”).³⁶ Nevertheless, read together with Goethe’s “Prometheus,” the Greek passage still lacks vehemence; and, indeed, one may even go a step further by saying that, in phonological terms, Smyth’s English translation is a more effective denunciation of Zeus than the original by virtue of its many stressed monosyllabic words, some of them occurring in a row (“let,” “forked curl,” “cast,” “head,” “let,” “sky,” “wrack,” “winds,” “shake,” “earth,” “base,” “let,” “waves,” “sea,” “surge,” “stars,” “let him lift,” “high,” “hurl me down,” “black,” “floods,” “stern,” “me,” “bring”), of its alveolar fricatives /z/ and /s/ (“winds,” “convulse,” “base,” “waves,”

³⁴ The nominative σφάκελος means “convulsion” or “convulsive fury” (Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, abridged ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 684). In the context of the quotation, it is used metaphorically, and means “*the convulsive fury of winds*” (Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* [unabridged], 1738). The Greek letter φ was pronounced like *p* in “pot’ (emphatically pronounced; later, as *f* in ‘fear’).” See The Joint Association of Classical Teachers’ Greek Course, *Reading Greek: Grammar, Vocabulary and Exercises*, first published 1978 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, reprinted 1997), 261.

³⁵ The Greek word ἐρεθίζω, from which “ἐρεθίζεσθω” (middle voice third person imperative) is conjugated, means “to rouse to anger, to provoke, irritate,” “to excite, kindle” (Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, abridged ed., 269).

³⁶ My emphasis. When the Greek words, particularly nouns in the genitive or dative case, are taken in isolation, they may not have neat equivalents in the English translation. To avoid confusion, I have not glossed them word for word, but have generally followed Smyth’s version in explaining them. It should be noted, too, that Smyth’s translation of “ἄρδην” (“lift [...] on high”) is different from Liddell and Scott’s. Thus, the entry “ἄρδην” in Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* reads: “Adv. [Adverb] contr. [contraction] for ἀέρδην, (ἀείρω) *lifted up on high*, of a vase carried on the head [...] II. *utterly, wholly*, εἰς Τάρταρον ἄ [ἄρδην] ῥίψειε δέμας A. [Aeschylus tragicus] *Pr. [Prometheus Vincetus]* 1051, cf. E. [Euripides Tragicus] *Hec. [Hecuba]* 887 [...]” In other words, whereas Smyth has taken the first sense of “ἄρδην” (“*lifted up on high*”) in translating the source-language text, Liddell and Scott have taken the second (“*utterly, wholly*”). See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* [unabridged], 237, “ἄρδην.” In Liddell and Scott’s dictionary [unabridged], “Tragicus” is Latin, meaning “a tragic poet, writer of tragedy” (Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten, *A Latin Dictionary*, founded on Andrews’ [sic] edition of Freund’s Latin Dictionary, 1st ed. 1879 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, impression of 1962), 1885, “tragicus” (B. Subst. **tragicus**, i).

“courses,” “stars,” “Tartarus,” “floods”), of its dental fricative /θ/ (“earth,” “death”), of its post-alveolar affricates /dʒ/ (“savage,” “surge”), of its consonant clusters (the final /kt/ in “forked,” the initial /st/ in “stars” and “stern,” the final /st/ in “cast” and “convulsed,” the initial /sk/ in “sky,” the final /ft/ in “lift”), and of its forceful velar plosive /k/ (“forked,” “wrack,” “shake,” “black”). Even by just reading aloud the clause “and let him lift me on high and hurl me down to black Tartarus with the swirling floods of stern Necessity” and its SL text (“εἷς τε κελαινὸν / Τάρταρον ἄρδην ῥίψειε δέμας / τοῦμὸν ἀνάγκης στερραῖς δίναις”), one can sense the superiority of the translation over the original in terms of phonological effectiveness. This is due not to any inferiority on the part of Aeschylus as a language user, but to the differences between the Greek and English phonological systems, the latter being more suited to the task of suggesting defiance by auditory means.³⁷

In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Satan, also a rebel figure, can be regarded as the Christian version of Prometheus; in defying God, the supreme ruler of the universe, he is defying the Christian version of Zeus. Of all the speeches made by Satan, the following is one of the most vehement, offering us a suitable example for comparison:

“[...] What though the field be lost?
 All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield:
 And what is else not to be overcome?
 That glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power
 Who from the terror of this arm so late
 Doubted his empire, that were low indeed,

³⁷ For detailed studies of Greek pronunciation, see Edgar H. Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*, 2nd ed., William Dwight Whitney Linguistic Series, Vol. 7, eds. Franklin Edgerton, Albrecht Goetze, and Edgar H. Sturtevant, published for Yale University by the Linguistic Society of America, Special Publications of the Linguistic Society of America, eds. Bernard Bloch, Hans Kurath, M. B. Emeneau, Urban T. Holmes Jr. (Philadelphia: Linguistic Society of America, University of Pennsylvania, 1940); W. Sidney Allen, *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*, 1st ed. 1968 (Cambridge / New York / New Rochelle / Melbourne / Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 3rd. ed. 1987). Of special relevance to my discussion of Aeschylus’ passage are Chapter Three of the former and Chapter One of the latter, both of which give detailed accounts of the Greek consonants.

That were an ignominy and shame beneath
 This downfall; since by fate the strength of gods
 And this empyreal substance cannot fail,
 Since through experience of this great event,
 In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
 We may with more successful hope resolve
 To wage by force or guile eternal war
 Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
 Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
 Sole reigning holds the tyranny of heav'n."
 (*Paradise Lost*, Book 1, ll. 105-124)³⁸

There is bragging, slandering, and name-calling; the defiance on the phonological level is conveyed by emphatic and repetitive declamation (“What though the field be lost? / All is not lost [...]”), by forceful stressed monosyllabic words (such as “bow,” “sue,” “late,” and “gods”), by sonorous polysyllabic words (“unconquerable,” “empyreal,” “Irreconcilable”), and by forceful consonants like the voiced labio-dental fricative /v/ (“revenge”), the voiced post-alveolar affricate /dz/ (“revenge,” “courage,” “wage”), the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ (gods), and the “spitting” /t/ (“lost,” “hate,” “might,” “late,” “foresight”). Nevertheless, the speech still lacks the teeth-gnashing ferocity that informs the whole of Goethe’s “Prometheus,” and is, for this reason, somewhat tame in phonological terms.

VII. Conclusion

From the detailed comparison of “Prometheus” with its English, French, and Italian translations, as well as with similar passages of original writing, it is clear that German, because of its unique phonological system with sounds that suggest vehemence, contempt, and unyielding will-power, is best suited to the task of representing in phonological terms a rebel figure defying Zeus.³⁹ It is precisely for this reason, too, that Goethe’s

³⁸ John Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Douglas Bush, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 215.

³⁹ German may not be the only language suited to the task of suggesting Prometheus’ defiance. Polish, a language rich in such sounds as the voiced alveolar affricate /dz/, as in *dzwon* (“bell”), the voiceless alveolar affricate /ts/, as in *co* (“what”), the voiced alveolo-palatal /ʒ/, as in *źrebię* (“foal”), the voiceless alveolo-palatal fricative /ç/, as in *śruba* (“screw”), the voiced alveolo-palatal affricate /dʒ/, as in *dźwięk* (“sound”), the voiceless alveolo-palatal affricate /tʃ/, as in *ćma* (“moth”), the voiced retroflex fricative /ʒ/, as in *żona* (“wife”) or *rżeka*

poem provides translation theorists and practitioners of translation with an outstanding example of untranslatability.

(“river”), the voiceless retroflex fricative /ʂ/, as in *szum* (“rustle”), the voiced retroflex affricate /dʒ/, as in *dżem* (“jam”), the voiceless retroflex affricate /tʂ/, as in *czas* (“time”), and the voiceless velar fricative /x/, as in *hak* (“hook”) or *chór* (“choir”), may compete with German in this regard. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_language (as at 19 September 2005). In view of this, Goethe’s “Prometheus” may not, after all, be so “untranslatable” to a translator whose target language is Polish, or, for that matter, to translators who are translating into other Slavic languages.

PART THREE

THE TRANSLATION OF POETRY

[ABSTRACT]

It is generally agreed that, of all the literary genres, poetry is the most difficult to translate. This paper discusses problems relating to poetry translation with reference to Chinese and some major European languages, including English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, and Greek, as source and target languages, dividing them into three types: the semantic, the syntactic, and the phonological. To show that its observations apply to more than isolated cases, it closely examines translations of both classical and modern texts, linguistically, culturally, and aesthetically.

I. Poetry as the Most Difficult Genre to Translate

Although poetry has been translated for more than two thousand years¹ from different source languages into different target languages,² many practitioners of translation and translation theorists still maintain that poetry is untranslatable. While some of us may be less pessimistic,³ we have to admit that this view of poetry does point to a fact about which few translators and theorists would disagree: that, of all the literary genres, poetry is the most difficult to translate; it is, to borrow a figure from Greek mythology, at once a Proteus and an Antaeus, always elusive, constantly

¹ Livius Andronicus (c. 284 B.C.-c. 204 B.C.) translated Homer's *Odyssey* into Latin more than two thousand years ago. His version, *Odyssia*, was the first translation of poetry in the West.

² Translation theorists like Eugene Nida use the term *receptor language* when they refer to the language into which a text is translated. However, as *receptor language* is still not as widely used as *target language*, I have retained the latter in my discussion.

³ With regard to the translation of poetry, allowing for certain exceptions, I am inclined to share Catford's view of translation in general: "Indeed, translatability [...] appears [...] to be a *cline* rather than a clear-cut dichotomy. SL texts and items are *more or less* translatable rather than absolutely *translatable* or *untranslatable*." See J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 93.

changing shapes and drawing strength from mother earth to baffle, indeed to overpower the most capable of translators. In this paper, I shall try to examine some of the factors that give rise to the intractability of poetry as source-language texts, factors that cause many a translator to throw up his hands in despair and declare, “Poetry is untranslatable!” To show that my observations are applicable to translation in more than one or two directions, I shall refer not only to Chinese and English, but also to other source and target languages.

II. Three Types of Problems

Generally speaking, the problems related to the translation of poetry can be divided into three types: (1) problems related to the use of individual words, which has to do largely with the semantic content of the poem; (2) problems related to the arrangement of words, which constitutes the poetic form, including metre, rhyme scheme, stanza-form, and other prosodic features; and (3) problems related to the sound effects of words. In linguistic terminology, the three types correspond roughly to three linguistic aspects: the semantic, the syntactic, and the phonological.⁴

III. Problems Related to the Semantic Level

Problems related to the use of individual words usually arise from what Jakobson calls the “poetic” function of languages.⁵ When words have to

⁴ These linguistic aspects belong to what Burton Raffel has described as “the specific constraints of language” and “the constraints of specific languages.” See Burton Raffel, *The Art of Translating Poetry* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), Chapters 1 and 2, 3-62.

⁵ In an article entitled “Linguistics and Poetics,” Jakobson put forward a schema which sums up the six functions of language: the emotive, the conative, the phatic, the referential, the metalingual, and the poetic. In performing the poetic function, language focuses “on the message for its own sake” (22). As the poetic function is the most complicated, and as poetry is the genre in which the poetic function is most prominent, it follows that poetry is more difficult to translate than other genres. For the entire article, see Roman Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry*, Vol. 3 of *Selected Writings*, ed. Stephen Rudy, 4 vols. (The Hague: Mouton, 1981), 18-51. In his *Hermeneutisches Übersetzen: Linguistische Kategorien des Verstehens und Formulierens beim Übersetzen*, Radegundis Stolze has also made a distinction between the language of poetry and that of non-poetry: “Die Sprache als Medium der Dichtkunst ist [...] nicht nur Kommunikationsmittel, sondern auch Medium der Wirklichkeitskonstitution”

perform the poetic function, they exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: precision, compression, ambiguity, and the tendency to become an intricate word-game.⁶

With regard to the first characteristic, one may say that words used in poetry best exemplify the French idea of *le mot juste* and Coleridge's description of poetry as "the best words in the best order."⁷ With regard to the second, the words used by a poet best illustrate—at least in theory—Ezra Pound's dictum about great literature: "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree."⁸

In the history of both Chinese and Western literature, anecdotes about poets trying to achieve precision of language and to charge words with meaning are legion. In China, students of classical Chinese literature do not need to be reminded how hard poets like Du Fu 杜甫 and Wang Anshi 王安石 strove to "refine the word" ("*lianzi* 煉字"). In the West, the manuscripts or variorum editions of the poetical works of such poets as Keats, Yeats, and the whole school of Imagists, who set great store by the "hard, clear image,"⁹ testify cogently to the relentlessness of their struggle with language, which is succinctly summed up in T. S. Eliot's "Four

'Language as the medium of poetry is [...] not only a means of communication, but also the medium that constitutes reality.' See Radegundis Stolze, *Hermeneutisches Übersetzen: Linguistische Kategorien des Verstehens und Formulierens beim Übersetzen*, Tübinger Beiträge zur Linguistik 368 (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1992), 223.

⁶ In saying this, I do not imply that words used in prose do not have these qualities; what I am saying is that, in poetry, these characteristics are much more pronounced. In response to this generalization, some may argue that, in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, the four characteristics are as pronounced as those in poetry, but Joyce's novel, though written in prose, draws on so many poetic devices that it can be regarded as poetry in prose—at times even as pure poetry.

⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk*, recorded by Henry Nelson Coleridge and John Taylor Coleridge, 2 vols., Title 14 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Carl Woodring (London: Routledge, 1990), 90; 16 titles.

⁸ The original dictum reads: "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." See Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 36. In charging language with meaning, of course, a writer pays attention not only to individual words, but also to many other aspects, such as syntax and the interaction between words, from which meaning beyond individual words can emerge.

⁹ J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 444.

Quartets: East Coker”:

So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—
 Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*—
 Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
 Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure [...]¹⁰

Thus, it can be seen that, in his attempt to achieve precision of language and to charge words with meaning, the poet is rivalled neither by the novelist nor by the essayist.

As the pains taken by poets in writing poetry are greater than those taken by writers of other genres, it is natural that the demands made by poetry on the translator are the most rigorous. In translating the poetry of such fine craftsmen as Du Fu, Li He 李賀, Li Shangyin 李商隱, Dante, Shakespeare, and Eliot, the translator has to go through a struggle with language no less demanding than that experienced by the poets themselves. In rendering Du Fu's "Autumn Meditation" ("*Qiu xing* 秋興"),¹¹ for example, he must strive to achieve the same kind of precision of language and charge words with an equal amount of meaning. On the other hand, in translating Shakespeare, he has to battle with the myriad-minded Bard's wave upon wave of highly condensed images built on similes, metaphors, and a host of other figures.

Precision and compression of meaning through the use of images, difficult as they appear, are by no means the most formidable aspects on the semantic level. This is not only because a lot of help is available with regard to these two aspects,¹² but also because the linguistic devices, such as figurative language and images, with which precision and compression of language are closely associated, lend themselves more readily to translation. Thus, even though I cannot read Hebrew, I can be sure that the

¹⁰ T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969), 202.

¹¹ The English translation of the title is by A. C. Graham. See A. C. Graham, trans., *Poems of the Late T'ang* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), 51-56.

¹² In translating metaphor, for example, one can refer to the chapter "The Translation of Metaphor" in Peter Newmark's popular text, *Approaches to Translation* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1988). Also see M. B. Dagut, "Can 'Metaphor' Be Translated?" in *Babel* 22.1 (1976): 21-33; and Mary M. Y. Fung, "Translation of Metaphor," in *An Encyclopaedia of Translation: Chinese-English. English-Chinese*, eds. Chan Sin-wai and David E. Pollard (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), 658-71.

metaphors of Psalm 18 in the Book of Psalms are largely undistorted in the authorized King James Version of the Bible, and that little was lost in the process of translation: “I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, *and* my high tower.”¹³ Nor do I need to worry about the fidelity of the following English translation of a Japanese poem by Saigyō (1118-1190), which is characterized by visual and auditory images:

In a tree standing
Beside a desolate field,
The voice of a dove
Calling to its companions—
Lonely, terrible evening.¹⁴

As one who has no knowledge of Japanese, I cannot, of course, appreciate the “technical perfection” of the poem, which has, according to Keene, been “lost in translation.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, with its fresh, evocative images, the translation is powerful enough to give me a delightful aesthetic experience. In going through Keene’s *Anthology of Japanese Literature: To the Nineteenth Century*, I have the feeling that images, especially those in haiku, suffer the least, and can remain relatively “unscathed” in the translation process. To test the reliability of this feeling, one has only to read the work of Bashō and Kobayashi Issa, and then compare one’s impressions with the impressions of those who can read Japanese poetry in the original.

As a translator whose first language is Chinese, I may be better qualified to speak about images in Chinese poetry. During the past thirty years or so, I have, for pleasure or for the purpose of teaching translation and classical Chinese literature, compared many times Arthur Waley’s English version of the *Shi jing* 詩經 ‘*The Book of Songs*’ with the

¹³ *The Holy Bible*, containing the Old and New Testaments, translated out of the original tongues and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesty’s Special Command, Appointed to be read in Churches, Authorized King James Version, Printed by Authority (London and New York: Collins’ Clear-Type Press, n.d.), 550.

¹⁴ Donald Keene, comp., *Anthology of Japanese Literature: To the Nineteenth Century*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 187.

¹⁵ Keene, comp., *Anthology of Japanese Literature: To the Nineteenth Century*, 184.

original. During the process, I have found that poems with sharp, striking images normally translate best.¹⁶ When I examine Chinese translations of poems written in English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish, my feeling is no different. In view of this, one may perhaps conclude that images, whether in Eastern or in Western poetry, can best “survive” the inevitable refraction of the translation process.

With respect to images, the translator is almost always in a state of combat readiness. He is, therefore, unlikely to make serious mistakes. It is in rendering words which are deceptively simple, words that do not make up an image in the conventional sense of the word, that he is most likely to trip up. This happens especially when he fails to grasp the subtle shades of meaning which suggest the poem’s tone or mood or to come to grips with words which play a crucial role in triggering a whole series of associations. Take number 5 of Tao Yuanming’s 陶淵明 cycle of twenty poems entitled “*Yinjiu* 飲酒” ‘Drinking Wine,’ for example:

結廬在人境，
而無車馬喧。
問君何能爾？
心遠地自偏。
採菊東籬下，
悠然見南山。
山氣日夕佳，
飛鳥相與還。
此中有真意，
欲辨已忘言。

With the exception of some pieces by Du Fu, many of Tao Yuaming’s poems have an unrivalled simplicity of language and naturalness of expression in the whole history of classical Chinese literature. Epitomizing these two qualities, the poem portrays a man completely at ease and in harmony with nature. Yet, because of its unadorned language, translators could easily be caught off guard. As space does not allow us to discuss complete translations of the poem, let us look at three versions of its most famous couplet “*Cai ju dong li xia, youran jian nan shan* 採菊東籬下，悠然見南山”:

¹⁶ See, for example, translations 86, 113, 179, and 187 in Arthur Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1937), 80, 106, 189, 196.

Picking chrysanthemums by the eastern hedge
 I catch sight of the distant southern hills [...]
 (by James Robert Hightower)¹⁷

As I pluck chrysanthemums beneath the eastern fence,
 I distantly see the southern mountains.
 (by A. R. Davis)¹⁸

Chrysanthemums I was picking under the east hedge
 When the South Range met my tranquil eyes.
 (by Tan Shilin)¹⁹

In Hightower's version, the phrase "catch sight of," with two stresses coming together in the first two words, suggests too much volition on the part of the speaker; it fails to convey to the reader the image of a man in complete harmony with nature, where volition has no part to play. The focus of the translation is also problematic: whereas the adverb "youran 悠然" 'in serenity' or 'at ease' in the original describes the action "jian 見" 'saw,' it has been translated as "distant" and made to qualify "southern hills," which reduces the poet's serene, leisurely contemplation of nature to a physical act of little significance.

Davis's version has avoided Hightower's first problem by using "see," a word that suggests less volition than "catch sight of." However, the phrase "distantly see," being more physical than spiritual, also fails to bring out the poet's serene spiritual state. As the translation of "cai 採," the word "pluck" is not a happy choice of words, either; it describes and phonologically suggests an action which is too strong to chime with the leisurely tranquillity suggested by the original.²⁰ At the same time,

¹⁷ James Robert Hightower, trans., *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 130.

¹⁸ A. R. Davis, *T'ao Yüan-ming (AD 365-427): His Works and Their Meaning*, 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1983), Vol. 1, 96.

¹⁹ Tan Shilin 譚時霖, trans., *The Complete Works of Tao Yuanming* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., Ltd., 1992), 61.

²⁰ Although *pluck* and *pick* refer to more or less the same action, they give rise to different kinds of suggestiveness because of the difference between their pronunciations: pronounced /plʌk/ (with the half-open vowel /ʌ/), *pluck* is "louder" than *pick* (pronounced /pɪk/ with the close vowel /ɪ/), and is therefore more suggestive of something discordant and violent. The problem is compounded by the many contexts in which *pluck* denotes a violent action, such as "to pluck a chicken," in which case "pluck" would have to be translated by "bá 拔" or "xián

compared with Hightower's "hills," which harmonizes with the atmosphere created by the poet, Davis's "mountains" is much less felicitous: the image it evokes is oppressive and, therefore, incongruous with the general mood.

In the third version, the translator seems to have been aware of the problems caused by the line "*youran jian nanshan* 悠然見南山," for he has used neither "catch sight of" nor "see"; instead, he has given the role of subject to "the South Range," thereby avoiding suggesting any volition on the part of the speaker: "the South Range met my tranquil eyes." Despite this sensitive rendering, however, the version is not without flaws. First, the use of inversion in "Chrysanthemums I was picking" is contrived; it goes against the simplicity and natural grace of Tao Yuanming's style. Second, whereas "*youran* 悠然" in the original mirrors the poet's spiritual serenity, its equivalent "tranquil" in the English version has been made to qualify "eyes," shifting the spiritual to the physical level, thereby changing the mood of the original. Third, the use of the past tense has reduced the poet's contemplation of nature, which has a touch of the universal and the eternally present, to a specific, isolated act, destroying, in the words of James J. Y. Liu, "[the] sense of timelessness,"²¹ which is a prominent quality of classical Chinese poetry.²²

擷," not "*cǎi* 採." By the same token, one can make a similar point about the Chinese words "*cǎi* 採" and "*zhāi* 摘." Although they have more or less the same meaning, they combine with "*huā* 花" to form collocations with different connotations and associations: while "*cǎihuā* 採花" evokes something more poetic, more refined, more elegant, not least because the word "*cǎi* 採" is often collocated with "*chá* 茶" 'tea,' "*lián* 蓮" 'lotus,' or "*líng* 菱" 'water caltrop' in idyllic descriptions in Chinese literature, "*zhāihuā* 摘花" evokes something more mundane, more commonplace, and triggers associations less linked to the world of classical Chinese poetry. It must be pointed out, though, that "*cǎihuā* 採花," for readers who have read a lot of classical Chinese romances or martial arts fiction, could easily trigger its second, and less complimentary, meaning: "to steal into somebody's house to rape a woman," reminding them of such collocations as "*cǎihuāzéi* 採花賊" 'a thief that steals into somebody's house to rape a woman.' On most occasions, however, letting one's imagination stray into the second meaning is not warranted.

²¹ James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 40.

²² This quality is due to a characteristic of the Chinese language to which Liu drew our attention more than thirty years ago. In discussing the poem "*Niao ming jian* 鳥鳴澗" ("A Bird Singing in the Ravine") by the Tang poet Wang Wei 王維,

If the first two types of problems are formidable, the third type—problems related to ambiguity—is much more so. Faced with problems of this type, the translator will find himself at the point where translatability gives way to untranslatability. According to J. C. Catford, when ambiguity is “a functionally relevant feature”²³ of the source-language text, as is the case with puns, linguistic untranslatability arises.²⁴ This is true of Marcus Antonius’ famous line, “O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,”²⁵ in which the speaker refers simultaneously to “brute” and “Brutus” with the word “brutish.” The same can be said of John Donne’s line from “A Hymne to God the Father”: “When thou hast done, thou hast not done,”²⁶ in which the speaker intends the word “done” to refer both to the past participle of “do” and to his own name “Donne.”²⁷ Normally this kind of ambiguity is untranslatable, unless the translator succeeds, with a stroke of luck, in hitting upon a word in the target language that has two corresponding meanings.

In translating poetry in which words are used as elements of a word-game, the problem is no less intractable. This can be seen not only in

he observed: “Moreover, the absence of ‘tense’ in Chinese enables the poet to present the scene not from the point of view of any specific time but almost *sub specie aeternitatis*” (Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, 40).

²³ Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, 94.

²⁴ Catford has identified two sources of ambiguity: *shared exponence* and *polysemy*. By *shared exponence*, he means “those cases where two or more distinct grammatical or lexical items are expounded in one and the same phonological or graphological form” (94), such as *Time flies* (95), which, with no co-text to fix the meaning, can mean “How quickly time passes” as well as “Make observations on the speed of flies” (95). By *polysemy*, he means “one item having a wide or general contextual meaning, covering a wide range of specific situational features” (96). For the purpose of the present discussion, however, there is no need to make such a fine distinction.

²⁵ William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 3.2.110, quoted from *Julius Caesar* in Shakespeare’s *Complete Works*, ed. W. J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 821-45. In quotations from Shakespeare’s plays, the first figure stands for the act, the second for the scene, and the third for the line number; thus, “3.2.110” stands for “Act 3, scene 2, line 110.”

²⁶ John Donne, *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Grierson (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 337-38.

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of these two puns, see Frederick Ahl’s article “Ars Est Caelare Artem (Art in Puns and Anagrams Engraved)” in *On Puns: The Foundation of Letters*, ed. Jonathan Culler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 22. For the entire article, see 17-43.

serious verse, but also in light verse and nonsense verse. Take Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" from *Alice in Wonderland*,²⁸ for example. In this poem, linguistic devices like the use of portmanteau words can tax the most talented translator's resourcefulness.²⁹

IV. Problems Related to Syntax

The problems we have discussed so far are those that involve relatively small units—individual words which make up a line. With problems of the second type—those related to the poetic form—the units to be considered are much larger. This is especially true of syntax, with which all translators have to come to grips even if they choose to translate verse into prose. The greater the syntactic difference between source and target language, the more formidable the translation problem will be. In classical Chinese poetry, for example, when a poet manipulates his syntax to create ambiguity, so that the relationship between words becomes indeterminate, the translator who tries to render such a poet's work into English or other European languages will run into difficulties. Take Du Fu's lines "*Shui luo Yulong ye, shan kong Niaoshu qiu* 水落魚龍夜，山空鳥鼠秋。"³⁰ A word-for-word translation of the second line could be: "mountain, empty, bird, rat, autumn." "*Niaoshu* 鳥鼠" in the poem refers to a place called "Niaoshu Gu 鳥鼠谷" 'the Valley of Birds and Rats,' and is antithetical to "*Yulong* 魚龍," which refers to a river called "Yulong Chuan 魚龍川" 'the River of Fishes and Dragons.'³¹ Here, however, Du Fu is ingeniously

²⁸ Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, ed. Donald J. Gray (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 116, 118.

²⁹ The result can be highly impressive, though, when such linguistic devices are handled with ingenuity, as Yuen Ren Chao has done. See Yuen Ren Chao, *Aspects of Chinese Sociolinguistics: Essays by Yuen Ren Chao*, selected and introduced by Anwar S. Dil (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1976), 165-67.

³⁰ These lines are taken from No. 2 of his twenty poems entitled "*Qinzhou zashi* 秦州雜詩" 'Poems Written in Qinzhou on Various Occasions.'

³¹ In modern Chinese, "*Yulong* 魚龍" can refer to the palaeontological term *ichthyosaur*. However, judging by the context, the two morphemes "yu 魚" and "long 龍" should be taken separately, so that they will become antithetical to "*niao* 鳥" and "*shu* 鼠" respectively. The difficulty of the lines becomes manifest even in their romanization: whereas Chinese does not set up any opposition between capitalization and non-capitalization (or upper case and lower case) in its script, English compels us to choose between capitalization and non-capitalization; once the choice is made, the ambiguity in the original immediately disappears,

tapping the paratactic potentialities of the Chinese language: by deliberately splitting the two place names into four units and putting them in antithesis, he has succeeded in breathing life into them, so that the four static morphemes wake up from their semantic slumber, evoking four animal images. As a result, “*niao* 鳥” and “*shu* 鼠” in the second line immediately become free agents, interacting not only with each other, but also with other units of the line, and, what is more, because of this breaking up of the semantic bondage, other units in the line are also liberated and combine freely and simultaneously in the reader’s mind as “*shan kong* 山空” ‘mountain empty,’ “*niao shu* 鳥鼠” ‘bird, rat,’ “*qiu* 秋” ‘autumn,’ “*niao shu qiu* 鳥鼠秋,” ‘bird rat autumn,’ “*qiu shan* 秋山” ‘autumn mountain,’ “*shan qiu* 山秋” ‘mountain autumn,’ “*qiu kong* 秋空” ‘autumn empty,’ and “*kong qiu* 空秋” ‘empty autumn,’ bringing into play all the associative possibilities of the individual units and instantaneously setting off a whole complex of impressions, feelings, and moods which defy translation and logical analysis.³²

Because of this kind of indeterminacy in classical Chinese syntax, the semantic units in a line of poetry are, in the hands of a master, often allowed free play to increase the complexity of meaning. In *Finnegans Wake*, James Joyce fuses English with many other languages to create a chord-like effect, the effect of simultaneity, which has been highly acclaimed by critics like David Daiches.³³ In Du Fu’s line, we see a similar simultaneity, a simultaneity created on a smaller scale, but

since capitalization indicates that the lexical items refer to place names whereas non-capitalization indicates that the lexical items refer to common nouns.

³² In discussing a poem by Paul Celan, George Steiner attributed a similar quality to the poet: “[T]he meanings are [...] indeterminate, provisional, susceptible of constant reorganization [...] When literature seeks to break its public linguistic mould [...] when it seeks untranslatability, we have entered a new world of feeling.” See George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 191-92. A similar view was expressed by Andrea C. Cervi when he spoke about Celan’s “complex poetic idiom [...] The uncompromisingly reflexive nature of his language [and] the extreme tendency towards internalisation that characterised the work of Hölderlin, Trakl, and Rilke.” See James Vinson and Daniel Kirkpatrick, eds., *Great Foreign Language Writers*, Great Writers Series (London: St. James Press, 1984), 113.

³³ See David Daiches, *The Novel and the Modern World*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 133, in which the critic ranks Joyce above Flaubert.

achieved with less effort.³⁴

As this quality is due solely to the syntactic ambiguity of classical Chinese, it can rarely be reproduced in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Latin, Greek, or any other hypotactic Indo-European language whose syntax tends to put words in a grammatical strait-jacket, defining their relationship in unequivocal terms. Because of this, a translator wishing to render the above lines into an Indo-European language can only hope to bring out one level of meaning.³⁵

Having seen the poetic nature of classical Chinese syntax, one may be tempted to conclude that Chinese as a language is, in all respects, superior to Indo-European languages. This, however, is not the case, since every natural language has its own potentialities and limitations.³⁶ While it is true that Indo-European languages like English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Latin, and Greek have little syntactic ambiguity, it is equally true that Chinese, whether classical or vernacular, is incapable of the complex, flexible, and, in the hands of skilful writers, functionally involved syntax of Indo-European languages. In the case of English, a passage taken at random from a novel by Henry James will suffice to show how complex and flexible English syntax can be:

Isabel found, however, that she knew a good deal about them, and knew about the marriage of the two elder girls; knew that their poor father had left very little money, but that the house in Albany, which had passed into his hands, was to be sold for their benefit; knew, finally, that Edmund Ludlow, Lilian's husband, had taken upon himself to attend to this matter, in consideration of which the young couple, who had come to Albany

³⁴ For a detailed discussion of Du Fu's simultaneity and that of Joyce, see Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Zhongguo san da shiren xin lun* 中國三大詩人新論 'A Reevaluation of Three Major Chinese Poets' (Hong Kong: Xuejin chubanshe 學津出版社, 1981), 43-45 and note 11 on 81-82. Some other syntactically ambiguous lines by Du Fu are: "Shuangyan qi ye ri, jingdao shu tian feng 霜煙淒野日, 粳稻熟天風"; "Luhua liu ke wan, fengshu zuo yuan shen 蘆花留客晚, 楓樹坐猿深"; "Gao niao huang yun mu, han chan bi shu qiu 高鳥黃雲暮, 寒蟬碧樹秋"; "Shui guo Cangwu ye, tian gao Baidi qiu 水闊蒼梧野, 天高白帝秋" (44). In each of these couplets, the meaning of the second half keeps shifting in the mind of the reader, leaving itself open to more than one interpretation.

³⁵ For a detailed discussion of ambiguity, see William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1966).

³⁶ On this point, see Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 4-7.

during Mr. Archer's illness, were remaining there for the present and, as well as Isabel herself, occupying the old place.³⁷

The sentence is deliberately involved; yet, "the complication [of style] is," as Eliot has pointed out in "Milton I," "due to a determination not to simplify, and in that simplification lose any of the real intricacies and by-paths of mental movement."³⁸ In cases like this, where the deliberately complex syntax is an integral part of the literariness or meaning of the message, a translation problem arises when there is no syntax of equal complexity in the target language. With regard to the translation of poetry, the problem can be most clearly explained with reference to European epics.³⁹

In many European epics, the poets often draw on the syntactic resources of their language to achieve various poetic effects. One who does this with great success is Milton. Let us look at the first sentence of *Paradise Lost*:

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heav'ns and earth
Rose out of Chaos; or if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar

³⁷ Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Robert D. Bamberg (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), 35.

³⁸ T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 142.

³⁹ In a paper written in Chinese, entitled "Yi fang ying yuan: Cong Shenqu Hanyi shuo dao Ouzhou shishi de jufa 以方應圓：從「神曲」漢譯說到歐洲史詩的句法" 'The Square versus the Circle: From the Translation of *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese to the Syntax of European Epics,' presented at a conference in Taipei in 1994, I have discussed this aspect in detail. The paper is collected in Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Yuyan yu fanhui 語言與翻譯 'Language and Translation'* (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, October 2001). Here, I shall repeat some of the points I made in the paper.

Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.⁴⁰

To the dismay of modern readers brought up on the syntactically simple and straightforward language of novelists like Hemingway, the sentence consists of sixteen lines, in which subordinate clauses and complicated rhetorical devices troop across the page, showing no mercy to their attention span.

On close analysis, we will see that the principal clause of the passage is “Sing, Heav’nly Muse [...] / Of Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree.” In the natural word order of English, the verb “Sing” should precede the object “Of Man’s first disobedience [...].” For stylistic effect, however, Milton has made full use of the flexibility of English syntax, and introduced an inversion by putting the verb “Sing” in line 6 and the object “Of Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree” in lines 1 and 2, thereby lifting his style to a level worthy of an epic.⁴¹

⁴⁰ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, lines 1-16. Quoted from John Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Douglas Bush, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 212.

⁴¹ The language of *Paradise Lost* is not—and was not meant to be—the language of everyday speech. Because of this, it incurred in 1936 one of the harshest attacks T. S. Eliot ever made against any writer. Then, eleven years later, Eliot did an about-face and retracted his earlier criticism. In his retraction, though, he did not openly admit having made a wrong judgement in his early days, an approach that prompted his critics to accuse him of being a Houdini. See his two essays, “Milton I” and “Milton II,” in T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 138-45, 146-61. On re-reading “Milton I” today, one cannot help asking why such a fine, insightful poet and critic could be so prejudiced. This is not, of course, Eliot’s only critical misjudgement. In his now notorious book *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*, which was never reissued after its first edition, probably because the author regretted his earlier pronouncements, he poured out equally serious prejudice against W. B. Yeats and D. H. Lawrence. In his equally—if not more—notorious essay, “Hamlet,” he declared that *Hamlet*, “far from being Shakespeare’s masterpiece [...] is most certainly an artistic failure” (*Selected Essays*, 143). For Eliot’s criticism on Yeats and Lawrence, see T. S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1934); for his full criticism on *Hamlet*, see T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, 1st ed. 1932 (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 3rd enlarged ed. 1951), 141-46. Eliot’s evasiveness in “Milton II” has drawn fire from Christopher Ricks:

Mr. Eliot’s second piece, his British Academy lecture of 1947 [“Milton II”],

Following the vocative “Heav’nly Muse,” there is a relative clause: “that on the secret top / Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire / That shepherd.” While functioning as the object of “inspire,” “shepherd” is also the subject of another relative clause: “who first taught the chosen seed / In the beginning.” Immediately after “beginning,” there is another relative clause (“how the heav’ns and earth / Rose out of Chaos”) functioning as the object of the verb “taught” in line 8. After “forbidden tree” in line 2, which is part of the object of “Sing of,” there is also a relative clause: “whose mortal taste / Brought death into the world, and all our woe, / With loss of Eden.” Then, lines 4 and 5 (“till one greater Man / Restore us, and regain the blissful seat”) make up an adverbial clause of time subordinate to “whose mortal taste / Brought death into the world, and all our woe, / With loss of Eden.”

From line 10 to line 16, the syntactic structure is equally complicated. “I thence / Invoke thy aid to my advent’rous song” is a co-ordinate clause parallel to “Sing, Heav’nly Muse [...] / Of Man’s first disobedience [...]” It is modified by an adverbial clause of condition: “if Sion hill / Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook.”⁴² Then, “Siloa’s brook” is followed by another relative clause (“that flowed / Fast by the oracle of God”), as is “advent’rous song” in line 13, which is qualified by the relative clause “That with no middle flight intends to soar / Above th’ Aonian mount.” After these two relative clauses, as if the syntax were not complicated enough, Milton introduces yet another clause, “while it pursues / Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,” which is an adverbial clause of time subordinate to “That with no middle flight intends to soar / Above th’ Aonian mount.”

The syntax of the lines quoted is involved not for its own sake: it helps the poet, among other things, to lift his utterance to a plane suited to the

is often seen as the return of the prodigal. But it is not exactly a recantation; Mr. Eliot still sees in Milton what he saw before. True, he now sees it as worthy of praise instead of blame, but the praise is quite exceptionally feline, even for Mr. Eliot. Take, for example, his equilibrist admiration for ‘Milton’s skill in extending a period by introducing imagery which tends to distract us from the real subject’. [...] The whole essay is a fine example of an evasiveness in Mr. Eliot which is so strong as to become almost a mark of greatness—though the greatness is that of Houdini.

For Ricks’s remark, see Christopher Ricks, *Milton’s Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 5-6.

⁴² In the word order of everyday speech, the clause would be something like: “if Sion hill and Siloa’s brook delight thee more [...]”

solemnity of an epic; its tortuous movement, reinforced by the use of inversion and by the cumulative effect resulting from the piling up of subordinate clauses, enables the reader to feel, almost kinaesthetically, the sweep of the sentence and the weight of the momentous theme. Indeed, in this quotation and in many other passages in *Paradise Lost*, it plays an important role in contributing to what Christopher Ricks calls “Milton’s grand style.”⁴³ To see how Milton’s syntax works, one has only to rewrite the first few lines as “Heav’nly Muse, sing / Of Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree [...]”.⁴⁴ In the rewritten version, the sinewy and emphatic utterance of the original, which has the ring of the oracular, is no longer there. Faced with this kind of syntax, a translator who wishes to convey the same effect in Chinese could be rendered helpless.⁴⁵

In the *Aeneid* of Virgil, by whom Milton was deeply influenced, we can see the syntactic potentialities of another European language ingeniously tapped by a great poet. For the sake of comparison, let us look at its opening lines, which, like the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*, also announce the theme of an epic:

Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
 Italiam fato profugus Lavinaque venit
 Litora—multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
 vi superum, saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram,
 multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem
 inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum

⁴³ For a detailed discussion of Milton’s grand style, see Ricks, *Milton’s Grand Style*.

⁴⁴ The same kind of stylistic change can be seen when the famous motto of the Americans, “In God we trust,” is recast as “We trust in God.”

⁴⁵ This is especially true of classical Chinese (*wenyan* 文言). Compared with vernacular Chinese (*baihua* 白話), classical Chinese is capable of much less syntactic complexity and flexibility, one reason being that the average classical Chinese sentence is much shorter than the average vernacular Chinese sentence. In the light of this difference, it can be seen that Fu Donghua 傅東華 made a strategic mistake in choosing to translate *Paradise Lost* into classical Chinese, a language with little syntactic affinity with Milton’s English. If *Paradise Lost* is to be translated into Chinese verse, neither the five-character line of Tao Yuanming’s “*Yin jiu* 飲酒” ‘Drinking Wine’ nor the seven-character line of Du Fu’s “*Qiu xing* 秋興” ‘Autumn Meditation’ is a suitable medium; to come as close as possible to Milton’s English, one has to use modern Chinese, which has, during the course of its development in the last few decades, taken on considerable syntactic flexibility, and would, therefore, be a more appropriate medium for translating *Paradise Lost*.

Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae. (Book 1, ll. 1-7)⁴⁶

To see how Virgil skilfully makes use of the characteristics of Latin syntax, it is first necessary to look at a word-for-word English translation of the quotation:

Arms [the]-man-and [I]-sing-[of], [of]-Troy who
 first from [the]-coasts
 [to]-Italy [by]-fate [an]-exile Lavinian-and came
 shores, much he and [on]-land buffeted and [on]-sea
 [by]-violence [from]-above, [of]-savage unforgiving
 [of]-Juno because-of wrath,
 much too and [in]-war having-suffered, until
 [he]-could-found [a]-city
 [he]-could-carry-and [the]-gods [to]-Latium, race whence Latin
 [of]-Alba-and sires and [of]-lofty walls [of]-Rome.⁴⁷

In the light of this word-for-word version, the following free translation will help us see the flexibility as well as the potentialities of Virgil's syntax:

Arms and the man I sing, who first from the coasts of Troy, exiled by fate, came to Italy and Lavinian shores; much buffeted on sea and land by violence from above, through cruel Juno's unforgiving wrath, and much enduring in war also, till he should build a city and bring his gods to Latium; whence came the Latin race, the lords of Alba, and the walls of lofty Rome.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Virgil, *Eclogues·Georgics·Aeneid I—VI*, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough, revised by G. P. Goold (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 262.

⁴⁷ Latin has no articles. In a Latin sentence, the subject is normally understood; the grammatical relationship between nouns and other words is indicated not by prepositions but by the use of the proper case; when two words are linked, *-que* 'and' is put at the end of the latter as an enclitic. To bring out these features, I have put subjects, prepositions, and articles in square brackets to indicate morphemes which are understood or represented by case changes. To show the actual position of the Latin enclitic *-que*, I have appended its English equivalent *and* to the end of English words.

⁴⁸ Virgil, *Eclogues·Georgics·Aeneid I—VI*, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough, revised by G. P. Goold, 263. In Goold's revised version, "the lofty walls of Rome" is substituted for "the walls of lofty Rome" in Fairclough's 1935 edition. In the quotation, I have retained "the walls of lofty Rome" for two reasons. First, in the original ("altae moenia Romae"), "altae" (first declension

Like Milton, Virgil makes use of the flexibility of syntax to build up tension, until it culminates in the climax: “[...] *altae moenia Romae* [the walls of lofty Rome].” Although the phonological aspect of poetry will be discussed in detail later, it is worth noting here how Virgil’s manipulation of Latin syntax helps to reinforce the sound effects of the words. In the last line, the diphthong “ae” in “*altae*” ‘of-lofty’ and in “*Romae*” ‘of-Rome,’ the diphthong “oe” in “*moenia*” ‘walls,’ and the vowel “o” in “*Romae*” ‘of-Rome’ are forceful and sonorous.⁴⁹ Coming at the end of the whole

feminine genitive singular) agrees grammatically with “*Romae*” (first declension feminine genitive singular), not with “*moenia*” (third declension neuter nominative plural); in other words, it is “Rome” (not “the walls”) that is “lofty.” Second, Latin grammar aside, “lofty Rome,” being grander, more imposing, referring to the entire city, and befitting the grand style of the epic, is superior to the more localized “lofty walls.”

⁴⁹ My underlining. As no one today knows for sure the exact pronunciation of Latin in Virgil’s time, my analysis is, of course, only approximate, as are all modern guides to Latin pronunciation. For a detailed reconstruction of Latin pronunciation, see W. S. Allen, *Vox Latina: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Latin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. 1975); Edgar H. Sturtevant, *The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin*, 2nd ed., unchanged reprint of the 1940 Philadelphia edition (Groningen: Bouma’s Boekhuis N. V. Publishers, 1968). Sturtevant has described “Our [...] knowledge of Greek and Latin phonetics and phonemics” as “partial” (5). In footnote 1 on page 19, where phonetic symbols are used to transcribe Greek and Latin sounds, Sturtevant again says, “Since our knowledge of ancient pronunciation is at best only approximate, these symbols, as used in this book, must not be given as precise an interpretation as is usual in books on the pronunciation of a modern language” (19). In connection with my analysis of the Latin sounds, Sturtevant’s discussion of “The Latin Vowels” (106-138, that is, Chapter V) is useful. The following passages, in particular, are especially relevant to Virgil’s lines: “Latin *ae* is traditionally confused with *ē* in the pronunciation of modern scholars and the two sounds develop alike in the Romance languages; but the consistent distinction in early and carefully written later inscriptions shows that we have to do with different phonemes. In many words, *ae* clearly comes from an Indo-European diphthong (*aedēs* : Gk. αἴθω). [...] Our earliest Latin documents show *ai* where classical Latin has *ae*, as in *aide* = *aedem* [...]. No doubt the diphthong had at first about the same sound as αἴ in Greek [...]. The spelling *ae* began to appear about 200 B. C. [...] and became usual before 100 B. C. The change in spelling must have represented a change in pronunciation [...] The orthography *ae* must reflect merely a more open pronunciation of the second member of the diphthong; the earlier *ai* stood for a diphthong ending in a close *i*, as in It. *mai*, while the later *ae* denoted a diphthong ending in a more open sound approaching a close *e*, somewhat as in Eng. *my* or

passage as they do after the preceding lines, which have been rising steadily and relentlessly to a crescendo, they have the effect of announcing the theme in the most emphatic manner possible. When a translator is called upon to render this passage into Chinese, he can try to re-create other effects, but he will find it all but impossible to reproduce the billow-like mounting of tension, which crashes upon the reader with irresistible force in “*altae moenia Romae*” ‘the walls of lofty Rome.’

To appreciate fully the flexibility of Latin syntax in general and of Virgil’s language in particular, it may be necessary to look at the various ways in which a Roman could combine the following words to make a sentence: *Graecia* (Greece—subject), *dat* (gives), *Romae* ([to-] Rome—indirect object), *sapientiam* (wisdom—direct object). With these words, an Englishman can come up with only two combinations without doing violence to his language: “Greece gives Rome wisdom” and “Greece gives wisdom to Rome.” In Latin, depending on the context or the kind of emphasis a Roman wanted to give to his message, the words could be combined as follows:

Graecia Romae sapientiam dat.
Romae Graecia sapientiam dat.
Romae sapientiam dat Graecia.
Sapientiam Graecia Romae dat.

Translated word for word into English, they would be something like:

Greece [to-] Rome wisdom gives.
[to-] Rome Greece wisdom gives.
[to-] Rome wisdom gives Greece.
Wisdom Greece [to-] Rome gives.

Germ. *mein*” (123-24). “The diphthong *oe* is usually the representative of Gk. $\omicron\iota$ (*Oedipus*, *poena*) or of Gk. ω (*tragoedus*). In a few Latin words it results from the contraction of *o* with *e* or *i*, as in *coetus* from **co-itus*, *coepere* from **co-ipere*, and *coepi* from *co-epi*. [...] Our earliest documents show *oi* (*Oinomavus*, [...] *foideratei* [...]), and the change doubtless indicates a more open pronunciation of the final member of the diphthong, as in the case of the change of *ai* to *ae* [...]. Confusion between *oe* and *e* begins in inscriptions of the first century A. D. [...]. We do not know at what date the monophthongal pronunciation got into standard Latin” (132-33). “An almost unanimous tradition assigns to the Latin letters *o* and *u* the value of back vowels, of which *o* represents the more open sound” (115). The Latin *o* can be pronounced /ɔ/ (as “Gott” in German) or /o/ (as “rose” in French or “Rose” in German). See Sturtevant, 20. In the quotation from the *Aeneid*, the “o” in “Romae” is pronounced /o/.

In other words, no matter how a Roman shifted the units, the general message that “Greece gives Rome wisdom” would remain unchanged.

In expressing their dislike of the German language, Edwin and Wila Muir have made the following remark about Latin:

In its emphasis on subordination and control it [the German language] is not so ruthless as Latin. [...] The drive, the straight purposive drive, of Latin, for instance, is remarkably like the straight purposive drive of the Roman roads.⁵⁰

Although singled out by the Muirs as a negative characteristic, the “emphasis [...] on control” is, indeed, very prominent in Latin; and, precisely because of this characteristic, Latin syntax can allow the words of a sentence to move freely without distorting its general drift. When this characteristic is skilfully drawn on by a poet, it can produce an effect which cannot be reproduced in languages that do not have an equally malleable syntax. A good example of this kind of difficulty was given by Rolfe Humphries:

Virgil’s *Tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore* conveys much, not all, of its emotional impact by the delay of the last word; with the long *ulterioris* ahead of it, the yearning, the longing, the desperate reaching out, stretching so far, has much more impact than the mere picture of the souls holding out their hands in love for the farther bank. “...Their hands, in longing, / Reach out for the farther shore...” is the way I rendered it, and now that I am talking about it, I don’t think that’s any too good. May I revise—“Their hands reach out / For the farther shore, in longing”—that’s a little, not much better; it still misses the long wait of a longer equivalent for *ulterioris*, and Oh above all, it misses the sighing echo of *ulterioris amore*.⁵¹

Humphries’s admission of his own limitations does not in any way indicate the incompetence of a translator; instead, it serves to highlight the almost insuperable obstacle arising from the difference in syntax between Latin and English. If Humphries had tried to translate the above quotation

⁵⁰ Edwin Muir and Wila Muir, “Translating from the German,” in *On Translation*, ed. Reuben A. Brower (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 95. For the entire article, see 93-96.

⁵¹ Rolfe Humphries, “Latin and English Verse—Some Practical Considerations,” in *On Translation*, ed. Reuben A. Brower (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 62. For the entire article, see 57-66.

into Italian, especially the Italian of Dante's time, the obstacle would not have been so formidable, for, in terms of syntax and word order, Italian has a much closer affinity with Latin.

Fortunate for translators wishing to render the *Aeneid* into Greek, but unfortunate for those wishing to translate Greek poetry into Chinese or any other language which has limited syntactic flexibility, the Greek language is also capable of the syntactic "contortions" performed by Virgil's Latin. In the *Iliad*, for example, we can see Homer, right from the proemium, executing a master-stroke no less amazing than Virgil's:

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
 οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρὶ ἄχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε,
 πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
 ἠρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεύχε κύνεσσιν
 οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ' ἐτέλειετο βουλή,
 ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε
 Ἄτρεϊδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς. (Book 1, ll. 1-7)⁵²

To show how the syntax of classical Greek contributes to the poetic effect of the passage, I shall begin with a word-for-word English version:

Wrath sing-[of], goddess, son-of-Peleus Achilles'
 accursed, which countless [to]-Achaean's woe caused,⁵³
 many and valiant souls [down to]-Hades hurled
 heroes', themselves and prey made [for]-dogs
 [for]-birds and all,⁵⁴ Zeus' and
 was-being-accomplished plan,
 from what [time, that is, the time when] indeed
 first [they two, that is, Agamemnon and

⁵² Homer, *The Iliad*, with an English translation by A. T. Murray, The Loeb Classical Library 170, first published 1924 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.; reprinted 1988), 2.

⁵³ The Greek "ἔθηκε," aorist third person singular of τίθημι, can mean "To lay, impose, inflict, bring (evil upon a person)." See Richard John Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, expanded edition, with a new Preface by James H. Dee (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 382.

⁵⁴ The Greek word "πᾶσι" (spelt "πᾶσιν" in Richard John Cunliffe, *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*, expanded edition), 289, "οἰωνός"), meaning "all," goes with "οἰωνοῖσί." Taken together, both words (in the dative case) mean "for all birds" or "for all birds of prey." The word "οἰωνός" can mean : "A bird [...] A bird of prey [...] A bird of omen" (Cunliffe, 289). In the context of the quotation, it means "A bird of prey," which can refer to a vulture.

Achilles]-separated, having-quarrelled
 son-of-Atreus [that is, Agamemnon] and king
 [of]-men and divine Achilles.

Then let us look at Martin Hammond's English translation:

Sing, goddess, of the anger of Achilleus, son of Peleus, the accursed anger which brought uncounted anguish on the Achaians and hurled down to Hades many mighty souls of heroes, making their bodies the prey to dogs and the birds' feasting: and this was the working of Zeus' will. Sing from the time of the first quarrel which divided Atreus' son, the lord of men, and godlike Achilleus.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Martin Hammond, trans., *The Iliad*, by Homer (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987), 51. In Hammond's translation, "and the birds' feasting" is not the rendering of the Greek "οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι" but of "οἰωνοῖσί τε δαῖτα." In other words, Hammond has substituted "δαῖτα" 'feasting' for "πᾶσι" 'all,' the latter being the dative plural masculine and neuter of πᾶς (see Cunliffe, 316, "πᾶς"). In "A Note on the Greek Text," Hammond writes:

For this translation I have used the text of D. B. Monro and T. W. Allen in the Oxford Classical Texts series (3rd edition, 1920). The text of the *Iliad* is more firmly established than that of most Greek authors, and there are relatively few occasions on which there is significant doubt about the true reading. In a number of places I have used a reading other than that printed in the Oxford Classical Text, or taken a different view of the status of a line or group of lines. I list here the more important of these divergencies, in each case giving first the reading adopted for this translation.

I. 5 [that is, Book 1, line 5] οἰωνοῖσί τε δαῖτα, not οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι [...] (Hammond, 48)

Judging by the context, Hammond's reading also makes sense. For the reading "οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι," see David B. Monro et [and] Thomas W. Allen, *Homeri Opera*, recognoverunt brevique adnotatione critica instruxerunt, editio tertia [third edition], 2 vols., Tomus I [Vol. 1], Iliadis Libros I-XII continens [containing Books 1-12 of the *Iliad*], Tomus II [Vol. 2] Iliadis Libros XIII-XXIV continens [containing Books 13-24 of the *Iliad*], Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxonii e Typographeo Clarendoniano [Oxford: Clarendon Press], 1920), Tomus [Vol.] 1, 1. As the footnotes of both Murray (2) and Munro and Allen (1) indicate, "δαῖτα" 'feasting' is the reading of Zenodotus. For a detailed definition, with examples, of "δαῖτα," see the entry "δαῖς" (nominative singular feminine) in Cunliffe, 82: "(1) A meal (often with the notion of faring well or

revelling [...] a meal for the King and his retainers [...] Of the god's share of a sacrifice [...] (2) A wedding-feast [...] (3) A funeral-feast [...]" Murray has followed the Oxford edition and translated "οἰωνοῖσι τε πᾶσι" as "and all manner of birds"(1). George Chapman, William Cowper, and Samuel Butler have not dealt with "πᾶσι" or "δαῖτα" satisfactorily. Their translations of the opening lines of Homer's poem are as follows:

Achilles' banefull wrath resound, O Goddess, that impos'd
 Infinite sorrows on the Greeks, and many brave souls los'd
 From breasts heroique; sent them far to that invisible cave
 That no light comforts; and their limbs to dogs and vultures gave:
 To all which Jove's will gave effect; from whom first strife begun
 Betwixt Atrides, king of men, and Thetis' godlike son. (Chapman)

Sing, Muse, the deadly wrath of Peleus' son
 Achilles, source of many thousand woes
 To the Achaian host, which numerous souls
 Of heroes sent to Ades premature,
 And left their bodies to devouring dogs
 And birds of heaven (so Jove his will perform'd)
 From that dread hour when discord first embroil'd
 Achilles and Atrides king of men. (Cowper)

SING, O goddess, the anger of Achilles son of Peleus, that brought
 countless ills upon the Achæans. Many a brave soul did it send hurrying
 down to Hades, and many a hero did it yield a prey to dogs and vultures,
 for so were the counsels of Jove fulfilled from the day on which the son of
 Atreus, king of men, and great Achilles, first fell out with one another.
 (Butler)

The renderings "and vultures" (Chapman), "and vultures" (Cowper), "and vultures" (Butler) show that the three translators have not paid close attention to either "πᾶσι" or "δαῖτα." In Chapman's translation, "πᾶσι" is misplaced and has become "all" in "To all which Jove's will gave effect." In Cowper's and Butler's version, there is no evidence of either "πᾶσι" or "δαῖτα" being part of the source-language text. For the three translations, see George Chapman, trans., *The Iliads of Homer*, by Homer, translated according to the Greek, 2 vols., Vol. 1, Books 1-12, Vol. 2, Books 13-24, The Temple Classics, ed. Israel Gollancz (London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1898), 1-2; William Cowper, trans., *The Iliad of Homer*, by Homer, translated into English blank verse, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Joseph Whetham, 1838), Vol. 1, 1; Samuel Butler, trans., *The Iliad of Homer*, by Homer, rendered into English prose for the use of those who cannot read the

The translation is fluent and highly readable, but, because of the difference between English and Greek syntax, it fails to reproduce some very important poetic effects. An epic of 15,693 lines, the *Iliad* centres on the wrath of Achilles, which brought about deaths, destruction, and a long war. As “wrath” (“Μῆνιν”) is the key to the action of the poem, Homer puts it at the very beginning of the first line—indeed of the entire epic—which is the most emphatic position possible. In so doing, he has succeeded in anchoring the theme and creating a sense of gravity worthy of “the oldest literature of the Greeks and therefore of Europe.”⁵⁶ Afterwards, he puts the second most important word, “Ἀχιλλῆος” (“Achilles” or, in Hammond’s version, “of Achilleus”) in the second most important (that is, the last) position in the first line. As he proceeds, he gives other emphatic positions (the first positions in the second and fourth lines respectively) to “οὐλομένην” (“accursed”), the key adjective that qualifies “Achilles” (“Ἀχιλλῆος”) “wrath” (“Μῆνιν”) and foreshadows its dire consequences, and to “ἥρώων” (“heroes”), the *dramatis personae* of the tragedy. By skilfully shifting the emphasis in accordance with the needs of the prooemium, Homer has created a sense of immediacy which serves the “first purpose” of heroic poetry: “to engage the hearers in what happens, to involve them imaginatively in it.”⁵⁷ With no comparable syntactic flexibility at his disposal, Hammond naturally fails to reproduce the same kind of poetic effect.⁵⁸

original (London: A. C. Fifield, 1914), 1.

⁵⁶ William Watson Goodwin, *Greek Grammar*, rev. Charles Burton Gulick, College Classical Series (New Rochelle, New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, exact reprint of the 1930 edition, reprinted 1992), 2.

⁵⁷ C. M. Bowra, *Homer*, Classical Life and Letters, General Editor, Hugh Lloyd-Jones (London: Duckworth, 1972), 141.

⁵⁸ The above discussion has touched on both Greek syntax and Greek word order. For an in-depth discussion of Greek word order, see K. J. Dover, *Greek Word Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). Although the book deals with “the most important determinants of order in early Greek prose” (Dover, v) in particular, it also sheds light on Greek word order in general. The following observation, for example, certainly helps us understand the opening of the *Iliad* better: “Most Greek words are ‘mobile’ (symbol *M*), in the sense that any one of them may be found at the beginning of a clause, at its end, or in the middle” (Dover, 12). Beginning with “a very simple Greek utterance, the words with which Hippocrates excitedly awakens Socrates at the beginning of Plato’s *Protagoras* (310B): Πρωταγόρας ἦκει [‘Protagoras has arrived’]” (Dover, 3), the author immediately proceeds to take the reader on an interesting journey of exploration, introducing him to factors that may have determined the word order of the

Despite its limitations with regard to the opening lines of the *Iliad*, the syntactic flexibility of English is, nevertheless, quite remarkable. With some stretching and bending by geniuses like Milton, it can, as the quotation from *Paradise Lost* has shown, even perform admirable syntactic “contortions.” Indeed, as far as translation goes, English syntax can, on most occasions, cope comfortably with poetry written in other European languages.⁵⁹ Take the translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, for example. Although the syntax of the original is, at times, extremely involved, reminding one very much of Latin, the English translator John D. Sinclair has little difficulty in keeping to it in his version:

E l’ombra che di ciò domandata era,
 si sdebitò così: «Non so; ma degno
 ben è che ’l nome di tal valle pera;
 ché dal principio suo, ov’è sì pregno
 l’alpestro monte ond’è tronco Peloro,
 che ’n pochi luoghi passa oltra quel segno,
 infin là ’ve si rende per ristoro
 di quel che ’l ciel de la marina asciuga,
 ond’hanno i fiumi ciò che va con loro,
 virtù così per nimica si fuga
 da tutti come biscia, o per sventura
 del luogo, o per mal uso che li fruga:
 ond’hanno sì mutata lor natura
 li abitator de la misera valle,
 che par che Circe li avesse in pastura.⁶⁰

And the shade that was questioned delivered himself thus: ‘I know not, but it is fitting indeed that the name of such a valley perish; for from its source, where the rugged mountain-chain from which Pelorus is broken off so teems with waters that in few places it is surpassed, down to where it gives

utterance: phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantic, lexical, logical, emotive, social or ceremonial, factor(s) involving the individual history of the speaker, stylistic or aesthetic” (Dover, 3-4). Given the formidableness of the subject, the author should be given credit for making it so easily “approachable.”

⁵⁹ This can also be said of French, German, Italian, and Spanish. In terms of syntax, one may conclude that it is much easier to translate from one Indo-European language into another than to translate an Indo-European language into a non-Indo-European language, such as a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family, to which Chinese belongs.

⁶⁰ *La Divina Commedia: Purgatorio*, Canto 14, lines 28-42. Quoted from Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, eds. M. Barbi et al., 2nd ed. (Firenze: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 609.

itself up to restore what the sky draws from the sea so that the rivers may be supplied in their course, virtue is fled from as an enemy by all as if it were a snake, either from some mischief in the place or from bad custom goading them, and the dwellers in that wretched valley have so changed their nature that it seems as if Circe had them at pasture.⁶¹

The original quotation is a long sentence consisting of fifteen lines. Like the opening sentence of *Paradise Lost*, it has subordinate clauses within subordinate clauses. Moving forward tortuously without breaking off, it halts or accelerates in accordance with the sense, and gives the poem a sweep worthy of the subject-matter. In Sinclair's translation, this syntactic structure is closely followed.

As Chinese syntax has no comparable flexibility, anyone wishing to translate Dante's lines into Chinese will have to divide the original into different sense-units and regroup them in a way permitted by the norm of idiomatic usage:

第一個幽靈見同伴向他發問，
 就這樣回答：「我也不知道，不過
 這河谷的名字也應該毀滅湮沉。
 該河的源頭崇山綿延，佩洛羅
 高地也斷自這川瀆密佈的山脈。
 在別的地方，水量鮮會這麼多。
 到了下游，河水就流入大海，
 去補充長天蒸發的水分，讓川瀆
 再有流水。從河源到河口地帶，
 美德彷彿是毒蛇，遭所有的宗族
 敵視擯棄。他們這樣做，不是因該地
 有災禍，就是受驅於敗壞的風俗。
 這些居民，在這個邪惡的河谷裏
 改變了性情，就像動物一樣，
 與克爾凱所養的豬糞無異。⁶²

⁶¹ John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, first published 1939-1946 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, 183, 185.

⁶² My translation. See Huang Guobin (Laurence K. P. Wong) 黃國彬, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 'Inferno,' Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 'Purgatory,' Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 'Paradise,' *Jiuge Wenku* 九歌文庫, 927, 928, 929 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, September 2003), Vol.2, *Lianyu pian*, 208.

As the translator of the Italian text, I would certainly like to flatter myself that I have, on the whole, preserved the semantic content of the original; but apart from a certain degree of fidelity to semantic content, there is little else I could claim; I am only too acutely aware that the continuous flow, the halting, and the accelerating of the Italian sentence, made possible by its flexible syntax, is beyond my reach, or, to put the blame somewhere else, beyond the reach of the Chinese language.

If we examine other languages belonging to the same language family as English, particularly the Romance languages, we will see that they, too, being cognate with Italian, can keep pace with Dante's lines in terms of syntactic movement. A competent translator who wishes to render the above passage into Spanish, for example, will not be unduly hampered by the syntactic differences between Spanish and Italian; for, in the work of Spanish poets like Garcilaso de la Vega, we can readily find more or less the same kind of syntax:

En tanto que de rosa y azucena
se muestra la color en vuestro gesto,
y que vuestro mirar ardiente, honesto,
enciende el corazón y lo refrena,

y en tanto el cabello, que en la vena
del oro se escogió, con vuelo presto,
por el hermoso cuello blanco, enhiesto,
el viento mueve, esparce y desordena;

coged de vuestra alegre primavera
el dulce fruto, antes que el tiempo airado
cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre.⁶³

Whilst the colours of the rose and the lily show themselves in your face,
and whilst your burning, direct glance inflames and restrains the heart,
and whilst the wind stirs, scatters, and disarranges the hair, which was
mined from a vein of gold, as it suddenly blows on your lovely white and
straight neck;

gather the sweet fruit of your happy Spring, before angry Time covers
your lovely head with snow.⁶⁴

⁶³ J. M. Cohen, ed., *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*, 1st ed. 1956 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 3rd ed. 1988), 181, 183.

⁶⁴ J. M. Cohen, ed., *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*, 180, 182.

The fluent and syntactically straightforward translation by Cohen belies the highly involved syntax of the original. To see the true quality of Garcilaso's sixteenth-century Spanish, we have to look at the following literal translation of the second stanza, which closely follows the word order of the original:

and whilst the hair, which in the vein
of gold was mined, with sudden flight,
on your lovely neck white, straight,
the wind stirs, scatters, and disarranges[.]

The tortuous syntax reminds one not only of Dante's Italian, but also of Virgil's Latin and Homer's Greek. Like these languages, Spanish also allows the poet to put the object "cabello" 'hair' before the verbs "mueve" 'stirs' "esparce" 'scatters,' and "desordena" 'disarranges.'

As Garcilaso was influenced by Dante, who was, in his turn, influenced by Virgil, and as Virgil was himself influenced by Homer, one may be tempted to argue that the affinity in syntax between Spanish and Italian, between Spanish and Latin, or between Spanish and Greek as shown above constitutes only an isolated piece of evidence. But if one studies the work of other Spanish poets, too, one will see that Spanish syntax is generally highly flexible.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ A comparative study of Spanish and Italian will show that the two languages can accommodate each other with little difficulty. In going through discussions about the two languages, one can easily find writers speaking about them in highly complimentary terms. Thus the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi had the following words to say about Italian: "in Italian the capacity to adapt to foreign forms is perhaps greater than in any other language" (Giacomo Leopardi, "Leopardi on the Right Language of Translation," in *Translation and Literature*, ed. Stuart Gillespie et al., 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992-1993), Vol. 1, 144; for the entire article, see 141-48). As for Spanish, the following remarks by Damaso Alonso in his discussion of Garcilaso will show how highly esteemed the language is because of its syntactic potentialities:

En castellano no hay un orden preestablecido: cada momento expresivo tiene el suyo. Es una maravillosa propiedad de la lengua española (compárese con el orden rígido del francés o del alemán). A cada instante, el hablante elige instintivamente el orden para cada expresión. (Damaso Alonso, *Poesía española: Ensayo de metodos y limites estilisticos* (Madrid: Gredos, 3rd ed. 1957), 53)

Although syntax is one of the most important aspects of poetic forms, which justifies the amount of space devoted to it in this paper, other aspects, such as metre, stanza-form, rhyme, and so forth, should not be overlooked. If syntax is macrocosmic, the other aspects are microcosmic. While syntax is something that everybody has to attend to, willy-nilly, in the translation of poetry, metre, stanza-form, rhyme, and so forth are often bypassed in modern times, because many translators today prefer to render poetry into prose in the belief that prose is a more suitable medium for achieving fidelity. As cribs for beginners in a foreign language, prose translations may be more helpful than verse translations, but their supposed fidelity is questionable, since they are less capable of conveying or re-creating the effects of the original's formal features, which constitute part—sometimes a very important part—of the poet's message. In overlooking the metre of a poem, for example, the translator will sacrifice much of the poem's rhythmic beauty, which must have been one of the qualities that Alistair Elliot had in mind when he wrote:

We live in an age that has begun congratulating itself on being a great age for translation. This self-congratulation is premature: we live, actually, in a time when Homer and Virgil are translated into prose. That is something the great Elizabethan translators never did: attend to the words of poems and not the forms. [...]

[...] My favourite image for poetic form is the competitions of international gymnastics. There are three distinct competitions: the parallel bars, the vaulting-horse, and the free display on a large square of carpet.

Now, the athletes who work on the parallel bars simply could not do those amazing and thrilling gyrations without the bars; the bars are like the poetic conventions: not a hindrance, but a necessity for producing that particular kind of athletic magic.⁶⁶

'In Castilian, there is no pre-established word order: each expressive moment has its own word order. This is a marvellous feature of the Spanish language (when compared with the rigid word order of French and German). At each particular moment, the speaker instinctively chooses the word order for each expression.' (My translation)

⁶⁶ Alistair Elliot, "Translating Poetic Forms," in *Translation and Literature*, ed. Stuart Gillespie et al., 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992-1993), Vol. 2, 67; for the entire article, see Vol. 2, 67-83. The importance of re-creating the poetic form in the translation of poetry was also indirectly recognized by George L. Kline when he described how he translated Brodsky's poetry:

All that needs to be recapitulated here is that Brodsky and I are in full agreement on the principle that translations of formal poetry, such as the

To see what can be lost when elements of poetic form, such as metre and rhyme, are overlooked, let us examine the following lines from Canto 33 of Dante's *Paradiso* and its prose translation by Wang Weike:

Ne la profonda e chiara sussistenza
 de l'alto lume parvermi tre giri
 di tre colori e d'una contenenza;
 e l'una da l'altra come iri da iri
 pareva riflesso, e 'l terzo pareva foco
 che quinci e quindi igualmente si spiri.
 Oh quanta è corto il dire e come fioco
 al mio concetto! e questo, a quel ch'i' vidi,
 è tanto, che non basta a dicer 'poco'.
 O luce eterna che sola in te sidi,
 sola t'intendi, e da te intelletta
 e intendente te ami e arridi!
 Quella circolazion che sì concetto
 pareva in te come lume riflesso,
 da li occhi miei alquanto circunspetta,
 dentro da sé, del suo colore stesso,
 mi parve pinta de la nostra effige;
 per che 'l mio viso in lei tutto era messo.⁶⁷

在那高光之深沉燦爛的本體裏，我瞥見三個圈子，是三種顏色而一樣

Russian, must convey as much as possible of its *form*—its meter, assonance, alliteration etc.—and, where this is possible without recourse to padding or other artificialities, its rhymes and slant-rhymes as well. (George L. Kline, “Revising Brodsky,” in *Translating Poetry: The Double Labyrinth*, ed. Daniel Weissbord (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 95; for the entire article, see 95-106.)

The same kind of attention was paid by another translator, Peter Green, when he translated Ovid's love poetry. See Peter Green, “Metre, Fidelity, Sex: The Problems Confronting a Translator of Ovid's Love Poetry,” in William Radice and Barbara Reynolds, eds., *The Translator's Art: Essays in Honour of Betty Radice* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 92-111. For a detailed account of the debate in Europe between those who favoured verse and those who favoured prose as a medium for translation, see Frederick M. Renner, *Interpretatio: Language and Translation from Cicero to Tyler*, Vol. 8 of *Approaches to Translation Studies*, edited by Raymond van den Broeck and Kitty van Leuven (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989), 204-216.

⁶⁷ Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia: Paradiso*, Canto 33, lines 115-32. See Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante*, 797-98.

大小；一個似乎是別個的反射，好像一虹被另一虹所反射的模樣，而那第三個似乎是被這個和那個所鼓動的火。唉！我的話句多麼無能，表現我的思想多麼軟弱！而我的思想和我的所見相比，真可說：“微乎其微”了。永久的光呀！你建立只在你自己，而且被你所了解又了解你，愛你又向你微笑。那個似乎是你的反射光而包含在你裏面的圈子，當我的眼睛看在上面的時候，似乎現出他的本色而繪出我們人類的圖形；我的眼光全然貫注在他上面。⁶⁸

Canto 33 of the *Paradiso* is the climax of the entire poem, in which Dante's poetic art rises to unprecedented heights. As Sinclair has rightly observed,

Nowhere else does Dante attain to the greatness of the last canto of the *Paradiso*, and in it more than any other it must be remembered that a canto is a song. Here his reach most exceeds his grasp, and nothing in all his work better demonstrates the consistency of his imagination and the integrity of his genius. In the culmination of his story he reports his experience with such intensity of conviction, in a mood so docile and so uplifted, and in terms so significant of a vision at once cosmic and profoundly personal, that we are persuaded and sustained to the end.⁶⁹

As one reads the original, one can feel the tension, the ecstasy, the “intensity of conviction,” and the “uplifted” “mood” of the poet. This poetic effect is due not only to the semantic content of the lines, but also to the rhythm of the hendecasyllabic verse, to the *terza rima*, to the caesuras and pauses that help to modulate the poet's voice, and to other poetic devices made possible by the poetic form.

In Wang's prose translation, only the semantic content is attended to; the mounting of tension, the joy, and the exultation suggested by the cadence and measured movement of the original can no longer be felt.

To preserve in Chinese the above effect and the qualities described by Sinclair, we have to turn to verse:

在高光深邃無邊的皖皖
本體，出現三個光環；三環
華彩各異，却同一大小。
第一環映着第二環，燦然

⁶⁸ Wang Weike 王維克, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲, by Dante Alighieri, 2nd ed. (Peking: Renmin wenzue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1980), 545-46.

⁶⁹ John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, 487.

如彩虹映自彩虹；第三環則如
 一二環渾然相呼的火焰在流轉。
 言語呀，是那麼貧乏，不能描述
 我的情懷！我的情懷與所見
 相比，說「微小」仍與其小不符。
 永恆之光啊，你自身顯現，
 寓於自身；你自知而又自明；
 你自知，自愛，而又毅然自矜！
 那光環，因你而誕生成形，
 在你體內如反射的光芒；
 當我的眼睛對着他諦視有頃，
 在光環內，在光環本身的華彩上，
 彷彿繪着我們人類的面容。
 為了這緣故，我全神貫注地凝望。⁷⁰

In the original, the rhythm and the song-like quality are essential to the representation of Dante's rapture. In translation, only verse can preserve these qualities, for only verse can, with its precise rhythmic effects, accurately tighten and relax, accelerate and decelerate to capture the rising and ebbing, the diastole and systole, as it were, of the entire gamut of human emotions. Prose translations, deprived of the qualities peculiar to verse, are rarely adequate when it comes to the rendering of poetry.

In trying to translate poetic forms, it is not always necessary—nor is it possible—to reproduce the exact features of the original. For example, in translating classical Chinese poetry—especially that which is in regulated verse (*lüshi* 律詩)—into English, it is not possible to reproduce the original's pattern of level and oblique tones (*pingsheng* 平聲 and *zesheng* 仄聲). Similarly, in translating the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* into Chinese, there is no way of preserving the quantities of either Homer's or Virgil's dactylic hexameter, as each language may have its own prosodic rules to follow. Nevertheless, wherever possible, the translator should convey or re-create the effects of the original's poetic form by drawing on the prosodic potentialities of his own language.⁷¹

⁷⁰ My translation. See Huang Guobin (Laurence K. P. Wong) 黃國彬 trans., *Shenqu* 神曲, Vol. 3, 510. Here it is not for me to say whether it has succeeded in solving the problems I noted in Wang's prose translation. Perhaps my attempt to translate *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese verse only serves to show my awareness of the potentialities of the poetic form used by Dante.

⁷¹ For instance, in rendering Latin poetry into English, the translator could

V. Problems Related to the Phonological Level

In examining Canto 33 of Dante's *Paradiso* and in discussing tonal patterns, quantitative verse, and accentual verse, I was already shifting my focus to the translation of sound effects in poetry. By "sound effects," I mean a lot of things: alliteration, rhyme, and all the phonological features that can contribute to the total message of a poem.⁷² As the sound of a word is fused with its sense, as different languages have different phonological systems, and as different objects or concepts are signified by different sounds, which may differ widely in terms of their associations for the reader, sound effects in poetry are among the most difficult features to translate. Take the words that mean "light" in languages other than English: 光 (Chinese), *lumière* (French), *Licht* (German), *luce* (Italian), *luz* (Spanish), *lux* (Latin).⁷³ Once these words are read aloud, they may evoke different associations in the reader's mind through his "auditory imagination."⁷⁴ The Chinese word 光 (/kuaŋ/), with its loud, clear, and almost metallic /uaŋ/ sound, for example, differs widely from the French word *lumière* (/lymjɛr/), which is soft, mellifluous, and likely to evoke tactile associations with its alveolar lateral consonant /l/, its bi-labial nasal consonant /m/, its vowel /y/, and the gliding from /j/ to /ɛr/. Similarly, the Greek word for *sea*, *θάλασσα*, being onomatopoeic, could suggest waves lashing the shore or washing the sands and pebbles on a beach.

This semantic and phonological bonding, which gives words their associative qualities, poses problems not only in interlingual translation, but also in interdialectal translation. Saying Li Bai's 李白 famous line,⁷⁵ "Dì bēng shān cuī zhuàngshì sǐ 地崩山摧壯士死" "[Only when] the earth

substitute accentual verse for quantitative verse.

⁷² Some features of poetic forms overlap with sound effects. For clarity and convenience, I have chosen to discuss them under two different heads.

⁷³ In conformity with the terminology of semiotics, one would have to follow Ferdinand de Saussure, using *signifiant* ("signifier") instead of *word* and *signifié* ("signified") instead of *meaning*. For a detailed discussion of these terms, see Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, ed. Rudolf Engler, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967-68).

⁷⁴ T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 142.

⁷⁵ In the Wade romanizing system, "李白" used to be romanized as "Li Po," which is equivalent to "Li Bo" in *pinyin*; but as more and more scholars have begun to romanize the poet's name as "Li Bai" (that is, in the way it is pronounced in modern spoken Chinese), I have also romanized "李白" in accordance with its modern pronunciation.

collapsed, the mountain broke, and the heroic men died [...],⁷⁶ from his “*Shudao nan* 蜀道難” ‘The Road to Shu Is Hard,’ in a Chinese dialect not too far removed from the language spoken in the poet’s time, such as Cantonese,⁷⁷ we can almost feel its full impact through the sound effects; saying it in Mandarin,⁷⁸ which is far removed from the language spoken in the poet’s time, we get a much smaller impact, as the violent scene described is very much toned down in phonological terms. With Du Fu’s equally famous line, “*Zhí běi guānshān jīngǔ zhèn* 直北關山金鼓震,” from his “*Qiu xing* 秋興” ‘Autumn Meditation,’ we can show the same difference. Spoken in Cantonese,⁷⁹ in which the hard, sharp, precipitate entering tone (*rusheng* 入聲) of ancient Chinese in “*Zhí běi* 直北” is still retained, the line has a sense of urgency which is in keeping with the military crisis being described; spoken in Mandarin, it loses much of this sense. Again, if we read aloud in Cantonese the following lines from Chen Liang’s 陳亮 *ci* 詞 poem, “To the Tune of ‘*He xinlang* 賀新郎’”: “*Jiǔ zhuǎn dānshā lǎo shíqǔ, guǎn jīngjīn, zhǐshì xúncháng tiě. Lóng gòng hǔ, yìng shēng liè* 九轉丹砂牢拾取，管精金，只是尋常鐵。龍共虎，應聲裂，”⁸⁰ with the phonological features of words in the entering tone (namely, “*tiě* 鐵” and “*liè* 裂”) preserved, we can almost “hear” the determination of the speaker. Once we switch to Mandarin, in which “*tiě* 鐵” and “*liè* 裂” have become words in the third and the fourth tone respectively, the poetic effect will be greatly reduced. Indeed, what Alexander Pope says in his “An Essay on Criticism” (lines 364-73) about creative writing is equally true of the translation of poetry:

’Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,

⁷⁶ In the English gloss, I have added the words “Only when” as well as the suspension points to show that the line in Chinese is linked to a line that follows, which reads “*ránhòu tiāntī shìzhàn xiāng gōulián* 然後天梯石棧相鈎連” ‘were the sky ladder and the stone path on the cliff hooked up.’

⁷⁷ In Cantonese, the line is pronounced “*dei⁶ bɛŋ¹ san¹ tsœy¹ dzɔŋ³ si⁶ sei².*”

⁷⁸ The romanization of the line just quoted is based on Mandarin. Today, Mandarin is also commonly referred to as *Putonghua* 普通話 ‘Common Speech (of the Chinese language).’

⁷⁹ In Cantonese, the line is pronounced “*dzik⁹ bɛk⁷ gwan¹ san¹ gɛm¹ gu² dzɛn³.*”

⁸⁰ Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 et al., *Tang-Song ci xuan zhu* 唐宋詞選注 ‘An Annotated Anthology of the Ci Poems of the Tang and Song Dynasties’ (Peking: Beijing chubanshe 北京出版社, 1982), 465. In Cantonese, the lines are pronounced “*gœu² dzyn² dan¹ sa¹ lou⁴ sɛp⁹ tsœy², gun² dziŋ¹ gɛm¹, dzi² si⁶ tsem² scɛŋ² tit⁸. luŋ² guŋ⁶ fu², jɪŋ³ siŋ¹ lit⁹.*”

The sound must seem an Echo to the sense:
 Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
 And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
 But when loud surges lash the sounding shoar,
 The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
 When Ajax strives, some rock's vast weight to throw,
 The line too labours, and the words move slow;
 Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
 Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.⁸¹

In view of the importance of sound effects, when I translated Paul Verlaine's "Chanson d'Automne" more than ten years ago, I tried to re-create in Chinese both the rhythm and the rhyme of the original:

Les sanglots longs
 Des violons
 De l'automne
 Blessent mon cœur
 D'une langueur
 Monotone.

Tout suffoquant
 Et blême, quand
 Sonne l'heure,
 Je me souviens
 Des jours anciens
 Et je pleure.

Et je m'en vais
 Au vent mauvais
 Qui m'emporte
 Deçà, delà,
 Pareil à la
 Feuille morte.⁸²

秋之小提琴
 抽噎的聲音
 長長，
 單調，萎靡，

⁸¹ Alexander Pope, *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis, Oxford Standard Authors (London / New York / Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), 74.

⁸² Paul Verlaine, *Oeuvres complètes de Paul Verlaine*, 5 vols. (Paris: Éditions Albert Messein, 1947), Vol. 1, 28.

使我憂感
心傷。

鐘響之際，
我全然窒息，
臉色蒼白；
想起以往
經歷的時光，
潛然悲從中來。

我要離去，
隨淒風飄舉；
淒風把我
吹往這邊，那邊，
有如一
片敗葉飄泊。

《秋曲》⁸³

Recently, when I tried to translate into English the following lines from an Italian poem by Attilio Bertolucci, entitled “La rosa bianca” ‘The White Rose,’ I was also conscious of the need to convey their musicality:

Coglieró per te (/koʎʎe' rɔ/ /per/ /te/)
l'ultima rosa del giardino, (/l'ultima/ /'rɔza/ /del/ /dʒar' dino/)
la rosa bianca che fiorisce (/la/ /'rɔza/ /'bjanka/ /ke/ /fjɔ' riʃe/)
nelle prime nebbie.⁸⁴ (/nelle/ /'prime/ /'nebbje/)

In my translation, I tried to re-create the tenderness suggested by the interplay or recurrence of mellifluous vowels (/e/, /u/, /i/), by the smooth gliding resulting from the lateral approximant /ʎ/ in “Coglieró” (/koʎʎe' rɔ/)

⁸³ The quotation here is slightly different from the version in my *Wenxue de xinshang* 文學的欣賞 ‘Appreciating Literature,’ 328-29. See Huang Guobin (Laurence K. P. Wong) 黃國彬, *Wenxue de xinshang* 文學的欣賞 (Taipei: Yuandong tushu gongsi 遠東圖書公司, 1986), 328-29.

⁸⁴ Piero Gelli and Gina Lagorio, eds., *Poesia italiana del Novecento*, Collezione I Garzanti-I Grandi Libri, Direttore responsabile, Livio Garzanti, 4 vols. (Milano: Garzanti, January 1980), Vol. 2, 596. To show the sound pattern of the poem, I have transcribed it in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The transcription is based on Tullio de Mauro [ideato e diretto da Tullio de Mauro] et al., eds., *Grande dizionario italiano dell'uso*, 6 vols. (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 2000).

and from the approximant /j/ in “bianca” (/ˈbjanka/) and “fiorisce” (/ˈfjoˈriʃe/), and by the lateral approximant /l/ in “l’ultima” (/ˈlultima):⁸⁵

I shall gather for you
the last rose of the garden,
the white rose which blooms
in the first mists.

For example, I used “blooms” instead of ‘blossoms’ or “flowers” to translate “fiorisce,” since the close vowel /u:/ in “blooms” (/blu:mz/) is more suggestive of tenderness than the open vowel /ɒ/ in “blossoms” (/ˈblɒsəmz/) or the diphthong /aʊ/ in “flowers” (/ˈflaʊəʒz/). However, as English does not have all the features to reproduce the sound effects of the original, the pains I took yielded only partial success. Surely the close vowel /u:/ or /u/ in “you” (/ju:/ or /ju/),⁸⁶ the close vowel /u:/, the bi-labial

⁸⁵ The word “approximant” is “A general term used by some PHONETICIANS in the classification of speech sounds on the basis of their MANNER OF ARTICULATION, and corresponding to what in other approaches would be called FRICTIONLESS CONTINUANTS, i.e. [w], [j], [r], [l] and all VOWELS. [...] In some analyses, [h] would also be considered an approximant (i.e. the voiceless equivalent of the VOWEL following).” See David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, 1st ed. 1980 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 5th ed. 2003), 30. The English sounds “[w] and [j], as in *wet* and *yet*” (Crystal, 413) are also called semi-vowels. A “semi-vowel,” according to Crystal, is “A term used in the classification of CONSONANT sounds on the basis of their MANNER OF ARTICULATION: it refers to a sound functioning as a consonant but lacking the PHONETIC characteristics normally associated with consonants (such as FRICTION or CLOSURE); instead, its QUALITY is phonetically that of a VOWEL; though, occurring as it does at the MARGINS of a SYLLABLE, its DURATION is much less than that typical of vowels” (Crystal, 413).

⁸⁶ In pronunciation, the English *you* has one strong form (/ju:/) and two weak forms (/ju/ and /jə/). See Note in Daniel Jones, *English Pronouncing Dictionary*, 15th ed., eds. Peter Roach and James Hartman, Pronunciation Associate, Jane Setter, first published by J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd. 1917, first published by Cambridge University Press 1991 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 557: “Weak form word. The strong form is used contrastively (e.g. ‘Will it be you, or me?’) or emphatically (e.g. ‘It was **you** that broke it’). Elsewhere the weak forms are used: in British English, /ju/ is the form found before vowels and in final position (e.g. ‘You ought’ /ju ˈɔ:t/ [US] -ɑ:t/; ‘Thank you’ /ˈæŋk.ju/), while /jə/ is only used before consonants (e.g. ‘if you can’ /ɪf.jəˈkæn/); in American English, /jə/ predominates in both environments. The strong form is also found in unstressed syllables. Sometimes when ‘you’ is weakly stressed and is preceded by

plosive /b/, and the alveolar lateral /l/ in “blooms,” the labio-dental fricative /f/ in “first” (/fɜ:st/), the bi-labial nasal /m/ in “mists” (/mɪsts/), and the sibilant, or, in more accurate phonetic terminology, the alveolar fricative /s/, in “first” and “mists” do play a part in conveying the poetic effect of the original, but many of the qualities described in my phonetic analysis of the Italian poem are lost in my translation. As a result, anyone who cannot read Bertolucci’s poem in the original will have no way of appreciating its musicality, which is fused with its sense and mood.⁸⁷

Very often, success is not guaranteed even when one translates from a source language which has close phonological affinities with the target language. Take Leonard Foster’s English translation of the following lines from Friedrich von Schiller’s “Das Lied von der Glocke” (“The Lay of the Bell”):

Welch Getümmel
 Straßen auf!
 Dampf wallt auf!
 Flackernd steigt die Feuersäule,
 Durch der Straße lange Zeile
 Wächst es fort mit Windeseile.
 Kochend wie aus Ofens Rachen
 Glühn die Lüfte, Balken krachen,
 Pfosten stürzen, Fenster klirren,
 Kinder jammern, Mütter irren,
 Tiere wimmern
 Unter Trümmern,
 Alles rennet, rettet, flüchtet,
 Taghell ist die Nacht gelichtet.

What a confusion up and down the streets! Smoke billows up. The pillar of fire rises and blazes, along the whole row of the street it grows with the speed of the wind; the draught sears like the breath of an oven, beams crack, posts collapse, windows shatter, children cry and mothers dither, animals whine beneath the ruins; everyone is running, saving, fleeing, the

a word normally ending in /d/, the two words are joined closely together as if they formed a single word with the affricate sound /dʒ/ linking the two parts. Thus ‘did you’ is often pronounced /ˈdɪdʒ.u/, and ‘behind you’ /bɪˈhaɪn.dʒu/. Similarly when the preceding word normally ends in /t/ (e.g. ‘hurt you’) it is sometimes pronounced /ˈhɜ:t.tʃu [US] ˈhɜ:r-/ and ‘don’t you know’ as /,dɒn.tʃəˈnəʊ [US] ,dɒn.tʃəˈnəʊ/.”

⁸⁷ Spanish, having many phonological affinities with Italian, would be a more suitable language for translating the sound effects of Bertolucci’s poem.

night is lit up like day.⁸⁸

The lines describe a disaster during the casting of a bell. When one reads the original, one is swept along by the hurried and breathtaking rhythm as well as by the harsh sounds of German. In Forster's translation, phrases like "beams crack, posts collapse, windows shatter, children cry" have captured some of the poetic qualities of the original, but the breathtaking sweep which characterizes the whole passage is lost, as is the discordance suggested by the harsh guttural sounds.⁸⁹

When it comes to rhyme, the translator's task is no less difficult. Take the case of an English translator, for example. Before he starts translating, he is already faced with the need to decide whether he should retain the rhyme scheme of the original or replace one rhyme scheme with another or simply use free verse; making the wrong decision could affect the translation immensely, as is the case with Mark Musa's version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In explaining why he had not used *terza rima* to translate *The Divine Comedy*, Mark Musa cited "five main qualities that rhyme gives to verse," which were first identified by Karl Shapiro: "the musical, the emphatic, the architectural, the sense of direction one feels in a well-turned stanza, and, finally, the effect of the rests that come between the stanzas."⁹⁰ Then he went on to argue that, in the case of *The Divine Comedy*, only two of the five qualities apply: "the musical and the emphatic." However, on closely reading *The Divine Comedy*, one can see practically all—instead of two—of the five qualities that Shapiro attributed to rhyme. Apart from "the musical and the emphatic," the other three qualities are, in varying degrees, also perceptible. As one reads the poem, one can easily see how *terza rima*, with its rhyme scheme aba, bcb, cdc..., gives the work a closely knit and interlocked structure, which is clearly an architectural quality. At the same time, *terza rima*, when read

⁸⁸ Leonard Forster, ed., *The Penguin Book of German Verse*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959), 268.

⁸⁹ As both English and German belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, the phonological affinity between them is much closer than that between German and any one of the Romance languages: both feature some very masculine and harsh sounds, which, when skilfully employed, can be as effective as the entering tone in Chinese for suggesting savageness, conflict, violence, or different kinds of discordance. It is a pity that Forster has not fully drawn on the phonological resources of the English language.

⁹⁰ Mark Musa, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, 3 vols., Vol 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatory*, Vol. 3, *Paradise*, by Dante Alighieri, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984-86), Vol. 1, *Inferno*, 61.

aloud, has the effect of imparting momentum to the verse, thereby creating a sense of direction in the poem. The final quality—"the effect of the rests that come between the stanzas"—is not so obvious, since *The Divine Comedy* is a long poem "whose only large subdivision is the canto";⁹¹ nevertheless, when a canto comes to a close, *terza rima* does give the reader a sense of rest before he proceeds further. For this reason, despite its accurate rhythm, Musa's highly readable English version of Dante's masterpiece still leaves something to be desired: in discarding *terza rima*, it has failed to preserve "the five main qualities that rhyme gives to verse."

With poets like Dante, rhyme is used for serious purposes. Very often, it can also perform other functions, one of which is the creation of comic effect in light verse. With poets like Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, whose nonsense verse has amused both children and adults, it can add to the humour of a poem, as can be seen in Lear's "How Pleasant to Know Mr. Lear":

He has ears, and two eyes, and ten fingers,
 Leastways if you reckon two thumbs;
 Long ago he was one of the singers,
 But now he is one of the dumbs.

He sits in a beautiful parlor,
 With hundreds of books on the wall;
 He drinks a great deal of Marsala,
 But never gets tipsy at all.⁹²

Rhyming "fingers" with "singers," "thumbs" with "dumbs," "parlor" with "Marsala," and (on the) "wall" with (at) "all," Lear has succeeded in creating bathos.

The same can be said of the following lines:

There was an Old Man with a nose,
 Who said, 'If you choose to suppose,
 That my nose is too long, you are certainly wrong!
 That remarkable man with a nose.⁹³

The rhyme in "nose" and "suppose," the internal rhyme in "long" and

⁹¹ Musa, *The Divine Comedy: Inferno*, 61.

⁹² M. H. Abrams et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 3rd. ed., 2 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), Vol. 2, 1550.

⁹³ Edward Lear, *The Complete Nonsense of Edward Lear*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1947), 4.

“wrong,” and the half-rhyme in “choose” and “suppose” all contribute to the comic effect of the piece.

In the hands of a competent translator, this kind of rhyme can be highly effective, as can be seen in Babette Deutsch’s English translation of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse*:

There are no inns. In a cold cottage
 You scarce can get a bowl of pottage:
 The menu hangs there, in plain sight,
 Merely to tease your appetite [...]⁹⁴

Ivan Petrovich ne’er was keen,
 Semyon Petrovich is as mean,
 Aunt Pelageya still possesses
 Monsieur Finemouche, friend of the house,
 And the same pom and the same spouse,
 The well-known clubman, who, God bless us,
 Is just as deaf and just as meek,
 And gorges seven days a week.⁹⁵

By skilfully tapping the potentialities of rhyme, Deutsch has produced some of the most hilarious verse in her English translation.

Rhyme used for comic purposes is not easy to translate. But more difficult are rhymes unique or peculiar to the source language. Take half-rhyme, for example. It is, as Cuddon has noted, “common in Icelandic, Irish and Welsh verse,”⁹⁶ and masters of this technique include Gerard Manley Hopkins, W. B. Yeats, Wilfred Owen, John Crowe Ransom, T. S. Eliot, Emily Dickinson, Allen Tate, and W. H. Auden.⁹⁷ With this poetic device, those who translate from English into Italian or Spanish would feel rather helpless; for words in these two Romance languages rarely rhyme in this manner.

Sometimes the sound effects in the original are so complex that they can tax the ingenuity of the translator to the utmost, as is the case with the following lines from Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “The Lotos-Eaters,” which is

⁹⁴ Babette Deutsch, trans., *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse*, by Alexander Pushkin, new rev. edition, edited with an introduction by Avrahm Yarmolinsky (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), 175.

⁹⁵ Deutsch, trans., *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse*, 180.

⁹⁶ Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 399.

⁹⁷ Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 399-400.

a classic example of “[t]he sound [seeming] an Echo to the sense”:⁹⁸

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
 Through every hollow cave and alley lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.⁹⁹

As Cuddon has aptly remarked, the lines, with the poet’s effective use of assonance, have “a kind of drowsy sonority,”¹⁰⁰ which is all but impossible to duplicate in another language. On the other hand, when a translator wants to tackle Chinese regulated verse, which has, as Yu-kung Kao has shown,¹⁰¹ highly complex tonal patterns, he will have to give up trying to reproduce those sound effects arising from the tonal patterns of the original if his target language is not tonal.¹⁰²

Nevertheless, when a translator does succeed in conveying the original’s sound effects, his version will be an avenue through which readers with no knowledge of the original can attain a highly pleasurable aesthetic experience. In translating the Greek poet John Gryparis’s “Sleep,” Constantine A. Trypanis has achieved exactly this kind of success, even though his use of prose as a medium of translation may have the limitations discussed earlier:

In a lily white as hail, whose petals a small butterfly will come at dawn to open with a kiss when sky and earth delight in the new light that is breaking in whiteness, a lily with a drop of cool dew in its heart.¹⁰³

The passage enables the reader to feel the softness and peace of sleep through the right sounds. The fresh, tender, and exquisite description and

⁹⁸ Alexander Pope, *Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 74.

⁹⁹ Alfred Tennyson, *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks, Annotated English Poets, General Editor, F. W. Bateson (London: Longman Group Limited; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.; 1969), 435.

¹⁰⁰ Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 63.

¹⁰¹ Yu-kung Kao, “The Aesthetics of Regulated Verse,” in *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to the T’ang*, eds. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 354-56; for the entire article, see 332-85.

¹⁰² Classical Greek is the only tonal European language I know of.

¹⁰³ Constantine A. Trypanis, trans. and ed., *The Penguin Book of Greek Verse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 574.

images (“a lily white as hail,” “petals,” “butterfly,” “new light [...] breaking in whiteness,” “cool dew”), the subtle blending of light and colour (“lily,” “white,” “whiteness”), and the tactile quality of words (“kiss,” “cool dew”) are reinforced by the sibilants (petals, kiss, sky, whiteness),¹⁰⁴ and by the long vowel /u:/ in “cool” (/ku:l/) and “dew” (/dju:/). Even as one who cannot read Modern Greek, I can feel the peace of sleep.¹⁰⁵

VI. Conclusion

The above discussion has painted a gloomy picture of poetry translation, which appears to be a task requiring almost superhuman abilities. While there is no denying the fact that, of all genres, poetry *is* the most difficult to translate, the task of translating it is both challenging and rewarding. When a translator wins a round in his wrestle with Proteus and Antaeus by dint of skill and hard work, his satisfaction will be far greater than that experienced by those translating other genres, for, as the intermediary between poet and reader, he will be twice blessed for bridging the gap between two languages and for bringing to the world the song of the Muses.

¹⁰⁴ My italics.

¹⁰⁵ To show how a reader who has no knowledge of the original responds to a translation, I have, in this paper, deliberately quoted versions of poems written in languages which I cannot read (namely, Hebrew, Japanese, Russian, and Modern Greek).

POETRY TRANSLATION
AS CRITICAL FINE-TUNING:
WITH REFERENCE TO *HAMLET*
AND ITS VERSIONS IN CHINESE
AND IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

[ABSTRACT]

Translation as an activity is as old as human civilization; translation criticism is not much younger. Long before scholars like Tytler proposed their criteria for assessing translations, telling what translators should or should not do, readers of translations, if they were familiar with both the source and target languages, had already begun to engage in translation criticism. As time went by, opinions, convictions, beliefs, precepts, principles, and theories accumulated, forming critical canons by which translations are judged. However, in translating a text from one language into another, especially when the source and target languages belong to different language families, one often becomes aware that certain well-established, widely accepted rules, principles, criteria, generalizations, or theories no longer apply, so much so that they have to be modified, giving rise to what one would call critical fine-tuning. With reference to the translation of the dramatic poetry of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into Chinese and European languages, this paper discusses such a phenomenon, and examines how certain traditional criteria or theories cease to be valid where equivalence, poetic or dramatic effects, and so on are concerned.

I. Fine-Tuning in Literary Criticism

Literary criticism is something that happens “after the fact,”¹ that is, an activity or an event that takes place only after a work of literature has come into being. A classic example is Aristotle's *Poetics*, which was written after Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and other Greek writers had produced their epics, plays, and so on. It was only when these artefacts of literature had been created that Aristotle was able to theorize

¹ The phrase “after the fact” is normally used as a legal term, meaning “after the commission of a crime”; here, it is used loosely—or metaphorically—meaning “after the production of a work / works of literature.”

about poetry and drama. In writing about drama—to take just one genre, for example—Aristotle succeeded in “setting forth certain universal principles of tragedy.”² But since these principles were based only on the works that Aristotle could have access to, the universality of his principles could not be absolute; with the passage of time, when new works—particularly those by highly original minds—appeared, the principles laid down in the *Poetics* had to be fine-tuned. Take the rules of the unities. First put forward by Aristotle and “formally stated as rules of drama by Castelvetro in 1570,”³ they were strictly adhered to by the French Neo-Classical school; Corneille was attacked by “the newly formed French Academy” “for not perfectly following the ‘rule’ of the unities” in *Le Cid* (1636). The rules “remained for nearly two centuries, until they were overthrown by Victor Hugo’s *Hernani* (1830), which replaced classical theories with romantic ones. Since then dramatists have not considered themselves under any obligation to observe the unities.”⁴ In England, the rules of the unities were given even shorter shrift. As Hornstein et al. have observed, “[t]he rule of the unities applies only to drama on the classical model [...]. English drama of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods [...] is largely independent of it. Shakespeare and Marlowe, for example, pay little heed to these ‘rules’.”⁵ If Corneille, Hugo, Shakespeare, and Marlowe had neglected the unities at their own expense, Aristotle’s principles might have remained unshaken; however, by parting company with him on the unities, these playwrights had succeeded in pushing back the frontiers of drama, whereas “[t]he strict adherence of the French Neo-Classical school to the unities sometimes resulted in a rigidity which Aristotle could hardly have intended.”⁶ For

² Lillian Herlands Hornstein et al., *The Reader’s Companion to World Literature*, a Mentor book (New York and Toronto: The New American Library, 1956), 357.

³ Hornstein et al., 465.

⁴ Hornstein et al., 465.

⁵ Hornstein et al., 465.

⁶ Hornstein et al., 356. In an address entitled “Zum Shakespears Tag” ‘On Shakespeare Day,’ Goethe made a similar point, declaring how, after reading Shakespeare, he began to renounce the unities: “Ich zweifelte keinen Augenblick dem regelmäßigen Theater zu entsagen. Es schien mir die Einheit des Orts so kerkermäßig ängstlich, die Einheiten der Handlung und der Zeit lästige Fesseln unsrer Einbildungskraft; ich sprang in die freie Luft und fühlte erst daß ich Hände und Füße hatte” (Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Ästhetische Schriften 1771-1805*, herausgegeben von Friedmar Apel, Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker 151, I. Abteilung, Band 18 [Vol. 18] of *Sämtliche Werke: Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, herausgegeben von Friedmar Apel et al., vierzig Bände [40 vols.]

this reason, Aristotle's literary criticism had to be fine-tuned by works that appeared many generations later.

II. Poetry Translation as a Fine-Tuning Act for Translation Criticism

While fine-tuning in literary criticism can easily be observed and noted even by the general reader—and documented by scholars—a similar phenomenon in translation criticism,⁷ if observed and noted at all, has not, so far, been systematically studied, particularly with respect to poetry translation.⁸ In this paper, with reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and its

(Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998), Vol. 18, 10). 'I did not hesitate a single moment longer to renounce the so-called "regular" theatre. The unity of place seemed to me as close and restrictive as a dungeon; the unities of action and of time appeared like irksome bonds laid upon our imagination. I arose, and for the first time I felt that I had hands and feet' (W. B. Rönfeldt, trans., *Criticisms, Reflections, and Maxims of Goethe*, the Scott Library 34 (New York: Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1897), 42).

⁷ By criticism, I also mean, in this paper, generalizations, deductions, beliefs, and convictions which have been put forward or revived in the past forty years as theories, such as Gideon Toury's conviction about the superiority of descriptive translation studies over prescriptive ones, Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, Lefevere's theory of rewriting, Derrida's deconstructionism, and so on. As I have argued in "The Shifting Nexus: Translation Revisited," these "theories" are not, strictly speaking, theories in the strict sense of the word, because they are only convictions, beliefs, or personal views, which are inexhaustive, unverifiable, or based on observations of isolated phenomena, observations that have no universal validity. As such, they should not be accorded the same status as the theories put forward by Catford in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, by Nida and Taber in *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, and by Nida in *Toward a Science of Translating*. See J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969); and Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964).

⁸ In an article entitled "Il traduttore e la teoria," Morini has the following to say about translation theory: "la teoria non è altro che l'osservazione di un qualsiasi fenomeno o di una qualsiasi attività. Dunque, la teoria della traduzione è semplicemente l'osservazione della traduzione e dell'attività traduttiva: essa

versions in Chinese and in four European languages, namely, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, I shall show how poetry translation, in this case the translation of dramatic poetry, can function as a fine-tuning act for translation criticism.⁹ By fine-tuning, I mean the adjustment or modification of existing convictions, principles, and rules relating to poetry translation, whether they were formulated as theories or simply as principles and guidelines consciously or unconsciously followed by practitioners of translation. I have chosen to study Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and its versions in Chinese and in European languages for a number of reasons. First, as a poetic drama, *Hamlet* encompasses poetry in various forms and moods, perhaps in more forms and moods than any other work of literature in English: the lyrical, the dramatic, the epical, the meditative, the declamatory, the conversational, the bombastic, and so on, ranging from the most homely to the most sublime, so that conclusions about poetry translation drawn from *Hamlet* and its versions should have greater validity. Second, Shakespeare is arguably the greatest poet of all time; his style, particularly as shown in *Hamlet*, encompasses a range not found in

comprende non solo la 'traduttologia' in senso stretto, ma anche ogni disciplina che possa aiutarci a fare luce sul modo di operare del traduttore, sul passaggio da un codice linguistico all'altro, sulla natura e sulla struttura del testo di partenza." 'Theory is nothing but the observation of any phenomenon or of any activity. Therefore, translation theory is simply the observation of translations and of the act of translating: it includes not only "translatology" in the strict sense of the word, but also every discipline that can help shed light on the way the translator operates, on the transfer of one linguistic code to another, and on the nature and structure of the source text' (my translation). For the quotation in Italian, see Massimiliano Morini, "Il traduttore e la teoria," in *Teoria e pratica della traduzione letteraria*, ed. Roberto Puggioni (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 2006), 201; for the entire article, see 201-210. Apart from the fact that the phrase "on the nature and structure of the source text" is incomplete, and should be amended as "on the nature and structure of the source and target texts," Morini's definition of the theory of translation is, on the whole, sound; it is another way of saying that theory arises from practice. For this reason, actual practice can, by definition, modify or help reformulate theory in the light of new findings relating to the nature of translation and to the translation process.

⁹ Because of space limitations, I shall confine myself to only one version in Chinese, which is a version by myself, entitled *Jiedu Hamuleite: Shashibiya yuanzhu Hanyi ji xiangzhu* 解讀《哈姆雷特》——莎士比亞原著漢譯及詳註 'Reading and Interpreting Hamlet: A Fully Annotated Chinese Translation of Shakespeare's Play' (Peking: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, January 2013).

other works of literature; consequently, findings resulting from a close study of different versions of *Hamlet* should be more convincing in stylistic terms than findings resulting from versions of any other work. Third, as Chinese and European languages belong to different language families, observations based on these versions will be applicable to more language pairs than observations based on versions belonging to the same language family. It should also be pointed out that, as a means of fine-tuning translation criticism, poetry is much more effective than prose, since poetry involves the use of language in all its complexity, which is beyond the reach of prose; as such, poetry translation can reveal more about the operation of language as well as about the translation process, thereby constituting a more effective testing ground for scrutinizing and verifying existing opinions, convictions, beliefs, principles, criteria, and theories by which translations are assessed.

III. Yardstick for Assessing Dramatic Poetry

In the study of poetry translation, no matter what form the genre is written in, semantic accuracy is one of the most important qualities that the translator or the translation critic sets great store by. Given a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a stanza, the translator's primary task is to get the "message" across. As the "message" of a text consists largely—though by no means solely—in its semantic content, once the translator has successfully grappled with the semantic content of the source-language text, his task is, for all practical purposes, half accomplished. The other half of his task is, as I have argued in "Defying Zeus in German: Goethe's 'Prometheus' as a Case of Untranslatability,"¹⁰ its phonological content.

¹⁰ In this article, I have shown how the phonological content of a poem makes up an important part of its message. To distinguish the various levels of language in the translation process, it is possible to go further, as Marta Mateo Martínez-Bartolomé has done in her article entitled "El nivel fonológico del lenguaje en el proceso de traducción" "The phonological level of language in the process of translation": "El proceso de traducción lleva implícitos todos los niveles y funciones del lenguaje. [...] y considerando que no hay un acuerdo unánime entre los lingüistas respecto a la clasificación de los niveles lingüísticos, podríamos distinguir en términos generales entre el nivel fonológico, el gráfico, el morfo-sintáctico, el semántico y el pragmático." "The process of translation involves all the levels and functions of language. [...] and in view of the fact that there is no unanimous agreement among linguists with respect to the classification of the linguistic levels, we could, in general terms, distinguish between the phonological level, the graphical level, the morpho-syntactical level, the semantic

In translating a poetic drama, however, the translator's task may often remain unfinished even when he has adequately attended to the semantic and phonological levels of the source-language text, for there is yet another yardstick by which his success or otherwise is measured: the yardstick of audibility. This is because dramatic poetry differs from other forms of poetry in one very important respect: whereas the message of other forms of poetry can generally be considered "received" by the reader once the poem is read, that is, conveyed to the addressee through the sense of sight by means of print or writing,¹¹ the message of dramatic poetry is "received" only when it is properly heard. By "properly heard," I mean "understood by the audience through the ear." In other words, while other forms of poetry are largely meant for the eye,¹² the poetry of poetic drama is meant for the ear. When one reads a poem in an anthology, one can take in the lines at one's own pace; when one has difficulty understanding a certain word or phrase, one can ponder over it in a leisurely manner, go back a line, a stanza, or even pages to figure out what the poet is—or was—talking about. If necessary, one can put down the anthology and look up a word in the dictionary or an allusion in a reference book. With a play, which is meant to be performed, watched, and heard—rather than read—by the audience, the playwright does not have the same privilege as writers of other forms of poetry do; his audience cannot stop the actors in the middle of a performance, and tell them to repeat a line which they did not understand when it was first spoken. In the theatre, "first spoken" also means "last spoken," for the actors are allowed to say only once what they have to say; in the theatre, once a word is uttered, it is gone for ever, never to be retrieved from the abyss of time; if it does not, at the very moment it

level, and the pragmatic level' (my translation). See Marta Mateo Martínez-Bartolomé, "El nivel fonológico del lenguaje en el proceso de traducción," in *La traducción de lo inefable: Actas del I Congreso Internacional de Traducción e Interpretación de Soria, 1-3 de diciembre de 1993*, ed. Excm. Diputación Provincial de Soria (Soria (España): Colegio Universitario de Soria—Universidad de Valladolid, 1994), 79; for the entire article, see 75-89.

¹¹ A lyric, in its original form, was meant to be sung; some epics, such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, are better understood or appreciated when chanted or read aloud, but their dependence on the ear is by no means comparable to that of poetic drama, a point to be elaborated on in this paper.

¹² It must be emphasized that this distinction is only one of degree, for other forms of poetry, whether lyric or epic, are better appreciated if they are read aloud. For example, though Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an allegory or, in a looser sense of the word, an epic, it is better understood, appreciated, and enjoyed when read aloud, so that the ear—as well as the eye—can also participate in the reception process.

is released from the lips of the actor, leave an intelligible impression on the minds of the audience, it will have no second chance. For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that every word spoken on stage should be heard and readily understood. To borrow the language of information technology, the actors' input should readily lend itself to quick, effective, and continuously smooth processing by the audience, in which no hitch is allowed; the words, phrases, sentences are fibre optic cables through which the playwright's message travels; if the fibre optic cables are of poor quality, the message gets distorted or blocked.

IV. The Need for Audibility in Translating *Hamlet*

In translating *Hamlet*, particularly in translating *Hamlet* into Chinese, the translator is constantly reminded of this need for audibility. Take 1.3.74-76,¹³ for example:

Neither a borrower nor a lender be,¹⁴
 For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulleth th'edge of husbandry.¹⁵

別向人借錢，也不要借錢給人。
 借錢往往會丟錢，也丟掉朋友；
 借錢(之舉) / (的做法)，¹⁶會弄鈍節儉之鋒刃。¹⁷

Bié xiàng rén jiè qián, yě bù yào jiè qián gěi rén.

¹³ In the quotations from *Hamlet* in this paper, Arabic numerals stand in sequence for the act, scene, and line numbers of the play. Thus, "1.3.74-76" means "Act I, scene 3, lines 74-76."

¹⁴ This line is the F (Folio) reading; in Thompson and Taylor's edition, which is generally based on the First Quarto, this line reads: "Neither a borrower nor a lender, boy." See Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Thomson Learning, 2006).

¹⁵ Thompson and Taylor, 196.

¹⁶ The two phrases in brackets are two possible versions for amplifying in Chinese the word "borrowing" in the original.

¹⁷ My translation. See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Jiedu Hamuleite: Shashibiya yuanzhu Hanyi ji xiangzhu 解讀《哈姆雷特》——莎士比亞原著漢譯及詳註 'Reading and Interpreting Hamlet: A Fully Annotated Chinese Translation of Shakespeare's Play,'* 2 vols., *Fanyi yu kuaxueke xueshu yanjiu congshu 翻譯與跨學科學術研究叢書* (Peking: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, January 2013), Vol. 1, 212-13.

Jiè qián wǎngwǎng huì diū qián, yě diū diào péng-you;
jièqián (zhījǔ) / (-de zuòfǎ), huì nóng dùn jiéjiǎn zhī fēngrèn.¹⁸

In my first rendering, the amplification (which is required by Chinese idiom) for “borrowing” was “zhījǔ 之舉” (/tʃi⁽¹⁾/ /tʃy⁽³⁾/)¹⁹, meaning “the act of”; however, as soon as I became aware that “zhījǔ” (/tʃi⁽¹⁾/ /tʃy⁽³⁾/) could not be readily grasped by the audience because of its weak and indistinct syllables, leaving the audience uncertain as to what its referents are,²⁰ I changed it to “-de zuòfǎ” (/dǎ⁽⁵⁾/ /tso⁽⁴⁾/ /fǎ⁽³⁾/), also meaning “the act of,” which, being more sonorous and more readily distinguishable from other Chinese syllables standing for other characters in the Chinese script, is readily audible. For this reason, though the two phrases have more or less the same meaning, the latter was preferred because of its greater audibility.

V. Translating *Hamlet* into European Languages

When it comes to translation between English and other European languages, the above consideration immediately becomes a non-issue.

¹⁸ To give readers who do not read Chinese an idea of what the lines sound like, Chinese characters are transcribed in the Chinese phonetic alphabet (*Hanyu Pinyin Zimu* 漢語拼音字母).

¹⁹ The pronunciation of the Chinese version is transcribed in brackets in the International Phonetic Alphabet; the superscript Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in superscript brackets indicate the five tones (the first, the second, the third, the fourth, and the light tone) in modern standard Chinese, which, in the Chinese phonetic alphabet, are respectively indicated by five tone marks put above or before the letter concerned: “ˊ” put above the letter for the first tone, “ˊˊ” put above the letter for the second tone, “ˇ” put above the letter for the third tone, “ˋ” put above the letter for the fourth tone, “ˋˋ” put before the letter for the light tone.

²⁰ In Chinese, there are many other characters represented by the sounds /tʃi⁽¹⁾/ (zhī) and /tʃy⁽³⁾/ (jǔ); in a split second, which is the amount of time allowed for comprehension in the theatre, the audience may not be able to know what “zhījǔ” means because of the many possible *signifiés* the two sounds may have. When the Chinese characters are given in print and meant to be read, no misunderstanding on the part of the reader is likely, since the two characters can immediately supply the reader with the necessary visual co-ordinates, as it were, for fixing the meaning. In the theatre, a split second’s hesitation on the part of the audience would immediately hamper communication, for, even if the hesitation could help clear any ambiguity, the audience, left behind by the dialogue, would have difficulty catching up after this split second’s pause.

Thus, with the two Spanish versions respectively by Martínez Lafuente and María Valverde of the same lines quoted above,

Procura no dar ni pedir prestado á nadie; porque el que presta suele perder á un tiempo el dinero y el amigo, y el que se acostumbra á pedir prestado falta al espíritu de economía y buen orden que nos es tan útil.²¹

No pidas prestado, ni prestes; pues préstamo muchas veces se pierde a sí mismo y al amigo, y el pedir prestado embota el filo a la economía [.]²²

the need to choose between versions that are more audible and versions that are less audible is much less obvious, since Spanish, like English and any other European language, is largely polysyllabic; that is to say, most of its words are made up of more than one syllable.²³ In both versions, “borrowing” is translated by “pedir prestado,” a group of words consisting of five syllables. Even if one or two or three syllables in this word-group lack sonority, the rest of the five syllables can readily “come to their rescue” and help the audience determine the meaning of the word-group; in other words, because the number of syllables carrying the message is large, setting up what I would call unambiguous auditory co-ordinates for the ear, the audience is unlikely to get confused as to what “pedir prestado”

²¹ R. Martínez Lafuente, trans., *Hamlet, Príncipe de Dinamarca*, in *Obras completas de Shakespeare*, by William Shakespeare, Prólogo de Víctor Hugo, Tomo primero [Vol. 1], 73-204, Clásicos ingleses (Valencia: Prometeo, 1900), Vol. 1, 91; 12 vols. Martínez Lafuente’s scene division is different from Thompson and Taylor’s; the passage quoted appears in Act 1, scene 8 (Acto Primero, Escena VIII).

²² José María Valverde, trans., *Hamlet, Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare (Barcelona: Planeta, 2000), 19.

²³ The same is not true of Chinese, in which every single syllable can stand for many words. Take the syllable “yì,” for example. In the *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典 ‘*Dictionary of Modern Chinese*,’ which is the most authoritative medium-sized dictionary of its kind, there are 93 entries under “yì,” each of which is a character with one or more than one meaning, and which can be recognized and readily understood when read in print, but not recognizable when heard without reference to the printed text. With very few exceptions, Chinese words are monosyllabic; what with this monosyllabicity and the limited number of distinctly different syllables, the average Chinese utterance orally delivered by the performer (addresser) is more likely to give rise to ambiguity than its counterpart in a European language, be it English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, or Greek.

means.²⁴

In the following versions in French, German, and Italian, such auditory co-ordinates are also readily available:

Ne sois ni emprunter, ni prêteur; car le prêt fait perdre souvent argent et ami, et l'emprunt émousse l'économie.²⁵

Ne prête ni n'emprunte; car souvent, par un prêt, l'on perd et l'argent et l'ami; quant à l'emprunt, il émousse le sens de l'économie.²⁶

N'emprunte ni ne prête; car prêter,
C'est souvent perdre et l'argent et l'ami,
Et emprunter use l'esprit d'épargne.²⁷

Kein Borger sei und auch Verleiher nicht;
Sich und den Freund verliert das Darlehn oft,
Und Borgen stumpft der Wirtschaft Spitze ab.²⁸

²⁴ For a detailed discussion of “auditory co-ordinates,” see “Comprehensibility in Drama Translation: With Reference to *Hamlet* and Its Versions in Chinese and in European Languages” in this volume.

²⁵ François-Victor Hugo, trans., *Hamlet*, in *Théâtre complet*, by William Shakespeare, Édition illustrée, Tome II [Vol. 2], 713-835 (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1961), 735; 2 vols.

²⁶ André Gide, trans., *La tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark / Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, in *Shakespeare: Oeuvres complètes*, by William Shakespeare, ed. d'Henri Fluchère, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Vol. 2 (*Tragédies*), 613-702 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1959), 625.

²⁷ Yves Bonnefoy, trans., *Hamlet. Le Roi Lear*, by William Shakespeare, Collection folio classique (Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 1978), 51.

²⁸ A. W. v. Schlegel and L. Tieck, trans., *Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark*, in *Shakespeares dramatische Werke*, by William Shakespeare, herausgegeben und revidiert von Hans Matter, Erster Birkhäuser-Klassiker 13, Erster Band [Vol. 1], 101-226 (Basel: Verlag Birkhäuser, 1943), Vol. 1, 120-21; 12 vols. The Schlegel-Tieck version is actually solely the work of August Wilhelm von Schlegel. According to Richard M. Meyer's *Die deutsche Literatur des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* ‘*German Literature of the Nineteenth Century*,’ “In this work of national significance, he [Schlegel] was supported by Dorothea Tieck and Count Wolf Baudissin. Schlegel himself translated seventeen plays, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. The only contribution which Tieck himself made to this great achievement of romanticism was his name” (cited in Paul Selver, *The Art of Translating Poetry* (London: John Baker Publishers Ltd., 1966), 107).

Non prendere a prestito nè prestare ad altrui; chè sovente il prestatore perde il prestito e l'amico; e il togliere a prestito spegne l'amor della parsimonia.²⁹

Non indebitarti e non prestar soldi, perché chi presta perde sé e l'amico, e il debito smussa il filo dell'economia.³⁰

Whether it is “emprunt” or “emprunter” in Hugo’s, Gide’s, or Bonnefoy’s French version, or “Borgen” in the German version, the abundance of phonemes serves as a useful pointer to the meaning of the word. In the Italian versions, Rusconi’s “togliere a prestito” and Montale’s “debito” both have sufficient phonemic information to prevent ambiguity, so that the message is clear and intelligible when it reaches the audience. Generally speaking, the context of an utterance can facilitate comprehension, but if the context is not very helpful, as happens in my Chinese version, phonemic richness can make up for the deficiency.³¹

²⁹ Carlo Rusconi, trans., *Amleto: Principe di Danimarca*, in *Teatro completo di Shakespeare*, by William Shakespeare, voltato in prosa italiana, quarta edizione [4th ed.], Vol 2, 5-98 (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice, 1858), Vol. 2, 18; 6 vols.

³⁰ Eugenio Montale, trans., *Amleto, Principe di Danimarca*, by William Shakespeare (Milano: Enrico Cenerina, 1949), 36.

³¹ One may argue that, like the Chinese *zhījū*, the French *emprunt* and the German *Borgen* are also only disyllabic, and, therefore, no different in terms of audibility. But one must remember that the consonant *r* in the French and German words (pronounced /r/ in French and /r/ in German) can supply the audience with one more “auditory co-ordinate” in their effort to “decode,” as it were, the playwright’s message. In this connection, one should point out that final consonants like /k/, /p/, and /t/, as well as consonant clusters, in English and German words can serve as distinguishing features as far as the need to reduce the possibility of ambiguity is concerned. Compared with English and German, French is at a disadvantage, for final consonants like /s/ and /t/, which are orthographically represented by the letters *s* and *t* respectively, are often “suppressed” in French words. In the French versions by Hugo and Gide, for example, “prêt,” “fait,” “souvent,” “argent,” “l’emprunt,” and “perd” all have their final consonants (/t/ and /d/) suppressed. This suppression of final consonants has a serious drawback where communication in the theatre is concerned: it reduces the number of distinguishing features of the language in spoken form and increases its “ambiguity rate” vis-à-vis English and German. The phonetic feature called liaison in French, as shown in the pronunciation of “quant à” in Gide’s version, further complicates the matter. Unpronounced in single words or when followed by initial consonants, the final consonants /d/, /t/, and so on in French become liaised with vowels that follow

VI. The Need to Prevent Ambiguity

Sometimes, apart from the sound quality, the need to prevent ambiguity arising from homophones should also be taken into consideration in the translator's choice of words. Take 1.1.45-48, in which Horatio is speaking to the ghost:

What are thou that usurp'st this time of night
 Together with that fair and warlike form
 In which the majesty of buried Denmark
 Did sometimes march? By heaven, I charge thee speak.³²

In translating the phrase “with that fair and warlike form” in the second line, I first used the Chinese phrase “*bìrán quánfú wǔzhūāng* 贲然全副武装” ‘majestically armed,’ which had a strong appeal for me, since it is concise, idiomatic, and semantically accurate, able to fuse colloquial and classical Chinese together effortlessly. However, after reading the phrase aloud to myself, I became aware of two problems. First, the word “*bì* 贲,” pronounced /bi⁽⁴⁾/, lacks audibility. Second, collocated with “*rán* 然” (equivalent to the English adverb-forming suffix *-ly*), it can give rise to ambiguity, for the two syllables “*bìrán*” can represent the identical pronunciation of at least two different pairs of Chinese characters, namely “*贲然*,” meaning “majestically,” and “*必然*,” meaning “certainly” or “definitely.” As “*bìrán*” in the first sense is classical and rarely used in everyday Chinese, ninety-nine theatre-goers out of a hundred would be more likely to associate it with “*必然*” ‘certainly’ or ‘definitely’ rather than “*贲然*” ‘majestically,’ thereby misunderstanding the message intended by me, or, to be more precise, by Shakespeare. To avoid this ambiguity, I gave up “*bìrán quánfú wǔzhūāng* 贲然全副武装” and

them. Thus when standing alone or when followed by another consonant, the letter *t* in *quant* is mute; but when it is followed by a vowel, as in the case of “*quant à*,” the letter *t* assumes a phonetic value and is pronounced and linked to the /a/ sound of “*à*.” Because of the suppression of final consonants and because of the presence of liaison, French is a more difficult language to follow by the ear than either English or German. A non-native speaker of French, English, and German, who can assess the “ambiguity rate” of each of these languages more objectively than native speakers of these languages, will be able to tell us to what extent dictation in a beginners’ course in French is more formidable than dictation in a beginners’ course in either English or German.

³² Thompson and Taylor, 153.

replaced it with “*xuān’áng wǔzhuāng* 軒昂武裝,”³³ in which “*xuān’áng* 軒昂,” also meaning “majestically,” is sonorous and unlikely to be misunderstood.

VII. The Audience’s Familiarity with the Message

At other times, a Chinese version may be phonetically clear and audible; but because of its semantic unfamiliarity to the average Chinese theatre-goer, it has to be replaced by a version which is more familiar, as can be found in the translation of 1.3.114-16:

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks – I do know
When the blood burns how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows.³⁴

唉，是捕捉鸕鶿的圈套。我深切
了解，熱血沸騰時，激情會怎樣
揮霍，把誓言借給舌頭。³⁵

*Ài, shì bǔzhuō ānchún ·de quāntào. Wǒ shēnqiè
liǎojiě, rèxuè fèiténg shí, jīqíng huì zěnyàng
huīhuò, bǎ shìyán jiègěi shé·tou.*

In semantic terms, “woodcocks” should be translated by “*qiūyù* 丘鶻” ‘woodcocks’ or “*shānyù* 山鶻” ‘woodcocks’ in Chinese. But as both Chinese words are rarely met with in everyday language, whether written or spoken, they are unlikely to be active in the audience’s vocabulary and, consequently, equally unlikely to be readily understood; for this reason, a more common bird, “*ānchún* 鸕鶿” ‘quail,’ is substituted for “*qiūyù*” and “*shānyù*.” In this case, semantic equivalence has yielded precedence to the needs of the stage.

When the same passage is translated into French, German, Italian, or Spanish, the decision as to which word to use depends on whether the would-be version can, in the translator’s opinion, readily be understood by the French- German-, Italian-, or Spanish-speaking theatre-goer:

³³ My translation of the lines is as follows: “甚麼東西，膽敢篡奪深夜 / 時分，篡奪軒昂武裝。下葬 / 不久的先王，生前行軍，就是這樣 / 打扮。皇天在上，我要你回答。” See Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 157-58.

³⁴ Thompson and Taylor, 199.

³⁵ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol.1, 217.

Ah, piège pour les bécasses! moi, je sais
Combien facilement, quand le sang brûle,
L'âme prête à la bouche les serments.³⁶

Bah! pièges à attraper des grues! Je sais, alors que le sang brûle, avec
quelle prodigalité l'âme prête des serments à la langue.³⁷

Miroir à alouettes! Parbleu, je sais: quand le sang s'allume, l'âme n'est pas
chiche de serments.³⁸

Ja, Sprenkel für die Drosseln. Weiß ich doch,
Wenn das Blut kocht, wie das Gemüt der Zunge
Freigebig Schwüre leiht.³⁹

Già! Trappole per gli uccelli di passo! Lo so io quando brucia il sangue
come fa presto l'anima a dar voti alla lingua.⁴⁰

Bonnefoy's "bécasses" is a direct equivalent of the English "woodcocks." On the other hand, Hugo, Gide, Schlegel and Tieck, and Montale have avoided direct equivalents, apparently because they considered them less common in the vocabulary of the French, German, or Italian audience, and, therefore, less easily understood. Hence Hugo's "grues" 'cranes,' Gide's "alouettes" 'larks,'⁴¹ Schlegel and Tieck's "Drosseln" 'thrushes,' and Montale's "uccelli di passo" 'birds of passage.'

VIII. Fine-Tuning Tytler's First Principle

In his *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, Tytler laid down three laws after describing "a good translation":

I would therefore describe a good translation to be, *That, in which the*

³⁶ Bonnefoy, 53.

³⁷ Hugo, 736.

³⁸ Gide, 626.

³⁹ Schlegel and Tieck, 122.

⁴⁰ Montale, 38.

⁴¹ "Miroir à alouettes" is, literally, a "revolving mirror used to catch larks"; figuratively it means "catch-penny" (Chevalley, A, and M. Chevalley, comp., *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 543, "miroir."

merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work.

Now, supposing this description to be a just one, which I think it is, let us examine what are the laws of translation which may be deduced from it.

It will follow,

I. That the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.⁴²

II. That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.

III. That the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.⁴³

⁴² From the point of view of the philosophy of language, it may be argued that it is not possible to prove whether a translator has succeeded in producing “a *complete* (my italics) transcript of the ideas of the original work,” since, as Eco has convincingly argued, to do so, we would need a “*tertium comparationis*,” “that Perfect or Adamic or Universal language,” or what Walter Benjamin called the “*reine Sprache*” ‘pure language,’ the kind of language which is never attainable. For Eco’s argument, see Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, trans., Alastair McEwen, Toronto Italian Studies, Goggio Publication Series, General Editor: Olga Zorzi Pugliese (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 9-12.

⁴³ A. F. Tytler, *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, 1st ed. 1791, Everyman’s Library 97, ed. Ernest Rhys (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 3rd ed. 1813), 8-9. Tytler’s three laws can be studied alongside a point made by van den Broeck: “From the viewpoint of a theory of texts translation equivalence must be considered a *semiotic category* (Neubert 1970: 451). This is to say that it comprises a *syntactic*, a *semiotic*, and a *pragmatic* component. In other words, equivalence results from the relation between signs, from the interrelation between the signs and what they stand for, and from the interaction between the signs, what they stand for, and those who use them. These three components are hierarchically related to one another: semantic equivalence must be given priority over syntactic equivalence, whereas both syntactic and semantic equivalence are conditioned and modified by the requirements of pragmatic equivalence.” For van de Broeck’s argument, see Raymond van den Broeck, “The Concept of Equivalence in Translation Theory: Some Critical Reflections,” in *Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary Studies with a Basic Bibliography of Books on Translation Studies*, eds. James S. Holmes, José Lambert, and Raymond van den Broeck (Leuven, Belgium: Acco (Academic Publishing Company), 1978), 39; for the entire article, see 29-47. In Tytler’s theory, the same hierarchy could have been established from the outset, which, in the light of my discussion of the versions of *Hamlet* in Chinese and in European languages, is found to be necessary.

Formulated with respect to translation between European languages without reference to the requirements of the stage, these three laws cannot be expected to be universally valid. In the light of the findings discussed above, the first law needs fine-tuning, for the expression “a complete transcript” may imply rigid adherence to the original in semantic terms. In the translation of dramatic poetry, as has just been shown, the need for “a complete transcript” is obviously less important than the needs of the stage.

IX. Linkage in Dialogue

When a version of dramatic poetry is both audible and unambiguous, it has yet to pass a third test: whether it can satisfy the need for proper linkage in the dialogue. To illustrate this point, let us look at the following example (1.2.235-38), in which Hamlet and Horatio are talking about the ghost:

HAMLET	Stayed it long?
HORATIO	While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.
MARCELLUS, BARNARDO	Longer, longer.
HORATIO	Not when I saw't. ⁴⁴

Rendering “Longer, longer” alone, the vast majority of translators whose target language is Chinese would most likely come up with something like “*gèng jiǔ, gèng jiǔ* 更久, 更久” ‘longer, longer’ or “*gèng cháng, gèng cháng* 更長, 更長” ‘longer, longer,’ but spoken after a Chinese rendering like “*yǐ yībān sùdù kěyǐ shǔ dào yībǎi* 以一般速度可以數到一百” ‘While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred,’ or something to that effect, the phrase “*gèng jiǔ, gèng jiǔ* 更久, 更久” ‘longer, longer’ or “*gèng cháng, gèng cháng* 更長, 更長” ‘longer, longer’ would sound rather abrupt and disjointed, lacking the natural and easy flow required of normal dialogue,⁴⁵ in which speakers interact with and echo each other. To satisfy this requirement, one would have to depart from the Chinese semantic equivalent of “longer, longer,” and use a different phrase, a phrase that comes after “*yǐ yībān sùdù kěyǐ shǔ dào yībǎi* 以一般速度可以數到一百” ‘While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred’ in a more conversation-like manner: “*bùzhǐ yībǎi* 不止一百” ‘More than a hundred.’

⁴⁴ Thompson and Taylor, 186.

⁴⁵ The word “normal” is important, for, on certain occasions, “natural and easy flow” may have to be avoided for stylistic purposes.

As a result, the natural and easy flow of the dialogue would be retained:

哈姆雷特 ‘Hamlet’	那個東西待得久嗎？ ‘Stayed it long?’
賀雷修 ‘Horatio’	以一般速度可以數到一百。 ‘While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.’
馬瑟勒、巴納多 ‘Marcellus, Barnardo’	不止一百。 ‘More than a hundred.’
賀雷修 ‘Horatio’	我見到的那一次沒有這麼久。 ‘Not when I saw’t.’

When it comes to translation of the same line from English into Spanish, no such adjustment is required, whether for stylistic or for non-stylistic reasons:

Hamlet. –	¿Y permaneció mucho tiempo?
Horacio. –	El que puede emplearse en contar desde uno hasta ciento con moderada diligencia.
Marcelo. –	Más, más estuvo.
Horacio. –	Cuando yo le vi, no. ⁴⁶
Hamlet.	¿Se quedó mucho tiempo?
Horacio.	Mientras uno podría haber contado hasta ciento con regular prisa.
Marcelo y Bernardo.	Más tiempo, más tiempo.
Horacio.	Cuando yo lo vi, no. ⁴⁷

In the two Spanish versions, which are separated by a century, there is no adjustment, that is, there is no rephrasing of Marcellus and Barnardo’s speech: both Martínez Lafuente’s “Más, más estuvo” ‘Longer, longer did he stay’ and María Valverde’s “Más tiempo, más tiempo” ‘More time, more time’ fit in well with what has gone before in Horatio’s speech: “El que puede emplearse en contar desde uno hasta ciento con moderada diligencia” ‘Enough time to count from one to a hundred at moderate speed’; “Mientras uno podría haber contado hasta ciento con regular prisa” ‘While one could have counted to a hundred at normal speed’; both translators have followed Shakespeare’s original literally without doing

⁴⁶ Martínez Lafuente, 88. In Martínez Lafuente’s version, which has a different scene division from Thompson and Taylor’s, the passage appears in Act 1, scene 6 (Acto Primero, Escena VI).

⁴⁷ María Valverde, 17.

violence to idiomatic Spanish.

Similarly, the same natural and easy flow is retained in the French, German, and Italian versions without adjustment:

- Hamlet. – [...] Est-il resté longtemps?
 Horatio. – Le temps qu'il faudrait pour compter jusqu'à cent sans se presser.
 Bernardo et Marcellus. –
 Plus longtemps, plus longtemps.
 Horatio. – Pas la fois où je l'ai vu.⁴⁸
- Hamlet. – [...] Il demeura longtemps?
 Horatio. – Le temps de compter, sans se presser, jusqu'à cent.
 Marcellus, Bernardo. –
 Plus longtemps. Plus longtemps.
 Horatio. Pas lorsque je l'ai vu.⁴⁹
- Hamlet. [...] Blieb es lang?
 Horatio. Derweil mit mäßger Eil
 Man hundert zählen konnte.
 Marcellus, Bernardo.
 Länger, länger.
 Horatio. Nicht, da ichs sah.⁵⁰
- Am. Si fermò lungo tempo?
 Or. Quanto ne occorreva per contare lentamente dall'uno al cento.
 Mar. e Ber.
 Più ancora, più.
 Or. Non quando io lo vidi.⁵¹
- Amleto [...] E s'è indugiato?
 Orazio Tanto che senza fretta si poteva contare fino a cento.
 Marcello e Bernardo
 E anche di più.
 Orazio Non quando l'ho visto io.⁵²

In each of the above quotations, the translator literally translates “Longer,

⁴⁸ Hugo, 733.

⁴⁹ Gide, 623.

⁵⁰ Schlegel and Tieck, 117.

⁵¹ Rusconi, 16.

⁵² Montale, 32.

longer” in his own target language, and the linkage in the dialogue is as natural and acceptable as that in the original.

X. Figurative Language in Dramatic Poetry

This kind of advantage, enjoyed by those translating *Hamlet* into other European languages, is even more obvious when it comes to morphology, particularly with respect to derivation. The major European languages, such as English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, all exhibit the grammatical feature of derivation, capable of forming abstract nouns from adjectives by affixation, sometimes only with minor adjustments to the adjectives concerned. Thus, the English adjective *hard* can be turned into an abstract noun by adding the suffix *-ness* to it. French, German, Italian, and Spanish, too, have the same derivational capacity: *dur—dureté* (French); *Hart—Härte* (German); *duro—durezza* (Italian); *duro—dureza* (Spanish). In assessing translations between these languages, the translation critic naturally expects to see corresponding abstract nouns in both the source and target languages, and he is rarely disappointed. When an English poet uses figurative language and says, “Freedom sings,” those translating the sentence into French, German, Italian, and Spanish can readily come up with perfect renderings: “La liberté chante”; “Die Freiheit singt”; “La libertà canta”; “La libertad canta.” At this point, native speakers of these European languages may ask, “Is there no word in Chinese which is equivalent to *freedom*?” The answer is: Yes, Chinese does have a word that is equivalent to *freedom*, but the word “*zìyóu* 自由” ‘freedom’ can be used both as an adjective and as a noun; morphologically, there is nothing to signify the different parts of speech represented by the same word. Under normal circumstances, this absence of a morphological marker to distinguish the adjective from the noun scarcely matters; but when it comes to the translation of abstract nouns as personifications in poetry, such as *Freedom*, *Prudence*, *Justice*, and *Cautiousness* treated as characters, Chinese becomes the odd language out in comparison with French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Whereas the four European languages can easily accommodate English personifications like “Prudence blushes in the presence of Rudeness” by offering equally natural personifications, Chinese is hard put to convey the same image in *natural* and *idiomatic* Chinese, that is, Chinese as traditionally used by Chinese people, since the personification of abstract nouns is rather alien to traditional Chinese poetry, unlikely to make a Chinese abstract noun sound *less abstract* to the reader or to the audience, whereas English, to

give just one example of the major European languages, has behind it a whole tradition established by allegories that date back to Plato's *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus*, and *Symposium*, Cicero's *De Republica*, Apuleius's *Golden Ass*, Sallustius's *About Gods and the World*, and Prudentius's *Psychomachia*,⁵³ from which Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* are descended, a tradition in which such abstract nouns as *Ignorance*, *Mercy*, and *Despondency* can easily be personified.⁵⁴

Born into the European tradition, Shakespeare has no difficulty creating images by treating abstract nouns as persons. In *Hamlet* 1.3.51-53, when Laertes speaks the following lines on seeing his father Polonius again:

I stay too long.
Enter POLONIUS
 But here my father comes.
 A double blessing is a double grace:
 Occasion smiles upon a second leave [,]⁵⁵

he is concretizing an abstraction by giving "Occasion" a human attribute: the ability to smile. While this kind of concretizing process lends itself readily to translation into French:

Je tarde trop longtemps. Mais voici mon père.
Polonius entre.
 Une double bénédiction est une double faveur; l'occasion sourit à de seconds adieux.⁵⁶
 Mais je m'attarde, et voici mon père. (Entre Polonius.) Une double

⁵³ For a detailed account of the tradition of allegories, see J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 22-24.

⁵⁴ Such names are called aptronyms. According to Cuddon, an aptronym is "[a] name that fits the nature and character of a person and / or their occupation. This is how names were originally acquired or bestowed (e.g. Hunter, Farmer, Cooper, Smith, Mason, Miller, Draper). Aptronymic titles have often been used in literature as a kind of label (William Archer called them 'label names'). They were common in the Morality Plays [...], in allegories like Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in novels (especially those of Fielding, Dickens and Thackeray) and in dramatic comedy (e.g. plays by Jonson, Congreve, Sheridan and Goldsmith). Famous instances are Mr Worldly Wiseman, Mrs Malaprop and Mr Gradgrind" (55-56).

⁵⁵ Thompson and Taylor, 193-94.

⁵⁶ Hugo, 735.

bénédition est une double grâce; la souriante occasion me ménage un second adieu [,]⁵⁷

Mais je m'attarde trop... Voici mon père.
Être deux fois béni vaut double grâce,
C'est un sourire de la chance que de seconds adieux [,]⁵⁸

German:

Zu lange weil' ich – doch, da kommt mein Vater.
Polonius kommt.
Zweifacher Segen ist ein zwiefach Heil:
Der Zufall lächelt einem zweiten Abschied [,]⁵⁹

Italian:

Ma io m'intrattengo troppo. Ecco mio padre; (*entra Polonio*) una doppia benedizione è una doppia grazia. L'occasione mi arride per chiedergli un secondo congedo.⁶⁰

Entra Polonio

Ma ho fatto tardi. Ecco mio padre. Una doppia benedizione è una doppia grazia. Il caso arride a un duplice commiato [,]⁶¹

and Spanish:⁶²

⁵⁷ Gide, 625. Though Gide's "souriante" 'smiling' is a verbal adjective, differing somewhat from Hugo's verb, "sourit," Schlegel and Tieck's "lächelt," Montale's "arride," and María Valverde's "sonríe," which are all verbs, meaning "laughs," Gide has still, like the other translators, retained the smiling image of the original.

⁵⁸ Bonnefoy, 50.

⁵⁹ Schlegel and Tieck, 120.

⁶⁰ Rusconi, 18.

⁶¹ Montale, 35.

⁶² It must be noted that, though Spanish, like French, German, and Italian, can perfectly accommodate the personification with naturalness of expression, as can be seen in María Valverde's version, Martínez Lafuente (90) has opted for non-figurative language: "Pero allí viene mi padre; y pues la ocasión es oportuna, me despediré de él otra vez. Su bendición repetida será un nuevo consuelo para mí." But this is prompted by the translator's strategy, and has nothing to do with the genius of the Spanish language. It should be mentioned in passing that, in Martínez Lafuente's version, the sentence "I stay too long" in the original has not been translated.

Entra Polonio

Me retraso mucho, pero aquí viene mi padre: doble bendición es doble gracia, y la ocasión sonrío a una segunda despedida [..]⁶³

direct translation into Chinese to retain the smiling image would require a modified frequency in the Chinese audience's reception process. One could, for example, translate "Occasion smiles upon a second leave" as "liángjī zhèng duì zhe dì'èr cì dào bié zhǎnyán ne 良機正對着第二次道別展顏呢" 'occasion smiles upon a second leave.' However, hearing this version spoken on stage, the Chinese audience, particularly those who have never been tuned to Shakespeare's figurative language, could have difficulty understanding its meaning; those who have read Shakespeare's plays in the original should be better equipped to comprehend the figure of speech, but the message would still be less direct, less natural to them than to the French, German, Italian, or Spanish audience. This is because the Chinese word "liángjī 良機" 'occasion,' or, more literally, 'auspicious occasion,' does not normally lend itself to personification; its collocation with "zhǎnyán 展顏" 'smiles' could sound odd to a Chinese theatre-goer when it is heard for the first time; the problem is compounded when another abstract idea, "dì'èr cì dào bié 第二次道別" 'a second leave' is used as the object of the verb "zhǎnyán 展顏" 'smiles.' In cases like this, the translator would have to choose between imagery-retention and naturalness of expression; critics who are accustomed to translation between European languages would have to fine-tune their criteria by tolerating unnatural and unidiomatic Chinese collocations if they insist on fidelity in imagery-translation, and Tytler's second and third laws would have to be relaxed or "put on hold." Aware of the difficulties, I have tried to strike a balance between the two requirements:

雷厄提斯 我呆得太久了。

波倫紐斯上

欸，爹來了。

雙重的祝福是雙重的恩典；
有兩次道別，良機對我不薄哇。⁶⁴

⁶³ María Valverde, 19.

⁶⁴ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 209-210.

The abstract “*liángjī* 良機” is also personified, but the “smile” image is replaced by “對 [...] 不薄” ‘treats me well.’ Although less striking, it is more idiomatic as a Chinese expression, and does not unnecessarily jolt the reader’s reception of the message.⁶⁵

To retain the imagery of the original and to conform to idiomatic usage in the target language at the same time, a translator whose target language is Chinese may, very often, have to proceed by a circuitous route. A case in point can be found in the translation process involved in the rendering of the line “O shame, where is thy blush” in *Hamlet* 3.4.74-79, in which the hero is taunting his mother:

What devil was’t
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope. O shame, where is thy blush?⁶⁶

In the last sentence, Hamlet has personified “shame,” which is natural to English and other European languages. Thus, Hugo, Gide, Schlegel and Tieck, Rusconi, Montale, Martínez Lafuente, and María Valverde have no difficulty rendering the whole speech into their respective target languages:

Quel diable vous a ainsi attrapé à collin-maillard? La vue sans le toucher, le toucher sans la vue, l’ouïe sans les mains et sans les yeux, l’odorat seul, une partie même malade d’un de nos sens, ne serait pas à ce pointe stupide. Oh honte! où est ta rougeur?⁶⁷

Quel démon put donc ainsi vous blouser? Des yeux sans tact, un toucher sans regards, une ouïe sans vision ni toucher, un odorat sans rien plus qu’un maladif débris de sens, ne pourraient errer davantage. O honte! où sont tes rougeurs?⁶⁸

⁶⁵ In poetry written for the eye, jolting the reader’s reception of the message is, even in Chinese, often necessary and, indeed, laudable.

⁶⁶ Thompson and Taylor, 341-42.

⁶⁷ Hugo, 790.

⁶⁸ Gide, 667. Though French allows direct and natural translation of the utterance, Bonnefoy (139) has chosen to digest the meaning and render it less directly, substituting a verb “rougiras” ‘will blush’ for the English noun “blush”: “Honte,

Was für ein Teufel
 Hat bei der Blindkuh Euch so betört?
 Sehn ohne Fühlen, Fühlen ohne Sehn,
 Ohr ohne Hand und Aug, Geruch ohn alles,
 Ja nur ein Teilchen eines echten Sinns
 Tappt nimmermehr so zu,
 Scham, wo ist dein Erröten?⁶⁹

Gli occhi senza il tatto, il tatto senza gli occhi, l'udito solo, o un senso anche più ottuso, bastavano per preservarvi da tal cieca e stolta risoluzione. Ah qual demone pose dunque sui vostri occhi benda sì fitta? Oh modestia! Dov'è il rossor tuo?⁷⁰

Quale demonio v'ha preso a mosca cieca? Gli occhi senza il tatto, il tatto senza la vista, gli orecchi senza mani ed occhi, l'odorato senza gli altri sensi, o una parte sola malata di uno dei cinque sensi non avrebbero potuto cadere in simile malinconia. Oh vergogna, dov'è il tuo rossore?⁷¹

¿Qué espíritu infernal os pudo engañar y cegar así? Los ojos sin el tacto, el tacto sin la vista, los oídos, el olfato solo, una débil porción de cualquier sentido, hubiera bastado á impedir tal estupidez...¡Oh vergüenza! ¿dónde están tus sonrojos?⁷²

¿Qué diablo fue el que así os engañó jugando a ciegas? [Ojos sin sentimiento, sentimiento sin vista; oídos sin manos, ni ojos, olfato, ni nada, o siquiera una parte enfermiza de un solo sentido verdadero, no habrían podido enloquecer así.] ¡Ah Vergüenza! ¿Dónde está tu rubor?⁷³

In all of the above versions, the question “O shame, where is thy blush?” is literally translated, with the image faithfully retained in idiomatic language with a naturalness of expression that matches the original.

Translating the speech into Chinese, the translator has no difficulty

rougiras-tu?” (literally “Shame, will you blush?”).

⁶⁹ Schlegel and Tieck, 177.

⁷⁰ Rusconi, 60-61. In Rusconi's version, the Italian translation of “What devil was't / That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?” (“Ah qual demone pose dunque sui vostri occhi benda sì fitta?”) is not put at the beginning of the speech, apparently for stylistic effect from the translator's point of view.

⁷¹ Montale, 127.

⁷² Martínez Lafuente, 151. This passage appears in Act 3, scene 26 (Acto Tercero, Escena XXVI) of Martínez Lafuente's version.

⁷³ María Valverde, 73.

handling the part from “What devil was’t” to “Could not so mope”; but when he comes to “O shame, where is thy blush,” he will have to pause awhile, for there is no readily available expression in Chinese which is natural, idiomatic, and easily audible on stage—that is, if he follows the grammatical structure of the original and tries to retain the image. Semantically, *shame* is equivalent to the Chinese “*xiūchǐ* 羞恥” ‘shame,’ but the Chinese word can function both as a noun and as an adjective; used in dialogue, it is not as natural as *shame* in English; besides, with its “adjectiveness” always lurking in the background, even when it is used as a noun, it is less concrete, and, unlike its English counterpart, cannot easily evoke a visual or “quasi-visual” image in the audience. To overcome this difficulty, he may have to add the suffix “*xīn* 心” ‘sense’ (literally “heart”) to form the word-group “*xiūchǐxīn* 羞恥心” ‘sense of shame,’ which is always used as a noun in idiomatic Chinese. More audible and more concrete to the Chinese audience, it has roughly the same effect as the original when spoken on stage. But a second problem arises when the translator comes to “blush,” which is used as a noun in Hamlet’s speech though it can also be used as a verb in other contexts. The Chinese equivalent that readily comes to mind when the English *blush* is mentioned is “*liǎnhóng* 臉紅” ‘blush’; unfortunately, “*liǎnhóng*,” made up of “*liǎn* 臉” ‘face,’ which is a noun-morpheme, and “*hóng* 紅” ‘to become red’ or ‘face-red,’ which can be either a verb-morpheme or an adjective-morpheme, does not sit well with the Chinese audience as a noun. Because of this, the English original cannot be comfortably translated as “*xiūchǐxīn* · *a*, *nǐ* · *de liǎnhóng* *qù* · *le nǎr*? 羞恥心哪·你的臉紅去了哪兒?” ‘Sense of shame, where has your face-to-become-red (face-red) gone?’ in which, as the gloss shows, “*liǎnhóng*” is not morphologically the same thing as the English *blush*; spoken on stage, it would sound odd and unidiomatic to the Chinese audience. To nominalize the idea, the translator could substitute “*nǎnyán* 赧顏” ‘blushing face’ or ‘face blushing from shame’ for “*liǎnhóng*”; but when he reads it aloud to test its audibility and comprehensibility in the theatre, he will become aware that even an educated theatre-goer may have to pause a second or two before he can understand what it means, for the expression belongs more to written classical Chinese than to spoken colloquial Chinese, which is used in everyday conversation. To circumvent this problem, he will, finally, have to introduce a translation shift by rendering “where is thy blush” as “*nǐ zěn-me* *bù liǎnhóng*? 你怎麼不臉紅?” ‘why don’t you blush?’ in which the English noun “blush” has been turned into a verbal structure (“*liǎnhóng*” ‘face-turns-red’). For these reasons, I have translated

the passages as follows:

是甚麼妖魔
 這樣蒙騙你，叫你扮瞎子捉迷藏？
 有眼睛而無感覺，有感覺而無視覺，
 有耳朵而無手無眼，或只有嗅覺，
 或只有真正官能患病的一部分，
 也不會這樣懵然無知。羞恥心哪，
 你怎麼不臉紅？⁷⁴

Realizing what a tortuous journey the English-Chinese translator has made, the translation critic will have to modify his expectations, for what is taken for granted in translation between European languages is no longer possible in English-Chinese translation, and the end product of the translation process will have to be judged by different criteria.

XI. Tackling English Syntactic Fluidity

If naturalness of expression in personification is not always achievable in English-Chinese translation, syntactic fluidity of the English language, on which Shakespeare often relies for dramatic and stylistic effect, is even more remote from the grasp of the Chinese translator. To illustrate this point, one has only to look at Ophelia's description in 2.1.74-81 of Hamlet's barging into her closet:

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
 No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
 Ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle,
 Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
 And with a look so piteous in purport
 As if he had been loosed out of hell
 To speak of horrors, he comes before me.⁷⁵

Stripped of the modifying phrases, the skeleton of the sentence is as follows: "as I was sewing in my closet / Lord Hamlet [...] comes before me." Between "Lord Hamlet" and "comes before me," Shakespeare has inserted a large number of descriptive phrases, so that the reader is kept in suspense until the main clause ("he [Hamlet] comes before me"), which is

⁷⁴ Huang, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 2, 460-61.

⁷⁵ Thompson and Taylor, 233-34.

the climax of the whole speech, bursts upon him with overwhelming force.

With other European languages as target languages, the translator has, again, no difficulty whatsoever in reproducing the same kind of dramatic and stylistic effect:

Monseigneur, j'étais dans ma chambre en train de coudre,
 Quand monseigneur Hamlet, le pourpoint tout délacé,
 Sans chapeau, les bas sans attache
 Boueux et tout en plis sur les chevilles,
 Pâle comme son linge, les genoux qui s'entrechoquaient
 Et la mine aussi pitoyable que si l'enfer
 L'eût relâché pour dire ses horreurs...
 Le voilà qui se jette devant moi!⁷⁶

Als ich in meinem Zimmer näht', auf einmal
 Prinz Hamlet—mit ganz aufgerißnem Wams,
 Kein Hut auf seinem Kopf, die Strümpfe schmutzig
 Und losgebunden auf den Knöcheln hängend;
 Bleich wie sein Hemde, schlotternd mit den Knien;
 Mit einem Blick, von Jammer so erfüllt,
 Als wär er aus der Hölle losgelassen,
 Um Greuel kundzutun—so tritt er vor mich.⁷⁷

Estaba haciendo labor en mi cuarto, cuando el príncipe Hamlet, con la ropa desceñida, sin sombrero en la cabeza, sucias las medias, sin atar, caídas hasta los pies, pálido como su camisa, las piernas trémulas, el semblante triste lo mismo que si hubiera salido del infierno para anunciar horror... se presentó delante de mí.⁷⁸

Señor, estaba cosiendo en mi cuarto, y en esto el príncipe Hamlet, con el jubón todo abierto, sin sombrero en la cabeza, con las medias sucias, sin ligas y caídas hasta el tobillo como grilletes; tan pálido como su camisa, con las rodillas entrechocándose, y una mirada de expresión tan digna de piedad como si le hubieran soltado del infierno para hablar de horrores; así se presentó ante mí.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Bonnefoy, 73.

⁷⁷ Schlegel and Tieck, 134.

⁷⁸ Martínez Lafuente, 104.

⁷⁹ María Valverde, 32. Though idiomatic French and Italian can easily accommodate parenthetical constructions as English does, Hugo, Gide, and Montale have forgone the advantage they have, and translated the passage as follows: "Monseigneur, j'étais à coudre dans ma chambre, lorsque est entré le seigneur Hamlet, le pourpoint tout débraillé, la tête sans chapeau, les bas

In all four translations, the subject, like that in the original, is separated from the predicate by a long series of modifying phrases that describe the hero in detail, creating suspense and keeping the audience on tenterhooks until the climax: “monseigneur Hamlet [...] se jette devant moi” (Bonnefoy); “Prinz Hamlet [...] so tritt er vor mich” (Schlegel and Tieck); “el príncipe Hamlet [...] se presentó delante de mí” (Martínez Lafuente); “el príncipe Hamlet [...] así se presentó ante mí” (María Valverde). As a result, the stylistic and dramatic effect of the original is forcefully and accurately presented to the French, German, and Spanish audiences. Bonnefoy, Schlegel and Tieck, Martínez Lafuente, and María Valverde could respectively have followed what is expected of normal French, German, and Spanish syntax, and supplied “se jette devant moi,” “tritt vor mich,” “se presentó delante de mí,” and “se presentó ante mí” immediately after the subject “Hamlet,” but then, the hero’s appearance in the narrative would have been much less striking, much less dramatic.

In Chinese, the translator could artificially imitate the original as well as the French, German, and Spanish translations in creating this kind of stylistic and dramatic effect, but in so doing, he would have to do violence to Chinese syntax, for, in Chinese, following the appearance of the subject, the predicate cannot stay “behind the scenes” too long; separation of the subject from the predicate by a long series of parenthetical phrases is unidiomatic, odd, and even ungrammatical, which is too big a price to pay on stage.⁸⁰ Furthermore, speakers of the European languages under

chiffonnés, sans jarretières et retombant sur la cheville, pâle comme sa chemise, les genoux s’entrechoquant, enfin avec un aspect aussi lamentable que s’il avait été lâché de l’enfer pour raconter des horreurs...Il se met devant moi...” (Hugo, 747-48); “Monseigneur, j’étais occupée à coudre, dans ma chambre, lorsque le seigneur Hamlet est entré, nu-tête, pourpoint dégrafé, sans jarretières et ses bas fripés encerclant ses chevilles, claquant des genoux, blanc comme son linge, d’aspect si pitoyable qu’on l’eût dit échappé de l’enfer pour en raconter les terreurs, s’est avancé vers moi [...]” (Gide, 635); “Mio signore, mentre stavo cucendo nella mia cameretta, entrò lord Amleto, col giustacuore slacciato, senza cappello in testa, le calze sgualcite e ricadenti come ceppi sulle caviglie, pallido come la sua camicia, le ginocchia che si scontravano, il compassionevole sguardo di chi sia uscito dall’inferno per parlare dei suoi orrori [...] e mi venne incontro” (Montale, 59). One does not know whether Hugo, Gide, and Montale have deliberately chosen to follow the normal and more common structure in French and Italian, thereby leaving out the stylistic and dramatic effect of the original.

⁸⁰ If the translation is meant to be read in print, sacrificing naturalness of expression could be a viable option, that is, if the translator wishes to reproduce at

discussion are accustomed to subjects separated from predicates by long parenthetical constructions without losing track of the main clause, speakers of Chinese, without the same “power of retention” cultivated in them, may easily lose track of the main clause, since Chinese is, as I have pointed out elsewhere, linear in syntactic terms.⁸¹ For this reason, the climax has to be given in the second line, immediately after the subject:

爹，我正在房間裏做針綫活兒，
 哈姆雷特殿下闖了進來，緊身上衣
 沒扣上，頭上沒有戴帽子，長統襪
 沒有洗，也沒有綁襪帶，腳鏢般垂到
 腳腕子，臉色蒼白如襯衫，膝蓋
 在互相碰撞，神情顯得很可憐，
 彷彿從地獄裏放出來，有恐怖的經歷
 跟人講。就這樣，他來到我面前。⁸²

*Diē, wǒ zhèngzài fángjiān-lǐ zuò zhēnxiàn huór,
 Hāmùléitè Diànxià chuāng-le jìn-lai, jǐnshēn shàngyī
 méi kòu-shang, tóu-shang méi-you dài mào-zi, chángtǒngwǎ
 méiyǒu xǐ, yě méiyǒu bǎng wàdài, jiǎoliào bān chuídào
 jiǎowǎn-zi, liǎnsè cāngbái rú chènshān, xīgài
 zài hùxiāng pèngzhuàng, shénqíng xiǎn-de hén kělián,
 fǎngfú cóng dìyù-lǐ fàng-chu-lai, yǒu kǒngbù-de jīnglǐ
 gēn rén jiǎng. Jiù zhèyàng, tā lái dào wǒ miànqián.*

‘My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
 Lord Hamlet **barged in**,⁸³ his doublet
 all unbraced, no hat upon his hat, his stockings

all costs the stylistic effect of the original.

⁸¹ See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), “*Yi fang ying yuan: cong Shenqu Hanyi shuo dao Ouzhou shishi de jufa* 以方應圓—從《神曲》漢譯說到歐洲史詩的句法” ‘The Square versus the Circle: From the Chinese Translation of *The Divine Comedy* to the Syntax of European Epics,’ in Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Yuyan yu fanyi* 語言與翻譯 ‘*Language and Translation*’ (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, 2001), 47-72; Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), “*Bing fen liu lu qin xian yin: tan Shenqu changju de fanyi* 兵分六路擒仙音—談《神曲》長句的翻譯” ‘Dispatching Troops in Six Directions: On Translating Long Sentences in *The Divine Comedy*,’ in Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Yuyan yu fanyi* 語言與翻譯 ‘*Language and Translation*’ (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, 2001), 107-127.

⁸² Huang, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 1, 273-74.

⁸³ My emphasis for discussion purposes.

fouled, ungartered, and down-gyved to
 his ankle, his face pale as his shirt, his knees
 knocking each other, looking very piteous,
 as though loosed out of hell, with horrible things
 to relate. Thus he appeared before me.⁸⁴

In Chinese, once the subject “Lord Hamlet” appears, the predicate “barged in” has to be supplied, otherwise the sentence would sound un-Chinese, for idiomatic Chinese does not normally allow the subject of a sentence to be separated by a long series of modifying phrases from its predicate, which, in this case, refers to Hamlet’s sudden appearance before Ophelia.⁸⁵ Because of this linguistic difference, the translator is not able to withhold the climax as Shakespeare does without doing violence to Chinese

⁸⁴ To make my point comprehensible to readers who do not read Chinese, I have given as literal a gloss or back-translation as possible; as a result, it appears at certain points to have slightly deviated from the original, though my Chinese version is unlikely to give one this impression. To conform to Chinese syntax, the sense-units in the original have been rearranged, so that each line in the original may not have exactly the same sense-units as its corresponding line in my Chinese version.

⁸⁵ In English, it is grammatically possible to go on with a very large number of modifying phrases after the subject “Lord Hamlet” is introduced (“Hamlet [subject]...comes before me [predicate]”); nevertheless, to enable the audience, who may have been distracted by the long parenthetical structure, to follow Ophelia’s account better, Shakespeare has added a “redundant” pronoun “he” before “comes before me”—that is, “redundant” with respect to English, not necessarily to other European languages, such as French. In French, for example, one can say: “Pierre a-t-il téléphoné?” “Has Pierre phoned?” (See Marie-Hélène Corréard et al., eds., *The Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary: French-English · English-French / Le Grand dictionnaire Hachette-Oxford: français-anglais · anglais-français*, 1st ed. 1994, 4th ed. by Jean-Benoît Ormal-Grenon and Nicholas Rollin (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Paris: Hachette Livre; 4th ed. 2007), 434.) Literally translated into English, the question would be: “Pierre, has he phoned?” According to English grammar, the pronoun “il” ‘he’ would be considered redundant. Similarly, the idiomatic French translation of the English proverb “knowledge is power” is “savoir c’est pouvoir,” in which the demonstrative pronoun (pronom démonstratif) “c’” (equivalent to “ce,” in which *e* is elided when *ce* comes before parts of *être* beginning with a vowel). See the entries “ce” and “knowledge” in *Harrap’s Shorter Dictionary: English-French / French-English / Harrap’s Shorter Dictionnaire: Anglais-Français / Français-Anglais*, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd., 2000), 523 (English-French) and 148 (French-English) respectively.

grammar or idiom.⁸⁶ When this happens, the critic will, once again, have to adjust his critical yardstick in assessing the translated version.

XII. Translation between English and Chinese and Translation between European Languages

With reference to the translation of Shakespeare's dramatic poetry, the foregoing paragraphs have shown, on the one hand, how translation between English and Chinese differs, sometimes radically, from translation between European languages, and, on the other, how the requirements of the stage, overriding other considerations, may oblige the translator to use strategies radically different from those used for the translation of texts meant for the eye. Because of this, a critic who has been accustomed to translation between European languages, particularly to target texts not meant for the stage, will have to adjust his criteria when looking at translation between different language families and at target texts meant for the stage, as is the case with Chinese versions of *Hamlet*. If he has, in the past few decades, been attuned to theories not relevant to the present topic, such as those about patronage,⁸⁷ about power, or about the literary polysystem,⁸⁸ he will have to put them on hold, and look at the translation process as well as the target texts from new perspectives, since, in cases like the above, these theories simply do not apply. More often than not, in translating Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the vast majority of translators make their decisions or adjust their translation strategies without reference to the factors emphasized by these theories. When these translators opt for a certain strategy, they may not have in mind the financial gain, fame, and so on listed by Lefevere; nor are they intent on manipulating; nor is the relationship between them and the recipient culture a dominating-dominated

⁸⁶ In Chinese translations not meant for the stage, it may be possible or worthwhile purposely to do violence to idiomatic Chinese if what is lost in terms of naturalness of expression is compensated for by a gain in poetic or stylistic effect. Thus, the translator, as one negotiating between two languages, may sometimes sacrifice naturalness of expression for freshness of imagery. Translating for the stage, he is under more constraints; doing violence to idiomatic Chinese or natural syntax may hamper the effective communication of the message to the audience, which is too heavy a price to pay.

⁸⁷ See André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London / New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁸⁸ See Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem," *Papers on Poetics and Semiotics* 8, ed. B. Hrushovski and I. Even-Zohar (Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects, 1978), 21-27.

relationship. In short, what may be true of the phenomena and circumstances given as examples in those theories is true only of phenomena and circumstances of a certain time or place, that is, only true of those phenomena and circumstances on which these theories are based; applied to other phenomena and circumstances, they may no longer be true or valid.

XIII. A Warning against Theorizing in a Vacuum

Whether in literary or in translation studies, theory divorced from practice is theory in a vacuum. As such, it is unlikely to contribute to the understanding of literature or translation. Today, when many translation theories have proved less and less relevant to translation because of their inability to come to grips with language and translation *per se*, shedding little light even on culture, an area over which the originators of these theories claim proud jurisdiction, the following observation by García Yebra can serve as a useful and timely reminder:

Teoría para guiar la práctica. Y práctica, mucha práctica, para encarnar, para dar vida a la teoría. En la traducción, como en casi todo, debemos tener siempre presentes aquellos dos sabios y hermosos versos de Goethe, en la primera parte del Fausto: “Grau, teuer / teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, / Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.”⁸⁹

‘Theory for guiding practice; and practice, much practice, for giving flesh and life to theory. In translation, as in almost everything, we must always bear in mind the two lines of wisdom and beauty by Goethe in Part One of *Faust*: “Grey, dear friend, are all theories, / And green the golden tree of life”.’⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Valentín García Yebra, *En torno a la traducción: teoría, crítica, historia*, Biblioteca románica hispánica, dirigida por Dámaso Alonso, II, Estudios y ensayos 328 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1983), 24. My English translation.

⁹⁰ My English translation.

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

[ABSTRACT]

Of the four literary genres, poetry, fiction, drama, and the essay, drama stands out conspicuously when it comes to translation. Meant to be performed on stage, a translation of a dramatic work has, first and foremost, to be instantly comprehended by the audience. With reference to *Hamlet* and its versions in Chinese and in European languages, this paper examines the requirements of drama translation, especially the translation of poetic drama, and discusses the problems involved on both the lexical and the syntactic level. Closely analysing the versions, it also compares Chinese and the major European languages as media of communication for the theatre.

I. A Special Criterion for Evaluating Drama Translation

With the notable exception of closet drama,¹ drama in general is meant to be performed on 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

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

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 instantly comprehensible when an utterance is made by the actor on 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 hinges on the voice and ear, since drama is primarily meant for the stage.

II. *Hamlet* and Its Versions in Chinese and in Four Major European Languages

The issue becomes more complicated when the source-language 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 translating from English to French, German, Italian, or Spanish than in translating from English to Chinese.³

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*.

³ Though it is possible to bring in several Chinese translations of *Hamlet* and study them alongside translations of the same play in the major European languages, I have confined myself to only two versions in Chinese, one of them by

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 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 printed form, the reader can freely adjust the pace of the reception process; 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 stage has only a split second's chance to get comprehended; once a word, a phrase, or a line fails to be understood 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 leads to further loss of information. For this reason, comprehensibility is of the utmost importance to drama translation.

III. European Languages and Chinese as Media of Oral Communication

When it comes to actual translation, a distinction can be made between European languages, such as English, French, German, Italian, and

myself. I have chosen my own version because talking about my own translation, I should be in a better position to describe accurately the translation strategies involved and the decision-making steps taken during the translation process.

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 be seen that the number of monosyllabic words in the Chinese passage is by far the largest, and that the ratio of monosyllabic to polysyllabic words in it is the greatest—also by far.⁴ This means that the average 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 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

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*, 1st ed. by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, 1911 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 11th ed. 2004), 1660-61. The definition given by *The Oxford English Dictionary* is: “A combination of sounds, or 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*, prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989), Vol. 20, 528; 1st ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, and 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 has no meaning. In classical Chinese writings, most characters are independent words; in modern Chinese, words tend more often to be disyllabic or polysyllabic.

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* (/bi:t/), *lad* (/læd/), and *mass* (/mæs/) each have three: /b/, /i:/, 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* (/split/) and *crashed* (/kræʃt/) each have 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 the abundance of phonemes, many monosyllabic words in the European languages have yet another feature 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* ‘ray.’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 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 黃慶萱:

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.

⁶ Among the European languages, further distinctions can still be drawn. 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. See Lao Yundong 勞允棟, ed., *Ying-Han yuyanxue cidian* 英漢語言學詞典 (*An English-Chinese Dictionary of Linguistics*) (Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 2004), 137.

In respect of phonology, the Chinese language has only 419 syllables; when this is multiplied by five (the 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 Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Characters*,’ 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 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: *Wǒjiào 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 Hanyu 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, 义, 弋, 刈, 艾, 乞, 屹, 亦, 衣, 抑... 杙, 邑, 佚, 役, 易, 俯, 沃, 柅, 吠, 食... 弈, 奕, 疫, 羿, 挹, 貶, 喏, 益, 浥, 悒, 埒, 異, 翊, 翌, 軼, 逸, 暘, 噬, 肄, 詣, 裔, 意, 義, 蓺, 勤, 甥, 廩, 溼, 嫫, 億, 誼, 瘞, 毅, 熠, 薏... 殪, 噫, 嶧, 劓, 焮, 憚, 憶, 縊, 斲, 臆, 鮐, 寢, 翼, 藝, 鎰, 瘕, 鴉, 繹, 饒, 譯, 議, 鷓, 囁, 鑿, 鷓, 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 people, 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)”), 張瘕 (“bury”),

⁷ Huang Qingxuan 黃慶萱, *Xiucixue* 修辭學, University Texts series (Taipei: Sanmin shuju gufen youxian gongsi 三民書局股份有限公司, 2002), 215. I have translated into English what Huang says in Chinese.

⁸ See *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yuyan yanjiusuo cidian bianjishi 中國社會科學院語言研究所詞典編輯室, 1st ed. December 1978 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan 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.

張縊 (“hang,” often used with *zì* 自 ‘self,’ meaning “to hang oneself”), or 張癡 (“hysteria”),⁹ but A could be 張艾, 張仡, 張屹, 張佚, 張易, 張洪, 張映, 張奕, 張羿, 張益, 張異, 張翊, 張軼, 張逸, 張詣, 張義, 張嫵, 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 what A’s name is by only hearing the syllable “*yi*” spoken by the addresser. Because of this, the conversation may, very often, have to continue with A replying: “*Rényì dàodé · de yi* 仁義道德的義” ‘The *yi* as in the collocation “benevolence, 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 *fūzuǒ* 輔佐 ‘assist’ or *bāngzhù* 幫助 ‘help,’ nor are they likely to know that there is the Chinese collocation *yìdài* 翊戴 ‘assist and support.’ As a result, it will not be of much use if A’s reply is: “*fūzuǒ · de yi* 輔佐的翊” ‘the *yi* meaning “assist”’ or “*yìdài · de yi* 翊戴的翊” ‘the *yi* as in the collocation “*yìdài*,” meaning “assist and support.”’

Supposing A’s first name happens to be the character 肆 (pronounced “*yi*”), 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 this case, A will have to say something like: “*Xiàng sìzì nà yàng · de yi* 像肆字那樣的肆” ‘The *yi* 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 *Xiandai Hanyu cidian*, is shared by twenty-three different characters: “巳, 四, 寺, 似, 汜, 兕, 侶, 伺, 祀, 似, 泗, 俟, 食, 飭, 涖, 耜, 筭, 覲, 肆, 嗣, 飼, 駟, 禩,” each of which has 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 嫵, A, in reply to B’s question

⁹ The translations of the Chinese characters are from Wu et al. (under the entry “*yi*”). See Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *Han-Ying cidian* 漢英詞典 (*The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary*) (Peking / Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1983).

(“Which *yì*?”), will have an extremely difficult task to perform 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.

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 conveyed in Chinese, especially in classical Chinese, is much less likely to be comprehended with precision and unambiguity than a message conveyed 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

¹⁰ In this case, A is more likely to be a “she,” since the quality or temperament described by 嫵 (meaning “genial, approachable,” and often collocated with *wǎn* 婉 to form the adjective *wǎnyì* 婉嫵, 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.

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 modern standard Chinese, the problem is less serious, because in 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,” “*guānli* 官吏” instead of “*li* 吏,” “*zǎochén* 早晨” or “*dà qīngzǎo* 大清早” instead of “*chén* 晨.” In the second passage, one would say “*jiào zuò* 叫做” instead of “*yuē* 曰,” “*yǎn · jīng* 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.

¹¹ Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記, Vol. 8 (Peking: Zhonghua shuju 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.

¹³ On some rare occasions, confusion does arise. For example, it is not uncommon for native speakers of Chinese to mistake 壺 (pronounced *kūn*, 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.

IV. Homophony¹⁴

In translating *Hamlet* into modern Chinese, I kept reminding myself that the translation, when completed, would be meant to be performed on stage, so I kept reading my version aloud 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 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 4.7.137-38,¹⁵ 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."¹⁶ My first version was as follows: "Yào chéngshì, wǒ huì zài jiàn · shàng 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.'¹⁷ The resultant version does not have the economy and conciseness of "成事"; by the stylistic standards of Chinese in original writing, it is even somewhat wordy; but spoken on stage, it is less likely to

¹⁴ Crystal defines "homophony" as follows: "A term used in SEMANTIC analysis to refer to WORDS (i.e. LEXEMES) which have the same pronunciation, but differ in MEANING. **Homophones** are a type of HOMONYMY. Homophony is illustrated from such pairs as *threw/through* and *rode/rowed*. When there is AMBIGUITY on account of this identity, a **homophonic clash** or **conflict** is said to have occurred." See David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, The Language Library, Series Editor, David Crystal, 1st ed. published 1980 by André Deutsch (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 5th ed. 2003), 221.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd series, General Editors, Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan, and H. R. Woudhuysen (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), 404.

¹⁷ 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.

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.¹⁸

In translating 5.1.193-94,

Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till 'a find it
stopping a bung-hole?¹⁹

in which Hamlet philosophizes about the cycle of life and death, I came across a similar problem. 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.²⁰ Indeed, as “瞳孔” is much 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 “*tǒngkǒng*” is spoken on 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*”).²¹

In 5.1.269-72, there is another example:

¹⁸ In revising my translation, I found even this phrase unsatisfactory, and changed it to “*Yào yī jì xíng shì* 要依計行事.” See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K.P. Wong), trans., *Jiedu Hamuleite: Shashibiya yuanzhu Hanyi ji xiangzhu* 解讀《哈姆雷特》——莎士比亞原著漢譯及詳注 ‘*Reading and Interpreting Hamlet: A Fully Annotated Chinese Translation of Shakespeare’s Play*,’ 2 vols., *Fanyi yu kuaxueke xueshu yanjiu congshu* 翻譯與跨學科學術研究叢書, (Peking: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, January 2013), Vol. 1, 571.

¹⁹ Thompson and Taylor, 423.

²⁰ 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 stage, “*tǒngkǒng*” becomes “*tóngkǒng*,” which is also the pronunciation of “瞳孔” ‘pupil of the eye.’

²¹ 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 very well with “一隻木桶” in terms of rhythm, “窟窿” is preferred.

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.²²

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, ròuzhūi, hóu ·zi 疣, 肉贅, 癩子" in Chinese.²³ 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 ("癩子," pronounced "hóu · zǐ"). Without even reading it aloud to myself, I already found it unusable, because it is homophonous with "猴子" 'monkey,' which, being much more common than "癩子," would more likely be the message that would come across. Consequently, I used another 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
小成贅疣。²⁴

My choice has three advantages: first, it is not homophonous with any other word or phrase I am aware of; 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."²⁵

²² Thompson and Taylor, 431.

²³ 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. (Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1984), 1565.

²⁴ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 2, 608.

²⁵ It must be admitted, though, that "贅疣" is not too common in everyday Chinese; but neither is "wart" in everyday English.

V. Two Solutions to the Problem of Homophony

During the process of drama translation, problems arising from homophony can be too many to enumerate. To avoid homophony, there are at least two possible 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 can prove useful in increasing the comprehensibility rate. The first point is self-evident, since the audience's ear is more tuned to modern Chinese than to classical Chinese, and is, 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 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, which are qualities 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. In everyday Chinese conversation, four-character idioms are used with a much higher frequency than in modern Chinese poetry which is 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 inventiveness of expression is not crucial, where "the poetic function" as postulated by Jakobson is not meant to be highlighted,²⁶ 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

²⁶ 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.

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...²⁷

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，穿着整齊的盔甲。²⁸

In my translation, “*gēng shēn rén jìng* 更深人靜,” together with “*yī piàn sǐ jì 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, thereby contributing to its comprehensibility rate and—to use a mixed metaphor—zooming in on the message to reduce 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 make the process of communication and reception in the theatre more effective 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 [,]²⁹

I have used four-character idioms or expressions liberally:

不過，閑話休提，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。³⁰

²⁷ Thompson and Taylor, 182-83.

²⁸ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 1, 193.

²⁹ Thompson and Taylor, 312.

³⁰ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 2, 411.

The expressions “*xián huà xiū tí* 閑話休提,” “*yán guī zhèng zhuàn* 言歸正傳,” “*shì yǔ yuàn wéi* 事與願違,” and “*mìng yùn guāi chuān* 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.³¹ The 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 meant to be stylistically different from the main plot, and which is expected to use a more conventional language.

³¹ 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 Limited, 1957), 74; for the entire essay, see 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, against clichés; for this reason, four-character idioms or stock phrases should be avoided as far as possible, sometimes at all costs. In translating a play by Shakespeare, however, the translator should not regard the source-language 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 flights” to avoid “monotony.”

VI. Audibility on the Lexical Level

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 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.'³²

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。」³³

In my first version, “To reason most absurd” was translated as “*lǐzhì huì jué · de jìdù huāngmiù* 理智會覺得極度荒謬,” but on re-reading it, I found the fourth-tone word “度” (*dù*) in “*jìdù* 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 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 “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

³² Thompson and Taylor, 173.

³³ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 1, 182.

unnatural murder!”³⁴ At first I rendered the two lines as “yào · shì nǐ duì qīnfù zhēn · de yǒu xiào xīn — / jiù děi fùchóu—tā cǎn zāo bēiwū hènghì · 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.”³⁵ 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*), “[-]uè” in “絕” (*jué*), “[-]iā” in “天” (*tiān*), and “-uē” in “倫” (*lún*).³⁶ The compound vowel in each word prolongs the utterance, thereby increasing its audibility.

VII. Syntax in Drama Translation

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 source and target languages, 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

³⁴ Thompson and Taylor, 213.

³⁵ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 241.

³⁶ Though the *Hanyu pinyin* 漢語拼音 (the Chinese alphabetic system of writing) form of “倫” is simplified as “lún” in writing or in print, the syllable (or word) should, strictly speaking, be transcribed as “luén,” which contains two vowels: “u” and “é.”

To do't.³⁷

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
inrepuat malis morsuque elusus inani est;
tum vero exoritur clamor ripaeque lacusque
responsant circa et caelum tonat omne tumultu [;]³⁸

in Dante's *Divine Comedy*:

Tosto che loco li 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 riflette,
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,
segue lo spirito sua forma novella [;]³⁹

in Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

³⁷ Thompson and Taylor, 370.

³⁸ Virgil [Publius Vergilius Maro], *Aeneid VII–XII*, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 352.

³⁹ 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.

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
 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 [;]⁴⁰

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 enterreciese
 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,

⁴⁰ John Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Douglas Bush, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 451. The full stop at the end of each of the above quotations (from Virgil, Dante, and Milton) has been replaced with a semicolon, so that the quotations can fit in with the grammar of the text.

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
 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 [.]⁴¹

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 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-language 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

⁴¹ 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.

target language is French, German, Italian, or Spanish can easily come up with translations which are as readily comprehensible as the source-language text:

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,
 Quand tout, motifs et volonté, force et moyens,
 Me pousse à l'accomplir [...] ⁴²

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. ⁴³

Ora, sia per uno stupido obbligo simile a quello della bestia, sia per una scrupolosa delicatezza che teme di troppo approfondire 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. ⁴⁴

Ahora, sea olvido bestial, o algún escrúpulo cobarde de pensar con demasiada exactitud en el suceso—un pensamiento que, partido en cuatro,

⁴² Yves Bonnefoy, trans., *Hamlet. Le Roi Lear*, by William Shakespeare, collection folio classique (Saint-Amand (Cher): Gallimard, 1978), 155.

⁴³ 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.

⁴⁴ 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-Editrice, 1858), 68; 6 vols., published 1858-1859.

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 [...]»⁴⁵

With an equally malleable syntax, with corresponding 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, whose widely different syntax has no relative pronouns to match those of the English language, and 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 in the theatre:

我有理由、有決心、

⁴⁵ 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; tome premier [vol. 1] of *Oeuvres dramatiques de William Shakespeare*, traduction couronnée par l’Académie française entièrement conforme au texte anglais (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1908), 7 vols.; Jean-Michel Déprats, trans., *La Tragique histoire d’Hamlet, prince de Danemark*, by William Shakespeare, in *Shakespeare: Tragédies I (Oeuvres 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, Principe 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).

有力量、有辦法復仇，却仍在說，
 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。⁴⁶

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 lìyǒu, yǒu juéxīn, yǒu lì·liang, yǒu bànfǎ fùchóu* 我有理由、有決心、有力量、有辦法復仇”), with the conjunction “sith” ‘since’ understood, the linkage being introduced by “*què* 却.” The indirect question (“whether it be / Bestial oblivion or some craven scruple”) has been changed to a direct question (“*jiūjìng shì shén·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 1.1.79-94, when Horatio explains to Marcellus “Why this same strict and most observant watch / So nightly toils the subject of the land,”⁴⁷ 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 return⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 2, 513.

⁴⁷ Thompson and Taylor, 155.

⁴⁸ “*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

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.⁴⁹

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:

[...] 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, toutes 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 [;]⁵⁰

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,

previously owned” (Thompson and Taylor, 157).

⁴⁹ Thompson and Taylor, 156-57.

⁵⁰ Déprats, trans., *La Tragique histoire d’Hamlet, prince de Danemark*, 683, 685.

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 besprochenen Punkte seins
 An Hamlet fiel [;]⁵¹

Italian:

Il nostro ultimo re, di cui l'immagine dianzi ci apparve, fu, lo sai, sfidato in 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 [;]⁵²

and Spanish:

Nuestro último re (cuya imagen acaba de aparecérsenos) fué provocado á combate, como ya sabéis, por Fortimbras de Noruega. En aquel desafio, 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 [;]⁵³

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

⁵¹ Schlegel and Tieck, trans., herausgegeben und revidiert von Hans Matter, *Romeo und Julia; Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark; Othello, der Mohr von Venedig*, 107-108.

⁵² Rusconi, trans., *Amleto: Principe di Danimarca*, 9.

⁵³ Martínez Lafuente, trans., *Hamlet, Príncipe de Dinamarca*, in *Obras completas de Shakespeare*, 78-79.

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 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，一他的英名是舉世稱頌的，一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。⁵⁴

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 Fúdingbólāsī · 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” (in line 83 of the original, “Dared to the combat, in which our valiant Hamlet”), 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 jǔshì chēngsòng · de* 他的英名是舉世稱頌的”), which sets up another road block between “*wǒ · men yǒngwǔ · de Hāmùléitè* 我們勇武的哈姆雷特” and “*bǎ*

⁵⁴ 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 chubanshe 譯林出版社, 1998), 12; 8 vols.

Fúdingbólāsī 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”), clumsily and redundantly translating “all these his” (line 87 of the original (“did forfeit with his life all these his lands”)), 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:

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。⁵⁵

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.”⁵⁶ 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

⁵⁵ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 1, 160-61.

⁵⁶ For a detailed comparison of Chinese and English syntax or of Chinese syntax and the syntax of the major European languages, including English, see “Syntax and Translatability” and “Centripetality and Centrifugality in Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese” in this volume.

the syntactic differences between the two languages.

VIII. Conclusion

Being a genre common to Chinese and the European languages under discussion, drama appears, at first sight, straightforward and equally easy or equally difficult to translators working in these languages, for every play, made up of similar components, namely, dialogue, monologue, asides, and stage directions, should, apparently, 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 a chasm separates Chinese from the major European languages, and how much more complicated, how much 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.

PART FOUR

TRANSLATING *LA DIVINA COMMEDIA* FOR THE CHINESE READING PUBLIC OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

[ABSTRACT]

This paper begins with a survey and general evaluation of the Chinese translations of *La Divina Commedia* that were published from the 1950s to 2000, and discusses the requirements for a credible translation of the Italian masterpiece for the Chinese reading public of the twenty-first century. Focusing on metre and the *terza rima* rhyme scheme, it draws on the author's own translation to argue its case.

I. Translating *La Divina Commedia* into Chinese: General Observations

From the 1950s to 2000, four complete Chinese translations of Dante's *La Divina Commedia* were published, two in prose and two in verse.¹ In going through these translations, one becomes aware of a number of problems that prevent them from meeting the needs of the Chinese reading public of the twenty-first century, which should be more sophisticated, more demanding than the Chinese reading public of the twentieth century.²

¹ These are Wang Weike 王維克, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 'The Divine Comedy' (Peking: Renmin wenzue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1954); Zhu Weiji 朱維基, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 'The Divine Comedy' (Shanghai: Shanghai yiwen chubanshe 上海譯文出版社, 1984); Tian Dewang 田德望, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 'The Divine Comedy' (Peking: Renwen wenzue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1997); Huang Wenjie 黃文捷, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 'The Divine Comedy' (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe 花城出版社, 2000).

² Since the May Fourth Movement, which took place in 1919 in China, Chinese translations of works of Western literature, particularly European literature, have multiplied. Brought up over the past eighty years on these translations, some of which are of high quality, the reading public is likely to use a rigorous yardstick to measure any new translations of *The Divine Comedy*; hence one is justified to say that the Chinese reading public has become "more sophisticated, more demanding."

In this paper, I shall discuss these problems and describe what I have done to tackle them in my own, also the latest, Chinese translation of the *Commedia*, entitled *Shequ* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*’ and published in 2003 by Chiuko Press (Jiuge chubanshe 九歌出版社) in Taipei, Taiwan in three volumes, subtitled, respectively, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ and *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ corresponding to the three *cantiche* of the *Commedia*, namely, the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. In my discussion, I shall try to show that verse is a more adequate medium for coping with the source-language text than prose, and that, in respect of the *terza rima* rhyme scheme, modern Chinese enjoys an advantage over modern English. As the focus of my paper is on practice and on translation as a craft and art, aimed at sharing my translation experience with practitioners and practitioner-theorists, abstract discussion in purely theoretical terms will be avoided.

II. Requirements for a Credible Translation of the *Commedia*

Of all the requirements for a credible translation of the *Commedia*, the first is related to the medium of translation: to preserve as many poetic qualities of the original as possible, the translation has to be done in verse.³ The reason for this will become clear if we examine the two prose

³ To contextualize my argument, a brief account of the metre and form of modern Chinese verse may be helpful. When modern Chinese poets began to depart from classical Chinese verse around the first and second decades of the twentieth century, they abandoned its metre, which was based on two tones, level (*ping* 平) and oblique (*ze* 仄), and which had been used by traditional poets for more than a thousand years. Writing in vernacular Chinese (which is largely polysyllabic) instead of classical Chinese (which is largely monosyllabic), they used a metre based on syllables, each syllable being equivalent to one Chinese character. Thus a poem may consist of lines made up of four, five, six, seven, eight, nine...syllables; lines consisting of less than four syllables were rare. For a detailed discussion of this kind of metre, see Wang Li 王力, *Hanyu shilixue* 漢語詩律學 ‘*Chinese Prosody*,’ 1st ed. 1958 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe 上海教育出版社, 1979), 822-950. Later, poets found that this syllable-based metre did not work, and that verse written in this kind of metre often sounded unnatural and mechanical. This is because units of rhythm in modern Chinese verse are, most of the time, based on groups of syllables (characters) rather than single syllables (characters), as is the case with classical Chinese verse. Such a difference is due largely to a difference between classical Chinese and vernacular Chinese: whereas characters

versions alongside the original.⁴ Deprived of the resources of verse, prose translations have difficulty reproducing the effects achieved by Dante through poetic devices, especially those on the syntactic and phonological levels. Take the mounting tension and sense of expectancy suggested by the rhythm in the following lines:

Ed ecco qual, sul presso del mattino,
per li grossi vapor Marte rosseggia
giù nel ponente sovra 'l suol marino,
cotal m'apparve, s'io ancor lo veggia,
un lume per lo mar venir sì ratto,
che 'l mover suo nessun volar pareggia.
(*La Divina Commedia: Purgatorio, Canto 2, ll. 13-18*)⁵

in classical Chinese are all stressed, characters in vernacular Chinese can be stressed or unstressed. As a result of their new awareness, poets began to experiment with a new kind of metre, which has become the most prevalent metre today among modern Chinese poets who care to tap the resources of Chinese prosody. According to the requirements of this new metre, a line is divided into pauses or, to use the terminology of English prosody, feet, with each foot consisting of one, two, three, or four syllables (characters). Within the same line, there may be one-character feet, two-character feet, or three-character feet; as the four-character foot is often regarded as two two-character feet, modern Chinese metre can practically be considered to be a metre based on three types of feet, which, when exploited by a skilful poet, can yield various rhythmic effects. As the foot is the basic unit of rhythm, in a stanza of four lines, for example, the number of syllables (characters) in each line may vary, but as long as each line consists of the same number of feet, the four lines are considered to be written in the same metre. For a detailed discussion of this kind of metre, see Wen Yiduo's 聞一多 article, "Shi de gelü 詩的格律" 'The Metre of Poetry,' in Wen Yiduo 聞一多 *Wen Yiduo lun xinshi 聞一多論新詩 'Wen Yiduo on New Poetry,'* ed. Research Unit for Wen Yiduo Studies, Wuhan University (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press 武漢大學出版社, 1985), 81-87). In the following paragraphs, the metre and form of modern Chinese verse will be further discussed in connection with textual analysis.

⁴ The two prose versions to be discussed are Wang Weike 王維克, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 'The Divine Comedy,' by Dante Alighieri (Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1954) and Tian Dewang 田德望, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 'The Divine Comedy,' by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 'Inferno,' Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 'Purgatory,' Vol. 3, *Tianguo pian* 天國篇 'Paradise' (Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1997).

⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, eds. M. Barbi et al. (Firenze: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 567. In quoting *La*

And just as Mars, when it is overcome
 by the invading mists of dawn, glows red
 above the waters' plain, low in the west,
 so there appeared to me—and may I see it
 again—a light that crossed the sea: so swift,
 there is no flight of bird to equal it.⁶

Divina Commedia, I have relied on the Società Dantesca Italiana edition rather than Petrocchi's edition despite the fact that, in recent years, the latter has become more popular with certain scholars. However, in translating the poem into Chinese, which requires close reading and comparison of different source-language texts, I have found that, generally speaking, the Società Dantesca Italiana edition is superior to the Petrocchi edition in terms of poetic effects. Take, for example, lines 43-44 of Canto 2 of the *Purgatorio*, which describe the angel from Heaven approaching, on a boat, Virgil and Dante the Pilgrim. The Società Dantesca Italiana edition reads: "Da poppa stava il celestial nocchiero, / tal che parea beato per iscritto" 'On the poop stood the heavenly steersman, such that blessedness seemed written upon him' (John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, 35); the Petrocchi edition reads: "Da poppa stava il celestial nocchiero, / tal che faria beato pur descritto" 'On the poop stood the heavenly steersman, such that he, even when merely described, would make one blessed.' Judging by the context, it would be more dramatic, more to the purpose to focus at this moment on the angel instead of on the angel's influence on the beholder; by focusing on the effect of looking, Petrocchi's reading has less immediacy and is, as a result, less effective in presenting a moment of high drama. The Italian Dante scholar Sapegno (Natalino Sapegno, ed., *La Divina Commedia*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, percorsi di lettura a cura di Ferdinando Cremascoli (Firenze: La Nuova Italia Editrice, Scandicci, 1997), Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, 18) is certainly right when he observes: "Il Petrocchi legge invece *faria beato pur descritto*; che è meno espressivo" 'Instead, the Petrocchi edition reads *would make one blessed even if merely described*, which is less expressive.' Because of this literary consideration, I find the Società Dantesca Italiana edition a more reliable source-language text.

⁶ Allen Mandelbaum, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: A Verse Translation*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, A Bantam Classic, Notes by Anthony Oldcorn and Daniel Feldman, with Giuseppe Di Scipio (New York: Bantam Books, 1982-1986), Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, 13. For the convenience of those who do not read Italian, I shall include Mandelbaum's English version after quoting Dante's original. However, as Mandelbaum's English version does not always follow the original as closely as

In Wang's version, only the semantic level is taken care of; what comes through the language of poetry, such as the mounting tension and sense of expectancy mentioned above, has been reduced to a minimum:

忽然，似乎有一顆明亮的火星，他的紅光透過海上的濃霧，出現在遠處。(我希望能再看見一次)！那紅光由海上向我們來，比鳥飛還要快。⁷

Huran, sihu you yi ke mingliang de huoxing, ta de hongguang touguo haishang de nongwu, chuxian zai yuanchu, (wo xiwang neng zai kanjian yi ci)! Na hongguang you haishang xiang women lai, bi niao fei hai yao kuai.

The sentence “*Na hongguang you haishang xiang women lai, bi niao fei hai yao kuai* 那紅光由海上向我們來，比鳥飛還要快” ‘The red light comes towards us from the sea, swifter than a bird,’ because of its unvaried rhythm resulting from an unduly large number of three-syllable pauses in a row (“*Na / hong/guang // you / hai/shang // xiang / wo / men //*

Sinclair's prose version does, probably because of the need to satisfy prosodic requirements, to highlight certain semantic units in the Italian poem, I shall rely more on Sinclair's version or on my own translations for English glosses. Allen Mandelbaum's translation was first published by the University of California Press (Vol. 1, *Inferno* in 1980, Vol.2, *Purgatorio* in 1982, Vol. 3, *Paradiso* in 1984). It was published in the Bantam Classic edition with the following dates of publication: *Inferno* in February 1982, *Purgatorio* in January 1984, *Paradiso* in February 1986.

⁷ Wang Weike, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ 176. For the convenience of those who do not read Chinese, I have romanized in *pinyin* 拼音 (which is the most widely used system of transcription today for the Chinese language) all Chinese quotations in this paper, so as to give them an idea of Chinese pronunciation. However, tone marks, which indicate the tones of the syllables, are not given, since they are too complicated for people who do not speak Mandarin, the standard spoken form of modern Chinese. Although the “joining of syllables in Chinese phonetic transcription” (“*lianxie* 連寫”) is governed by some generally recognized rules, scholars are not always unanimous on whether certain syllables should or should not be joined. In romanizing the Chinese passages in this paper, I have relied on my own judgement when the general rules cannot give me guidance. In the main text, a Chinese quotation and its romanized version are accompanied by a gloss in English, which, to help readers grasp the meaning of individual lexemes, is normally made as literal as possible.

lai, // bi / niao / fei // hai / yao / kuai”),⁸ sounds monotonous, and fails to suggest the swiftness of the approaching angel.

Published more than forty years later, Tian’s version is more meticulous, able to attend to the phrase “sul presso del mattino” ‘on the approach of morning,’⁹ which Wang has left untranslated:

瞧！好像在晨光映射下，火星從西方的海面上透過濃霧發出紅光一樣，我看到這樣的一個發光體——但願我能再看到它一渡海而來，來得那樣快，任何鳥飛的速度都比不上它的運動。¹⁰

Qiao! Haoxiang zai chenguang [morning’s light, the idea of “morning” being left out in Wang’s version] *yingshe xia, huoxing cong xifang de haimianshang touguo nongwu fachu hongguang yiyang, wo kandao zheyang de yi ge faguangti—danyuan wo neng zai kan dao ta—du hai er lai, lai de nayang kuai, renhe niao fei de sudu dou bibushang ta de yundong.*

However, denied the resources of verse for approximating Dante’s poetic devices and hampered by a sluggish rhythm resulting from the unskilful arrangement of one-character, two-character, and three-character pauses in “*ren/he // niao / fei / de // su/du // dou // bi/bu/shang // ta / de // yun/dong*” ‘no speed of birds in flight is comparable to its movement,’ which is hardly in keeping with the swiftness described in the original, it is ill-equipped to re-create the original poetic qualities.

With verse as my medium, I find it easier to suggest the original’s mounting tension and sense of expectancy. Through the functional arrangement of pauses in lines 4-6 and the interplay of the four tones in the rhyme scheme,¹¹ I have also been able to emphasize the speed of the angel and to re-create the musicality of *terza rima*:

之後，突然間，如將近黎明的時辰，
低懸在西方海面之上的火星
閃耀，紅彤彤射穿濃厚的霧氛，

⁸ Syllables are divided by single slashes; pauses by double slashes.

⁹ Sinclair, trans., *Purgatorio*, 33.

¹⁰ Tian Dewang, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ 12.

¹¹ Modern Chinese has four tones: the first tone, the second tone, the third tone, and the fourth tone. If the light tone is also counted, there are altogether five tones. As it is not possible to convey, without a tape recording, to non-speakers of Chinese what the five tones sound like, the tones are not indicated in the romanized transcriptions.

一道光，疾掠入眼簾——能再睹這奇景
就好了——並射過海面，速度之快，
遠勝過任何方式的翱翔飛凌。¹²

zhi/hou, // tu/ran/jian, // ru / jiang/jin // li/ming / de // shi/chen,
di / xuan / zai // xi/fang // hai/mian // zhi / shang / de // huo/xing
shan/yao, // hong/tong/tong // she / chuan // nong/hou / de // wu/fen,
yi/dao / guang, // ji / lue / ru // yan/lian //—neng / zai / du // zhe /
qi/jing
jiu / hao / le //—bing / she/guo // hai/mian, // su/du // zhi / kuai,
yuan / sheng/guo // ren/he // fang/shi / de // ao/xiang // fei/ling.

Using the same medium, Zhu should, in theory, have an advantage over Wang and Tian; in practice, however, he has his own limitations, which are due mainly to his inability to meet the second requirement for a credible Chinese version of the *Commedia*: that it should be a direct translation from the Italian.¹³ As an indirect recipient of the message conveyed by Dante, Zhu often has difficulty gauging its impact with precision, as is the case with the following scene:

Finito questo, la buia campagna
tremò sì forte, che de lo spavento
la mente di sudore ancor mi bagna.
La terra lagrimosa diede vento,
che balenò una luce vermiglia
la qual mi vinse ciascun sentimento;
e caddi come l'uom che 'l sonno piglia.
(*La Divina Commedia: Inferno*, Canto 3, ll. 130-36)¹⁴

¹² Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ *Jiuge Wenku* 九歌文庫, 927, 928, 929, 1st ed. September 2003 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, rev. ed. February 2006), Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatorio*,’ 25-26.

¹³ Zhu’s version is translated from the Carlyle-Okey-Wicksteed English version of 1919 (London: J. M. Dent and Sons), which was published again in 1932 and 1950 by Vintage Books, a division of Random House; the Carlyle-Wicksteed quotation in this paper is from the 1950 Vintage Books edition. See John Aitken Carlyle, Thomas Okey, and P. H. Wicksteed, trans., *The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950).

¹⁴ Alighier, *Le opere di Dante*, 455.

And after this was said, the darkened plain
 quaked so tremendously—the memory
 of terror then, bathes me in sweat again.
 A whirlwind burst out of the tear-drenched earth,
 a wind that crackled with a bloodred light,
 a light that overcame all my senses;
 and like a man whom sleep has seized, I fell.¹⁵

The sonorous “o” in “Finito,” “questo,” “tremò,” “forte,” “lo,” “spavento,” “sudore,” “ancor,” “lagrimosa,” “vento,” “balenò,” “sentimento,” “come,” “uom,” and “sonno” and the emphatic “en” in “spavento,” “mente,” “vento,” and “sentimento” work together like hammer-strokes to drive home the sense of shock and violence.

In Zhu’s indirect verse translation, the original images are retained, and the forceful words “*feng* 風” ‘wind’ and “*guang* 光” ‘light’ in lines 4 and 5 have re-created some sense of violence:

他說完話之後，那幽冥的境界
 發生劇烈的震動，回想起
 我那時的恐怖還使我渾身出着冷汗。
 那陰慘慘的地上刮起了風，
 風中閃出一道紅色的電光，
 使我全部失去了知覺；
 我倒下了，好像一個突然睡去的人。¹⁶

Ta shuo wan hua zhihou, na youming de jingjie
fasheng julie de zhendong, huixiangqi
wo nashi de kongbu hai shi wo hunshen chuzhe lenghan.
Na yincan can de dishang gua qile feng,
fengzhong shanchu yidao hongse de dianguang,
shi wo quanbu shiqule zhijue;
wo daoxiale, haoxiang yige turan shuiqu de ren.

¹⁵ Mandelbaum, trans., *Inferno*, 27.

¹⁶ Zhu, trans., *Diyu pian* 地獄篇, 22. Zhu’s translation is based on the following Carlyle-Okey-Wicksteed English version:

When he had ended, the dusky champaign trembled so violently, that the remembrance of my terror bathes me still with sweat.

The tearful ground gave out wind, which flashed forth a crimson light that conquered all my senses; and I fell, like one who is seized with sleep (Carlyle, Okey, and Wicksteed, 25).

In terms of phonological effects, however, it is still a far cry from the original. Had Zhu translated the *Inferno* directly from the Italian, the construction “*huixiangqi / wo nashi de kongbu hai shi wo hunshen chuzhe lenghan* 回想起 / 我那時的恐怖還使我渾身出着冷汗” ‘recalling my terror I experienced then, I am still sweating all over’ in lines 2 and 3, made limp by the clogged rhythm of “*hui/xiang/qi // wo // na/shi/de // kongbu*” ‘recalling my terror I experienced then,’ the feeble form word “*le* 了” in “*wo dao xiale* 我倒下了,” and the attributive adjectival structure “*turan shuiqu de* 突然睡去的” ‘like [...] sleep has seized,’ which has weakened the rhythm of line 7, would probably have been replaced by something more suggestive of violence.

Translating directly from the Italian, I find it easier to make accurate decisions as to what phonological effects to preserve:

維吉爾的話剛說完，晦冥的平原
就劇烈地震動。想起當時的驚悸，
滿身的冷汗仍會流淌如泉。
含淚的土地把一陣陰風吹起，
霍然閃出一道紅色的光芒，
嚇走我所有的知覺，使我昏迷
不醒，像沉睡的人倒在地上。¹⁷

Weiji'er de hua gang shuo wan, huiming de pingyuan
jiu juliede zhendong. Xiangqi dangshi de jingji,
manshen de lenghan reng hui liutang ru quan.
Hanlei de tudi ba yizhen yinfeng chuiqi,
huoran shanchu yidao hongse de guangmang,
xiazou wo suo you de zhijue, shiwo hunmi
buxing, xiang chenshui de ren dao zai dishang.

Apart from “*guangmang* 光芒” ‘flash’ (line 5) and “*shang* 上” ‘on’ (line 7), which are loud and heavy in phonological terms because of the open vowel “a,” I have used “*huoran* 霍然” ‘suddenly’ (line 5) to bring out the abruptness suggested by “*balenò*” ‘flashed.’ Conscious of the need to re-create a scene of violence and shock, I have avoided using feeble form words like *le* 了 (an aspect word here) in rendering “*e caddi come l’uom che ’l sonno piglia*” ‘and fell like one whom sleep has seized’; instead, I have tried to make my version as forceful as possible by tightening the rhythm and ending with a loud-sounding word (“*shang* 上” ‘on’): “*xiang*

¹⁷ Huang Guobin, trans., *Diyupian* 地獄篇, 141.

chenshui de ren dao zai dishang 像沉睡的人倒在地上” ‘fell on the ground like one whom sleep has seized.’

In comparing Zhu’s version with mine, one will also see a difference with respect to the translation of “lagrimosa” ‘gloomy, bedewed by tears.’ In rendering “lagrimosa” as “*yincancan* 陰慘慘” ‘gloomy,’ Zhu has left out one important message of the original, which is both literal and symbolic. According to the Italian commentator Chiappelli,¹⁸ “lagrimosa” means “triste, irrorata di lagrime” ‘gloomy, bedewed by tears.’ As the scene describes damned souls entering hell to be punished, the tear image is highly symbolic, and should, for this reason, be preserved. Without direct access to the Italian word “lagrimosa,” which derives from “lagrima” ‘tear,’ a translator is unlikely to see how important it is to look for an equally specific, equally evocative, and equally symbolic word in the target language. In my version, I have taken the image into consideration and rendered the line as “*Hanlei de tudi ba yizhen yinfeng chuiqi* 含淚的土地把一陣陰風吹起” ‘A whirlwind burst out of the tear-drenched earth,’ which matches the original’s atmosphere on both the mimetic and the symbolic level.

Translating the *Commedia* from the Italian into Chinese verse,¹⁹ Huang Wenjie should be the best qualified translator of the four, potentially able to do better than Wang, Zhu, and Tian. In practice, however, he turns out to be capable only of a rather mixed performance. With respect to the lines quoted above, his version is an improvement upon those of the other three:

話剛說完，黑暗的荒郊突然地動山搖，
這把我嚇得魂不附體，
至今一想起，我仍然大汗淋漓。
淚水浸透的大地刮起狂風，
血紅色的電光閃過夜空，
霎時間，我喪失了一切知覺〔……〕²⁰

¹⁸ Fredi Chiappelli, ed., *La Divina Commedia*, by Dante Alighieri (Milano: U. Mursia & C., 1972), 40.

¹⁹ According to Huang Wenjie (*Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ acknowledgment page; *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ 488), his Chinese version is translated from two editions of *La Divina Commedia*: Natalino Sapegno, ed., *La Divina Commedia* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia Scandicci, 1985); Umberto Bosco and Giovanni Reggio, eds., *La Divina Commedia* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1994).

²⁰ Huang Wenjie, trans., *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ 28.

Hua // gang shuo wan, // hei'an de // huangjiao // turan // di dong //
 shan yao,
 Zhei // ba wo // xiade // hun bu // fu ti,
 zhijin // yi xiangqi, // wo regran // da han // linli.
 Leishui // jintou de // dadi // guaqi // kuangfeng,
 xuehong de // dianguang // shanguo // yekong,
 shashijian, // wo // sangshile // yiqie // zhijue.

The rhythm is more precise, and the tear image (“bedewed by tears”) of “lagrimosa” is preserved in “*leishui jintou de* 泪水浸透的” ‘tear-drenched’;²¹ yet, he is unable to handle line-length, so that the first line gets too long and unwieldy, thereby undermining the effectiveness of metre, which works on the basis of variation in regularity. Skilfully employed, metre can provide the poet with a useful means of producing contrapuntal effects, of creating various kinds of musicality that glide back and forth in the lines, and of tapping the possibilities of pauses, feet, or, in the case of Greek and Latin poetry, quantity. When line-length gets out of control, as is the case with Huang Wenjie’s version, metre as a highly functional prosodic device is in danger of being disabled. In Huang Wenjie’s translation, whether with regard to the *Inferno*, or to the *Purgatorio*, or to the *Paradiso*, many lengthy lines simply sprawl into shapeless prose.

In his translation of the climax of the *Commedia*, Huang Wenjie’s inadequacies become most obvious:

Qual è 'l geometra che tutto s'affige
 per misurar lo cerchio, e non ritrova,
 pensando, quel principio ond'elli indige,
 tal era io a quella vista nova:
 veder volea come si convenne
 l'imago al cerchio e come vi s'indova;
 ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne:
 se non che la mia mente fu percossa
 da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne.
 A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
 ma già volgeva il mio disio e il velle,
 sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,
 l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

²¹ It should be noted, though, that “*leishui jintou de* 泪水浸透的” ‘tear-drenched,’ being stronger than “irrorata di lagrime” ‘bedewed by tears,’ is an exaggeration, and that the emotive element (“triste” ‘gloomy’) is missing.

(*Divina Commedia: Paradiso*, Canto 33, ll. 133-45)²²

As the geometer intently seeks
to square the circle, but he cannot reach,
through thought on thought, the principle he needs,
so I searched that strange sight: I wished to see
the way in which our human effigy
suited the circle and found place in it—
and my own wings were far too weak for that.
But when my mind was struck by light that flashed
and, with this light, received what it had asked.
Here force failed my high fantasy; but my
desire and will were moved already—like
a wheel revolving uniformly—by
the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.²³

如同一位幾何學家傾注全部心血，
來把那圓形測定，
他百般思忖，也無法把他所需要的那個原理探尋，
我此刻面對那新奇的景象也是這種情形：
我想看清：那人形如何與那光圈相適應，
又如何把自身安放其中；
但是，我自己的羽翼對此卻力不勝任：
除非我的心靈被一道閃光所擊中，
也只有在這閃光中，我心靈的宿願才得以完成。
談到這裏，在運用那高度的想像力方面，已是力盡詞窮；
但是，那愛卻早已把我的欲望和意願移轉，
猶如車輪被均勻地推動，
正是這愛推動太陽和其他群星。²⁴

*Rutong yi wei jihe xuejia qingzhu quanbu xinxue,
lai ba na yuanxing ceding,
ta baiban sicun, ye wufa ba ta suo xuyao de nage yuanli tanxun,
wo cike miandui na xinqi de jingxiang ye shi zheizhong qingxing:
wo xian kanqing: na renxing ruhe yu na guangquan xiang shiying,
you ruhe ba zishen anfang qizhong;
danshi, wo ziji de yuyi dui ci que li bu shengren:
chufei wo de xinling bei yi dao shanguang suo jizhong,
ye zhiyou zai zhei shanguangzhong, wo xinling de suyuan cai deyi
wancheng.*

²² Dante, *Le opere di Dante*, 798.

²³ Mandelbaum, trans., *Paradiso*, 303.

²⁴ Huang Wenjie, trans., *Tiantangpian* 天堂篇 'Paradiso', 483-84.

*Tan dao zheili, zai yunyong na gaodu de xiangxiangli fangmian, yi shi
li jin ci qiong;
danshi, na ai que zaoyi ba wo de yuwang he yiyuan yizhuan,
yuru chelun bei junyunde tuidong,
zhengshi zhei ai tuidong taiyang he qita qunxing.*

Inspired, as it were, by the Holy Spirit, Dante's imagination in these lines soars from pinnacle to pinnacle without showing any sign of fatigue. The reader, rhythm-drunk and in transports of joy, is hurled higher and higher until he reaches the limit of all human experience—the experience of sharing the Beatific Vision with Dante the Pilgrim, which is beyond words and understanding. To appreciate how formidable the task of translating the above quotation can be, one has only to read the following comment by Sinclair:

Nowhere else does Dante attain to the greatness of the last canto of the *Paradiso*, and in it more than any other it must be remembered that a *canto* is a *song*. Here his reach most exceeds his grasp, and nothing in all his work better demonstrates the consistency of his imagination and the integrity of his genius. In the culmination of his story he reports his experience with such intensity of conviction, in a mood so docile and so uplifted, and in terms so significant of a vision at once cosmic and profoundly personal, that we are persuaded and sustained to the end.²⁵

Words like “Nowhere else,” “greatness,” “his reach most exceeds his grasp,” “the consistency of his imagination,” “the integrity of his genius,” “the culmination of his story,” “such intensity of conviction,” “uplifted,” “so significant of a vision,” “at once cosmic and profoundly personal,” and “sustained to the end” are sufficient warning to the translator that, in rendering these lines, he should be prepared to find his abilities taxed to the utmost.

To his readers' disappointment, however, Huang Wenjie has failed to rise to the challenge. Not only has he misinterpreted two crucial lines (lines 139-40), in which “se non” means “if not,” not “*chufei* 除非” ‘unless,’ as is understood by Huang, but he has also failed to convey Dante the Pilgrim's ecstasy, which the original imagery and rhythm, working in perfect unison, have so powerfully expressed. Although meant to be poetry, the translation sounds like prose, for no poet with an ear for rhythm would, at such a crucial moment, allow himself to produce limp, monotonous lines with seven two-character pauses coming in a row as Huang has done,

²⁵ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 487.

seriously retarding the crescendo of the original movement: “*Ru/tong // yi / wei // ji/he // xue/jia // qing/zhu // quan/bu // xin/xue* 如同 / 一位 / 幾何 / 學家 / 傾注 / 全部 / 心血” ‘As a geometer expending all his energies.’²⁶ Nor would such a poet tolerate the jumble of ineffective syllables in lines 3-5, “*ta baiban sicun, ye wufa ba ta suo xuyao de nage yuanli tanxun, / wo cike miandui na xinqi de jingxiang ye shi zheizhong qingxing: / wo xiang kanqing: na renxing ruhe yu na guangquan xiang shiyong* 他百般思忖, 也無法把他所需要的那個原理探尋, / 我此刻面對那新奇的景象也是這種情形: / 我想看清: 那人形如何與那光圈相適應”²⁷ ‘but he cannot reach, through thought on thought, the principle

²⁶ In modern Chinese verse, when more than three two-character pauses appear in a row, the rhythm will sound unvaried and monotonous, lacking the vigour and force produced by the accurate spacing of one- two- and three-character pauses. By “accurate spacing of one- two- and three-character pauses” is meant the spacing of the three kinds of pauses in keeping with the sense. In the hands of a poet practised in the art of poetry writing or, for that matter, prose writing, the rhythm can accelerate and decelerate, moving with a speed that reinforces what the poet wants to express semantically. For a detailed discussion of metre in Chinese verse, which is based on feet made up of one- two- and three-character pauses, see Wen Yiduo’s 聞一多 article “*Shi de gelü* 詩的格律” ‘The Metre of Poetry,’ in Wen Yiduo, *Wen Yiduo lun xinshi* 聞一多論新詩 ‘*Wen Yiduo on New Poetry*,’ 81-87. In this article, Wen shows how two-character and three-character pauses (feet) are spaced out to give the rhythm vigour and force. In the lines quoted by Wen, three two-character pauses (much less four) never appear in a row. When more than three two-character pauses appear in a row, the same rhythm will keep repeating itself, thus resulting in monotony.

²⁷ The words “jumble” and “ineffective” are used to describe the syllables for two reasons. First, the metre of the three lines consists largely of two-character feet, such as “*baiban / sicun / ... / wufa / ba ta / ... / nage / yuanli / tanxun / ... / cike / miandui / ... / jingxiang / yeshi / zheizhong / qingxing / wo xiang / kanqing / ... / renxing / ruhe / ... / (百般 / 思忖 / ... / 無法 / 把他 / ... / 那個 / 原理 / 探尋 / ... / 此刻 / 面對 / ... / 景象 / 也是 / 這種 / 情形: / 我想 / 看清: / ... / 人形 / 如何 / ...)*” Second, the rhythm is often repetitive, lacking variation even when non-two-character feet are used, as can be seen in “*ye wufa / ba ta / suo xuyao de // 也無法 / 把他 / 所需要的 /*” and “*/ wo cike / miandui / na xinqi de // 我此刻 / 面對 / 那新奇的,*” as well as in the four three-character feet appearing in a row in “*na renxing / ruhe yu / na guangquan / xiang shiyong / 那人形 / 如何與 / 那光圈 / 相適應 /.*” A translator who is more sensitive to rhythm would have avoided this kind of repetition and introduced more variation; as it is, the Chinese translation under discussion gives one the impression that it is made up of two- and three-character feet accidentally thrown together, forming a

he needs, / at this moment, before the strange sight, I was in the same situation: / I wanted to discern how the human image could fit in with the circle of light,' which, rhythmically unvaried and feeble, just drag on and on, taxing the reader's attention span to its limits. Towards the end of the poem, the translation (lines 9-11) continues to flag,²⁸ until it ends in an anticlimax: “zhengshi zhei ai tuidong taiyang he qita qunxing 正是這愛推動太陽和其他群星” ‘the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.’ As the Chinese counterpart of the last—perhaps also the most powerful—line of the entire *Commedia*, the rendering is a total disaster. Whereas the original (“l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle” ‘the Love that moves the sun and the other stars’) is worthy of the lofty task assigned to it, functioning as the last notes of a perfect coda to the poem, with the emphatic “o” (/o/) and “e” (/e/) in “amor” (/a'mor/), “che” (/ke/), “move”

“jumble” of syllables that fails to suggest the sense of the original effectively.

²⁸ Footnotes 3, 26, and 27 have already explained how metre in modern Chinese verse works. In connection with the phrases “drag on” and “continues to flag,” further explanation is necessary, so as to avoid giving readers the impression that the observations are subjective. In modern Chinese verse, one foot—whether consisting of one character (one syllable), two characters (two syllables), or three characters (three syllables)—occupies the time-span of one beat; when a line is read aloud, every beat has the same time-value. In terms of rhythm, therefore, a one-character foot, in which one beat is assigned to one syllable, sounds slower than a two-character foot, in which one beat is shared by two syllables, or a three-character foot, in which one beat is shared by three syllables; for the same reason, a two-character foot sounds faster than a one-character foot but slower than a three-character foot, and a three-character foot sounds the fastest, for, in actual reading, the reader has to finish reading three syllables within the time-span of one beat. When too many two-character feet appear in a row, the rhythm tends to slow down, going on in a monotonous sing-song manner with no element of surprise; when the three major types of feet are skilfully arranged, the rhythm of a line or of the whole poem can quicken or slow down in accordance with the meaning. As footnote 27 has shown, in lines 3-5 of Huang Wenjie's translation, there are too many two-character feet appearing in a row, resulting in a slow rhythm which fails to accelerate with the heightening tension signified by the lines on the semantic level. Hence the phrase “drags on.” In line 9-11, the metre is handled in such a way that the reader feels no sense of direction, the sense that the poem is rising to the pinnacle of pinnacles. Hence the phrase “continues to flag.” From the above discussion and from the discussion in footnotes 26 and 27, it can be seen that adjectives like “brisk,” “sluggish,” “lingering,” “clogged,” and so on, which are used by critics to describe rhythm of various kinds, can all be verified objectively—even scientifically.

(/move/), “sole” (/sole/), “altre” (/altre/), and “stelle” (/stelle/) resonating and rhyming from beginning to end, the Chinese translation has no such music; impeded by four two-character pauses coming in a row (“zheng/shi // zhe / ai // tui/dong // tai/yang 正是 / 這愛 / 推動 / 太陽” ‘the Love that moves the sun’), it ends “[n]ot with a bang but a whimper.”²⁹

In a way, one is not even sure whether Huang Wenjie’s rendering of the last lines of Canto 33 of the *Paradiso* is comparable to Wang’s prose version:

像一個幾何學家，他專心致志於測量那圓周，他想了又想，可是沒有結果，因為尋不出他的原理；我對於那新見的景象也是如此；我願意知道一個人形怎樣會和一個圈子結合，怎樣他會在那裏找着了地位；但是我自己的翅膀不能勝任，除非我的心靈被那閃光所擊，在他裏面我的欲望滿足了。

達到這想像的最高點，我的力量不夠了；但是我的欲望和意志；像車輪轉運均一，這都由於那愛的調節；是愛也，動太陽而移群星。³⁰

Xiang yi ge jihe xuejia, ta zhuan xin zhi zhi yu celiang na yuanzhou, ta xiangle you xiang, keshi meiyou jieguo, yinwei xunbuchu ta de yuanli; wo duiyu na xinjian de jingxiang yeshi ruci; wo yuanyi zhidao yige renxing zenyang hui he yige quanzi jiehe, zenyang ta hui zai nali zhaozhele diwei; danshi wo ziji de chibang buneng shengren, chufei wo de xinling bei na shanguang suo ji, zai ta limian wo de yuwang manzule.

Dadao zhe xiangxiang de zuigaodian, wo de liliang bugoule; danshi wo de yuwang he yizhi, xiang chelun zhuanyun junyi, zhei dou youyu na ai de tiaojie; shi ai ye, dong taiyang er yi qunxing.

Though Wang has made the same mistake as Huang Wenjie in interpreting lines 140-41 of the original,³¹ his rendering of the last line (“shi / ai / ye, //

²⁹ Eliot’s “The Hollow Men” ends as follows: “*This is the way the world ends / This is the way the world ends / This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper.*” See T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems: 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), 92. The lines do not, of course, have anything to do with Italian-Chinese translation; quoted here, the last line is meant to be metaphorical.

³⁰ Wang, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 *The Divine Comedy*, 546.

³¹ Lines 140-41 in the original (“se non che la mia mente fu percossa / da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne”) means “had not my mind been smitten by a flash wherein came its wish” (Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 484), which can be translated into Chinese as “幸虧我的心神獲靈光燿然 / 一擊，願望就這樣垂手而得。” In the translations by Huang Wenjie and Wang, the first line is translated as “chufei

dong / tai/yang // er // yi / qun/xing 是愛也，動太陽而移群星” ‘the Love that moves the sun and the other stars’), with a more forceful, more varied rhythm made possible by the one-character pause “//er// ‘and’” inserted between the two three-character pauses, “*dong / tai/yang // er // yi / qun/xing* 動太陽而移群星” ‘that moves the sun and the other stars,’ conveying the same clinching effect as the original, is far superior to its counterpart in Huang Wenjie’s version.³²

III. Translating Dante’s Metre in a Different Linguistic Medium

To capture the rhythm, the emotional intensity, and, above all, the pinnacle of spiritual experience described by the poet, one has to rely on verse:

像個幾何學家把精神盡用，
 企圖以圓求方，苦苦揣摩
 其中的規律，最後仍徒勞無功，
 我對着那奇異的景象猜度，
 一心要明瞭，那樣的顏容怎麼
 與光環相配而又安於其所。
 可是翅膀卻沒有勝任的勁翻——
 幸虧我的心神獲靈光耀然
 一擊，願望就這樣垂手而得。
 高翔的神思，至此再無力上攀；
 不過這時候，吾願吾志，已經
 見旋於大愛，像勻轉之輪一般；
 那大愛，迴太陽啊動群星。³³

Xiang ge // jihe // xuejia // ba jingshen // jin yong,

wode xinling bei yiado shanguang suo jizhong 除非我的心靈被一道閃光所擊中” ‘unless my mind is struck by a flash’ and “*chufei wode xinling bei na shanguang suo ji* 除非我的心靈被那閃光所擊” ‘unless my mind is struck by that flash’ respectively, thereby deviating from the meaning of the source-language text.

³² Wang’s version is not, of course, without flaws. See “The Translation of Poetry” in this collection for a detailed discussion of the weaknesses of Wang’s version. Take the passage just quoted for comparison with Huang Wenjie’s version, apart from the uncharacteristically fine line at the end, the rest is sprawling and rhythmically imprecise prose.

³³ Huang Guobin 黃國彬, trans., *Tiantangpian* 天堂篇 ‘Paradiso,’ 510-11.

qitu // yi yuan // qiu fang, // kuku // chuaimo
 qizhong de // guilü , // zuihou // reng tu lao // wu gong,
 wo duizhe // na // qi yi de // jingxiang // caiduo,
 yixin yao // mingliao, // nayang de // yanrong // zenme
 yu guanghuan // xiangpei // er you // an yu // qi suo.
 Keshi // chibang // que meiyou // shengren de // jinghe—
 xingkui // wo de // xinshen // huo lingguang // huoran
 yiji, // yuanwang // jiu zheyang // chui shou // er de.
 Gaoxiang de // shensi, // zhi ci // zai wu li // shang pan;
 buguo // zhe shihou, // wu yuan // wu zhi, // yijing
 jian xuan yu // da'ai, // xiang yunzhuan // zhi lun // yiban;
 na // da'ai, // hui taiyang // a // dong qunxing.

In my version, I have used the five-pause line to translate Dante's hendecasyllable (eleven-syllable line).³⁴ My choice was made with reference to Western poetry and in the light of actual practice. In long narrative poems—especially epics—written in European languages, such as English, Greek, and Latin, the average line-length normally falls within the range of the English pentameter, the Greek dactylic hexameter, or the Latin hexameter. The English pentameter as used in long poems is best exemplified by Milton's decasyllabic line in *Paradise Lost*:

“All night | the dread|less an|gel un|pursued
 Through heav'n's | wide cham|paign held | his way, | till Morn,
 Waked by | the cir|cling Hours, | with ros|y hand
 Unbarred | the gates | of light. | There is | a cave
 Within | the mount | of God, | fast by | his throne [,]”
 (*Paradise Lost*, Book 6, ll. 1-5)³⁵

³⁴ In re-creating Dante's *terza rima* alongside the five-pause line in my Chinese translation of *La Divina Commedia*, I have used what Holmes describes as a “mimetic” verse form (quoted from Edoardo Crisafulli, “Dante, *The Divine Comedy*,” in *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, 2 vols., ed. Olive Classe (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), 340; for the entire article, see 339-44). While the arguments made by Lefevere about “patronage” (André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), 11-25) and about “ideology” (André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Fame*, 59-72) are relevant to the texts he discusses, my strategies in translating *La Divina Commedia* into Chinese are dictated mainly by poetic considerations.

³⁵ John Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Douglas Bush, Oxford Standard Authors (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 320.

while the “standard” Greek line is to be found in the opening of Homer’s *Iliad*:

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
 οὐλομένην ἣ μῦρτί ’ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε’ ἔθηκε [...]³⁶

The wrath do thou sing, O goddess, of Peleus’ son, Achilles, that baneful
 wrath which brought countless woes upon the Achaeans [...]³⁷

With regard to Latin poetry, the representative line is provided by Virgil’s *Aeneid*:

Corrip|ere vi| [am] intere|a, qua | semita | monstat.
 iamqu[e] asc|endeb|ant coll|em, qui | plurimus | urbi
 imminet | advers|asqu[e] asp|ectat d|esuper | arces.
 (*Aeneid*, Book 1, ll. 418-20)³⁸

³⁶ A. T. Murray, trans., *The Iliad*, 2 vols., by Homer, The Loeb Classical Library 170 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd.; 1924), Vol. 1, 2. The metrical scheme of the two lines is as follows:

— ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — — | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — —
 — ∪ ∪ | — — | — ∪ ∪ | — — | — ∪ ∪ | — —,

in which “—” stands for a long syllable and “∪” for a short one. For a detailed description of Greek prosody and the Greek hexameter, see Clyde Pharr, rev. John Wright, *Homeric Greek: A Book for Beginners* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 29-31; 309-312. Unscanned, that is, with the syllables undivided, the two lines from the *Iliad* are as follows:

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
 οὐλομένην ἣ μῦρτί ’ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε’ ἔθηκε [...]

Metre in Greek and Latin verse is based on quantity, metre in English verse on stress, metre in classical Chinese verse on tone (level or oblique), and metre in modern Chinese verse on pause (one-character pause, two-character pause, and three-character pause, which, as has been shown earlier, are also described as “one-character foot,” “two-character foot,” and “three-character foot”). However, as I am concerned only with line-length here, I shall not discuss Chinese and Western prosody in detail.

³⁷ Murray, trans., *The Iliad*, Vol. 1, 3.

³⁸ H. Rushton Fairclough, trans., revised by G. P. Goold, *Eclogues, Georgics*,

Meanwhile they sped on the road where the pathway points. And now they were climbing the hill that looms large over the city and looks down on the confronting towers.³⁹

In addition to what I have observed in the work of the masters of epics,⁴⁰ I have also discovered, during the actual translation process, that the average hendecasyllabic line in Dante's *La Divina Commedia* is best matched by the five-pause (five-foot) line in modern Chinese. Take the first five lines of my translation quoted above:

像個 | 幾何 | 學家 | 把精神 | 盡用，
 企圖 | 以圓 | 求方， | 苦苦 | 揣摩
 其中的 | 規律， | 最後 | 仍徒勞 | 無功，
 我對着 | 那 | 奇異的 | 景象 | 猜度，
 一心 | 要明瞭， | 那樣的 | 顏容 | 怎麼
 與光環 | 相配 | 而又 | 安於 | 其所。

Xiang ge // jihe // xuejia // ba jingshen // jin yong,
qitu // yi yuan // qiu fang, // kuku // chuaimo
qizhong de // guilü, // zuihou // reng tu lao // wu gong,
wu duizhe // na // qiyi de // jingxiang // caiduo,
yixin yao // mingliao, // nayang de // yanrong // zenme
yu guanghuan // xiangpei // er you // an yu // qi suo.

Aeneid I-VI (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 290.
 The metrical scheme of the three lines is as follows:

— ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪ ∪ | — — | — ∪ ∪ | — ∪
 — — | — — | — — | — — | — ∪ ∪ | — —
 — ∪ ∪ | — — | — — | — — | — ∪ ∪ | — —,

where, in terms of *syllable quantity*, “—” stands for *heavy*, and “∪” for *light*. The metre is hexameter, consisting of six feet, which are either dactyls (— ∪ ∪) or spondees (— —). For a detailed description of Latin metre and Virgil's hexameter, see Peter V. Jones and Keith C. Sidwell, *Reading Latin: Grammar, Vocabulary, and Exercises* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 318-320.

³⁹ Fairclough, translated, revised by G. P. Goold, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, 291.

⁴⁰ *La Divina Commedia* is regarded both as an allegory and as an epic. See the entry “epic” in J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 1st ed. 1977 (London: Penguin Books, 3rd ed. 1992), 284-293.

One can see that they have accommodated the original sense-units quite comfortably, and that the need to compress content unduly or to pad out a line for metrical reasons has been reduced to a minimum. If I had opted for a longer or shorter line, that is, a line with more or fewer pauses, I would have been harder put to avoid padding or to cope adequately with the original sense-units. In general, I find that, within five pauses, there is just about the right amount of space for me to reproduce the music of the original by moving the caesura back and forth, by introducing variation, by deploying one-character, two-character, and three-character pauses as required, and by creating contrapuntal effects as well as tension between similarity and variety.

IV. *Terza Rima* in Modern Chinese versus *Terza Rima* in English

As for rhyming, I have followed Dante's *terza rima*. Assigned prosodic as well as symbolic functions, *terza rima* in the *Commedia* is no mere embellishment. Prosodically, it gives the poem an interlocking unity in which lines, while resonating across the page, echo each other within each tercet. Take the following lines, for example:

Ne la profonda e chiara sussistenza
 de l'alto lume parvermi tre giri
 di tre colore e d'una contenza;
 e l'un da l'altro come iri da iri
 pareo riflesso, e 'l terzo pareo foco
 che quinci e quindi igualmente si spiri.
 (*Paradiso*, Canto 33, ll. 115-120)⁴¹

[...] In the deep and bright
 essence of that exalted Light, three circles
 appeared to me; they had three different colors,
 but all of them were of the same dimension;
 one circle seemed reflected by the second,
 as rainbow is by rainbow, and the third
 seemed fire breathed equally by those two circles.⁴²

Together with the whole complex of vowels (“a,” “e,” “i,” “o,” “u”) and the consonant “n” (“profonda,” “d’una,” “l’un,” “quince,” “quindi”),⁴³ the

⁴¹ Dante, *Le opere di Dante*, 797.

⁴² Mandelbaum, trans., *Paradiso*, 303.

⁴³ My italics.

rhyme scheme (“sussistenza,” “giri,” “contenenza,” “iri,” “foco,” “spiri”) weaves an intricate and highly effective pattern of sounds to suggest the ever increasing rapture of the Pilgrim.

By giving up *terza rima*, English translators like Mark Musa can convey only part of the emotional intensity:

Within Its depthless clarity of substance
I saw the Great Light shine into three circles
in three clear colours bound in one same space;

the first seemed to reflect the next like rainbow
on rainbow, and the third was like a flame
equally breathed forth by the other two.
(*Paradise*, XXXIII, 115-20)⁴⁴

This difference between the original and the translation will become *audible* if one reads the Italian and English quotations aloud: in the original, there is an exciting symphony of interlocking sound patterns echoing one another, delighting the ear and reinforcing the mounting emotional intensity at the same time; in the translation, the semantic content is retained, but the symphony can no longer be heard. In the light of this comparison, then, Musa’s defence of his not using *terza rima* merits detailed discussion:

My desire to be faithful to Dante, however, has not led me to adopt his metrical scheme. I do not use *terza rima*, as, for example, Dorothy Sayers does, or even the “dummy” *terza rima* of John Ciardi. My medium is rhymeless iambic pentameter, that is, blank verse. I have chosen this, first, because blank verse has been the preferred form for long narrative poetry from the time of Milton on. It cannot be proved that rhyme necessarily makes verse better: Milton declared rhyme to be a barbaric device, and many modern poets resolutely avoid it.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Mark Musa, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatory*, Vol. 3, *Paradise* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), Vol. 3, *Paradise*, 393.

⁴⁵ Musa, trans., *Inferno*, 61. Greene et al. have pointed out both the merits and possible dangers of *terza rima*: “Terza rima [not italicized by Greene et al.] has a powerful forward momentum, while the concatenated rhymes provide a reassuring structure of woven continuity, which may on occasion, however, imprison the poet in a movement of cyclical repression or driven mindlessness (Alfred de Vigny, ‘Les Destinées’; Hugo von Hofmannsthal, ‘Ballade des äusseren Lebens’). In all its realizations, terza rima suggests processes without beginning or end, an

At first sight, the defence appears to be an excuse made by a translator who has not done his job properly. As one reads on, however, one will see that Musa has put his finger on an obstacle that English translators cannot easily surmount:

But my main reason for avoiding rhyme has been the results achieved by all those who have used rhyme in translating *The Divine Comedy*: they have shown that the price paid was disastrously high. [...] There are two reasons for the crippling effects of rhyme in translating a lengthy poem. First of all it is apparently impossible always to find perfect rhymes in English for a long stretch of lines—and if good rhyme gives a musical effect, bad rhyme is cacophonous; it is a reminder [...] that the search for rhyme has failed. [...] One can be more faithful to Dante [...] by avoiding rhyme than by introducing imperfect rhyme into the rendition of his lines, whose rhymes are always acoustically perfect.⁴⁶

In going through the English translations of the *Commedia* that employ rhyme, such as the two mentioned by Musa (one by Sayers and the other by Ciardi),⁴⁷ one *does* see “the crippling effects of rhyme in translating a

irresistible *perpetuum mobile*.” See Roland Greene et al., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1423. However, these merits or possible dangers have nothing to do with Musa’s decision not to use *terza rima*. In explaining the same rhyme scheme, Myers and Wukasch have commented on its unsuitability for English poetry: “(Italian for ‘third or triple rhyme’) a fixed form, invented by Dante for his *Divine Comedy* and introduced into English by Chaucer in his *Complaint to His Lady*, consisting of iambic (usually pentameter) tercets rhyming abc bcb cdc ded, etc.—a RHYME SCHEME that pushes the reader through the poem, as can be seen from the first section of Shelley’s *Ode to the West Wind*: [...] Although the form is somewhat ill-fitted to English because of the demanding rhyme scheme, poets such as Browning, Yeats, Byron, MacLeish, Auden, and Eliot, among others, have successfully employed it, often with variations in RHYME and METER.” See Jack Myers and Don Charles Wukasch, *Dictionary of Poetic Terms* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2003), 364.

⁴⁶ Musa, trans., *Inferno*, 61-62.

⁴⁷ See Dorothy Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, trans., *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Hell*, Vol. 2, *Purgatory*, Vol. 3, *Paradise* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1949-1962); John Ciardi, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, a verse rendering for the modern reader, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *The Inferno*, Vol. 2, *The Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *The Paradiso* (New York: Mentor, 1961-1982). Apart from these translations, one might add Anderson’s as

lengthy poem,” and tends to agree with him that “it is apparently impossible always to find perfect rhymes in English for a long stretch of lines.” In using *terza rima* to translate the *Commedia*, an English translator will, much to his chagrin, find that he cannot be faithful to the rhyme scheme without doing severe violence to the meaning, so that his gain will be outweighed by his loss. Perhaps for this reason, no English translations of the *Commedia*, whether partial or complete, published in recent years have used rhyme in general, much less the very “crippling” *terza rima*. When I say, “English translations of the *Commedia*, whether partial or complete, published in recent years,” I have in mind the versions by Sisson, Durling, and Zappulla respectively.⁴⁸ Of the three translators, Durling is especially noteworthy. In the Introduction to his translation, Durling is keenly aware of the symbolic significance of Dante’s *terza rima*:

Terza rima is an extremely supple and flexible medium. In the *Divine Comedy*, there is no set number of lines in a canto; the cantos range in length from 115 to 160 lines. It is clear that Dante associated the triplicities of the form (groups of three lines, interlocking chains of three rhymes) with the idea of the Creator as triune and with the idea of the chain of being. In the wake of Saint Augustine’s *De trinitate*, he saw the marks of the Creator’s triple unity everywhere in creation—in the structure of time (past, present, and future), in the triple structure of man’s nature (rational, appetitive, and vegetative), and in the three “first things” (form and matter, separate and conjoined)—and regarded his verse medium, *terza rima*, as one of the ways his creation of the poem imitated God’s creation of the universe: others are, of course, that the poem has three parts and that it consists of a “perfect” number of cantos, 100—or, after the prologue of the first canto, three parts of thirty-three cantos each.⁴⁹

Yet, in his translation, he has avoided it, probably because, like Musa, he knows full well how helpless the English language is when confronted

well. See Melville B. Anderson, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *The Inferno*, Vol. 2, *The Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *The Paradiso*, The World’s Classics 392, 393, 394 (London: Oxford University Press, 1932); first published in 1921; included in The World’s Classics in 1932.

⁴⁸ See C. H. Sisson, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Robert M. Durling, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, Vol. 1, *Inferno* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Elio Zappulla, trans., *Inferno*, by Dante Alighieri, A New Verse Translation (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998).

⁴⁹ Durling, trans., *Inferno*, 23.

with this challenging rhyme scheme.

Not so with modern Chinese. To be sure, translating *terza rima* into modern Chinese is an arduous task,⁵⁰ but I have found that modern Chinese has more affinities with Dante's Italian than English and classical Chinese do. This is because unique syllable-endings in modern Chinese, called “*yunmu* 韻母” ‘simple or compound vowels (of a Chinese syllable), sometimes with a terminal n or ng’⁵¹ in linguistic terminology, make up only a relatively small number. In contrast to the rich and diverse syllable-endings in English words and to the large number of consonant endings in classical Chinese, which makes the task of finding matching rhymes formidable, they are more “rhyme-friendly” when it comes to translating *terza rima*.⁵² Thus, in my translation of the *Commedia*, I have chosen to retain this prosodic feature, a feature that is anathema to English translators. Because of the linguistic “advantage” I enjoy, I believe that, in my version of the lines quoted above, I have generally succeeded in achieving my goal: to convey the original's emotional intensity and re-create its phonological features, features that include the resonance between vowels within the lines, the echoing between vowels and between sound patterns, and the orchestration of vowels, sound patterns, and the rhyme scheme:

⁵⁰ In three papers in Chinese, I have discussed how formidable the task is if one decides to follow the *terza rima* rhyme scheme in a modern Chinese translation of *La Divina Commedia*. The papers are entitled “*Zi tao ku chi: Tan Shenqu yunge de fanyi* 自討苦吃——談《神曲》韻格的翻譯” ‘You Asked for It: On the Translation of the Rhyme Scheme of *La Divina Commedia*’; “*Zai tan Shenqu yunge de fanyi* 再談《神曲》韻格的翻譯” ‘A Second Discussion on the Translation of the Rhyme Scheme of *La Divina Commedia*’; “*Bing fen liu lu qin xianyin: Shenqu changju de fanyi* 兵分六路擒仙音——《神曲》長句的翻譯” ‘Dispatching Troops in Six Directions to Capture the Music of Heaven: On the Translation of Long Sentences in *La Divina Commedia*.’ The three papers have been collected in my book *Yuyan yu fanyi* 語言與翻譯 ‘*Language and Translation*.’ See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Yuyan yu fanyi* 語言與翻譯 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, 2001).

⁵¹ Wu Jingrong 吳景榮 et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1983), 860.

⁵² Spanish, with most words ending in vowels, can accommodate *terza rima* even more comfortably than modern Chinese does. For a detailed discussion of the subject, see the Introduction to my Chinese translation of *La Divina Commedia* (Huang 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Shenqu: Diyu pian* 神曲·地獄篇, 17-59).

在高光深邃無邊的皦皦
 本體，出現三個光環；三環
 華彩各異，卻同一大小。
 第一環映自第二環，燦然
 如彩虹映自彩虹：第三環則如
 一二環渾然相呼的火焰在流轉。

*Zai gaoguang shensui wubian de jiaojiao
 benti, chuxian san ge guanghuan; sanhuan
 huacai ge yi, que tong yi daxiao.
 Diyi huan ying zi di'er huan, canran
 ru caihong ying zi caihong; disan huan ze ru
 yi er huan hunran xianghu de huoyan zai liuzhuan.*

Words like “*guang* 光” (‘lume’ ‘light’), “*shen* 深” (‘profonda’ ‘profound’), “*huan* 環” (‘giri’ ‘circles’), “*tongyi* 同一” (‘d’una’ ‘of one’), “*can* 燦” (‘bright,’ translation of the meaning implied in the original), “*hong* 虹” (‘iri’ ‘rainbow’), “*ying* 映” (‘reflesso’ ‘reflected’), “*san* 三” (‘tre’ ‘three’), “*hun* 渾” ‘all in one,’ “*ran* 然” (Chinese function word), and “*yan* 焰” (‘foco’ ‘flame’) echo one another with their vowels, as well as with their “*n*”s or “*ng*”s, creating an intricate phonological pattern that suggests the emotional intensity of the original; reinforced by the rhymes (“*jiao* 皦”—“*xiao* 小,” “*huan* 環”—“*ran* 然”—“*zhuan* 轉”), two of which in turn set off sub-resonance, as it were, in the *diezi* 疊字 ‘reduplication’ “*jiaojiao* 皦皦” ‘bright,’ as well as in the *dieyun* 疊韻 ‘rhyming collocation’ “*canran* 燦然” ‘brightly,’⁵³ this phonological pattern becomes all the more powerful, creating effects which are, to use Nida’s terminology, dynamically equivalent to those in the original.⁵⁴

⁵³ In modern Chinese, each syllable has one of five tones, including the light tone. As each syllable has a tone, the phonological orchestration in my Chinese translation is more complex than has been represented here, since I have not indicated the tone of each syllable in my analysis.

⁵⁴ In his *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, co-authored with Charles Taber, Nida emphasizes “the priority of dynamic equivalence over formal correspondence.” See Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Helps for Translators, prepared under the auspices of the United Bible Societies, Vol. VIII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 22.

V. Conclusion

In an article entitled “What is Minor Poetry?” Eliot has made the following point about Crabbe:

I think that George Crabbe was a very good poet, but you do not go to him for magic: if you like realistic accounts of village life in Suffolk a hundred and twenty years ago, in verse so well written that it convinces you that the same thing could not be said in prose, you will like Crabbe.⁵⁵

If there are “accounts of village life” that “could not be said in prose,” how much more is this dictum true of accounts of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise! In using verse as a medium of translation to re-create the effects produced by the prosodic devices used by Dante, I hope that I have minimized the inevitable refraction of “la profonda e chiara sussistenza / de l’alto lume” ‘the profound and clear essence / of that lofty Light.’⁵⁶

At the beginning of the twentieth century, when translation from the major European languages like English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish to Chinese was a relatively new activity, it was not uncommon to see someone who did not know any English or French becoming well-known “translators” of English and French novels. Of this class of “translators,” the most famous was Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), who, by rewriting in classical Chinese what he was told by someone who knew the original, had “translated” more than 180 works written in European languages. In the twenty-first century, when translation from the major European languages has developed for nearly a hundred years, when the Chinese reading public, with its taste made more sophisticated by a host of fine translations, has become more demanding, this kind of “story-retelling” is no longer acceptable.⁵⁷ In translating a masterpiece like *La Divina Commedia* for the Chinese reading public of the twenty-first century, one has to go many steps further: not only must one translate from the original Italian, but one must use a medium which can reproduce as many qualities of the original as possible. By this, I mean verse in modern Chinese that can cope with all the prosodic devices used by Dante, including his *terza*

⁵⁵ T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 49.

⁵⁶ The gloss is based on both Mandelbaum’s and Sinclair’s version. See Mandelbaum, trans., *Paradiso*, 303 and Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 485.

⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion of Lin Shu’s story-retelling as translation, see “Lin Shu’s Story-Retelling as Shown in His Chinese Translation of *La Dame aux camélias*” in this collection. The article was first published in *Babel*, Vol. 44, no. 3 (1998), 208-233.

rima.

THE MYRIAD VOICES OF *THE DIVINE COMEDY*: ITS TRANSLATIONS IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND IN CHINESE

[ABSTRACT]

Once translated into different languages, *The Divine Comedy* assumes different voices. These voices are not normally determined by what critics consider the most prominent qualities of the original, namely, its structural beauty, the consistency of Dante's imagination, and the integrity of his genius, but by morphological features, by syntax, by rhythm, by the phonological characteristics of the different languages, and by the *terza rima* rhyme scheme. This paper discusses the myriad voices of the masterpiece with reference to its translations in English, French, German, Spanish, Latin, and Chinese, and shows how these voices echo the original and how they differ from one another.

I. Different Voices of *The Divine Comedy*

“To keep well abreast of the Dante literature that now appears from year to year would require a man's whole time,” said Grandgent,¹ a famous Dante scholar, in 1933. What Grandgent said of Dante literature is also true of the translations of *The Divine Comedy*. Seventy-four years after this forbidding statement was made, the speed with which translations of *The Divine Comedy* now appear from year to year would leave him helpless in trying even to keep track of the translations of Dante's masterpiece in various languages.

As a translator of *The Divine Comedy* whose Chinese *terza rima* version was published in Taiwan in 2003, I have not only had the opportunity of struggling to render Dante's Italian poem into Chinese verse, but also seen how fellow translators working in Chinese and in a number of European languages accomplished the same task. Although *The Divine Comedy* is but one masterpiece, once it is translated into different languages, it becomes different songs, even though its theme, imagery, and characters remain unchanged, very much like Calliope, the Muse of epic

¹ See C. H. Grandgent, ed. and annotated, *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1933), xli.

poetry,² singing in her myriad voices. While it is futile to try to give an exhaustive list of all the components that make up the original voice of Dante's poem, it is possible to enumerate some of the most distinctive qualities that make *The Divine Comedy* what it is, and subsequently discuss what are the most difficult qualities to reproduce in some of the major European languages and in Chinese.

II. The Structural Beauty of *The Divine Comedy*

In terms of structure, Grandgent has made the following pronouncement about the poem:

Of the external attributes of the *Divine Comedy*, the most wonderful is its symmetry. With all its huge bulk and bewilderingly multifarious detail, it is as sharply planned as a Gothic cathedral. Dante had the very uncommon power of fixing his attention upon the part without losing sight of the whole: every incident, every character receives its peculiar development, but at the same time is made to contribute its exact share to the total effect. The more one studies the poem, the clearer become its general lines, the more intricate its correspondences, the more elaborate its climaxes.³

This quality is certainly difficult to attain or imitate for a poet in his

² There are different versions as to the functions of the nine Muses. As Grimal says, "From the classical period the number of Muses was standardized to nine [...]. Each came to be attributed with a specific function, but these vary from one author to another. Broadly speaking, Calliope was said to be the Muse of epic poetry [...]." In assigning epic poetry to Calliope, I have followed Grimal's version. See Pierre Grimal, *A Concise Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, ed. by Stephen Kershaw from the translation by A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, first published in French as *Dictionnaire de la Mythologie Grecque et Romaine* by Presses Universitaires de France, Paris in 1951 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), 282). *The Divine Comedy* is classified both as an allegory and as an epic. See J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 287.

³ Grandgent, xxxvii. Dante originally referred to his poem as the *Commedia*; later, starting from Boccaccio, it was called *La Divina Commedia*. Translated into English, it is entitled either the *Divine Comedy*, in which the definite article "the" is not part of the title, or *The Divine Comedy*, in which the definite article "The" is part of the title. Either title is used by poets, critics, and scholars, many of whom are of high standing. In this and other papers in *Where Theory and Practice Meet*, I have, in English, referred to Dante's masterpiece consistently as "*The Divine Comedy*" or, in Italian, as "*La Divina Commedia*" or "the *Commedia*."

process of creation, but for the translator, this is easy fare, since what he has to do is just to follow in Dante's footsteps, for what was required of the poet is not required of the translator.

III. The Consistency of Dante's Imagination and the Integrity of His Genius

The same can be said of the following quality as described by Sinclair when he comments on the thirty-third, and the last, canto of the *Paradiso*:

Nowhere else does Dante attain to the greatness of the last canto of the *Paradiso*, and in it more than any other it must be remembered that a *canto* is a *song*. Here his reach most exceeds his grasp, and nothing in all his work better demonstrates the consistency of his imagination and the integrity of his genius. In the culmination of his story he reports his experience with such intensity of conviction, in a mood so docile and so uplifted, and in terms so significant of a vision at once cosmic and profoundly personal, that we are persuaded and sustained to the end.⁴

Though described by Eliot as "the highest point that poetry has ever reached or ever can reach,"⁵ though Dante's genius may have been taxed to the utmost, even this quality does not pose too great a problem for the translator, since the flight to empyrean, which is an extremely arduous task, has already been accomplished by Dante; what the translator has to do is to "repeat" Dante's words in another language. To be able to soar to the highest heaven in the poem, the poet, during the most intense moment of creation, has to be equipped with an imagination of the first order. In saying this, I do not mean that the translator does not need imagination; what I mean is that the actual soaring to empyrean is the poet's duty, which has already been superbly discharged; what the translator has to do is just to "ride on" the wings of the poet's imagination, which is a much easier task. To be sure, the translator is required to be capable of a felicity and loftiness of expression worthy of the author's, but this requirement is different from the requirement to create *The Divine Comedy* from nothing. In other words, what is required of the creative writer is different—sometimes very different—from what is required of the translator. While the poet should be capable of loftiness of conception, of the ability to

⁴ John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, 487.

⁵ T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951), 251.

“realize the inapprehensible in visual images,”⁶ to grip the reader from beginning to end, to create architectonic beauty, and so on, the translator, not being the creator of the poem, only needs to follow, in a different language, in the footsteps of the poet. What really challenges the translator is the linguistic and cultural gap between source and target languages.

IV. Morphological Features of Italian and of the Target Languages

Linguistic differences include those relating to morphology, syntax, and phonology. With the major European languages, namely, English, French, German, Spanish, and Latin, into which *The Divine Comedy* has been translated, morphology and syntax do not cause too much of a problem, since, like Italian, these languages are also inflectional, and have many morphological features in common with Dante’s mother tongue; almost all the morphological features found in Italian can be readily translated into almost any one of the these languages, particularly languages of the Italic branch, namely, French and Spanish. For example, in the following lines:

«Spene» diss’io «è uno attender certo
 de la gloria futura, il qual produce
 grazia divina e precedente merito.
 Da molte stelle mi vien questa luce;
 ma quei la distillò nel mio cor pria
 che fu sommo cantor del sommo duce.»
 (*Paradiso*, Canto 25, ll. 67-72)⁷

‘Hope’ I said ‘is a sure expectation of future glory, and it springs from divine grace and precedent merit. This light comes to me from many stars, but he first distilled it in my heart who was the sovereign singer of the Sovereign Lord [.]’⁸

there are many words of Latin origin which the Romance languages (Italian, French, and Spanish being three of them) share, as can be seen in

⁶ Eliot, *Selected Essays*, 267.

⁷ Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, 2nd ed. (Firenze: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 768.

⁸ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 362. For discussion purposes, as well as for the benefit of those who do not read Italian, every quotation from the original Italian will be accompanied by Sinclair’s prose translation.

the following French and Spanish translations:

«l'Espérance», dis-je, «est l'attente certaine
de la gloire future, qui est produite
par grâce divine et par mérite ancien.

De plusieurs étoiles me vient cette lumière,
mais le premier à la distiller dans mon cœur
fut le plus grand chantre du plus grand roi.»⁹

«La esperanza—repuse—es cierta espera
de la gloria futura, que produce
la gracia con el mérito adquirido.

Muchas estrellas me han dado esta luz;
mas quien primero la infundió en mi pecho
fue el supremo cantor del rey supremo.»¹⁰

A large number of keywords¹¹ in the original and in the French and

⁹ Jacqueline Risset, trans., *La Divine Comédie*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *L'Enfer*, Vol. 2, *Le Purgatoire*, Vol. 3, *Le Paradis* (Paris: GF Flammarion, 1992), 239.

¹⁰ Luis Martínez de Merlo, trans., *Divina comedia*, by Dante Alighieri, Letras Universales, 6th ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2000), 686.

¹¹ *Keyword* is spelt differently in different dictionaries: *key-word* (*OED*, Vol. 8, 406), *keyword* (*The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, eds. Lesley Brown et al., 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), Vol. 1, 1482; *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 5th ed., eds. William R. Trumble et al., 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Vol. 1, 1491); *key word* (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, eds. Philip Babcock Gove et al. (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc., Publishers, 1986), 1240; *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*, eds. John Sinclair et al. (London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1995), 915. *The Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 1st ed., eds. Jess Stein and Laurence Urdang, 2nd ed., eds. Wendalyn R. Nichols et al. (New York: Random House Inc., 2nd ed. 2001), 1052 gives *keyword* with the following note: "Also, *key word*." In the past decades, I have generally followed the *Oxford* dictionaries in spelling English words, but as the *Oxford* dictionaries themselves are sometimes at variance these days, as is shown in the above examples, I have to use my own discretion now from time to time. In the light of the following observation, the *Oxford* dictionaries are not to blame: "The single most variable element in the writing of words is the **hyphen**, hence the large amount of discussion it generates. **Hyphens** serve both to link and to separate the components of words; and while they are established in the spelling of certain words, they

Spanish translations are cognate, as can be seen in the following list: (1) Italian and Latin: Spene (spes), attender (attendere), certo (certus), gloria (gloria), futura (futura), produce (producere), grazia (gratia), divina (divinus), precedente (praecedere), merto (meritum), stelle (stella), vien (venire), luce (lux), distillò (distillare), cor (cor), pria (prima), cantor (cantor);¹² (2) French: “Espérance,” “attente,” “certaine,” “gloire,” “future,” “produite,” “grâce,” “divine,” “mérite,” “étoiles,” “vient,” “lumière,” “premier,” “distiller,” “cœur,” “chantre”; (3) Spanish: “esperanza,” “cierta,” “espera,” “gloria,” “futura,” “produce,” “gracia,” “mérito,” “estrellas,” “luz,” “primero,” “cantor.” The French and Spanish words are derived directly or indirectly from the same Latin words as their Italian counterparts.¹³ By virtue of the fact that Italian, French, and

come and go from many others. The use or nonuse of **hyphens** varies somewhat in different Englishes round the world. In the UK under the influence of the *Oxford* dictionaries, **hyphens** seem to be used relatively often, and certainly more often than in the US, where according to *Webster's* dictionaries the same words may be set solid, or spaced (if compounds). Canadians and Australians are somewhere between Britons and Americans in their readiness to use **hyphens**. Though there are few fixed conventions over hyphens, authorities do agree on such underlying principles as: • restrict the use of **hyphens** as far as possible • shed the linking **hyphen** from the better established formations • use **hyphens** to separate letter sequences which distract the reader from construing the word correctly[.] But how to apply these principles to words such as *co(-)operate* and *co(-)ordinate* is still a matter of debate. To resolve the issue, writers are sometimes encouraged to adopt the practices of one dictionary—although dictionaries themselves have mixed policies” (Pam Peters, *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 258). As Pam Peters says, “But how to apply these principles [...] is still a matter of debate.” Take the second principle, for example, the word “better” in the phrase “better established formations” can be differently interpreted by different people. What is considered “better established” by A may be considered “not well established yet” by B.

¹² The words in brackets are Latin words from which the Italian, French, and Spanish ones are derived. See Giorgio Cusatelli, ed., *Dizionario Garzanti della lingua italiana*, 18th ed. (Milano: Aldo Carzanti Editore, 1980) for the relevant Italian entries.

¹³ There are, of course, also words in the French and Spanish versions which are derived from Latin words, but whose cognates in Italian Dante has not used in his poem. For example, whereas Dante uses “duce” (derived from the Latin *dux* ‘leader’ or ‘guide’), Risset uses “roi” (derived from the Latin *rex* ‘ruler’ or ‘king’), and Martínez de Merlo uses “rey” (derived from the Latin *rex*); whereas Dante uses “sommo” (derived from the Latin *summus* (superlative of *superus* ‘that is

Spanish are cognate languages with countless cognate words, translation from the Italian into French and Spanish is almost a kind of direct replication. Being cognate, the words in the three languages have what one would call a centripetal pull between them with respect to their denotations, connotations, and, very often, even the associations they evoke.

When one moves in the opposite direction, that is, from Italian to Latin, the replication becomes even more direct. Take the opening of the entire *Comedy* and its Latin translation by Serravalle:

Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita
 Mi trovai per una selva oscura,
 Che la dritta via era smarrita.
 Et quanto dir qual era è cosa dura
 Esta selva selvaggia et aspra e forte,
 Che nel pensier rinova la paura.
 Tant'è amara che poco è più morte;
 Ma, per trattar del ben ch'i' vi trovai,
 Dirrò de l'altre cose ch'i'v'ho scorte.¹⁴

In the middle of the journey of our life I came to myself within a dark wood where the straight way was lost. Ah, how hard a thing it is to tell of that wood, savage and harsh and dense, the thought of which renews my fear! So bitter is it that death is hardly more. But to give account of the good which I found there I will tell of the other things I noted there.¹⁵

above, upper, higher') 'highest in position, most exalted, supreme'), Risset uses "plus grand" (derived respectively from the Latin *plus* 'more' and *grandis* 'great'), and Martínez de Merlo uses "supremo" (derived from the Latin *supremus* (superlative of *superus*) 'supreme'). It should be noted that *superus* (rarely *super*) has two superlatives, namely, *supremus* and *summus*. For further details of the meanings of the Latin words, see Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten, *A Latin Dictionary*, founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary, 1st ed. 1879 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, impression of 1962); D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English-Latin*, 1st ed. 1959 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 5th ed. 1968); and A. Souter et al., eds., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

¹⁴ Fratris Iohannis de Serravalle, trans., *Translatio et comentum totius libri Dantis Aldigherii*, by Dante Alighieri, cum textu italico Fratris Bartholomaei a Colle nunc primum edita (Prati: Ex Officina Libraria Giachetti, Filii et Soc., 1891) 27-28. The source-language text used by Serravalle is different from that published by the Società Dantesca Italiana. As a result, there are variant readings in the quotation.

¹⁵ Sinclair, trans., *Inferno*, 23.

In medio itineris vite nostre
 Reperi me in una silva obscura,
 Cuius recta via erat devia.
 Hey, quantum, ad dicendum qualis erat, est res dura,
 Ista silva silvestris et aspera et fortis,
 Que in meditatione renovat pavorem.
 Tantum est amara quod ea vix amarior sit mors.
 Sed, ut tractem de bono quod in ea reperi,
 Dicam de aliis rebus quas in eadem percepi.¹⁶

In respect of vocabulary, the Latin translation almost reads like the prototype of Dante's original; or, one could even say, without sounding facetious, that Dante's poem is "translated" from the "original Latin." To switch to figurative language, while Italian, French, and Spanish are siblings, Latin and Italian are father and son, for one can immediately recognize a large number of Latin words from which Dante's Italian is descended: "medio"- "mezzo," "vite"- "vita," "nostre"- "nostra," "silva"- "silva," "obscura"- "oscura," "via"- "via," "quantum"- "quanto," "dicendum"- "dir," "qualis"- "qual," "dura"- "dura," "silva"- "selva," "silvestris"- "selvaggia," "aspera"- "aspra," "et"- "e," "fortis"- "forte."

When we leave the Italic branch and move into the Germanic, the cognation between the original and the translations decreases, as can be seen in the following English and German translations of the same lines (67-72) quoted above from Canto 25 of the *Paradiso*:

[...] I said, "Hope

is sure expectancy of future bliss
 to be inherited—the holy fruit
 of God's own grace and man's precedent worth.

From many stars this light comes to my mind,
 but he who first instilled it in my heart
 was highest singer of the Highest Lord.¹⁷

¹⁶ Serravalle, 27-28. The Latin used in the translation is different from classical Latin, that is, the Latin language as used by Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, Caesar, and so on. For example, in classical Latin, the indefinite article *a* or *an* is not normally translated. In the Latin translation quoted here, the indefinite article "una" 'a' is used. See Simpson, 651 for examples of Latin translations of the English indefinite article *a*: "a certain, *quidam*. Distributively: twice a year, *bis in singulis annis*."

¹⁷ Mark Musa, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri,

»Hoffnung« sprach ich, »ist gwiss anwartend 'wesen
 der glôrjen künftigen, die welche uns schafft
 genade und guter werk was durch uns 'wesen.
 Von stern viel erbet solich wissenschaft;
 doch der sie mir ins herze träufte ob allen,
 war erzinger des Fürsten siegehaft.«¹⁸

In Musa's version, the most important word of the original, "Spene," on which Dante is examined by St. James, no longer has a cognate of Latin origin to translate it; instead, it is translated by "Hope," a word derived from the "Late OE. [Old English] *hopa*, earlier *tó-hopa*, wk. masc. [weak masculine] First found in LG. [Low German] areas, whence in HG. [High German] and Scand. [Scandinavian]."¹⁹ Nevertheless, using a language which, like Italian, belongs to the Indo-European language family, Musa still has cognates to rely on: "expectancy" (Latin *expectantia*, which is ultimately derived from *ex(s)pectiare* 'to look out for, await'),²⁰ "future" (Latin *futūrus*),²¹ "inherited," "grace," "precedent," and "instilled." As German has been less influenced by Latin, Borchardt's version has only one word of Latin origin: "glôrjen".

Unlike those translating into the Romance languages, English, or German, one translating *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese, a language belonging to the Sino-Tibetan family, has no cognation whatsoever to count on. Instead of a centripetal pull between source and target languages

3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatory*, Vol. 3, *Paradise* (London: Penguin Books, 1984-1986), Vol. 3, *Paradise*, 297. Musa's line numbers are slightly different: he starts translating Dante's line 67 in his line 66.

¹⁸ Rudolf Borchardt, trans., *Dantes Comedia Deutsch* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967), 429.

¹⁹ William Little et al., prepared, rev. C. T. Onions, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 3rd ed., revised with addenda (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 920.

²⁰ J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, first ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, and W. A. Craigie, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989), Vol. 5, 556, "expectancy," 555, "expect." In the entry "expect," detailed etymological information is given as follows: "[ad. L. *ex(s)pect-āre* to look for, await, f. *ex-* (see EX- *pref.*) + *spect-āre* to look, freq. of *spec-ĕre* to see. Cf. OF. *esperer* (14th c.) to await.]" (Vol. 5, 555). *The Oxford English Dictionary* is hereafter referred to as *OED*.

²¹ *OED*, Vol. 6, 295.

that guides the translator during the translation process, the Italian-Chinese translator is totally on his own. To be sure, commonly used words like “spene” may easily find their semantic equivalents; but more often than not, he has to sail into uncharted waters. Take the Italian word “gloria,” for example. Whereas his counterparts translating into French, Spanish, English, and German all have a cognate of Latin origin in their respective languages (“gloire” in French, “gloria” in Spanish, “glory” in English,²² and “glôrjen” in German),²³ he has to search hard for a usable word in

²² To conform to the metre, Musa has used the monosyllabic “bliss” instead of the disyllabic “glory,” which is semantically more accurate, for, derived, like the Italian “gloria,” from the Latin *gloria*, both cognate words have almost exactly the same semantic field. Perhaps because of this, other English translators like Anderson, Binyon, Carlyle-Okey-Wicksteed, Ciardi, Singleton, and Sisson have all translated “gloria futura” as “future glory.” It can be seen that this kind of consensus resulting from cognation can multiply almost beyond belief if one examines, from the first line of the *Inferno* to the last line of the *Paradiso*, all the translations of *The Divine Comedy* in the major European languages against the original. In other words, working within the parameters set by cognation between the European languages, the translators do not find their “semantic orbits” too divergent; as a result, semantic similarity—very often even uniformity—can be found everywhere, something which cannot be said of Chinese translations of the same poem. For the English translation of “gloria futura” as “future glory,” see Melville B. Anderson, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *The Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *The Paradiso*, The World’s Classics (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), Vol. 3, *The Paradiso*, 249; Laurence Binyon, trans., *The Portable Dante* (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), 498; Aitken Carlyle, Thomas Okey, and Philip H. Wicksteed, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Aitken Carlyle, *Purgatorio*, trans. Thomas Okey, *Paradiso*, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), *Paradiso*, 557; John Ciardi, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, a verse rendering for the modern reader, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *The Inferno*, Vol. 2, *The Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *The Paradiso* (New York: Mentor, 1961-1982), Vol. 3, *The Paradiso*, 281; Charles Singleton, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, 6 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno 1: Italian Text and Translation*, Vol. 2, *Inferno 2: Commentary*, Vol. 3, *Purgatorio 1: Italian Text and Translation*, Vol. 4, *Purgatorio 2: Commentary*, Vol. 5, *Paradiso 1: Italian Text and Translation*, Vol. 6, *Paradiso 2: Commentary*, Bollingen Series LXXX (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989-1991), Vol. 5, 283; C. H. Sisson, trans., *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 461.

²³ In German, the word derived from the Latin *gloria* is normally spelt *Glorie*,

Chinese. With the exception of cases where “false friends” (“*faux amis*” in French) are involved,²⁴ translation between cognates, which reduces any possible semantic shift or distortion to a minimum, normally ensures a high degree of fidelity. When one is working in a language that belongs to a different family, no such help is available; in cases like this, one has to use one’s knowledge of both the source and target languages as best one can to search for words that appear to have the same or similar semantic fields as the originals. Take the word “gloria” from the Italian quotation again. Whereas Wang Weike and Huang Wenjie have both translated it as “*guangrong* 光榮” ‘honour,’²⁵ I have translated it as “*rongyao* 榮耀” ‘glory,’²⁶ which, in the context of the quotation, is closer to “gloria.”²⁷ If Chinese were a member of the Italic branch, it would most probably have a word cognate with “gloria,” providing all Chinese translators with a “standard” equivalent of the Italian word, as is the case with French, Spanish, English, and German translators. As it is, with no cognation to guide them, Chinese translators are left to fend for themselves, often coming up with versions that differ widely from one another as well as

which is cognate with the English *glory*, even though the English *glory* in different contexts may be translated by the German words “*Rhum, Ehre, Herrlichkeit, Pracht, Glanz, Glanzpunkt, Verklärung, Strahlenkrone, Heiligenschein*” (Harold T. Betteridge, ed., *Cassell’s English and German Dictionary*, based on the edition by Karl Breul, completely revised and re-edited by Harold T. Betteridge, 12th ed. (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1976), 213.

²⁴ See Abel Chevalley and Marguerite Chevalley, *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary: French-English*, first published 1934 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966 printing), ix-xi for a discussion of “false friends,” “words that are sounded or spelt alike” (ix), but which are not exact equivalents, and which may mislead translators.

²⁵ See Wang Weike 王維克, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ by Dante Alighieri, 2nd ed. (Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1980), 499; Huang Wenjie 黃文捷, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*’; Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*’; Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*’ (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe 花城出版社, 2000), Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian*, 372.

²⁶ Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ *Jiuge Wenku* 九歌文庫, 927, 928, 929 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, September 2003), Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian*, 381.

²⁷ Wang Weike’s translation is based on a French version of *The Divine Comedy*. The source-language text of his “*guangrong* 光榮” is, therefore, probably the French “*gloire*” instead of the Italian “*gloria*.”

from the source-language text.

V. Syntax

Single words are the smallest units that a translator has to deal with. Moving beyond single words the translator will have to tackle syntax, which is “[t]he arrangement of words (in their appropriate forms) by which their connexion and relation in a sentence are shown.”²⁸ Anyone who has closely studied a large enough number of translations between European languages as well as translations from European languages into Chinese must have become keenly aware how easily the syntax of one European language can be reproduced in another, and how difficult it is for Chinese to cope with the syntax of European languages. This is because the syntax of Chinese is much less flexible than the syntax of European languages. Of the handful of major European languages that I have a knowledge of, the one which has the greatest flexibility in respect of syntax is Latin. To see how flexible Latin syntax is, one has only to read Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero.²⁹ Yet, despite differences in degree, these European languages can, generally speaking, cope with each other’s syntax with little difficulty. Not so with Chinese. As I have pointed out in an article entitled “Syntax and Translatability,”³⁰ Chinese syntax is linear in comparison with the syntax of European languages. Without relative clauses and with only a very limited capacity for accommodating parenthetical constructions and inversion,³¹ it has low malleability. As a

²⁸ *OED*, Vol. 17, 487.

²⁹ Latin not written in classical times is less complex in terms of syntax, as can be seen in Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa contra Gentiles* and *Summa theologica* and the *Biblia sacra vulgatae editionis*. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Libri quatuor (Roma: Typographia Forzani et Socii, 1888); *Summa theologica*, de Rubeis, Billuart et aliorum notis selectis ornata, editio XXII, 5 vols. (Roma: Domus Editorialis Marietti, 1940); *Biblia sacra vulgatae editionis*, Sixti V et Clementis VIII, jussu recognita atque edita (London: S. Bagster, 1890).

³⁰ The article is now collected in this volume.

³¹ The word “inversion” is used both in rhetoric and in grammar. In rhetoric, it means “reversal of the usual or natural order of words; anastrophe”; in grammar, it means “any change from a basic word order or syntactic sequence, as in the placement of a subject after an auxiliary verb in a question or after the verb in an exclamation, as ‘When will you go?’ and ‘How beautiful is the rose!’” See Wendalyn R. Nichols et al., eds., *Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, Inc., 2001), 1003. In respect of translation from European languages to Chinese, inversion as a rhetorical device is much

result, when Chinese translators come across a lengthy complex Italian sentence in *The Divine Comedy*, they have to use all the skills at their disposal to cope with it. With other European languages, a complex Italian sentence can be readily reproduced. Take lines 73-84 of Canto 32 of the *Purgatorio*, for example:

Quali a veder de' fioretti del melo
 che del suo pome li angeli fa ghiotti
 e perpetue nozze fa nel cielo,
 Pietro e Giovanni e Iacopo condotti
 e vinti, ritornaro a la parola
 da la qual furon maggior sonni rotti,
 e videro scemata loro scuola
 così di Moisè come d'Elia,
 ed al maestro suo cangiata stola;
 tal torna' io, e vidi quella pia
 sovra me starsi che conducitrice
 fu de' miei passi lungo 'l fiume pria.³²

The passage describes Dante waking up after hearing the hymn chanted by the procession in Purgatory, and sees Matelda standing over him. In the sentence, there is a typical Dante simile, using the formula “Quali” ‘As’... “così” ‘so.’ In the first as well as the second half of the simile, plenty of information is packed, thanks to the malleable syntax of the Italian language, which allows one to go on using relative clauses almost indefinitely. Because of cognation, this kind of syntax lends itself readily to translation into other European languages, such as English:

As, when brought to see some of the blossoms of the apple-tree that makes the angels greedy for its fruit and makes perpetual marriage-feast in heaven, Peter and John and James were overpowered and came to themselves again at the word by which deeper slumbers were broken and saw their company diminished by both Moses and Elias and their Master's raiment changed, so I came to myself and saw standing over me that compassionate lady who was before the guide of my steps along the river.³³

more difficult than inversion as a grammatical feature.

³² Alighieri, 674-75.

³³ Sinclair, trans., *Purgatorio*, 423. Considerations of space do not allow me to quote more English versions, but one can easily find that other English versions, including those by Anderson, Ciardi, Mandelbaum, Musa, Sayers, and Sisson—to name just a few—can also follow the Italian syntax closely.

Similar syntactic effects can also be easily reproduced in French:

Quand on les mena voir les fleurs du pommier
 qui rend les anges avides de son fruit,
 et fait dans le ciel des noces perpétuelles,
 Pierre Jean et Jacques s’y évanouirent,
 puis ils revinrent à la parole
 qui rompit aussi de plus profonds sommeils,
 et ils virent leur école diminuée
 à la fois de Moïse et d’Elie,
 et la robe de leur maître changée;
 tel je revins à moi, et vis debout
 penchée sur moi la pieuse dame
 qui m’avait conduit le long du fleuve [...] ³⁴

in German:

Als da zu schau den Apfel in der Bluht,
 —der reizet engels gaumen auf sein obes,
 und ewig hochzeit in himmele thut—
 Hinführen Petrus, Jöhans und Jakobes,
 und, übermannt, heim fanden auf den Ton,
 der ander Dumpf schon brochen denn so grobes—
 Und sahen waisen ihrer Lehren thron
 schon beider, also Mōsen wie Elien,
 und in neu kleid gefahren ihren Fron:
 Also heimfand ich, und bei meinen knieen
 sah ich die Vielgetreue, die mir wies
 vordem beim flusse, und mir ins ziel geliehen [...] ³⁵

and in Spanish:

Como por ver las flores del manzano
 que hace ansiar a los ángeles su fruto,
 y esponsales perpetuos en el cielo,

 Pedro, Juan y Jacob fueron llevados
 vencidos, tornóles la palabra
 que sueños aún más grandes ha quebrado,

 y se encontraron sin la compañía

³⁴ Risset, trans., *Le Purgatoire*, 297.

³⁵ Borchartd, 308.

tanto de Elías como de Moisés,
 y al maestro la túnica cambiada;
 así me recobré, y vi sobre mí
 aquella que, piadosa conductora
 fue de mis paso antes junto al río.³⁶

The Italian formula “Quali” ‘As’...“così” ‘so’ can be easily translated by similar formulas: “Quand...tel” (French), “Als”...“Also” (German), and “Como”...“así” (Spanish). At this point, one may ask: “Is Chinese so primitive that it does not even have words that can translate the Italian formula “Quali” ‘As’...“così” ‘so’?” The answer is: Chinese does have words that can translate the Italian formula, but it does not have relative pronouns like those in English (“that,” “which,” “who”), in French (“qui,” “que,” “dont”), in German (“der,” “die,” “das”), and in Spanish (“que”). With these relative pronouns, the French, German, and Spanish translations can follow the original syntactic movement closely. Though probably taken for granted by translators working in European languages, the importance of this affinity between the European languages cannot be overemphasized, for, in literature, particularly in poetry, syntactic movement can be skilfully exploited by a master-hand to create various stylistic effects, including tension, climax, suspense, bathos, and tortuous circumlocution, all of which can be found in the original *Divine Comedy*.

Unable to reproduce these stylistic effects, a translator translating from Italian to Chinese has to sing a humbler tune, as can be seen in the following lines from my own version:

那株神聖的蘋果樹，叫婚宴的盛會
 在天國永不停息；它的鮮果，
 叫天使嘴饞。因獲得引導而窺窺
 樹花時，彼得、約翰、雅各一夥
 被完全震懾，直到話聲響起
 才恢復過來，發覺隊伍單薄，
 不見了摩西、以利亞；老師的裳衣
 也變回了原狀。更深沉的睡眠
 曾經因上述的話聲破裂分辯。
 我當時也這樣醒轉；仰視時看見
 那位帶領過我、沿河畔一帶
 前行的善女子，立在我身邊。³⁷

³⁶ Martínez de Merlo, 503-504.

³⁷ Huang Guobin, trans., *Lianyu pian*, 506.

‘That sacred apple-tree, caused the wedding’s banquet
 in Heaven to never end; its fresh fruit
 made the angels greedy. When led to espy
 the tree’s blossoms, Peter, John, and James’s group
 were completely overcome, until a voice sounded;
 only then did they recover, to find the gathering thin,
 with Moses and Elias gone, their Master’s garment
 having resumed its original form. Deeper sleep,
 because of the above-mentioned voice, had been broken before.
 At that time, I woke up in the same manner: looking up, I saw
 that having-led-me-along-the-stream-
 to-walk-ahead good lady standing by my side.’³⁸

From the back-translation, it can be seen that the flow of the original Italian, the cohesion made possible by relative clauses, the closely-knit structure, and the echoing in the “Quali”—“così” formula are missing; the units of the original are broken up and rearranged to conform to idiomatic Chinese. As a result, what French, German, and Spanish can achieve almost effortlessly is no longer achievable in Chinese. If one reads other Chinese versions, such as those by Wang,³⁹ by Tian,⁴⁰ and by Huang Wenjie,⁴¹ one will find that, to all these versions, Italian syntax has been a formidable challenge. Wang’s and Huang Wenjie’s versions have, to a certain extent, also broken the original units up and rearranged them in accordance with the requirements of Chinese grammar and syntax, and are therefore comprehensible to the Chinese reader. Tian’s version has paid little attention to Chinese grammar and syntax, and forcibly tries to transplant Italian syntax into Chinese; the result is an involved version that is hardly readable or comprehensible. Take the following sentences, for example:

正如彼得·約翰和雅各被帶去觀看那棵使天使們貪食它的果子而在
 天上擺永久的喜筵的蘋果樹的一些花時〔……〕我就那樣醒了，只

³⁸ To give readers who do not read Chinese a rough idea of what Chinese syntax and word order are like, my back-translation is made as literal as possible, so much so that it has deviated considerably from idiomatic English.

³⁹ Wang, 344-45.

⁴⁰ Tian Dewang 田德望, trans., *Shenqu* 神曲 ‘*The Divine Comedy*,’ 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 ‘*Inferno*,’ Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 ‘*Purgatory*,’ Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘*Paradise*,’ by Dante Alighieri (Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1997), Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian*, 444.

⁴¹ Huang Wenjie, trans., *Lianyu pian*, 416.

見當初沿着河行走作為我的嚮導的那位慈悲的淑女站在我旁邊彎身向着我。⁴²

‘Just as Peter, John and James were led to see the caused-the-angels-to-be-greedy-to-eat-its-[the apple-tree’s]-fruit-so-that-in-heaven-set-the-eternal-marriage-feast apple-tree’s some blossoms [...] I also in that way woke up, [I] only saw the earlier-along-the-stream-walking-as-my-guide compassionate lady standing by my side, bending over me.’⁴³

In respect of syntax, therefore, in any readable and comprehensible Chinese version of Dante’s sentence, one is compelled to forgo the stylistic effects arising from the syntactic features of the original. In other words, once a translator tries to render the original Italian into a Sino-Tibetan language like Chinese, what is taken for granted by translators working in the major European languages will become something that could only be dreamt of. This is because between the European languages on the one hand and Chinese on the other, there is an unbridgeable chasm in respect of syntax; those translating *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese can only try to do their best within the insurmountable constraints imposed by the vast differences between the two families of languages.

VI. Rhythm

When it comes to rhythm, translators, whether working in the major European languages or in Chinese, have to rise to another challenge. Take lines 85-99 of Canto 33 of the *Paradiso*, in which Dante comes face to face with the Eternal Light and fixes his gaze upon it:

Nel suo profondo vidi che s’interna,
legato con amore in un volume,
ciò che per l’universo si squaderna;
sustanze e accidenti e lor costume,

⁴² Tian, trans., *Lianyu pian*, 444.

⁴³ In the back-translation, I have tried to show the extremely lengthy premodification in the Chinese version by using hyphens to join words together at the expense of idiomatic English. In Chinese, such lengthy premodification violates idiomatic usage and is hardly comprehensible, giving rise to ambiguity because of the large number of the same premodifying particle “de 的” (a particle that signifies either the possessive case when it follows a noun, or an attributive adjective when it follows an adjective; it has no equivalent in English, French, German, Spanish, Latin, or Greek).

quasi conflati insieme, per tal modo
 che ciò ch'i' dico è un semplice lume.
 La forma universal di questo nodo
 credo ch'i' vidi, perché più di largo,
 dicendo questo, mi sento ch'i' godo.
 Un punto solo m'è maggior letargo
 che venticinque secoli a la 'mpresa,
 che fé Nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo.
 Così la mente mia, tutta sospesa,
 mirava fissa, immobile e attenta,
 e sempre di mirar faciesi accesa.⁴⁴

In its depth I saw that it contained, bound by love in one volume, that which is scattered in leaves through the universe, substances and accidents and their relations as it were fused together in such a way that what I tell of is a simple light. I think I saw the universal form of this complex, because in telling of it I feel my joy expand. A single moment makes for me deeper oblivion than five and twenty centuries upon the enterprise that made Neptune wonder at the shadow of the Argo. Thus my mind, all rapt, was gazing, fixed, still and intent, and ever enkindled with gazing.⁴⁵

To emphasize the wonder of the Eternal Light, Dante introduces one pause after another at the end of the passage (“Così la mente mia, tutta sospesa, / mirava fissa, immobile e attenta, / e sempre di mirar faciesi accesa”), which suggests the intensity of his gazing and the momentousness and ineffability of the vision. In Sinclair’s prose translation, this effect is faithfully captured: “Thus my mind, all rapt, was gazing, fixed, still and intent, and ever enkindled with gazing.” As pauses are relatively easy to reproduce, most versions, whether in the major European languages or in Chinese, have succeeded in conveying similar stylistic effects, as can be seen in Musa’s,⁴⁶ Sayers and Reynolds’s,⁴⁷ Singleton’s,⁴⁸ Sisson’s,⁴⁹ Risset’s,⁵⁰ Martínez de Merlo’s,⁵¹ and Huang

⁴⁴ Alighieri, 797.

⁴⁵ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 483.

⁴⁶ Musa, trans., *Paradise*, 393.

⁴⁷ Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, trans., *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri the Florentine*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Cantica I, *Hell*, trans. Dorothy Sayers, Cantica II, *Purgatory*, trans. Dorothy Sayers, Cantica III, *Paradise*, trans. Dorothy Sayers and Barbara Reynolds (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949-1962), *Paradise*, 346.

⁴⁸ Singleton, trans., *Paradiso*, 377.

⁴⁹ Sisson, 498.

Guobin's.⁵² In failing to preserve the original rhythm, Ciardi⁵³ has produced stylistic effects which are a far cry from those of the original: "My tranced being / stared fixed and motionless upon that vision, / ever more fervent to see in the act of seeing." Being too fluent, flowing on with too few pauses, the lines simply cannot measure up to the intensity and momentousness of Dante's vision. Of all the versions quoted above, the one which is most successful in reproducing the original's stylistic effects is Martínez de Merlo's:

Así mi mente, toda suspendida,
miraba fijamente, atenta, inmóvil,
y siempre de mirar sentía anhelo.⁵⁴

Apart from the pauses, which follow those in the original closely to re-create the rhythm in Spanish, there is an echoing on the phonemic level, at times even between identical or almost identical lexical items: "Così"—"así," "mente"—"mente," "mia"—"mi," "tutta"—"toda," "sospesa"—"suspendida," "mirava"—"miraba," "fissa"—"fijamente," "immobile"—"inmóvil," "sempre"—"siempre," "di"—"de," "mirar"—"mirar."

VII. The Phonological Level

In the last sentence in my discussion of the Spanish quotation above with reference to the original, I have already moved to another aspect of the myriad voices of *The Divine Comedy*: the phonological level in the translation of the poem. On most occasions and for most practical purposes, as long as the translator has brought over the semantic level of the source-language (SL) text, he should be considered to have discharged his duties satisfactorily. However, when sound effects in the original play a part, especially when the part is a highly significant part, the semantic level can only be considered to be carrying some—not all—of the total meaning of the SL text. Take the following SL texts in French, German, and Italian alongside their English versions:

oignez vilain, il vous poindra, oignez vilain, il vous oindra.⁵⁵ save a thief

⁵⁰ Risset, 311.

⁵¹ Martínez de Merlo, 740.

⁵² Huang Guobin, *Tiantang pian*, 509.

⁵³ Ciardi, trans., *The Paradiso*, 363.

⁵⁴ Martínez de Merlo, 740.

⁵⁵ Chevalley and Chevalley, 643, under the headword "poindre."

from the gallows, and he will be the first to cut your throat;⁵⁶ flatter the low, and they will treat you roughly, cudgel them, and they will lick your boots;⁵⁷

Hoffen und Harren macht manchen zum Narren: he who lives on hope dies of hunger;⁵⁸

Casa mia, casa mia, per piccina che tu sia, tu mi sembri una badia: there's no place like home;⁵⁹ literally "my home, my home, small as you are, you seem an abbey to me."

The semantic elements of the proverbs may have been satisfactorily brought over, but the phonological content, which is full of musicality because of the echoing of similar or even identical sounds throughout the SL texts, is missing. For this reason, the translations can only be considered a partial success.

When it comes to poetry translation, the phonological level is even more important. Take the following Portuguese poem entitled "Serenata sintética" by Cassiano Ricardo, cited by Hatim and Mason⁶⁰ from García Yebra,⁶¹ the phonological level is predominant:

rua
 torta

 lua
 morta

 tua
 porta

Thus, Hatim and Mason comment:

In this short poem, phonemic form is everything. The words themselves are evocative: a small town with 'winding streets' (*rua torta*), a 'fading moon'

⁵⁶ Chevalley and Chevalley, 583, under the headword "oindre."

⁵⁷ Chevalley and Chevalley, 643, under the headword "poindre."

⁵⁸ Betteridge, 237, under the headword "hoff-en."

⁵⁹ Maria Cristina Bareggi et al., *DII Dizionario: Inglese Italiano•Italiano Inglese* (Trento: Paravia Bruno Mondatori Editori and Oxford University Press, 2001), 1599, under the headword "casa."

⁶⁰ Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (London: Longman, 1990), 14.

⁶¹ V. García Yebra, *En Torno a la traducción* (Madrid: Gredos, 1983), 145.

(*lua morta*) and the hint of an amorous affair: ‘your door’ (*tua porta*). But their impact is achieved almost solely through the close rhyme and rhythm; the meaning is raised from the level of the banal by dint of exploiting features which are indissociable from the Portuguese language as a code. García Yebra relates that he gave up the attempt to translate the poem even into Spanish, a language which shares certain phonological features with Portuguese.

This point will be better illustrated by Jacque Prévert’s “Familiale” and its English translation, “Family Piece,” by Anthony Hartley:⁶²

La mère fait du tricot
 Le fils fait la guerre
 Elle trouve ça tout naturel la mère
 Et le père qu’est-ce qu’il fait le père?
 Il fait des affaires
 Sa femme fait du tricot
 Son fils la guerre
 Lui des affaires
 Il trouve ça tout naturel le père
 Et le fils et le fils
 Qu’est-ce qu’il trouve le fils?
 Il ne trouve rien absolument rien le fils
 Le fils sa mère fait du tricot son père des affaires lui la guerre
 Quand il aura fini la guerre
 Il fera des affaires avec son père
 La guerre continue la mère continue elle tricote
 Le père continue il fait des affaires
 Le fils est tué il ne continue plus
 Le père et la mère vont au cimetière
 Ils trouvent ça tout naturel le père et la mère
 La vie continue la vie avec le tricot la guerre les affaires
 Les affaires la guerre le tricot la guerre
 Les affaires les affaires et les affaires
 La vie avec le cimetière.

The mother does her knitting, the son goes to the war. The mother finds that quite natural. And the father, what does the father do? He does business. His wife does her knitting, his son goes to the war, and he does business. The father finds that quite natural. And the son, and the son, what does the son think? The son thinks nothing, absolutely nothing. The son’s mother does her knitting, his father business, he goes to the war. When he

⁶² Anthony Hartley, trans., *The Penguin Book of French Verse: 4: The Twentieth Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), 266-67.

has finished the war, he will do business with his father. The war goes on, the mother goes on—she knits—the father goes on—he does business—the son is killed—he does not go on any more. The father and mother go to the cemetery. The father and mother find that quite natural. Life goes on, life with knitting, war, business. Business, war, knitting, war. Business, business and business. Life with the cemetery.

The original is written in a conversational style; deliberately casual and with a lot of repetition in respect of lexical items and phonological features, lines 1-17 sound functionally garrulous, but an ironic twist takes over in line 18. From then on until the end, there is still the abundant use of repetition. The English translation has reproduced almost all the stylistic features of the original; what is missing is the repetitive sound pattern which includes end rhyme and internal rhyme based on such words as “mère” (/mɛʀ/), “père” (/pɛʀ/), “guerre” (/gɛʀ/), “des affaires” (/dez/ /afɛʀ/), “les affaires” (/lez/ /afɛʀ/),⁶³ “cimetière” (/simtjɛʀ/), “tricot” (/triko/), “naturel” (/natyʀɛl/), “continue” (/kɔ̃tjiny/), “plus” (/ply/), and “fils” (/fis/). The repetition of the same phonemes throughout the poem suggests the monotonous nature of the mundane world as well as a sense of ennui, with the repetition of “mère,” “père,” and “fils” emphasizing the “familiale” theme. Before the last line, the narrator brings the repetition to an unbearable climax in terms of repetition: “La vie continue la vie avec le tricot la guerre les affaires / Les affaires la guerre le tricot la guerre / Les affaires les affaires et les affaires,” intensifying the boredom of life and

⁶³ When “des affaires” and “les affaires” are read, there is what the French call a liaison between “des” and “affaires” as well as between “les” and “affaires”; their phonetic transcriptions would be: /dez/ /afɛʀ/) and /lez/ /afɛʀ/ respectively. In French, to pronounce words in this way is described as “faire la liaison (entre deux mots)” ‘to make the liaison (between two words).’ Liaisons can be divided into three types: (1) “les liaisons impossibles” ‘impossible liaisons’; (2) “les liaisons obligatoires” ‘mandatory liaisons’; (3) “les liaisons facultatives” ‘optional liaisons.’ For a detailed account of French liaisons, see the grammatical and linguistic article “La Liaison” in Louis Guilbert et al., eds., *Grand Larousse de la langue française en sept volumes* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1971-1978), tome quatrième [Vol. 4], 3027-3029. On the title page of Vol. 1, Vol. 2, and Vol. 3, the words indicating the number of volumes are “en six volumes” [in six volumes] instead of “en sept volumes” [in seven volumes]; on the title page of Vol. 4, Vol. 5, Vol. 6, and Vol. 7, the words “en sept volumes” [in seven volumes] are used. As a matter of fact, the dictionary consists of seven volumes instead of six. The publication years are 1971 (Vol. 1), 1972 (Vol. 2), 1973 (Vol. 3), 1975 (Vol. 4), 1976 (Vol. 5), 1977 (Vol. 6), and 1978 (Vol. 7).

making the last line all the more powerful: “La vie avec le cimetière.” What begins as innocent repetition, as a mechanical sing-song pattern of sounds—even as hilarity—finally turns out to be black humour, pouncing on the reader when he is most off his guard. As the English language operates on a different set of phonological features, Hartley’s version, although admirable considering the insurmountable constraints, fails to convey the same phonological effects.

What is true of Prévert’s “Familiare” is even more true of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. As Sinclair has aptly pointed out, “it must be remembered that a *canto* is a *song*”;⁶⁴ for this reason, the entire poem of 100 cantos should be regarded as 100 songs. As such, the poem is, as expected, full of music or musicality. In translating *The Divine Comedy* into another language, therefore, the translator must, from beginning to end, be “all ears” to pick up every piece of music created by Dante in Italian. However, to be “all ears” is one thing; whether the translator can replay this music in the target language is another thing. In an article entitled “Musicality and Intrafamily Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese,”⁶⁵ I have pointed out that, with reference to the same source language, one language may be better equipped than another to translate the musicality of the original. Not so with the translation of imagery: with the translation of imagery, almost all target languages are on a par, since imagery is sememe-oriented, and practically every language can readily come up with approximately the same semantic equivalents when rendering images. Take the following image of lost souls in the *Inferno*:

E come a gradicar si sta la rana
 col muso fuor de l’acqua, quando sogna
 di spigolar sovente la villana;
 livide, insin là dove appar vergogna
 eran l’ombre dolenti ne la ghiaccia,
 mettendo i denti in nota di cicogna.
 (*Inferno*, Canto 32, ll. 31-36)⁶⁶

And as the frog sits with its muzzle out of the water to croak when the peasant-girl dreams often of her gleanings, so, livid up to where the flush of shame appears, the suffering shades were in the ice, setting their teeth to

⁶⁴ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 487.

⁶⁵ See *Meta*, Vol. 51, no. 1 (March 2006), 89-97. The article is now collected in this volume.

⁶⁶ Alighieri, 551.

the note of the stork.⁶⁷

A random sampling of versions in different languages will show that the translators can all pass muster:

And as the frogs to croak are often laid
with muzzle out of water, when alone
of frequent gleaning dreams the peasant-maid:
Livid to where the blush of shame is shown,
here shades in ice betrayed their sufferance
setting their teeth to the stork's monotone.⁶⁸

Et comme la grenouille se tient pour coasser
le museau hors de l'eau, alors que rêve
souvent la paysanne qu'elle s'en va glaner,
livides, jusqu'au point où la honte se voit,
les ombres dolentes étaient dans la glace,
claquant des dents comme font les cigognes.⁶⁹

Y como la rana está croando con la cabeza fuera del agua cuando se acerca la estación en que la aldeana sueña con la siega, así asomaban las pálidas cabezas de los condenados, hundidos en el hielo hasta donde suele manifestarse la vergüenza, batiendo los dientes con igual ruido que suelen hacer con el pico las cigüeñas.⁷⁰

猶如青蛙把嘴臉浮出水面，
呱呱地叫個沒完，
而這時節，農婦則常常夢見把麥穗拾撿；
那些埋入冰中的受苦幽魂
凍得青紫，一直埋到羞愧發紅的面孔，
他們牙齒打戰，發出鸛鶴的敲喙聲。⁷¹

'As the frog that puts its muzzle out of the water-surface
keeps croaking;
and in this season, the peasant woman often dreams of gleaning;
so the suffering shades that were buried in the ice
were frozen livid, and were buried up to the blushing face,

⁶⁷ Sinclair, trans., *Inferno*, 397.

⁶⁸ Anderson, trans., *Inferno*, 309.

⁶⁹ Risset, trans., *L'Enfer*, 289.

⁷⁰ Joaquín Arce, trans., *La Divina Comedia*, by Dante Alighieri (Barcelona: Ediciones Nauta, 1968), 162.

⁷¹ Huang Wenjie, trans., *Diyu pian*, 332.

their teeth trembling, making the sound of a stork's bill-tapping.⁷²

The versions may differ in quality, but the imagery of the original is preserved. Paradoxically, then, what Eliot singles out as one of the greatest hallmarks of Dante's genius is one of the easiest poetic features to translate.⁷³

When it comes to musicality of the original, a different picture emerges: the more phonemic features the target language shares with the source language, the easier it is to reproduce the original musicality, since the translation of musicality is phoneme-oriented. Take lines 115-26 from Canto 33 of the *Paradiso*:

O luce eterna che sola in te sidi,
sola t'intendi, e da te intelletta
e intendente te ami e arridi!⁷⁴

O Light Eternal, that alone abidest in Thyself, alone knowest Thyself, and,
known to Thyself and knowing, lovest and smilest on Thyself!⁷⁵

There is a complex resonance of the same words, vowels, sound patterns, rhyme words back and forth in the three lines: “**sola**,” “**sola**,” “**luce**,”

⁷² My gloss.

⁷³ In commenting on lines 85-96 of Canto 33 of the *Paradiso* in his famous essay, “Dante”, Eliot says, “One can feel only awe at the power of the master who could thus at every moment realize the inapprehensible in visual images. And I do not know anywhere in poetry more authentic sign of greatness than the power of association which could in the last line, when the poet is speaking of the Divine vision, yet introduce the Argo passing over the head of wondering Neptune. [...] It is the real right thing, the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts; it is the utmost power of the poet” (T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951), 267-68). In commenting on the “difficult passages” in the *Paradiso*, Eliot has this to say: “But certainly the ‘difficult passages’ in the *Paradiso* are Dante’s difficulties rather than ours: his difficulty in making us apprehend sensuously the various states and stages of blessedness” (T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, 265). With a slight adaptation, this judgement is also applicable to Dante the poet in relation to his translators: “But certainly the ‘difficult [images]’ in [*The Divine Comedy*] are Dante’s difficulties rather than [the translators’],” for what the translators have to do is only to translate, not to create, not to be able “at every moment [to] realize the inapprehensible in visual images.”

⁷⁴ Alighieri, 798.

⁷⁵ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 484.

“eterna,” “che,” “te,” “e,” “te,” “e,” “te,” “e,” “**intendi**,” “**intelletta**,” “**intendente**,” “**sidi**,” “**ami**,” “**arridi**.” It is heard in the repetition of whole words (“sola,” “sola”; “te,” “te”), of vowels (“e,” “i”), of syllables (“in-,” “in-”; “ten-,” “ten-”), of internal rhyme (“-ten-,” “-den-”; “intendi,” “ami,” “arridi”), and even of assonance (“**eterna**,” “**intendi**,” “**intelletta**,” “**intendi**”).⁷⁶ In Sinclair’s English version, there is only a partial reproduction of the musicality: “alone,” “alone,” “abidest,” “knowest,” “lovest,” “smilest,” “Thyself,” “Thyself,” “Thyself,” “Thyself,” “knowest,” “known,” “knowing.”⁷⁷

In Risset’s French translation, the reproduction of the original’s phonological effects is also partial:

O lumière éternelle qui seule en toi réside,
seule tu penses, et par toi entendue
et t’entendant, ris à toi-même, e t’aimes!⁷⁸

The repetition of “toi” and “seule” and the echoing between “entendue” and “entendant” are certainly functional in terms of musicality, but they fail to match the complexity of the original, particularly because of the absence in French of the original *terza rima*.

Borchardt’s German version fares even worse despite its *terza rima*:

Ach Ewig Licht, alleine in aus-dir-lehnen
allein in um-dich-wissen, selbstdurchdrungen
selbstinbewusst, minnst und zulächelest jenen!⁷⁹

This is because German belongs to a different branch of languages—the Germanic branch; with its abundance of fricatives, particularly fricatives that appear at the end of words, it is unlikely to come close to Italian.

Of all the European languages under discussion, Latin and Spanish are the two languages that come closest to Italian in reproducing Dante’s musicality:

O lux eterna, que sola in te sedes,
Sola te intelligis, et a te intellecta
Et intelligens te michi arrides!⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Bold type is added to highlight the musicality arising from the sound patterns.

⁷⁷ Generally speaking, the same can be said of other English translations.

⁷⁸ Risset, trans., *Le Paradis*, 313.

⁷⁹ Borchardt, 466.

⁸⁰ Serravalle, 1212.

¡Oh luz eterna que sola en ti existes,
sola te entiendes, y por ti entendida
y entendiente, te amas y recreas!⁸¹

The two versions contain many phonemic features of the original, so that distortion of Dante's music is reduced to a minimum.

In rendering *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese, I have tried to reproduce the original music as far as possible, making use of the Chinese phonological system to re-create an analogous music:

永恆之光啊，你自身顯現，
寓於自身；你自知而又自明；
你自知，自愛，而又粲然自明！⁸²

Yǒnghéng zhī guāng ·a, nǐ zìshēn xiǎnxiàn,
yù yú zìshēn; nǐ zìzhī ér yòu zì míng;
nǐ zìzhī, zì'ài, ér yòu càn rán zì miàn!⁸³

In my translation, there is also an echoing of the same or similar sounds throughout the lines, although they are phonemically different from those of Dante's: "Yǒnghéng," "guāng," "nǐ," "nǐ," "nǐ," "zì," "zì," "zì," "zì," "zì," "zì," "zì," "xiǎnxiàn," "miàn," "yù," "yú," "yòu," "yòu," "ér," "ér," "càn," "rán."

VIII. The *Terza Rima* Rhyme Scheme

The last aspect of Dante's music—*terza rima*—is perhaps also the most important. Created by Dante himself, this rhyme scheme has both phonological and symbolic significance. Phonologically, it sets up a super-resonance throughout the 14,233 lines of the entire poem; with its

⁸¹ Matínez de Merlo, 741.

⁸² Huang Guobin, trans., *Tiantang pian*, 510.

⁸³ The script of my Chinese translation has been transcribed in the *Hanyu Pinyin* 漢語拼音 'phonetic spelling of Chinese' system, so that readers who do not read Chinese characters can have a rough idea of what my Chinese translation sounds like. Modern standard Chinese pronunciation has five tones, the first, second, third, fourth, and light tones. For example, "ā" is in the first tone, "á" in the second, "ǎ" in the third, "à" in the fourth, and "·a" in the light, each indicated by a tone mark above or to the left of the phoneticized character. Without a tape recording, though, it is not possible to enable the reader to hear the actual tones.

interlocking effect, it gives the poem something like the isometric system of the structure of diamond, which is the firmest and strongest of all crystal structures. When read aloud, one hears a continuous piece of music from beginning to end, which, when complemented by other phonological devices used by the poet, such as internal rhyme and so on, gives the reader a delightful auditory experience. Working closely with the semantic level of the poem, it emphasizes the meaning or subtly modulates it. Symbolically, this rhyme scheme, containing three units (aba, bcb, cdc, ede, fef...xyx, zzy, z) as it does, formally corresponds to the Holy Trinity, also a unit of three. The significance of the *terza rima* is fully recognized by Angel Crespo when he says that the translator of *The Divine Comedy* “can only choose between *terza rima* or [*sic*] nothing.”⁸⁴ Dorothy Sayers made a similar point as early as 1948:

I have stuck to the *terza rima*, despite the alleged impossibility of finding sufficient rhymes in English—it is, after all, less exacting in this respect than the Spenserian stanza, which nobody dreams of calling impossible. In prose, a greater verbal accuracy would of course be attainable; but for the general reader this does not, I think, compensate for the loss of speed and rhythm and the “punch” of the rhyme.⁸⁵

Then she went on to enumerate the advantages of sticking to the *terza rima*, the effect of the *terza rima* in a poem, and the poetic devices she had used:

I have used all the licence which English poetic tradition allows in the way of half-rhyme, light “Cockney”, identical, and (if necessary) eccentric rhyme—and indeed, without these aids, the heavy thump of the masculine rhymes (which predominate in English) would be tiresome.⁸⁶

In her note, Sayers perceptively remarked:

English is “poor in rhymes” because it is remarkably rich in vowel-sounds. Of these, Italian possesses seven only, all “pure” and unmodified by the succeeding consonants. For English, on the other hand, the Shorter O.E.D. lists no fewer than fifty-two native varieties, shading into one another by imperceptible degrees.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Crespo, 375. In idiomatic English, one would say “between *terza rima* and nothing.”

⁸⁵ Sayers, trans., *Hell*, 56.

⁸⁶ Sayers, trans., *Hell*, 56-57.

⁸⁷ Sayers, trans., *Hell*, 57.

Finally, she affirmed: “I agree, therefore, with Maurice Hewlett that, for the translator, the choice is “*terza rima* or nothing.”⁸⁸

Many years later, another translator, Mark Musa, expressed a different view in his “Translator’s Note: On Being a Good Lover”.⁸⁹

I do not use *terza rima*, as, for example, Dorothy Sayers does, or even the “dummy” *terza rima* of John Ciardi. My medium is rhymeless iambic pentameter, that is, blank verse. I have chosen this, first, because blank verse has been the preferred form for long narrative poetry from the time of Milton on. It cannot be proved that rhyme necessarily makes verse better: Milton declared rhyme to be a barbaric device, and many modern poets resolutely avoid it. Karl Shapiro, an enthusiast for rhyme, is considering only shorter poems when he speaks of the five main qualities that rhyme gives to verse: the musical, the emphatic, the architectural, the sense of direction one feels in a well-turned stanza, and, finally, the effect of the rests that come between the stanzas. [...] Only two of the qualities of rhyme he mentions might apply to Dante’s poem: the musical and the emphatic.

But my main reason for avoiding rhyme has been the results achieved by all those who have used rhyme in translating *The Divine Comedy*: they have shown that the price paid was disastrously high. I believe that all those who have offered rhymed translations of Dante could have produced far better poems if they had not used rhyme. There are two reasons for the crippling effects of rhyme in translating a lengthy poem. First of all it is apparently impossible always to find perfect rhymes in English for a long stretch of lines—and if good rhyme gives a musical effect, bad rhyme is cacophonous; it is a reminder (and with some translators we are being constantly reminded) that the search for rhyme has failed.

Crespo, Hewlett, Sayers, and Musa are, in a way, all correct. All, perhaps with the exception of Musa, who gives less credit to the *terza rima* in *The Divine Comedy*, agree that the *terza rima* is of the utmost importance. Sayers and Musa agree with each other that, in English, it is not easy to find rhymes because of its richness in vowel-sounds.

If we look at a few lines from Sayers’s version and examine them against Dante’s original, we will be able to see the difficulty. The first example is lines 103-105 of Canto 1 of the *Paradiso*:

Then she began: “All beings great and small
Are linked in order; and this orderliness

⁸⁸ Sayers, trans., *Hell*, 56.

⁸⁹ Musa, trans., *Inferno*, 61.

Is form, which stamps God's likeness on the All.⁹⁰

e cominciò: «Le cose tutte quante
hanno ordine tra loro, e questo è forma
che l'universo a Dio fa simigliante.»⁹¹

and she began: "All things whatsoever have order among themselves, and this is the form that makes the universe resemble God." [...]⁹²

In order to rhyme, Sayers has added the phrases "great and small" and "on the All," which are not in the original. To be sure, translating rhyme into rhyme, the translator is extremely hard put totally to avoid distortion or "refraction," but after reading Sayers's version or other *terza rima* English versions, such as Anderson's,⁹³ one can see that their distortion or "refraction" is more serious than the distortion or "refraction" in *terza rima* versions in languages which are not "poor in rhymes."⁹⁴

Sometimes, Sayers's inability to come up with what Musa calls "good rhyme" does indeed constitute "a reminder [...] that the search for rhyme has failed," as can be seen in her translation of lines 109-114 of Canto 1 of the *Paradiso*:

And being thus ordered, all these natures tend
Unto their source, or near or farther off,
As divers lots their divers fashions blend;

Wherefore to divers havens all these move
O'er the great sea of being, all borne on
By instinct given, to every one enough.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Sayers and Reynolds, trans., *Paradise*, 56.

⁹¹ Alighieri, 683.

⁹² Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 23.

⁹³ Anderson's translation of the same lines are: "Began: 'All things soever have ordinance / among themselves; here is the form displayed / which makes the world like God's own countenance'" (*The Paradiso*, 7). To satisfy the requirements of the rhyme scheme, the translator has added "displayed" and "countenance."

⁹⁴ Borchardt's German version is also in *terza rima*. Whether German is "richer" or "poorer" in rhymes than English is a topic for future research, but reading Borchardt's translation against the original, one is also aware of a high degree of distortion, probably because German, being a language in the same branch as English, is not "rich" in rhymes, either.

⁹⁵ Sayers and Reynolds, trans., *Paradise*, 56.

Ne l'ordine ch'io dico sono accline
 tutte nature, per diverse sorti,
 più al principio loro e men vicine;
 onde si muovono a diversi porti
 per lo gran mar de l'essere, e ciascuna
 con istinto a lei dato che la porti.⁹⁶

In the order I speak of all natures have their bent according to their different lots, nearer to their source and farther from it; they move, therefore, to different ports over the great sea of being, each with an instinct given it to bear it on [...].⁹⁷

Strictly speaking, the “rhyme” of “off-move-enough” is not even consonance, for the final consonant of move (/mu:v/) is voiced while the final consonant of “off” (/ɒf/) and “enough” (/ɪnʌf/) is unvoiced.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Alighieri, 683-84.

⁹⁷ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 25.

⁹⁸ As quoted above, Sayers, in defence of her less than perfect rhymes, has said: “I have used all the licence which English poetic tradition allows in the way of half-rhyme, light ‘Cockney’, identical, and (if necessary) eccentric rhyme—and indeed, without these aids, the heavy thump of the masculine rhymes (which predominate in English) would be tiresome” (Sayers, trans., *Hell*, 56-57). The argument, however, is not convincing, for, once the translator, because of the poverty in rhymes of the English language, takes shelter in “half-rhyme, light ‘Cockney’, identical, and (if necessary) eccentric rhyme,” his or her rhyming has already defeated the purpose, the purpose of bringing over the qualities of Dante’s *terza rima*. The argument that “without these aids, the heavy thump of the masculine rhymes (which predominate in English) would be tiresome” gives one the impression that Sayers is just trying to find an excuse for not being able to rhyme well. In the Introduction to her translation, she compares Dante’s *terza rima* with the Spenserian stanza: “I have stuck to the *terza rima*, despite the alleged impossibility of finding sufficient rhymes in English—it is, after all, less exacting in this respect than the Spenserian stanza, which nobody dreams of calling impossible.” (Sayers, trans., *Hell*, 56). In putting forward this argument, Sayers has overlooked the vast difference between translating someone else’s text and creating one’s own work: in translating, the translator has to work under the double constraint of sticking to the rhyme scheme and of adhering to what the writer of the original has said; in creating one’s work, one has almost limitless freedom, for one can change the message (that is, the message one originally wanted to say) to suit the rhyme scheme. Take a stanza from *The Faerie Queene* at random: “But wicked Time that all good thoughts doth waste, / And works of noblest wits to nought out weare, / That famous monument hath quite defaste, / And robd the

Nevertheless, when one compares the *terza rima* English versions of *The Divine Comedy*, such as Anderson's and Sayers's, with its versions in blank verse, such as Musa's and Mandelbaum's, one can see that all these versions have both merits and demerits. In the *terza rima* versions, one does see some of the qualities Sayers attributes to the rhyme scheme: the "speed and rhythm and the 'punch' of the rhyme." At the same time, a gain in "verbal accuracy"⁹⁹ is clearly discernible in the blank-verse translations.¹⁰⁰ In other words, a translator trying to render *The Divine Comedy* into a language which is "poor in rhymes" is, in a way, caught in a cleft stick: if he abandons the *terza rima* to achieve greater "verbal accuracy," he has to sacrifice all the qualities this rhyme scheme can bestow upon the poem; if he wants to retain the *terza rima*, he has to put

world of threasure endlesse deare, / The which mote haue enriched all vs heare. / O cursed Eld the cankerworme of writs, / How may these rimes, so rude as doth appeare, / Hope to endure, sith workes of heauenly wits / Are quite deuour'd, and brought to nought by little bits?" (*The Faerie Queene*, Book IV, Canto II, Stanza 33, in Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, eds. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, with an introduction by E. de Selincourt, Oxford Standard Authors (London / New York / Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1912), 222). Supposing Spenser had wanted to end his line as "Are quite deuour'd, and brought to nought with no regret?" Seeing that the word "regret" did not rhyme with "wits" in the preceding line to fit in with the rhyme scheme ababbcbcc of the stanza-form, he could freely "change his mind" and end the line with the phrase "by little bits"; and no one would know that he had changed his mind, so that he would never be taken to task for being unfaithful to himself. Rendering the above stanza, however, the translator would have to put on the semantic strait-jacket woven by Spenser and follow the rhyme scheme of the Spenserian stanza; he is not allowed to make Spenser say something he did not say; once he disregards this double constraint, he would be taken to task for distorting Spenser's message, as Sayers has been taken to task by an "unsympathetic" critic like me when she made Dante say something he did not say. And it is mainly for this reason that the time I spent on translating *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese far exceeded the time Dante spent on writing his masterpiece. By the same token, if *The Divine Comedy* were written in Chinese and Dante were asked to translate it into Italian, the time he would have to spend as a translator would, without a doubt, far exceed the Chinese poet who wrote *The Divine Comedy*. Hence Sayers's—and Anderson's—woes.

⁹⁹ Sayers, trans., *Hell*, 56.

¹⁰⁰ It must be added, though, that even blank verse may distort the original, because, in working under metric constraints, the translator sometimes has to sacrifice semantic accuracy to satisfy the requirements of a certain foot. A close examination of the versions by Musa and Mandelbaum against the original will substantiate my point.

up with a much higher degree of semantic distortion or “refraction.”

The luckiest translator is, to my knowledge, perhaps the one who translates *The Divine Comedy* into Spanish, for, working in a language which shares many phonological features with the Italian language, he becomes the envy of those working in English or German. Let us look at Mitre’s Spanish translation of the last four lines of the last canto (Canto 33) of the *Paradiso*:

ya mi alta fantasía fué impotente;
 mas cual rueda que gira por sus huellas,
 el mío y su querer movió igualmente,
 el amor que al sol mueve y las estrellas.¹⁰¹

Without referring to the original Italian, one could, when one is just off guard, mistake the Spanish version for Dante’s lines:

A l’alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
 ma già volgeva il mio disio e il velle,
 sì come rota ch’igualmente è mossa,
 l’amor che move il sole e l’altre stelle.¹⁰²

Here power failed the high phantasy; but now my desire and will, like a wheel that spins with even motion, were revolved by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.¹⁰³

Because of the very close cognation between Spanish and Italian in both semantic and phonological terms, one sees an extremely high fidelity in the Spanish version, in which Dante’s music is transmitted to the reader with a minimum degree of distortion. Perhaps with the exception of only those working in Latin, Portuguese, and Italian dialects like Venetian, all translators working in other languages would envy Mitre and his compatriots, who have such a “transparent” language to translate *The Divine Comedy*.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Bartolomé Mitre, trans., *La Divina Comedia*, by Dante Alighieri, traducción en verso, Biblioteca Mundial Sopena (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sopena, 1938), 307.

¹⁰² Alighieri, 798.

¹⁰³ Sinclair, trans., *Paradiso*, 485.

¹⁰⁴ The word “transparent” was used by Eliot in a lecture entitled “Poetry and Drama,” delivered at Harvard University, to describe the language of Shakespeare’s dialogue in *Hamlet*. See T. S. Eliot, “Poetry and Drama,” in *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 75; for the entire lecture, see 72-88.

In comparison with Spanish, Chinese is not rich in rhymes; however, in comparison with English, it is not poor; in other words, in terms of “rhyme-friendliness,” it is somewhere between Italian and Spanish on the one hand and English and German on the other. For this reason, I believe that I have translated Dante’s poem into *terza rima* verse with less difficulty than most English translators do. My translation of the last four lines of the *Paradiso* is as follows:

高翔的神思，至此再無力上攀；
 不過這時候，吾願吾志，已經
 見旋於大愛，像勻轉之輪一般；
 那大愛，迴太陽啊動群星。¹⁰⁵

‘My high-flying phantasy at this point has no more power to rise
 higher;
 but now, my desire and will are already
 revolved by the great Love, like a wheel that spins evenly;
 that great Love [also] moves the sun and the [other] stars.’¹⁰⁶

With reference to the original, it can be seen that the price I have paid in using *terza rima* is not, as Musa has put it, “disastrously high,” and I do not believe that I “could have produced [a] far better [poem] if [I] had not used rhyme.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Huang Guobin, trans., *Tiantang pian*, 511.

¹⁰⁶ In my gloss, I have followed the word order of my translation as literally as possible, though the actual translation has been made, to use Nida’s terminology, dynamically equivalent to the Italian original as far as possible in terms of syntax and word order. To show what is understood in Chinese but specified in idiomatic English, I have put the words “also” and “other” in square brackets.

¹⁰⁷ Of all the complete Chinese translations of *The Divine Comedy*, Wang Weike’s, translated from the French, is in prose; Zhu Weiji’s 朱維基, translated from Carlyle’s English version (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1919), uses no rhyme; Tian Dewang’s, translated from the Italian, is in prose; Huang Wenjie’s, translated from the Italian, does not use *terza rima*; mine, translated from the Italian, is, to date, the only Chinese version to have followed the *terza rima* rhyme scheme.

TRANSLATING SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY FOR THE CHINESE AUDIENCE: WITH REFERENCE TO *HAMLET* AND ITS VERSIONS IN CHINESE AND IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

[ABSTRACT]

Generally speaking, the message of a poem is conveyed on three levels: the semantic, the syntactic, and the phonological. How translatable each of these levels is to the translator depends on how much cognation there is between source and target languages: the more cognation there is, the more translatable each of these levels will be. Thus, in respect of all three levels, translation between languages of the same family, such as English and French, both of which belong to the Indo-European family, is easier than translation between languages of different families, such as English and Chinese, which belong respectively to the Indo-European and the Sino-Tibetan family. If a further distinction is to be made, one may say that, in translation between Chinese and European languages, the semantic level is less challenging than both the syntactic and the phonological level, since syntactic and phonological features are language-bound, and do not lend themselves readily to translation, whereas language pairs generally have corresponding words and phrases on the semantic level to express similar ideas or to describe similar objects, events, perceptions, and feelings. As an image owes its existence largely to its semantic content, the imagery of a poem is easier to translate than its phonological features. Yet, when imagery is closely examined, it can be seen that, when it comes to translation, there is a great difference between the imagery of non-dramatic poetry and that of poetic drama. With reference to *Hamlet* and its versions in Chinese and in European languages, this paper discusses this difference and the challenges which the translator has to face when translating the imagery of poetic drama from one language into another; it also shows how translating Shakespeare's imagery from English into Chinese is more formidable than translating it from English into other European languages.

I. Cognation between Languages

In translating a poem from one language into another, the translator has to tackle at least three levels on which the total meaning of the poem

hinges: the semantic, the syntactic, and the phonological. How translatable each of these levels is depends, to a large extent, on how much cognation there is between the source and the target language concerned: the more cognation there is between the two languages, the more translatable each of these levels will be. Thus, in translating between two languages belonging to the same branch of the same language family, such as Italian and Spanish, the translator faces a less formidable challenge on all three levels than when he translates between two languages belonging to two different branches of the same language family, such as English and Italian, or between two languages belonging to two different language families, such as English and Chinese, with the last language pair posing the greatest challenge.¹ This is because the more cognation there is between source and target languages, the more similarities there are between them in semantic, syntactic, and phonological terms, thereby rendering the translation of semantic, syntactic, and phonological features of the source-language text into the target language simpler and more straightforward. If a further distinction is to be made, one may point out that, of the three levels, the semantic is by far the easiest. This is because on the semantic level, all language pairs have corresponding words and phrases to express similar ideas and describe similar events, perceptions, feelings, and so on, whereas syntactic and phonological features are language-bound.² In the terminology of linguistics, one may say that the

¹ Portuguese, Spanish, Judeo-Spanish, Catalan, Provençal, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Rhaeto-Romanic, Sardinian, *Dalmatian* (now a dead language), Romanian belong to the Italic branch of the Indo-European language family; Icelandic, Faeroese, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German, Yiddish, Dutch, Afrikaans, Flemish, Frisian, and English belong to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family (see Philip Babcock Gove et al., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1976), 1153 for the above classification); Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family.

² In discussing the translation of images, Ilek points out that words in the source and target languages sometimes may rhyme, and that rhyming is easier to “the original author” than to the translator: “It is the result of a casual development that in Italian the words *amore*, *dolore*, and *cuore* constitute a rhyme, while two of their equivalents, *Herz* and *Schmerz*, rhyme in German. Theoretically, a thesis might be advanced that what is casual in one language can be casually found in another language. But there is no doubt that a satisfactory solution will be more difficult for the translator than it was for the original author.” See Bohuslav Ilek, “On Translating Images,” in *The Nature of Translation: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation*, eds. James S. Holmes, Frans de Haan, and Anton

signifier-signified bonds in one language often have corresponding ones in another. Consequently, the imagery of a poem, which owes its existence largely to the semantic content of words and phrases, is easier to translate than stylistic effects arising from the syntactic and phonological features of a poem, which include, among other things, musicality.³

II. Translating Imagery in Poetic Drama

Applied to isolated images found in source-language texts written in English and other European languages, the above point about imagery is fully valid; however, it needs modification when applied to poetic drama, as is the case with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which images are used extensively in the whole play. These images not only form large patterns that function as vehicles for thinking, reasoning, and argument, but also impel the dramatic action, enable the characters to carry on their conversations, unfold the plot in ways which non-imagery cannot do, and, above all, reveal subtle meanings and symbolic significance which language used on other levels cannot reveal. In view of its multifarious functions, the importance of imagery cannot be overemphasized. As early as seventy years ago, Caroline Spurgeon had already highlighted three important functions of the imagery of Shakespeare's plays when she said, "the image [...] gives quality, creates atmosphere and conveys emotion in a way no precise description, however clear and accurate, can possibly do."⁴

III. Imagery Defined

At this point, the question arises as to what I mean by "imagery." To answer this question, let us first look at two definitions of *imagery* given by Baldick and Cuddon respectively:

Popovič, *Approaches to Translation Studies 1* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 136; for the entire article, see 135-38. Ilek's observation has indirectly highlighted the fact that the phonological features of a source language are not as easily translatable as its semantic features.

³ For detailed discussions of the intractability of syntactic and phonological features in poetry, see "Syntax and Translatability" and "Musicality and Intrafamily Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese" in this collection.

⁴ Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1935), 9.

a rather vague critical term covering those uses of language in a literary work that evoke sense-impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptible or 'concrete' objects, scenes, actions, or states, as distinct from the language of abstract argument or exposition. The imagery of a literary work thus comprises the set of images that it uses; these need not be mental 'pictures', but may appeal to senses other than sight. The term has often been applied particularly to the figurative language used in a work, especially to its metaphors and similes.⁵

Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience.⁶

Classifying almost all uses of language as imagery, Cuddon's definition is too inclusive to be useful for my discussion because, according to this definition, virtually nothing is non-imagery. Excluding "the language of abstract argument or exposition," Baldick's definition is more discriminating, and provides my discussion with a more suitable point of departure. If a further classification is to be made, it is possible to divide imagery into imagery in the broad sense and imagery in the narrow sense. In the broad sense, it refers to all words, phrases, clauses, or sentences that present a concrete description through the senses, including the visual, the auditory, the tactile, the olfactory, the gustatory, and the kinaesthetic.⁷ Judged by this standard, each of the following descriptions can be considered an image: "the fire burns," "the wolf is chasing the rabbit," "the perfume is wafted by the wind," "the car crashes into the wall." In the narrow sense, it refers to "the figurative language used in a work, especially to its metaphors and similes."⁸ While Wolfgang Clemen takes *image* in the

⁵ Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 106.

⁶ J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 442-43.

⁷ Cuddon divides images into seven categories: "visual (pertaining to the eye), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), gustatory (taste), abstract (in which case it will appeal to what may be described as the intellect) and kinaesthetic (pertaining to the sense of movement and bodily effort)" (Cuddon, 443). As Baldick's definition is used in this paper, the abstract category is not included in my discussion.

⁸ Baldick, 106. In saying that "[t]he term has often been applied particularly to the figurative language used in a work, especially to its metaphors and similes," Baldick has highlighted two figures of speech; however, he has not excluded

broad sense in his *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*,⁹ Caroline Spurgeon takes it in the narrow sense in her *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*, and delimits her use of the word before she begins her discussion: "I use the term 'image' here as the only available word to cover every kind of simile, as well as every kind of what is really compressed simile—metaphor."¹⁰ In this paper, I shall use *image* and *imagery* in the broad sense, which encompasses both figurative and non-figurative language.

Cuddon's "synecdoche, onomatopoeia and metonymy" (Cuddon, 443).

⁹ See Wolfgang Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen & Co., 1977).

¹⁰ Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*, 5. Metaphors, as Hausman (Carl R. Hausman, *Metaphor and Art: Interactionism and Reference in the Verbal and Nonverbal Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 18-19) has shown, can be divided into "creative" and "frozen" (or "dormant") metaphors." Creative metaphors are those that are "creations—creations in exemplifying fundamentally new and valuable significances, which in turn themselves create or generate new significances," those which "are frequently thought of as 'fresh,' 'innovative,' and 'enlightening,' in relation to the contexts in which they first appear." Frozen or dormant metaphors are those which "may once have been highly creative," but are no longer so. The vast majority of Shakespeare's metaphors are "creative metaphors"; expressions like "a branch of knowledge" are frozen metaphors in that they are now unlikely to evoke fresh images as they did when they were first used; thus "a branch of knowledge" is unlikely to evoke in the addressee the tree image through *branch*. Many critics like to refer to "frozen metaphors" as "dead metaphors." If a more precise classification is to be made, one may include "moribund metaphors," that is, those which are neither totally creative nor totally frozen, existing in a limbo, as it were, between life and death. A case in point is *infiltrate*, which, when used in everyday English, generally means "gain entrance or access to surreptitiously and by degrees (as spies etc.)." Apart from this primary meaning, which is listed as sense 1 in R. E. Allen, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1st ed. by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 8th ed. 1990), 606, there are also secondary, literal meanings: "permeate by filtration," "introduce (fluid) by filtration" (*ibid.*). When the word is used of spies, it can still evoke the filtration image in the minds of sensitive users of English. In other words, moribund metaphors are those which, while no longer totally vigorous, fresh, and creative, still retain a vestige of its original metaphorical meaning.

IV. Shakespeare's Imagery

In studying the translation of Shakespeare's imagery, one must bear in mind two important points. First, Shakespeare's imagery is primarily meant to be spoken on stage in the theatre and intended for the audience, even though one may choose to read and enjoy it in printed form. Second, while a translation meant to be read in printed form is comprehended through the eye, which can be a leisurely process, a translation to be spoken on stage is comprehended through the ear, a process in which each word has to be understood by the audience within a split second, or, to be more precise, instantly. In other words, unlike imagery meant to be read, imagery spoken on stage has to satisfy the requirement of instant comprehensibility.

V. Translating the Imagery of *Hamlet* into Chinese and European Languages

As an exhaustive study of the translation of Shakespeare's imagery in his complete works is beyond the scope of this paper, I shall confine myself to the translation of the imagery of *Hamlet* into Chinese with reference to my own version and versions in four European languages, namely, French, German, Italian, and Spanish, and try to find out what problems are involved, how they can be tackled, and what differences there are between translating the play's imagery into Chinese and translating it into the four European languages.

VI. Images Built on Plain Descriptions

In the following discussion, I shall divide images into two types: those that are plain descriptions and those that employ figurative language, including, but not limited to, simile, metaphor, and personification. In translation, images of the first type are easy to handle, no matter what direction one is translating in: English to Chinese, Chinese to English, English to French, French to English, English to German, German to English, French to German, German to French, and so on. This is because all languages have the capacity to cope with imagery of this kind. Take 1.1.156-63 of *Hamlet*, for example, in which Marcellus explains why the ghost of Hamlet's father disappeared when it heard the cock crow:

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes

Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated
 This bird of dawning singeth all night long,
 And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad,
 The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
 So hallowed and so gracious is that time.¹¹

The description “evoke[s] sense-impressions by literal [...] reference to perceptible or ‘concrete’ objects, scenes, actions, or states”; it appeals to the audience's senses: the visual (“faded,” “dawning”) and the auditory (“crowing,” “singeth”); it has “‘concrete’ objects” (“cock,” “bird,” “spirit,” “planets,” “fairy,” “witch”), “scenes” (“It faded on the crowing of the cock,” “our Saviour's birth is celebrated,” “no spirit dare stir abroad,” “no planets strike,” “[n]o fairy takes”), and “actions” (“crowing,” “comes,” “is celebrated,” “singeth,” “stir,” “strike,” “charm,” “hallowed”). To be sure, the above classifications may overlap sometimes. For example, objects and actions can be part of a scene, as is the case of “no planets strike.” Nevertheless, complicated as they may seem, the imagery in the quotation is by no means difficult to translate, for the literal description of or reference to senses, objects, scenes, actions, and states is common to all languages; it can easily be translated into another language, whether it is French:

Il s'est évanoui au chant du coq.
 D'aucuns disent que toujours, aux approches de la saison
 Où l'on célèbre la naissance du Sauveur,
 L'oiseau de l'aube chant toute la nuit.
 Alors, dit-on, aucun esprit n'ose sortir,
 Les nuits sont purifiées, les planètes ne foudroient plus,
 Les fées ne jettent plus leurs maléfices, les sorcières sont sans pouvoir
 Tant cette époque est sainte et chargée de grâce [;]¹²

German:

Es schwand erblässend mit des Hahnes Krähn.
 Sie sagen, immer, wann die Jahrszeit naht,
 Wo man des Heilands Ankunft feiert, singe
 Die ganze Nacht durch dieser frühe Vogel;

¹¹ Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, eds. *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 163.

¹² Yves Bonnefoy, trans., *Hamlet, Le Roi Lear*, by William Shakespeare, Collection folio classique (Saint-Amand (Cher), Gallimard, 2001), 35.

Dann darf kein Geist umhergehn, sagen sie,
Die Nächte sind gesund, dann trifft kein Stern,
Kein Elfe faht, noch mögen Hexen zaubern:
So gnadenvoll und heilig ist die Zeit [;]¹³

Italian:

S'è dissolto al cantar del gallo. Secondo alcuni, sempre, prima che venga la stagione in cui si celebra la nascita del nostro Salvatore, l'uccello dell'alba canta tutta la notte; e allora non c'è spirito che osi muoversi, le notti sono pure, nessun pianeta sprigiona influssi funesti, le fate non compiono sortilegi, né fatture le streghe, tanto è sacro e benigno quel tempo [;]¹⁴

or Spanish:

Se desvaneció al cantar el gallo. Dicen algunos que cuando se aproxima la época en que se celebra el nacimiento de nuestro Salvador, el ave del alba canta toda la noche: y entonces—dicen—ningún espíritu puede andar por ahí, las noches son saludables, y entonces no hay planetas que choquen, ni hadas que encanten, ni brujas que tengan poder de hechizar: tan sagrado y lleno de gracia es ese tiempo.¹⁵

“[S]ense-impressions” evoked in the original “by literal [...] reference to perceptible or ‘concrete’ objects, scenes, actions, or states” are all preserved in translation. In Chinese, the images can be retained with equal fidelity:

雄雞一啼，它就飄然而逝。
救世主誕生的季節，大家會慶祝。
有的人說，這季節將臨的時候，
這黎明之鳥總會整夜啼叫。
據說這時候，會夜夜康寧，幽靈
不敢出動，行星不放邪氣，
精怪不作祟，巫婆無力蠱人，

¹³ 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*, erster Band [Vol. 1] of *Shakespeares dramatische Werke*, 12 vols., by William Shakespeare, Birkhäuser-Klassiker 13 (Basel: Verlag Birkhäuser, 1943), Vol. 1, 110.

¹⁴ Eugenio Montale, trans., *Amlato: principe di Danimarca*, by William Shakespeare (Milano: Enrico Cederna, 1949), 20-21.

¹⁵ José María Valverde, trans., *Hamlet, Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2000), 9.

因為這時辰聖潔而又吉祥。¹⁶

*xióngjī yītí, tā jiù piāorán ér shì.
 Jiùshìzhǔ dànsēng ·de jìjié, dàjiā huì qìngzhù.
 yǒu ·de rén shuō, zhè jìjié jiāng lín ·de shí·hou,
 zhé línmíng zhī niǎo zǒng huì zhēngyè tǐjiào.
 Jiùshuō zhè shí·hou, huì yèyè kāngníng, yǒuling
 bù gǎn chūdòng, xíngxīng bù fàng xiéqì,
 jīngguài bù zuòsuì wūpó wú lì gǔ rén,
 yīnwei zhè shí·chen shèngjié ér yòu jíxiáng.*

VII. Images Built on Figurative Language

When it comes to the translation of images built on figurative language, the picture becomes more complicated. Where utterances in figurative language involving simple similes, metaphors,¹⁷ or personifications are involved, Chinese as a language for the stage generally remains as effective as the European languages. By simple similes, metaphors, and personifications, I mean figurative structures like the following: “A is like B” (“The warrior is like a lion”) (simple simile); “A is as C (an adjective or an adjectival phrase...) as B” (“The warrior is as brave as a lion”) (simple simile); “A is B” (“The warrior is a lion”) (simple metaphor); “A + D (a personifying verb or personifying phrase)” (“The snowflakes are dancing”) (personification). In these structures, the use of figurative language is a “one-off” thing; not sustained further, the simile, metaphor, or personification is of limited complexity. Thus in the following lines (1.5.29-31), in which Hamlet urges the ghost of his father to reveal the cause of his death, so that he can bring about swift retribution,

¹⁶ Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans. and annotated, *Jiedu Hamuleite: Shashibiya yuanzhu Hanyi ji xiangzhu* 解讀《哈姆雷特》——莎士比亞原著漢譯及詳註 ‘Reading and Interpreting Hamlet: A Fully Annotated Chinese Translation of Shakespeare’s Play,’ by William Shakespeare, 2 vols., *Fanyi yu kuaxueke xueshu yanjiu congshu* 翻譯與跨學科學術研究叢書 (Peking: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, 2013), Vol. 1, 168-69.

¹⁷ For a definition of *metaphor*, see *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed., eds. Roland Greene et al. (Princeton / Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 863: “A trope, or figurative expression, in which a word or phrase is shifted from its normal uses to a context where it evokes new meanings. [...] Following Richards, we can call a word or phrase that seems anomalous the ‘vehicle’ of the trope and refer to the underlying idea that it seems to designate as the ‘tenor’.”

Haste me to know't that I with wings as swift
 As meditation or the thoughts of love
 May sweep to my revenge [,]¹⁸

the phrase “wings as swift / As meditation or the thoughts of love” is what I would call a “simple simile.”¹⁹ Similarly, the clause “the morn in russet mantle clad / Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill”²⁰ in 1.2.165-66 should be regarded as a simple personification. In translating these images, Chinese is just as effective as European languages. Take the different versions of the first example:

Vite, instruis-moi. Et d'une aile aussi prompte
 Que l'intuition ou la pensée d'amour
 Je vole te venger.²¹

Eil, ihn zu melden; daß ich auf Schwingen, rasch
 Wie Andacht und des Liebenden Gedanken,
 Zur Rache stürmen mag.²²

Affrettati a farmelo conoscere, che io possa, rapido come l'ali del pensiero
 e dell'amore, correre alla mia vendetta.²³

Date prisa, date prisa en hacérmelo conocer, para que, con alas tan rápidas
 como la meditación o como los pensamientos del amor, pueda lanzarme a
 la venganza.²⁴

快點兒跟我說，好讓我插上翅膀，
 快捷如冥想，如戀人的思念，
 飛掠去報仇。²⁵

kuàidiǎnr gēn wǒ shuō, hǎo ràng wǒ chā-shang chìbǎng,

¹⁸ Thompson and Taylor, 213.

¹⁹ Strictly speaking, there are two simple similes separated by the conjunction “or.” However, as conjunctions like *or* and *and* do not increase the complexity of a figure of speech, we can conveniently classify similes, metaphors, and personifications linked by *or* or *and* as simple figurative structures.

²⁰ Thompson and Taylor, 163-64.

²¹ Bonnefoy, 60.

²² Schlegel and Tieck, 126.

²³ Montale, 45.

²⁴ María Valverde, 25.

²⁵ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 242.

*kuàijíe rú míngxiǎng, rú liànrén ·de sīniàn,
fēiliùe qù bàochóu.*

In all these versions, the similes of the original remain unrefracted: “aussi prompte / Que l’intuition ou la pensée d’amour” (French), “rasch / Wie Andacht und des Liebenden Gedanken” (German), “rapido come l’ali del pensiero e dell’amore” (Italian), “rápidas como la meditaci3n o como los pensamientos del amor” (Spanish), “*kuàijíe rú míngxiǎng, rú liànrén ·de sīniàn* 快捷如冥想, 如戀人的思念” (Chinese), all meaning “as swift / As meditation or the thoughts of love.”²⁶

As for the personification in the second example (“the morn in russet mantle clad / Walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill”), Chinese as a target language is at no disadvantage when compared with the European languages: “l’aube en v4tement de bure / Foule à l’Orient, là-bas, la rosée des hautes collines”;²⁷ “Doch seht, der Morgen, angetan mit Purpur, / Betritt den Tau des hohen Hügels dort”;²⁸ “l’alba, avvolta nel suo rosso mantello, trascorre sulla rugiada di quell’alto colle, a oriente”;²⁹ “la mañana, revestida de manto bermejo, camina sobre el rocío de esa alta colina de oriente”;³⁰ “*líming chuān·zhe chìhè ·de pīfēng / zōuguò dōngbiān nàzuò gāoshān ·de lùshuǐ ·le* 黎明穿着赤褐的披风 / 走過東邊那座高山的露水了”³¹ ‘the morn in russet mantle clad / Walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill.’ In all five versions, “morn” is adequately personified; no language appears to have failed to catch up with the other four in rendering the image of “morn” as a person “[w]alk[ing] o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill.”

VIII. Figurative Language That Lends Itself Less Readily to Translation into Chinese

However, what is true of the above examples is not always true of other similes, metaphors, or personifications. Even with simple images

²⁶ Montale’s translation is inaccurate, though. Meaning, in English, “swift as the wings of thought and of love,” it is a distortion. However, the distortion is due either to incompetence or to sloppiness, not to any limitations of the Italian language.

²⁷ Bonnefoy, 35.

²⁸ Schlegel and Tieck, 110.

²⁹ Montale, 21.

³⁰ María Valverde, 10.

³¹ Huang, Vol. 1, 169.

built on simple similes, metaphors, or personifications, the difference between Chinese and European languages can be obvious, as one can see in the following lines (1.1.135-38) spoken by Horatio to the ghost of Hamlet's father:

Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth –
For which they say your spirits oft walk in death –
Speak of it, stay and speak.³²

The metaphor “the womb of earth” is simple and common in English; when English theatre-goers hear it spoken on stage, they will find it natural and readily acceptable, for there are many similar sayings in English which may already have attuned their ears to the frequency of Shakespeare's metaphor. Examples are: “from the womb to the tomb,” “in the womb of time,” “the womb of Night,” “the glacier wombs,”³³ “hels black wombe.”³⁴ In these expressions, *womb*, while retaining part of its primary meaning (“uterus”), can also be taken metaphorically, meaning, as listed in Little et al., “[a] hollow space or cavity, or something conceived as such” or “[a] place or medium of conception and development; a place

³² Thompson and Taylor, 161.

³³ Gove, 2629.

³⁴ Little et al., 2443. In *The Oxford English Dictionary*, under sense 3 (“*transf.* A hollow space or cavity, or something conceived as such (e.g. the depth of night)”), many more examples are given, ranging in time from 969 to 1887. The following are some of them: “**1588** SHAKS. *Tit. A.* II. iii. 239, I may be pluckt into the swallowing wombe, Of this deepe pit, poore Bassianus graue. **1592** — *Rom. and Jul.* V. i. 65 As violently, as hastie powder fier'd Doth hurry from the fatall Canons wombe. **1602** MARSTON *Antonio's Rev.* III. v, Yee sootie coursers of the night, Hurrie your chariot into hels black wombe. **1615** CHAPMAN *Odysse* X. 471 The fourth brought water, and made fuel shine In ruddy fires beneath a womb of brass. [...] **1697** DRYDEN *Aeneis* XII. 1278 What Earth will open her devouring Womb, To rest a weary Goddess in the Tomb? [...] **1827** KEBLE *Chr. Y., Palm Sunday* iii, Stones in earth's dark womb that rest. [...] **1887** IAN HAMILTON *Ballad of Hadji* 14 Then through the womb Of night I galloped.” See J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, first ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, and W. A. Craigie, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989), Vol. 20, 490. Hereafter referred to as *OED*. From the examples quoted from the dictionaries, it can be seen that the English word *womb* used in *OED*'s sense 3 (transferred sense) is almost as common as a cliché.

or point of origin and growth,"³⁵ and so on. It can also mean "[the] abdomen [...] the stomach (as the receptacle of food)."³⁶ Because of the cognation between European languages and of their cultural affinities, many sayings—including metaphors—in one European language often have their counterparts in another European language, so much so that the "womb" image in the above lines can readily be translated with semantic precision and naturalness of expression:

Ou si tu as enfoui de ton vivant
 Dans le sein de la terre un trésor extorqué,
 Ce pour quoi vous errez souvent, dit-on, esprits des morts [...]³⁷

Und hast du aufgehäuft in deinem Leben
 Erpreßte Schätze in der Erde Schoß,
 Wofür ihr Geister, sagt man, oft im Tode
 Umhergeht: sprich davon! verweil und sprich!³⁸

Se nel grembo del suolo hai ammassato tesori estorti in vita—e questo, dicono, fa camminare anche voi morti—, tu fèrmati e parla.³⁹

O, si cuando vivías has guardado en el vientre de la tierra tesoros mal arrancados (por lo que dicen que los espíritus andáis muchas veces por la tierra) (*canta el gallo*), habla de eso. Espera y habla.⁴⁰

In French the word *sein* has several figurative meanings, including "bosom, midst, heart, womb,"⁴¹ which can easily be collocated with other French words to translate the image "in the womb of the earth." The same can be said of the German *Schoß*, meaning "womb,"⁴² the Italian *grembo*,

³⁵ Little et al., 2443.

³⁶ Little et al., 2443.

³⁷ Bonnefoy, 34.

³⁸ Schlegel and Tieck, 109.

³⁹ Montale, 19.

⁴⁰ María Valverde, 9.

⁴¹ A. Chevalley and M. Chevalley, comp., *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary: French—English / English—French*, compiled by A. Chevalley and M. Chevalley (French—English) and G. W. F. R. Goodridge (English—French), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 758.

⁴² Harold T. Betteridge, rev. and re-ed., *Cassell's German and English Dictionary*, based on the editions by Karl Breul, completely revised and re-edited by Harold T. Betteridge (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1976), 411.

meaning “[l]ap, bosom, womb,”⁴³ and the Spanish *ventre*, meaning “abdomen [...] womb, belly.”⁴⁴ Properly collocated, they easily provide accurate and idiomatic translations in the four European languages: “Dans le sein de la terre,” “in der Erde Schoß,” “nel grembo del suolo,” “en el vientre de la tierra.” Hearing these translations spoken on stage, the French, the German, the Italian, and the Spanish audience have no difficulty receiving them as natural and easily acceptable expressions.

In rendering the passage into Chinese, the translator will have to choose between acceptability, naturalness, and idiomaticity on the one hand and originality and freshness on the other. The Chinese language does have, to be sure, the word “*zǐgōng* 子宫” ‘womb,’ which is the semantic equivalent of the English *womb*, and it is possible artificially to create a phrase similar to the English phrase “in the womb of earth”: “*zài dàdì de zǐgōng-li* 在大地的子宫裏” ‘in the womb of earth,’ but this would sound odd and alien to the Chinese audience, for the Chinese “*zǐgōng* 子宫” ‘womb’ does not have similar figurative meanings as its counterparts in the European languages, and no native speaker of idiomatic Chinese would describe the depths of the earth in this way. To reduce the unacceptability, the translator could substitute a less outlandish word like “*dùzǐ* 肚子” ‘belly’ or “*fùbù* 腹部” ‘belly’ or, more literally, ‘ventral part’ for “*zǐgōng* 子宫” ‘womb.’ Still, the substitution is unlikely to fare much better, because forcibly created images like “*zài dàdì de dùzǐ-li* 在大地的肚子裏” ‘in the belly of earth’ or “*zài dàdì de fùbù* 在大地的腹部” ‘in the ventral part of earth’ do not chime in with idiomatic Chinese, shocking the audience and thereby seriously affecting the reception process in the theatre, an effect not intended by Shakespeare in the original.⁴⁵ In cases like this, the translator would have to weigh the

⁴³ Piero Rebora et al., comp., *Cassell's Italian—English / English—Italian Dictionary* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1977), 233.

⁴⁴ Beatriz Galimberti Jarman et al., eds., *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English · English-Spanish / Gran Diccionario Oxford: Español-Inglés · Inglés-Español*, 1st ed. 1994 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th ed. 2008), 854.

⁴⁵ This kind of unintended startling effect in translation is different from intended startling effects created by Shakespeare in the original. For example, in 1.1.112-19, when Horatio describes what happened before Caesar’s assassination, the lines are obviously intended by Shakespeare to be startling: “In the most high and palmy state of Rome / A little ere the mightiest Julius fell / The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead / Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets; / At stars with trains of fire and dews of blood, / Disasters in the sun; and the moist star / Upon whose influence Neptune’s empire stands / Was sick almost to doomsday with

loss and gain resulting from either way of translating the original. In coming up with my own version, I have given more weight to the requirements of the stage than to semantic equivalence, and consequently have sacrificed a little originality and freshness for naturalness and idiomaticity:

又或者像傳說那樣，你生前
聚斂了不義之財，深埋在泥土中，
死後常常來索取。⁴⁶

*yòu huòzhěxiàng chuánshuō nà yàng, nǐ shēngqián
jùliǎn-le bù yì zhī cái, shēnmái zài nítǔzhōng,
sǐhòu chángcháng lái suǒqǔ.*

In the above lines, Shakespeare's "in the womb of earth" is translated as "*shēnmái zài nítǔzhōng* 深埋在泥土中" 'buried deep in earth.' As a reader of poetry, I deeply regret the disappearance of the striking image, but as someone translating for the Chinese audience in the theatre, in which dramatic effect takes precedence over poetic effect, I consider the sacrifice necessary. In his article entitled "On Translating Images," Ilek considers the substitution of "a worn, banal image" for "a fresh and new one" to be an error. At the same time, he emphasizes that "[e]very good translator is aware of the limits of his licence to make changes in the poetic text."⁴⁷ What Ilek says is certainly sound advice for translators dealing with images; however, when the effect of performance on stage is taken into consideration, fine-tuning in the translation process is sometimes inevitable. In the process of fine-tuning, the translator, should, of course, do his utmost to avoid falling back on "a worn, banal image."

eclipse" (Thompson and Taylor, 159-60). In the following lines spoken by the ghost to Hamlet (1.5.15-20), the same startling effect is obviously intended by the playwright: "I could a tale unfold whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, / Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres, / Thy knotted and combined locks to part / And each particular hair to stand on end / Like quills upon the fearful porpentine" (Thompson and Taylor, 212). In translating these lines, the translator would have to do his best to bring out the startling effect, and convey the intended shock to the audience.

⁴⁶ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite: *Shashibiya yuanzhu Hanyi ji xiangzhu*, Vol. 1, 166-67.

⁴⁷ Ilek, "On Translating Images," in *The Nature of Translation: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation*, eds. James S. Holmes, Frans de Haan and Anton Popovic, 137.

IX. Complex Images

When it comes to the translation of images which are more complex, Chinese stands out even more conspicuously alongside European languages. By “images which are more complex,” I mean sustained metaphors. This is because figurative language is used more often and with more naturalness in the dialogue of plays written in European languages than in the dialogue of plays written in Chinese. In going through Shakespeare’s plays, a reader brought up on traditional Chinese drama will be surprised and impressed by the abundance of figurative language used in dialogue, figurative language which is almost as natural as everyday spoken English:⁴⁸ it never sounds odd or stiff, or calls undue attention to the turns of phrase themselves. What Eliot says in his famous essay, “Poetry and Drama,” about Shakespeare’s dramatic poetry is also true of the playwright’s figurative language:

No poet has begun to master dramatic verse until he can write lines which, like these in *Hamlet* [1.1.1-22], are *transparent*. You are consciously attending, not to the poetry, but to the meaning of poetry.⁴⁹

When Macbeth speaks his so often quoted words beginning

To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow,

or when Othello, confronted at night with his angry father-in-law and friends, utters the beautiful line

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them,

we do not feel that Shakespeare has thought of lines which are beautiful poetry and wishes to fit them in somehow, or that he has for the moment come to the end of his dramatic inspiration and has turned to poetry to fill up with. The lines are surprising, and yet they fit in with the character; or else we are compelled to adjust our conception of the character in such a

⁴⁸ Although the average man or woman in the street in England today or, for that matter, in Elizabethan times, is not expected to speak like Romeo to Juliet in Capulet’s orchard or like Caesar refusing to be bent by Cassius’s prayers, figurative language in Shakespeare is readily accepted by the audience as part of the language used by the characters. Whether this is due to a tradition established long before Shakespeare’s time or to the work Shakespeare and his contemporaries had done in tutoring the English ear is a subject for another paper.

⁴⁹ T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 75.

way that the lines will be appropriate to it.⁵⁰

In hearing figurative language spoken in the dialogue of *Hamlet*, one has the feeling that figurative language is the characters' second nature, just as natural as people saying "hello" to each other, as is the case when Polonius in 1.3.18-20 reminds Ophelia of her status in relation to Hamlet's:

He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state [;]⁵¹

or when he in 2.2.51-52 asks the King to wait awhile before the cause of Hamlet's lunacy is to be revealed:

Give first admittance to th'ambassadors.
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast [;]⁵²

or when Laertes warns his sister Ophelia in 1.3.32-43 to keep Hamlet at arm's length:

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes.
The canker galls the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then: best safety lies in fear,
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.⁵³

In the first quotation, the expression "Carve for himself" means "make his own choice," but underlying the meaning, there is the metaphor "from serving or helping oneself at table."⁵⁴ In the second, Polonius effortlessly

⁵⁰ Eliot, 83.

⁵¹ Thompson and Taylor, 190-91.

⁵² Thompson and Taylor, 240.

⁵³ Thompson and Taylor, 192.

⁵⁴ Thompson and Taylor, 191.

shifts to metaphorical language without drawing undue attention from the audience. In the third, we see what I would call Shakespeare's constant: sustained figurative language in which one metaphor unobtrusively leads to another without sounding contrived; on the contrary, it embodies the most complex, most effective reasoning, arguments, thoughts, feelings, emotions in concrete images, sometimes visual, sometimes auditory, sometimes tactile, sometimes olfactory, sometimes gustatory, and sometimes combining two or more than two senses in the same series of images. What is even more remarkable is that Shakespeare's characters can talk to each other in sustained figurative language with felicity while at the same time remaining convincingly human; a conversation in his plays can often, with naturalness, take the form of a large-scale exchange of metaphors between the characters, as can be seen in Ophelia's reply in 1.3.44-50 to her brother's admonition quoted above:

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep
 As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
 Do not as some ungracious pastors do
 Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven
 Whiles, a puffed and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
 And recks not his own rede.⁵⁵

In Shakespeare's plays, this constant is found almost everywhere. When Romeo and Juliet talk to each other in *Romeo and Juliet* 2.2.107-120, they take up each other's metaphors and respond in metaphors; metaphorical language is their medium of communication:

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
 That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops, –
 Jul. O! swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb,
 Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.
 Rom. What shall I swear by?
 Jul. Do not swear at all;
 Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
 Which is the god of my idolatry,
 And I'll believe thee.
 Rom. If my heart's dear love –
 Jul. Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
 I have no joy of this contract to-night:

⁵⁵ Thompson and Taylor, 193.

It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden;
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
 Ere one can say it lightens.⁵⁶

In *King Lear*, one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, or, in Bradley's words, "Shakespeare's greatest work, the best of his plays,"⁵⁷ this kind of sustained figurative language in dialogue is brought to perfection, as can be seen in the angry exchange between King Lear and the Earl of Kent, when the latter pleads in 1.1.141-69 for Cordelia at his own peril:

Kent.	Royal Lear,
	Whom I have ever honour'd as my king, Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd, As my great patron thought on in my prayers, –
Lear.	The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.
Kent.	Let it fall rather, though the fork invade The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man? Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state; And, in thy best consideration, check This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment, Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least; Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound Reverbs no hollowness.
Lear.	Kent, on thy life, no more.
Kent.	My life I never held but as a pawn To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it, Thy safety being the motive.
Lear.	Out of my sight!
Kent.	See better, Lear; and let me still remain The true blank of thine eye.

⁵⁶ W. J. Craig, ed., *Shakespeare: Complete Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 773.

⁵⁷ After agreeing with the widely accepted view that *King Lear* is "Shakespeare's greatest work, the best of his plays," Bradley goes on to say, "and if we were doomed to lose all his dramas except one, probably the majority of those who know and appreciate him best would pronounce for keeping *King Lear*." See A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*, Papermac P52, 1st ed. 1904 (London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1965), 198.

Lear. Now, by Apollo, –
 Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
 Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O vassal! miscreant!
 [Laying his hand on his sword.]

Alb.
 Dear sir, forbear.

Corn.
 Kent. Do;
 Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
 Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;
 Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
 I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!⁵⁸

In the dialogue, the characters' thoughts, emotions, feelings, and reasoning are all fused with figurative language, so that the images do not give the audience the impression that they are introduced for their own sake, or squeezed into the dialogue as something extraneous; to use Eliot's words, they "fit in with the character[s]," so that images can express the subtle change of moods, the rising of tension, and the complex workings of the character's psychology.

X. Translating the Complex Images in *Hamlet* into European Languages and Chinese

What is true of *King Lear* is equally true of *Hamlet*, in which images are a natural medium through which characters express their perceptions and feelings. What Clemen says of the hero is, to a lesser degree, also applicable to other characters:

When [Hamlet] begins to speak, the images fairly stream to him without the slightest effort—not as similes or conscious paraphrases, but as immediate and spontaneous visions. Hamlet's imagery shows us that whenever he thinks and speaks, he is at the same time a visionary, a seer, for whom the living things of the world about him embody and symbolize thought.⁵⁹

When *Hamlet* is translated into other European languages, to which images in figurative language in dialogue are not alien, the process is

⁵⁸ Craig, 909-910.

⁵⁹ Clemen, 106.

simple; what the translator has to do is simply follow the original closely without making any adjustment. Take, for example, 1.1.29-32, in which Barnardo (spelt "Bernardo" in some editions) tells Horatio to get ready for an account of the ghost's apparition:

Sit down awhile,
And let us once again assail your ears
That are so fortified against our story
What we have two nights seen.⁶⁰

The battle images in "assail your ears" and "fortified against our story" can easily be rendered into French:

Asseyez-vous un moment, que nous rebattions encore une fois vos oreilles,
si bien fortifiées contre notre histoire, du récit de ce que nous avons vu
deux nuits [;]⁶¹

Asseyez-vous un moment,
Et une fois de plus nous assiégerons vos oreilles,
Qui sont si fortifiées contre nos paroles,
De ce que, par deux fois, nous avons vu [;]⁶²

German:

Setzt Euch denn
Und laßt uns nochmals Euer Ohr bestürmen,
Das so verschanzt ist gegen den Bericht,

⁶⁰ Thompson and Taylor, 150-51.

⁶¹ François-Victor Hugo, trans., *Hamlet*, in Vol. 2 (713-835) of *Shakespeare: théâtre complet*, 2 vols., by William Shakespeare, Édition illustrée (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1961), Vol. 2, 722.

⁶² Bonnefoy, 29. Despite the ease and naturalness with which English images built on figurative language can be translated into French, Gide has chosen to give up Shakespeare's fort image in "fortified": "Assieds-toi un moment, que nous rebattions tes oreilles, si rétives à notre histoire, de ce que deux nuits nous avons vu" (André Gide, trans., *La tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark / Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, in *Shakespeare: Oeuvres complètes*, by William Shakespeare, avant-propos d'André Gide, introduction générale et textes de présentation d'Henri Fluchère, ed. d'Henri Fluchère, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2 vols., Vol. 2 (*Tragédies*), 613-702 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1959), Vol. 2, 615). The fort image in "fortified" is reduced to an adjective, "rétives," meaning "restive, unmanageable, mulish" (Chevalley and Chevalley, 723).

Was wir zwei Nächte sahn [:]⁶³

Italian:

Siediti un poco e permettimi di assalire i tuoi orecchi, corazzati contro questa storia, con ciò che abbiamo veduto per due notti [:]⁶⁴

or Spanish:

Sentémonos un rato, y, una vez más, ataquemos tus oídos, tan fortificados contra lo que contamos, con lo que hemos visto dos noches.⁶⁵

“And let us once again assail your ears” is translated respectively as “que nous rebattions encore une fois vos oreilles” (French), “Et une fois de plus nous assiègerons vos oreilles” (French), “Und laßt uns nochmals Euer Ohr bestürmen” (German), “e permettimi di assalire i tuoi orecchi” (Italian), and “y, una vez más, ataquemos tus oídos”; “so fortified against our story” is translated respectively as “si fortifiées contre notre histoire” (French), “si fortifiées contre nos paroles” (French), “corazzati contro questa storia” (Italian),⁶⁶ and “tan fortificados contra lo que contamos” (Spanish). In

⁶³ Schlegel and Tieck, 106.

⁶⁴ Montale, 15. Strictly speaking, the singular number *corazzato* of Montale’s translation, “corazzati,” means, literally, “armato di corazza” (Giorgio Cusatelli, ed., *Dizionario Garzanti della lingua italiana* (Milano: Aldo Gazanti Editore, 1980), 450) ‘armed with a suit of armour’; figuratively it means “difeso, protetto” (Cusatelli, 450) ‘defended, protected.’ In Rusconi’s translation, the fort image is reduced to an abstract description, “che si mostra incredulo al nostro racconto” ‘which appears incredulous of our story’: “Assidiamoci un istante; daremo novello assalto al tuo orecchio che si mostra incredulo al nostro racconto; incredulo di ciò che due notti abbiamo veduto” (Carlo Rusconi, trans., *Amleto: Principe di Danimarca*, by William Shakespeare, in *Teatro completo di Shakespeare voltato in prosa italiana*, quarta edizione [4th ed.], Vol. 2, 5-98 (Torino: Unione Tipografica, 1858), Vol. 2, 8; 6 vols.). In the two Italian versions, the translators have substituted different expressions for the fort image not because idiomatic Italian cannot accommodate it, but probably because they have forgone their “prerogative” for stylistic reasons, or simply because they have not done their best as translators.

⁶⁵ María Valverde, 6.

⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that Montale has translated “fortified” as “corazzati” ‘equipped with a suit of armour’ instead of “fortificati” (plural of *fortificato*, meaning “fortified”), which is both semantically and stylistically acceptable in Italian; one does not know why he has had to shift to a different metaphor, an operation which is semantically and stylistically undesirable.

these versions, the imagery of the original is rendered in vivid terms, with its freshness retained. Aware of the requirements of the stage on the one hand and the need to preserve the originality and freshness of imagery on the other, I have tried to attend to both aspects:

先坐下來。
Xian zuo xia-lai.
 'Let us sit down first,

你的耳朵是一座城堡，不相信
Ni de er-duo shì yī zuò chéngbǎo, bù xiāngxìn
 Your ears are a fort, they do not believe

我們所講；那我們再進攻一次，
wǒ-men suǒ jiǎng; nà wǒ-men zài jìngōng yī cì,
 what we say, so let us assail them once again,

說一說兩個晚上所見。⁶⁷
shuō yī shuō liǎng gè wǎn-shang suǒ jiàn.
 and tell you what we have two nights seen.'

However, as the gloss of the translation shows, though the battle images have been retained, there is considerable adaptation in the target language in terms of syntax and word-class; the path I have taken to come up with a version that satisfies the requirements of the stage and preserves the freshness of the imagery is less direct and more tortuous than that taken by the translator whose target language is French, German, Italian, or Spanish.

In rendering Shakespeare's imagery for the Chinese audience, one is constantly reminded of this need for adjustment and fine-tuning. Even in tackling relatively simple images, the translator is keenly aware how Chinese is different from the European languages. In the following passage (2.2.43-49), in which Polonius tells the King that he has smelt out the cause of Hamlet's lunacy, there is a hunting image "of a man or dog tracking prey":⁶⁸

Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege
 I hold my duty as I hold my soul,
 Both to my God and to my gracious King;
 And I do think, or else this brain of mine
 Hunts not the trail of policy so sure

⁶⁷ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 155.

⁶⁸ Thompson and Taylor, 240.

As it hath used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.⁶⁹

The lines “or else this brain of mine / Hunts not the trail of policy so sure / As it hath used to do,” which convey in only two words (“Hunts [...] trail”) the image of a hound following the scent of the hunted game, are easily comprehensible to the English audience. In French, German, Italian, and Spanish, the same degree of economy and compactness is easily achievable:

ou alors mon cerveau
Ne suit plus aussi sûrement qu'il ne faisait
La piste d'une affaire [...] ⁷⁰

oder dies Gehirn
Jagt auf der Klugheit Fährte nicht so sicher,
Als es wohl pflegte [...] ⁷¹

o il fiuto non mi guida più sulla pista con la prontezza d'una volta [...] ⁷²

o mi cerebro no sigue la pista a la astucia con tanta seguridad como solía. ⁷³

Translating the image into Chinese, I had to make adjustments, using the technique of amplification:

微臣這個腦袋，如非一反
Wēichén zhè gè nǎo·dai, rú fēi yī fǎn
‘This brain of mine, if it is not totally different from its

常態，像獵狗追蹤臭跡時不再
chángtài, xiàng liègǒu zhuīzōng xiūjī shí bù zài
normal condition, like a hound in following the scent of game

世故準確 [...] ⁷⁴
shìgù zhǔnquè [...] ⁷⁴
becoming no longer sophisticated and astute [...]

⁶⁹ Thompson and Taylor, 240.

⁷⁰ Bonnefoy, 77.

⁷¹ Schlegel and Tieck, 136-37.

⁷² Montale, 62.

⁷³ María Valverde, 34.

⁷⁴ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 284.

To make it readily comprehensible to the audience and to preserve the image at the same time, I have used a simile instead of a metaphor, adding the phrase “*xiàng liègǒu* 像獵狗” ‘like a hound.’ As a result, it has lost a good deal of the directness and compactness of the original, which is fully preserved in the European languages.

In the following lines (1.3.5-10), in which Laertes gives his sister advice about Hamlet, images appear one after another:

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute,
No more.⁷⁵

The metaphors (“a fashion and a toy in blood,” “A violet in the youth of primy nature,” “Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,” “The perfume and suppliance of a minute”) form into an organic whole, echoing and reinforcing one another in harmony, posing a challenge for the translator. The problem for the translator using Chinese as the target language is compounded by the fact that “*Perfume and suppliance* is another example of hendiadys.”⁷⁶ Again, in translating this passage into French, German, Italian, and Spanish, translators find their work made easier by the cognation between these European languages on the one hand and English on the other, so that there is little need to introduce translation shifts or to make syntactic adjustments:

Pour ce qui est d'Hamlet, et de ses futile faveurs,
N'y voyez qu'une fantaisie, le caprice d'un jeune sang.
C'est la violette en sa prime saison,
Précoce mais sans durée, douce mais périssable,
Le parfum et l'amusement d'une minute,
Rien de plus.⁷⁷

Was Hamlet angeht und sein Liebsgetändel,
So nimms als Sitte, als ein Spiel des Bluts;
Ein Veilchen in der Jugend der Natur,
Frühzeitig, nicht beständig – süß, nicht dauernd,

⁷⁵ Thompson and Taylor, 189-90.

⁷⁶ Thompson and Taylor, 189-90.

⁷⁷ Bonnefoy, 48-49.

Nur Duft und Labsal eines Augenblicks:
Nichts weiter.⁷⁸

Quanto ad Amleto e allo scherzo del suo pegno d'amore, ricordati ch'esso è solo il capriccio di una moda galante, una violetta troppo precoce per durare, dolce ma effimera; profumo e distrazione d'un minuto, ma niente di più.⁷⁹

En cuanto a Hamlet, y a esta broma de sus complacencias, considéralo a moda y un juego de su sangre, una violeta en la juventud de la naturaleza primaveral, algo prematuro, no permanente; dulce, no duradero; el perfume y el solaz de un minuto, y nada más.⁸⁰

Not so with the translator whose target language is Chinese:

至於哈姆雷特跟他的小慳慳，
Zhìyú Hāmùléitè gēn tā ·de xiǎo yínqín,
'As for Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,

就當做時髦的小玩意兒跟血氣的衝動，
jiù dàngzuò shímáo ·de xiǎowányìr gēn xuèqì ·de chōngdòng,
hold it as a fashionable toy and the impulse of his blood,

當做青春旺盛時的一朵紫羅蘭，
dàngzuò qīngchūn wàngshèng shí ·de yī duǒ zǐluólán,
as a violet of youth during its prime,

早熟，卻容易凋謝，芬芳而不持久；
zǎoshú, què róngyì diāoxiè, fēnfāng ér bù chíjiǔ,
precocious but easy to wither, sweet but not lasting,

是一縷微香，只供一分鐘的消遣—
shì yī lǚ wēixāng, zhǐ gōng yī fēngzhōng ·de xiāoqiǎn—
a faint whiff of perfume, providing only a minute's distraction—

不外如此。⁸¹
bùwài rúcǐ.
nothing else.⁸²

⁷⁸ Schlegel and Tieck, 118-19.

⁷⁹ Montale, 33-34.

⁸⁰ María Valverde, 18.

⁸¹ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 202-203.

⁸² My gloss, conditioned by my Chinese translation, is similar to Shakespeare's

As the gloss shows, the operation required of the translator is much more complicated than that required of translators whose target language is one of the four European languages being examined.

XI. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is clear that, although imagery is normally easier to translate than features on the syntactic or phonological level, particularly with regard to poetry meant to be read, the degree of ease or otherwise varies from language to language when it comes to imagery spoken on stage. In rendering the imagery of *Hamlet* for the Chinese audience, the translator, because of the absence of cognation between source and target languages, has to draw on all his resourcefulness to try, as far as possible, to meet the requirements of audibility, comprehensibility, naturalness of expression, idiomaticity, and originality and freshness of imagery at the same time. When not all aspects can be taken care of, he will have to use his judgement to draw up a priority list, making sacrifices that cannot be avoided while keeping the infrastructure, as it were, intact, for only then will he be able to do justice to the Bard and the Chinese audience.

TRANSLATING SHAKESPEARE'S PUNS: WITH REFERENCE TO *HAMLET* AND ITS VERSIONS IN CHINESE AND IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

[ABSTRACT]

The pun as a linguistic phenomenon is as old as literature. It has been discussed by many scholars and critics throughout the history of translation in the West, covering a large variety of European languages. In various monographs and articles, its typology, functions, challenges, and translatability or otherwise have been reviewed, analysed, and debated, sometimes with reference to huge amounts of corpus material, yielding interesting results and shedding light on a fascinating stylistic feature employed by many writers, among them Shakespeare, Joyce, Morgenstern, and Queneau. However, studies of the subject with reference to more than one language family and integrating theory with practice are rare. Against this background and with a view to supplementing the findings of translation scholars to date, this paper discusses puns with reference to *Hamlet* and its versions in Chinese, a language of the Sino-Tibetan family, and in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, four languages of the Indo-European family, drawing on the author's first-hand experience of translating Shakespeare's most famous play in the English-Chinese direction.

I. The Pun as a Subject of Study and Delabastita's *There's a Double Tongue*

In Western translation studies over the past centuries, countless translation critics and scholars have paid special attention to the pun and published countless monographs and articles on this linguistic and stylistic feature. To appreciate the size of the team which has been engaged in this subject, one has only to go over the names of scholars mentioned by Dirk Delabastita in his discussion of the translatability or otherwise of the pun in his book on the subject, *There's a Double Tongue: An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay, with Special Reference to*

Hamlet:¹ Addison, Albrecht, Bergson, Jacques de Callières, Catford, Dupriez, Eckhardt, Freidhof, Hausmann, Hénault, Heun, House, Jakobson, Koller, Malone, Mautner, Rauch, Reiß, Rickard, Slotte, Söll, Spilka, Störig, Toury, Tytler, Ulrich, Voltaire, Wandruszka, Widmer, Wurth, Yebra, Zimmer. In terms of time, the list spans four centuries—from the eighteenth to the twenty-first; with respect to the languages used in the discussions, there are English, French, and German. Based on his doctoral thesis, Delabastita's monograph is one of the most comprehensive and systematic studies on the pun, dealing as it does with such topics as the definition of wordplay, its communicative significance, its classification, its textual perspective based on its functions in the text, its modes of translation, and wordplay in action. In so doing, it has set up a workable theoretical framework, examined texts written in English, German, French, and Dutch, and explored the topics in great depth with special reference to *Hamlet*, drawing on a huge amount of corpus material, and arriving at many valid descriptive conclusions.²

II. The Pun with Reference to *Hamlet* and Its Versions in European Languages and in Chinese

Comprehensive and perceptive as the findings of the above-mentioned critics and scholars are, there is, however, not yet a study devoted to the translation of the puns in *Hamlet* with reference to its versions in Chinese, a language of the Sino-Tibetan family, and in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, languages of the Indo-European family. It is with a view to filling this gap that this paper is written, in which the subject will be approached

¹ Dirk Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue: An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay, with Special Reference to Hamlet*, Approaches to Translation Studies, eds. Raymond van den Broeck and Kitty M. van Leuven-Zwart, Vol. 11 (Amsterdam—Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993), 173-77.

² As can be seen in the collection *Trductio: Essays on Punning and Translation*, ed. Dirk Delabastita (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing; Namur: Presses Universitaires de Namur; 1997), in Dirk Delabastita, "Focus on the Pun: Wordplay as a Special Problem in Translation Studies," in *Target* 6: 2 (1994), 223-43, and in Dirk Delabastita, "Jacqueline Henry. *La Traduction des jeux de mots*. Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2003," in *Target* 17: 1 (2005), 178-81, since the publication of *There's a Double Tongue*, there have been many more studies on the subject. It will, therefore, be unnecessary to try to cover similar ground in this paper. For some of the works on the subject and their methodologies, see Delabastita, "Focus on the Pun: Wordplay as a Special Problem in Translation Studies"; Delabastita, "Jacqueline Henry. *La Traduction des jeux de mots*."

from a different angle: examining the translation of Shakespeare's puns with reference to *Hamlet* and its versions in Chinese and in European languages from the perspective of one who has observed the development of translation theories in the past decades and translated the play into Chinese himself.³

In this paper, I shall not join the post-structuralists in debating whether the pun is translatable or not, for this topic has been more than belaboured (witness the list of scholars quoted above from Delabastita).⁴ After all, if one believes that the pun is totally untranslatable, no further discussion on the subject is necessary. For this reason, therefore, I shall adopt the position well put by Kathleen Davis: "Those engaged in translation studies are certainly far more interested in examining acts of translation than in theoretical pronouncements that what they are studying cannot be done."⁵

To avoid dragging my discussion into an unfruitful debate as to what is or is not a pun, I shall concentrate on three examples whose identity as puns is generally recognized, and discuss how they are handled in the English-Chinese, English-French, English-German, English-Italian, and English-Spanish directions by translators, what makes puns intractable,

³ See my Chinese translation: Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Jiedu Hamuleite: Shashibiya yuanzhu Hanyi ji xiangzhu* 解讀《哈姆雷特》—莎士比亞原著漢譯及詳註 'Reading and Interpreting Hamlet: A Fully Annotated Chinese Translation of Shakespeare's Play,' 2 vols., *Fanyi yu kuaxueke xueshu yanjiu congshu* 翻譯與跨學科學術研究叢書 (Peking: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, January 2013).

⁴ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 173-77.

⁵ Kathleen Davis, "Signature in Translation," in *Traductio: Essays on Punning and Translation*, ed. Dirk Delabastita (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing; Namur: Presses Universitaires de Namur; 1997), 29. Critics of Derrida are perhaps not facetious when they say that his adherents would not be able even to order a cup of coffee in Paris if they really believe in *différance*, "a French portmanteau word combining 'difference' with 'deferral' to suggest that the differential nature of meanings in language ceaselessly defers or postpones any determinate meaning: language is an endless chain or 'play of *différance*'" [...] (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 52). Baldick is certainly right when he says, "Derrida's difficult and paradoxical attitude to the metaphysical tradition seeks to subvert it while also claiming that there is no privileged vantage-point from which to do this from outside the instabilities of language. Deconstruction thus undermines its own radical scepticism by admitting that it leaves everything exactly as it was; it is an unashamedly self-contradictory effort to think the 'unthinkable', often by recourse to strange neologisms, puns, and other wordplay" (Baldick, 52).

and what are some of the factors that facilitate pun translation.⁶ As for the definition of *pun*, *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* has provided one which is clear and concise: "The use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings, or the use of two or more words of the same sound with different meanings, so as to produce a humorous effect; a play on words."⁷ However, this definition is applicable only to puns in the strict sense of the word; for "a word" in the above definition implies only *one* word, whereas, very often, the punning effect may arise from more than one word; and there are examples of wordplay in which "two or more words" may not be "of the *same* sound,"⁸ but only of sounds which are similar. *The Oxford English Dictionary*

⁶ In Delabastita's *There's a Double Tongue* (347-492), 175 examples are listed in the "Appendix: Puns and Ambiguities in *Hamlet* and in *Hamlet* Translations: An Anthology of Examples." But the author is mindful of the fact that there are divergent views on whether all of them are puns. Thus, in commenting on example 12, the word *common* in the dialogue between the Queen and Hamlet, in which the Queen says, "Thou know'st 'tis *common*: all that lives must die, / Passing through nature to eternity [:]" and in which Hamlet answers, "Ay, madam, it is *common* [,]" the author's remarks: "We can be positive about s1 [sense 1: universal, usual, unavoidable (i.e. death in general)] only (see also FURNESS 1877: I, 36). Wurth 1895: 60-61, Spevack 1953: 76 and KLEIN 1984: II, 60 argue that s2 [mean, low, base (i.e. the death of Hamlet's father)] is pertinent in the second occurrence of the word, whereas HIBBARD 1987: 159 suggests s3 [commonplace (i.e. the Queen's trite consolation)]" (Delabastita 1993: 355). Moreover, many of these "puns" may not have been puns in Elizabethan times, but "puns" only to present-day scholars who attribute meanings to them, for, with the aid of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, almost any lexical items can be regarded as polysemous and therefore as puns, even though there is doubt as to whether these "puns" are functional in the play's context. In reading a work of literature, "over-reading" is just as undesirable as "under-reading." A case in point is Delabastita's examples 2 and 3 in which Horatio says, "This bodes some strange *eruption* to our *state*" (1993: 348). In this utterance, the context shows that Horatio is talking about "violent, extraordinary outbreak" (s1 for "eruption") and "kingdom, the body politic" (s1 for "state"). From the dictionary, it is possible to find other senses for "eruption" and "state," such as s2 ("tetter, a breaking out of a rash or of pimples on the skin") for "eruption" and s2 ("condition, state of health of an individual") for "state"; but in the context in which the two words are used, attributing to them such senses is far-fetched.

⁷ William Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 1st ed. 1933 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd ed. with corrections 1970), 1619.

⁸ My italics.

(hereafter referred to as *OED*) gives a more precise definition:

The use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings or different associations, or the use of two or more words of the same or nearly the same sound with different meanings, so as to produce a humorous effect; a play on words.⁹

Still, it has not said anything about the linguistic structure of the pun. For these reasons, therefore, I shall adopt Delabastita's definition of *wordplay* (another word for *pun*), which covers a broader sense of the word, and has greater linguistic precision:

wordplay is the general name indicating the various textual phenomena (i.e. on the level of performance or *parole*) in which certain features inherent in the structure of the language used (level of competence or *langue*) are exploited in such a way as to establish a communicatively significant, (near)-simultaneous confrontation of at least two linguistic structures with more or less dissimilar meanings (signifieds) and more or less similar forms (signifiers).¹⁰

With reference to this definition, it is possible to include not only puns in the strict sense of the word, but also "puns" in a looser sense. Along with this definition, I shall also use Delabastita's definition of *punoids*, examples of which "show [...] that the translator has effectively perceived the S. T. [source text] wordplay and, moreover, has tried to re[-]create its textual effect by using some other, wordplay-related rhetorical device."¹¹

⁹ J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, prepared, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (first edited by James A. H. Murray, Henry Bradley, W. A. Craigie, and C. T. Onions), 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, edited by R. W. Burchfield and reset with corrections, revisions, and additional vocabulary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), Vol. 12, 832. The dictionary is hereafter referred to as *OED*.

¹⁰ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 57. The *OED*'s definition of *word-play* is unexpectedly brief: "[cf. G. *wortspiel*], a play of or upon words (see *PLAY sb.* 7 b)" (*OED*, Vol. 20, 530). The definition of the phrase "*play of words*" is not much more comprehensive, either: "a playing or trifling with words; the use of words merely or mainly for the purpose of producing a rhetorical or fantastic effect" (*OED*, Vol. 11, 1012); nor is that of "*play on or upon words*": "a sportive use of words so as to convey a double meaning, or produce a fantastic or humorous effect by similarity of sound with difference of meaning; a pun" (*OED*, Vol. 11, 1012).

¹¹ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 207.

III. Delabastita's Eightfold Classification of Puns

Before we proceed to discuss examples of puns in *Hamlet*, it will be helpful to refer to Delabastita's "eightfold classification of puns,"¹² which is presented in the form of a grid.¹³ In this classification, there are four types of puns: homonymic, homophonic, paronymic, homographic:

- (1) **Homonymic:** = sound, = spelling
Horizontal:
 e.g. We must be *neat*; not *neat*, but cleanly, captain: / And yet the steer, the heifer, and the calf are / All call'd *neat*. (*The Winter's Tale* 1.2.123-125)
Vertical:
 e.g. In the old age black was not counted *fair* [...] (Sonnet 127.1)
- (2) **Homophonic:** = sound, ≠ spelling
Horizontal:
 e.g. Indeed, I am in the *waist* two yards about – but I am now about no *waste*; I am about thrift. (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* 1.3.39-41)
Vertical:
 e.g. O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow, / Nor draw no lines there with thine antique [antic] pen [...] (Sonnet 19.9-10)
- (3) **Paronymic:** ≠ sound, ≠ spelling
Horizontal:
 e.g. You [...] made her serve your uses both in *purse* and in *person*. (*The Second Part of Henry IV* 2.1.114-116)
Vertical:
 e.g. Come, thou mortal wretch, / With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate [intricate, intrinsic] / Of life at once untie. (*Antony and Cleopatra* 5.2.301-303)¹⁴
- (4) **Homographic:** ≠ sound, = spelling
Horizontal:
 e.g. <How the *US* put *US* to shame>
Vertical:
 e.g. <The-rapist>¹⁵

¹² Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 80.

¹³ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 81.

¹⁴ Delabastita's line numbers of Shakespeare's plays are not exactly the same as those quoted here, which are based on Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan, and H. R. Woodhuysen, eds., Consultant Editor, Harold Jenkins, *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works* (London: Cengage Learning, 2001).

¹⁵ In commenting on the two examples of homographic puns, Delabastita has the following to say: "The reader will have noticed that the example puns in the two

IV. Example 1

[King]	But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my <i>son</i> –
Hamlet	A little more than <i>kin</i> , and less than <i>kind</i> .
King	How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
Hamlet	Not so, my lord, I am too much <i>in the sun</i> . (1.2.64-67) ¹⁶

homography boxes in the grid are not from Shakespeare. In point of fact not a single spelling pun can be found in Shakespeare's entire *Works*. This does not come as a surprise. A first explanation concerns Shakespeare's dramatic poetry only: Shakespeare obviously meant his plays to be performed rather than published. He was not concerned to have them published, let alone in the high-standard sort of edition that would have been needed to bring out any intended orthographic niceties. The second reason is even more fundamental. In spite of the trend in Shakespeare's age toward stabilization and consistency in matters of orthography, on the whole, 'in the 15th and 16th centuries people still spelled very much as they pleased' (Kökeritz 1953: 20). Orthographic practice was simply not yet codified to a sufficient degree to allow for variations that would be recognized as meaningful" (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 81). On the same page, Delabastita has added a footnote: "[M. M.] Mahood ([*Shakespeare's Wordplay*. London: Methuen.] 1957: 24) believes to have spotted at least one example; see however, Kökeritz [H.] ([*Shakespeare's Pronunciation*. New Haven: Yale UP.] 1953: 24, 87) and [M.] Spevack ([*The Dramatic Function of Shakespeare's Puns*. Ph. D. thesis Harvard U.] 1953: 21)" (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 81).

¹⁶ Proudfoot et al., *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*, 295. All quotations from *Hamlet* in this paper are based on Proudfoot et al., *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*. The puns in question are italicized. The "kin" / "kind" pun is more complicated. As Delabastita has pointed out, "[s]ome [...] commentators [Wurth, Wilson, etc.] argue that s2 [sense 2 of "kin"] actually forms a polysemic cluster of distinct meanings ('loving, affectionate' v. 'united through blood relationship, son' v. 'belonging to nature, natural'), thus superimposing a vertical play on 'kind' upon the horizontal 'kin' / 'kind' pun. Even though the passage is obviously cryptic, its punning character has usually been recognized (see e.g. FURNESS 1877: I, 33-34)" (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 352). As for "the 'sun' / 'son' pun," it "has been acknowledged at least from the 18th century onwards (FURNESS 1877: I, 34-35)" (Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 352). For ease of reference, I have italicized the puns in this and other source-language texts to be discussed. While many translation studies scholars use the term "source text," I have followed Catford in using "SL text" (meaning Source Language text), which is more precise. For my explanation of why I have not used "source text" and "target text", see Laurence K. P. Wong, *Dreaming across Languages and Cultures: A Study of the Literary Translations of the Hong lou meng* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), xii. As "source language" or

In the dialogue, Shakespeare is using two puns: (1) "A little more than kin, and less than kind"; (2) "my son" / "in the sun." The first is, in Delabastita's terminology, a paronymic pun,¹⁷ in which the two words involved have neither the same sound nor the same spelling. Semantically, it has been variously interpreted: "a little more than kinsman, since you have married my mother, yet hardly your son, since the marriage is incestuous";¹⁸ "more than kinsmen in our actual relationship and less than kinsmen in our likeness to one another and in our mutual feelings and behaviour."¹⁹ In pronunciation, "kin" and "kind" echo each other with the alliterative /k/ and the consonant /n/; at the same time, "kind" means "kindly" and "natural relationship."²⁰ The whole line means: though Hamlet has a double relationship with Claudius ("more than kin"), that is, both as his nephew and as his step-son, his nature is not like that of Claudius, nor does he have any affection for him ("less than kind").²¹ According to Thompson and Taylor,²² what Hamlet says suggests that Claudius is Hamlet's uncle, and that calling himself Hamlet's father is going against the truth, for Claudius is not only "unkind," but also "unnatural," and that there is an English proverb saying: "The nearer in kin, the less in kindness." In *Gorboduc* (1561), a work by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, there is a similar theme in the Queen's words to her son: "A father? No. / In kind a father, not in kindliness" (1.1). In Lyly's

"Source Language" is used as an attributive adjective before "text," I have put a hyphen between the two words in this volume. For Catford's use of "SL text," see J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Stevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

¹⁷ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 81.

¹⁸ John Dover Wilson, ed., *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, by William Shakespeare, The Works of Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 150.

¹⁹ Harold Jenkins, ed., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen & Co., 1982), 183.

²⁰ T. J. B. Spencer, ed., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, New Penguin Shakespeare, with an introduction by Anne Barton (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), 220.

²¹ Sylvan Barnet, ed., *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, by William Shakespeare, with new and updated essays and a revised bibliography (New York: New American Library, 1998), 12.

²² Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, eds., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 170.

Mother Bombie (1591), there is a similar idea: “the greater the kindred is, the less the kindness must be” (3.1).²³ The second pun is homophonic; it has two senses: “s1: in the sun = in the glare of public notice, in the gaiety of the Court, in the sunshine of the King’s presence and favour (cf. the sun as a royal emblem) [;] s2: in the son = in a natural filial relationship (i.e. Hamlet resents being called ‘son’ by Claudius).”²⁴

The following are the translations (or non-translations) of the puns in some versions of *Hamlet* in Chinese and in European languages:

- 王 [...] 得，哈姆雷特，我的侄兒，我的兒——
哈 [旁白]
 親上加親，越親越不相親！
- 王 你怎麼還要讓愁雲慘霧罩着你？
哈 陛下，太陽大，受不了這個熱勁“兒”。²⁵
- 國王 [...] 現在還有，我的姪兒漢姆萊特，我的孩子，——
漢姆萊特 (自語) 比親戚親一點，說親人卻說不上。
國王 怎麼回事，還是滿臉陰沉沉的？
漢姆雷特 不是的，我的大人；我是被陽光曬得太久了。²⁶
- 國王 [.....] 好啦，朕的親人哈姆雷特，吾兒——
哈姆雷特 [旁白] 比親人稍親，只是稍遜於仁心。
國王 怎麼烏雲仍在你頭上密佈？
哈姆雷特 不，陛下，金烏兒太強烈，吃不消。²⁷
- 王 [...] ——現在，我的姪子哈姆雷特，也是我的兒子，
 ——
哈 [旁白] 比姪子是親些，可是還算不得兒子。
王 怎麼，你臉上還是罩着一層愁雲？
哈 不是的，陛下；我受的陽光太多了。²⁸

²³ My translation of the pun, which is different from other Chinese versions, is based on this more comprehensive interpretation of the original.

²⁴ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 352.

²⁵ Bian Zhilin 卞之琳, trans., *Hamuleite* 哈姆雷特 ‘*Hamlet*,’ by William Shakespeare (Peking: Zuojia chubanshe 作家出版社, 1956), 14.

²⁶ Cao Weifeng 曹未風 trans., *Hanmulate* 漢姆萊特 ‘*Hamlet*,’ by William Shakespeare (Shanghai: Xinwenyi chubanshe 新文藝出版社, 1955), 14.

²⁷ Huang Guobin, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 1, 177-79.

²⁸ Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, trans., *Hamuleite* 哈姆雷特 ‘*Hamlet*,’ Vol. 3 of the *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., by William Shakespeare (Taipei: Yuandong tushu gongsi 遠東圖書公司, 1968), 26-27.

- 國王 〔...〕可是現在，侄兒哈姆雷，我的兒啊——
 哈姆雷 多一些兒親，可差一點兒情了。
 國王 怎麼回事，您還是滿臉陰霾？
 哈姆雷 不見得，陛下，我是陽光曬得夠了。²⁹
- 王 〔...〕可是現在，我的姪兒同時又是我的兒子的哈孟雷特——
 哈 (傍白) 比族人稍微親一點兒，可是還說不到親骨肉。
 王 怎麼那些愁雲依然還懸在你的臉上呢？
 哈 不然，陛下，我是曬多了太陽。³⁰
- 國王 〔...〕來，我的侄兒哈姆萊特，我的孩子——
 哈姆萊特 (旁白) 超乎尋常的親族，漠不相干的路人。
 國王 為甚麼愁雲依舊籠罩在你的身上？
 哈姆雷特 不，陛下，我已經在太陽裏曬得太久了。³¹

French:

- LE ROI 〔...〕 Mais vous, Hamlet, mon neveu, mon fils...
 HAMLET, *à part*. Bien plus fils ou neveu que je ne le veux!
 LE ROI D'où vient que ces nuées vous assombrissent encore?
 HAMLET Allons donc, monseigneur, je suis si près du soleil!³²
- LE ROI 〔...〕 Mais vous, Hamlet, mon neveu et mon fils...
 HAMLET Un peu plus que neveu, moins fils que tu ne veux.
 LE ROI D'où vient que les nuages planent toujours sur vous?
 HAMLET Pas tant que ça, mon seigneur, le nom de fils m'éblouit trop.³³

²⁹ Lin Tongji 林同濟, trans., *Danmai Wangzi Hamulei de beiju* 丹麥王子哈姆雷的悲劇 'The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,' by William Shakespeare (Peking: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe 中國戲劇出版社, 1982), 13.

³⁰ Tian Han 田漢, trans., *Hamengleite* 哈孟雷特 'Hamlet,' by William Shakespeare, 1st ed. 1922, *Shaonian Zhongguo xuehui wenxue yanjiuhui congshu* 少年中國學會文學研究會叢書, *Shaweng jiezuo ji* 莎翁傑作集 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 7th ed. 1932), 11.

³¹ Zhu Shenghao 朱生豪, trans., *Shashibiya quanji* 莎士比亞全集 'The Complete Works of Shakespeare,' 8 vols., by William Shakespeare (Nanjing: Yilin chubanshe 譯林出版社, 1998), Vol. 5, 285-86.

³² Yves Bonnefoy, trans., *Hamlet. Le Roi Lear*, by William Shakespeare (Saint-Amand (Cher): Gallimard, 2001), 38.

³³ Jean-Michel Déprats, trans., *La Tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de*

LE ROI. [...] Maintenant, Hamlet, mon cousin et mon fils...
 HAMLET, *à part*. Un peu plus qu'un cousin et moins qu'un fils!
 LE ROI. Comment se fait-il que des nuages pèsent encore sur votre front?
 HAMLET. Des nuages, monseigneur? Je suis trop près du soleil!³⁴

LE ROI. – [...] Mais à présent, cousin Hamlet, mon fils...
 HAMLET, *à part*. De fait, hélas! un peu plus que de cœur.
 LE ROI. – Toujours ces nuages sur votre front?
 HAMLET. – Nuages, non, Sire; me voici trop près du soleil.³⁵

LE ROI [...] Et maintenant, Hamlet, mon cousin, mon fils...
 HAMLET, *à part*.—Un peu plus que cousin, et un peu moins que fils.
 LE ROI.— D'où vient que les nuages pèsent encore sur vous?
 HAMLET.—Mais non, mon seigneur; je ne suis que trop en plein soleil.³⁶

LE ROI.— [...] Eh bien! Hamlet, mon cousin et mon fils...
 HAMLET, *à part*. – Un peu plus que cousin, et un peu moins que fils.
 LE ROI. – Pourquoi ces nuages qui planent encore sur votre front?
 HAMLET. – Il n'en est rien, seigneur; je suis trop près du soleil.³⁷

German:

Danemark, by William Shakespeare, in *Shakespeare: Tragédies I (Oeuvres complètes, I)*, Édition publiée sous la direction de Jean-Michel Déprats avec le concours de Gisèle Venet (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 695 ; 2 vols.

³⁴ Georges Duval, trans., *Hamlet, Roméo et Juliette, Le roi Jean, La Vie et la mort du roi Richard II*, by William Shakespeare, Tome premier [Vol. 1] of *Oeuvres dramatiques de William Shakespeare*, 7 vols., traduction couronnée par l'Académie française entièrement conforme au texte anglais (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1908), 10.

³⁵ André Gide, trans., *La Tragique histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark / Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, by William Shakespeare, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Henri Fluchère, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Vol. 2: *Tragédies* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1959), 620; 2 vols.

³⁶ M. Guizot, trans., *Hamlet*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Shakespeare*, traduction de M. Guizot, nouvelle édition entièrement revue, avec une étude sur Shakespeare, des notices sur chaque pièce et des notes, Librairie académique, Vol. 1 (Paris: Didier et Cie, Libraires - Éditeur, 1872), 147 ; 8 vols.

³⁷ François-Victor Hugo, trans., *Hamlet*, in *Shakespeare: Théâtre complet*, Tome II [Vol. 2] (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1961), 727-28 ; 2 vols.

KÖN. [...] Doch nun, mein Vetter Hamlet und mein Sohn—
 HAM. BEISEIT: Mehr als befreundet, weniger als Freund.
 KÖN. Wie hängen stets noch Wolken über euch?
 HAM. Nicht doch, mein Fürst, ich habe zu viel Sonne.³⁸

König. [...] Doch nun, mein Vetter Hamlet und mein Sohn—
Hamlet (*beiseite*). Mehr als befreundet, weniger als Freund.
König. Wie, hängen stets noch Wolken über Euch?
Hamlet. Nicht doch, mein Fürst, ich habe zu viel Sonne.³⁹

KÖNIG. [...] Doch nun, mein Vetter Hamlet und mein Sohn—
 HAMLET *beiseite*. Mehr als befreundet, weniger als Freund.
 KÖNIG. Wie hängen stets noch Wolken über Euch?
 HAMLET. Nicht doch, mein Fürst, ich habe zu viel Sonne.⁴⁰

Italian:

IL RE [...] E tu, Amleto, nipote mio e figliuolo...
 AMLETO (*a parte*) Un po' più che nipote e men che figlio...
 IL RE ...sei dunque ancora abbuiato?
 AMLETO Sono fin troppo al chiaro, mio sovrano.⁴¹

Spanish:

Rey. Y ahora, sobrino Hámlet, hijo querido—
Hám. {*Aparte.*} Sobrino dices porque estoy de sobra.

³⁸ Friedrich Gundolf, trans., *Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark*, Schlegels Übersetzung durchgesehen, in V Band [Volume 5], 1-106 of *Shakespeare in Deutscher Sprache*, herausgegeben, zum Teil neu übersetzt von Friedrich Gundolf, neue Ausgabe in sechs Bänden [six vols.], Blaetter Fuer die Kunst, XV. bis XX. Tausend, II. Auflage der neuen Ausgabe (Berlin: Ei Georg Bondi, 1925), V. Band [Vol. 5], 13; 6 vols. The translation is Schlegel's; as, according to the title page, the play has been "checked through" ("durchgesehen"), to avoid confusion in the discussion, it is referred to as Gundolf's translation.

³⁹ A. W. v. Schlegel and L. Tieck, trans., *Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark*, in *Shakespeares dramatische Werke*, by William Shakespeare, herausgegeben und revidiert von Hans Matter, Erster Birkhäuser-Klassiker 13, Erster Band [Vol. 1] (Basel: Verlag Birkhäuser, 1943), 112; 12 vols.

⁴⁰ L. L. Schücking, herausgegeben, *Hamlet: Prinz von Dänemark*, in *Shakespeares Werke: Englisch und Deutsch*, by William Shakespeare, Vierter Band [Vol. 4] (Berlin und Darmstadt: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, 1958), 83-84; 6 vols.

⁴¹ Eugenio Montale, trans., *Amleto: Principe di Danimarca*, by William Shakespeare (Milano: Enrico Cedenra, 1949), 23-24.

Rey. Qué, ¿ todavía envuelto en nubarrones?
Hám. Al contrario, Señor, que estoy expuesto
 Muy mucho al sol.⁴²

REY. [...] Pero ¿ y tú, sobrino Hamlet, mi hijo?
 HAMLET. [*aparte*]. Un poco más que pariente, y menos que padre.
 REY. ¿ Cómo es que todavía las nubes se ciernen sobre tí?
 HAMLET. No es eso, señor, es que estoy demasiado al sol.⁴³

EL REY.— [...] Y tú, Hamlet, mi deudo, mi hijo...
 HAMLET.—Algo más que deudo y menos que amigo.
 EL REY. —¿ Qué sombras de tristeza son esas que te cubren siempre?
 HAMLET.—Al contrario, señor; estoy demasiado á la luz.⁴⁴

With respect to the Chinese translations, the first pun (“A little more than *kin*, and less than *kind*”), is left out by Zhu. The other translators, including myself (Huang), have all tried to get the punning effect across by making the same or similar sounds echo each other:⁴⁵ “*qīn·shang jiā qīn, yuè qīn yuè bù xiāngqīn* 親上加親，越親越不相親” (Bian); “*bǐ qīnqī qīn yīdiǎn, shuō qīnrén què shuō bù ·shang* 比親戚親一點，說親人卻說不上” (Cao); “*bǐ qīnrén shāo qīn, zhǐshì shāo xùn yú rénxīn* 比親人稍親，

⁴² Salvador de Madariaga, trans., *El Hámlet de Shakespeare*, edición bilingüe, ensayo de interpretación, traducción española en verso y notas (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana Sociedad Anónima, 1949), 261, 263.

⁴³ José María Valverde, trans., *Hamlet / Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 2000), 12.

⁴⁴ 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), 83; 12 vols.

⁴⁵ Delabastita (*There's a Double Tongue*, 192-221) divides pun-translation techniques into nine types, some of which are further divided into sub-types: (1) pun>pun ((a) parallel pun translation, (b) semi-parallel pun translation, (c) non-parallel pun translation); (2) pun>non-pun translation (non-selective non-pun, selective non-pun, diffusive paraphrase); (3) pun>punoid ((a) repetition, (b) imagery, (c) assonance, alliteration, rhyme, (d) referential vagueness or ambiguity, (e) irony, understatement, (f) allusion); (4) pun>zero ((a) omission of a phrase or sentence, (b) omission of single speech, (c) omission of a piece of dialogue, (d) omission of a scene or act); (5) direct copy: pun S. T. = pun T. T.; (6) transference; (7) addition: non-pun>pun; (8) addition (new textual material): zero>pun; (9) editorial techniques (footnotes, anthological translation). In Delabastita's discussion, not all types have examples.

只是稍遜於仁心” (Huang);⁴⁶ “*bǐ zhī-zǐ shì qīn xiē, kěshì hái suàn bù ·de ér-zǐ* 比姪子是親些，可是還算不得兒子” (Liang); “*duō yīxiē qīn, kě chà yīdiǎnr qīng ·le* 多一些兒親，可差一點兒情了” (Lin); “*bǐ zúrén shāowēi qīn yīdiǎnr, kěshì hái shuō bù dào qīn gǔròu* 比族人稍微親一點兒，可是還說不到親骨肉” (Tian).

As for the second pun, only Bian and Huang have tried to get the rhetorical effect across. In Bian's version, “*ér* 兒” in “*tàiyáng dà, shòu bù liǎo zhè gè rè jìn* 太陽大，受不了這個熱勁‘兒’” echoes “*ér* 兒” in “*wǒ ·de ér* 我的兒.” However, there is quite some difference between Bian's translation and the original: whereas Shakespeare's “son / sun” pun is simultaneous, or, to use Delabastita's terminology, “homophonic” and “vertical,”⁴⁷ conveying at the same time two meanings with the same sound but not the same spelling, Bian's version is sequential, or, in Delabastita's terminology, “horizontal,” that is, presenting two signifieds in different positions in the line, first “sun” (“*tàiyáng* 太陽”) and then “son” (“*ér* 兒”), so that on stage, they have to be spoken at different points in time. Besides, “兒” in “*rè jìn* 熱勁‘兒’” is morphologically a suffix and should be pronounced “r” instead of “ér,” “causing a retroflexion of the preceding vowel,”⁴⁸ in this case “i” in “*jìn* 勁”; to mean “son,” it has to be pronounced “ér,” which is no longer an “ér” suffix. Like many translations of puns, the version has strained normal usage somewhat. In my version, I have tried to preserve the simultaneity or near-simultaneity in “*jīnwū* 金烏兒” (“sun”), a collocation which loosely contains the two meanings at the same time: “the sun,” “my son” (*wū'ér*). Though “*jīnwū* 金烏,” which means “the sun,” usually stands alone without the “*ér* 兒” suffix, the somewhat extraordinary suffix is justified since Hamlet is speaking sardonically. What makes the translation a quasi-pun instead of a pun lies in the pronunciation: while “*wū*” in “*wū'ér* 吾兒” ‘my son’ is a second-tone word, “*wū* 烏” in “*jīnwū*” is a first-tone word; at the same time, like “兒” in Bian's “*rè jìn* 熱勁‘兒’,” the character “兒” is pronounced “r” instead of “ér” when given the value of a suffix in “*jīnwū* 金烏兒”; when it is pronounced “ér,” it is no

⁴⁶ As my translation is based on a more inclusive interpretation, the difference between it and the rest of the Chinese translations is more pronounced than the difference between the other translations themselves.

⁴⁷ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 81.

⁴⁸ Wu Jingrong et al., ed. 1983. *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* 漢英詞典 (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; New York / Chichester / Brisbane / Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 1983), 177.

longer a suffix; as a result, like Bian's quasi-pun, my translation has also strained idiomatic usage somewhat. All the other translators have adopted what Delabastita calls the pun>selective non-pun translation technique, retaining s2 ("sun"), but not sl ("son"). In the case of Bian, Liang, and Huang, the editorial technique of using footnotes is employed.

With reference to the European languages, the processes involved in the translation of the first pun can be classified as follows: paronymic pun>paronymic pun: "Bien plus fils ou neveu que je ne le veux" (Bonnefoy); "Un peu plus que neveu, moins fils que tu ne veux" (Déprats); "Mehr als befreundet, weniger als Freund" (Gundolf); "Mehr als befreundet, weniger als Freund" (Schlegel and Tieck); "Mehr als befreundet, weniger als Freund" (Schücking);⁴⁹ "Un poco más que pariente, y menos que padre" (María Valverde); pun>non-selective non-pun: "Un peu plus qu'un cousin et moins qu'un fils" (Duval); "Un peu plus que cousin, et un peu moins que fils" (Guizot); "Un peu plus que cousin, et un peu moins que fils" (Hugo); "Un po' più che nipote e men che figlio..." (Montale); "Sobrino dices porque estoy de sobra" (Madariago); pun>selective non-pun: "De fait, hélas! un peu plus que de cœur" (Gide); "Algo más que deudo y menos que amigo" (Martínez Lafuente).

In the above classification, there may be some difference between versions in the same category. For example, though classified as a pun, the claim of María Valverde's translation to pun status is weaker than that of the translations by Bonnefoy, Déprats, Gundolf, Schlegel and Tieck, and Schücking: while the punning effect in each of the French and German versions is created by an extensive interplay between similar sounds across the line (Bonnefoy's "Bien plus fils ou neveu *que je ne le veux*," Déprats's "Un *peu plus que neveu, moins fils que tu ne veux*," Gundolf's, Schlegel and Tieck's, and Schücking's "Mehr als *befreundet, weniger als Freund*"), the punning effect of María Valverde's version ("Un poco más *que pariente, y menos que padre*") hinges only on "p" in "poco," on "que," and on "pa[-]" in "pariente" and "padre."⁵⁰

With respect to the second pun, the versions in the European languages are pun>pun ("Pas tant que ça, mon seigneur, le nom de fils m'éblouit trop" (Déprats); "ich habe zu viel Sonne" (Gundolf; Schlegel and Tieck; Schücking) and pun>selective non-pun translations ("Allons donc, monseigneur, je suis si près du soleil" (Bonnefoy); "Je suis trop près du

⁴⁹ It should be noted that the three German versions are identical.

⁵⁰ Keywords, key syllables, and key consonants are highlighted in italics.

soleil" (Duval); "me voici trop près du soleil" (Gide); "je ne suis que trop en plein soleil" (Guizot); "je suis trop près du soleil" (Hugo); "Sono fin troppo al chiaro" (Montale); "que estoy expuesto / Muy mucho al sol" (Madariaga); "es que estoy demasiado al sol" (María Valverde); "estoy demasiado á la luz" (Martínez Lafuente)). From the above examples, it is clear that the "son / sun" pun has proved intractable; only one sense ("sun") is preserved (as a non-pun) by most of the translators. Déprats is able to convey part of the original's punning effect sequentially, combining "fils" ("son") with "éblouit" ("dazzles"), a verb that characterizes the sun's brightness. Of all the translations, the German "Sohn / Sonne" ("son / sun") version is closest to the original's punning effect, since the first syllable of the disyllabic *Sonne* is pronounced in exactly the same way as the monosyllabic *Sohn*.

V. Example 2

HAMLET

Let her not *walk i'th' sun*. *Conception* is a blessing, but as your daughter may *conceive* – friend, look to't. (2.2.184-86)⁵¹

In this passage, there are two puns: "walk i'th' sun"; "conception" / "conceive." The first is glossed by Thompson and Taylor as follows: "The suggestion is that the sun will cause her to breed, as it encourages the breeding of maggots in a dead dog. Hamlet may also allude to the sun / son pun (see 1.2.67), indicating that a son(-in-law) will make Ophelia pregnant."⁵² Hibbard, also seeing the pun, has a slightly different interpretation: "walk i'th' sun" = "go about in public" (2) "run the risk of becoming pregnant by the sun / son."⁵³ In the second pun, "conception / conceive," two meanings ("to become pregnant" and "to grasp with the mind; to apprehend")⁵⁴ are signified; "conception" = "(1) the ability to form ideas (2) becoming pregnant. The same quibble is carried further in *conceive*."⁵⁵

⁵¹ Proudfoot et al., *The Arden Shakespeare*, 305. My italics.

⁵² Thompson and Taylor, 251.

⁵³ G. R. Hibbard, ed., *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 213.

⁵⁴ Little et al., 1970.

⁵⁵ Hibbard, 213. The *OED* gives even more precise, more comprehensive definitions of *conceive* and *conception*: "**conceive** [...] **I**. To conceive seed or offspring; with extensions of this sense. [...] **1**. *trans.* Of a female: To receive (seed)

Let us look at the translations:

Chinese:

- 哈 別讓她走到太陽底下。肚子裏搞得出名堂是一種福氣，可是你的女兒也會在肚子裏搞得明白的，朋友，當心啊。⁵⁶
- 漢姆萊特 不要叫她在太陽底下走路；懷孕雖然是一件有福氣的事；但是如果你的女兒懷了孕，——朋友，還是當心點好。⁵⁷
- 哈姆雷特： 別讓她去陽台：肚中有數是福氣，不過你女兒也

in the womb; to become pregnant with (young). [...] **b.** *pass.* To be created or formed in the womb; to be engendered. [...] **c.** *loosely.* To cause to be conceived, to beget. [...] **2.** *intr.* To become pregnant. [...] **3.** *pass.* To be made pregnant; to become or be pregnant, or with child. [...] **II.** To take into, or form in, the mind. **6.** To take or admit into the mind; to become affected or possessed with. [...] **b.** To form and entertain (an opinion). [...] **7.** To form (a purpose, design, etc.) in the mind; to plan, devise, formulate in idea. [...] **b.** To form or evolve the idea of (any creation of skill or genius). [...] **8.** To form a mental representation or idea of; to form or have a conception or notion of; to think of, imagine. [...] **9.** To grasp with the mind, 'take in'; to apprehend, understand, comprehend. [...] **a.** a thing. [...] **b.** with *obj. clause.* [...] **c.** To understand, take the meaning of (a person). [...] **d.** *absol.* [...] **10.** To perceive (by the senses), observe. [...] **11.** To take into one's head, form an opinion, be of opinion; to fancy, imagine, think: also used as a modest way of expressing one's opinion, or a depreciative way of characterizing the opinion of another. [...] **b.** with *obj.* and *infin.* (or equivalent) *complement:* To imagine, think (a thing to be so and so). [...] **III.** In various senses, mostly after Latin. **12.** To take in, comprise, comprehend" (*OED*, Vol. III, 649-50); "**conception** [...] **1.** **a.** The action of conceiving, or fact of being conceived, in the womb. [...] **3.** *concr.* That which is conceived: **a.** The embryo, foetus. [...] **b.** Offspring, child [...]. [...] **5.** **a.** The action or faculty of conceiving in the mind, or of forming an idea or notion of anything; apprehension, imagination. [...] **6.** [...] **c.** The forming of a **CONCEPT** or general notion; the faculty of forming such. [...] **7.** **a.** That which is conceived in the mind; an idea, notion. [...] **c.** An opinion, notion, view. [...] **9.** **a.** Origination in the mind; designing, planning. [...] **b.** Something originated in the mind; a design, plan; an original idea (as of a work of art, etc.); a mental product of the inventive faculty" (*OED*, Vol. 3, 654).

⁵⁶ Bian, 59.

⁵⁷ Cao, 57.

可能肚中有數；要小心哪，朋友。⁵⁸

哈 那麼可別教她在太陽底下走路；受胎固然是福氣；但是別教你的女兒受胎；——朋友，留神點罷。⁵⁹

哈姆雷 別讓她走到太陽下吧。有喜是福氣，——可也許給您搞出個女兒得喜呢，老朋友，留神吧。⁶⁰

哈 有就莫教她在太陽底下行走：懂事固然好，但是你不要叫你的女兒懂那些事。——朋友，你要注意她呢。⁶¹

哈姆萊特 不要讓她在太陽光底下行走。懷孕是一種幸福，可是你的女兒要是懷了孕，那可糟了。朋友，留心哪。⁶²

French:

HAMLET Qu'elle n'aïlle pas au soleil! Concevoir est une bénédiction, mais, mon ami, veillez à la façon dont votre fille peut concevoir.⁶³

HAMLET Ne la laissez pas aller au soleil. La conception est une bénédiction; mais comme votre fille peut concevoir, veillez-y.⁶⁴

HAMLET Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil. Concevoir est une bénédiction, mais la façon dont votre fille peut concevoir, ami, veillez-y.⁶⁵

HAMLET Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil. C'est une bénédiction de concevoir; mais comme votre fille le

⁵⁸ Huang, *Jiedu* Hamuleite, Vol. 1, 301.

⁵⁹ Liang, 70.

⁶⁰ Lin, 54.

⁶¹ Tian, 51.

⁶² Zhu, 313.

⁶³ Bonnefoy, 83.

⁶⁴ Duval, 36.

⁶⁵ Déprats, 771.

conçoit. Ami, veillez-y.⁶⁶

HAMLET. —Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil. La conception est une bonne chose: mais quant à la façon dont votre fille pourrait concevoir...ami, prenez-y garde.⁶⁷

HAMLET. —Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil: la conception est une bénédiction du ciel; mais, comme votre fille peut concevoir, ami, prenez garde.⁶⁸

HAMLET Ne la laissez pas se promener au soleil: la conception est un bienfait du ciel; mais, comme votre fille peut concevoir,—mon cher, prenez garde.⁶⁹

German:

HAM. Lasst sie nicht in der Sonne gehn. Empfänglichkeit ist ein Segen: doch nicht wie eure Tochter empfangen könnte...Seht euch vor, Freund.⁷⁰

Hamlet. Laßt sie nicht in der Sonne gehn. Gaben sind ein Segen; aber da Eure Tochter empfangen könnte—seht Euch vor, Freund.⁷¹

HAMLET Laßt sie nicht in der Sonne gehn. Empfänglichkeit ist ein Segen; aber da Eure Tochter empfangen könnte—seht Euch vor, Freund.⁷²

Italian:

⁶⁶ Gide, 640.

⁶⁷ Guizot, 176.

⁶⁸ Hugo, 754.

⁶⁹ Benjamin Laroche, trans., *Hamlet, drame en cinq actes, par William Shakespeare*, in *Oeuvres dramatiques de Shakespeare*, traduction nouvelle par Benjamin Laroche, précédée d'une introduction sur le génie de Shakespeare, par Alexandre Dumas, Tome premier [Vol. 1] (Paris: Marchant, editeur du Magasin Théâtral, 1839), 693; 2 vols. (Vol. 2 published in 1842).

⁷⁰ Gundolf, 37.

⁷¹ Schlegel and Tieck, 141.

⁷² Schücking, 109.

AMLETO E allora non fatele prender sole. Concepire è una benedizione; ma non come potrebbe farlo lei. Attenzione, amico.⁷³

Spanish:

HAMLET No la dejes pasear al sol: concebir es una bendición, pero no tal como lo puede concebir tu hija. Amigo, ojo a ello.⁷⁴

HAMLET. — Pues no la dejes pasear al sol. La concepción es una bendición del cielo, pero no del modo como tu hija podría concebir. Cuida mucho de eso, amigo mio.⁷⁵

In the Chinese versions by Bian (“*Bié ràng tā zǒu dào tàiyáng dīxià* 別讓她走到太陽底下”), Cao (“*Bùyào jiào tā zài tàiyáng dīxià zǒulù* 不要叫她在太陽底下走路”), Liang (“*Nà-me kě bié jiào tā zài tàiyáng dīxià zǒulù* 那麼可別教她在太陽底下走路”), Lin (“*Bié ràng tā zǒu dào tàiyáng dīxià ·ba* 別讓她走到太陽下吧”), Tian (“*Yǒu jiù mò jiào tā zài tàiyáng dīxià xíngzǒu* 有就莫教她在太陽底下行走”), and Zhu (“*Bùyào ràng tā zài tàiyángguāng dīxià xíngzǒu* 不要讓她在太陽光底下行走”) respectively, what is involved is the pun>selective non-pun translation process, in which only one sense is conveyed with no punning effect. Huang’s translation (“*Biéràng tā qù yángtái* 別讓她去陽台”) is a semi-parallel pun: the first sense (“sun”) is retained in the “*yáng* 陽 ‘sun’ element in “*yángtái* 陽台,” which means “balcony,”⁷⁶ where people can bask in the sunshine; the collocation “*yángtái*” also alludes to the well-known Chinese story in which the King of Chu 楚 has sexual intercourse with the Goddess of Wushan 巫山 ‘Mount Wu’; by extension, it refers to any place where a man has sexual intercourse with a woman. Being a semi-parallel pun, the translation can no longer retain the original’s “son” element.

As for the second pun (“conception” / “conceive”), Bian’s (“*Dù-zǐ-li gǎo ·de ·chu míng-tāng shì yī zhǒng fú-qì, kěshì nǐ ·de nǚ’ér yě huì zài dù-zǐ-li gǎo ·de míng-bai ·de* 肚子裏搞得出名堂是一種福氣，可是你的女兒也會在肚子裏搞得明白的”) and Tian’s (“*dǒngshì gùrán hǎo, dànshì nǐ bùyào jiào nǐ ·de nǚ’ér dǒng nàxiē shì* 懂事固然好，但是你不要叫你

⁷³ Montale, 68.

⁷⁴ María Valverde, 38.

⁷⁵ Martínez Lafuente, 111.

⁷⁶ Wu et al., 799.

的女兒懂那些事”) are two instances of pun>pun translation, but they are vague as puns, so that their correspondence with the original is tenuous. The version by Cao (“*huáiyùn suīrán shì yī jiàn yǒu fú-qì ·de shì; dànnhì rúguǒ nǚ ·de nǚ’ér huái ·le yùn* 懷孕雖然是一件有福氣的事；但是如果你的女兒懷了孕”), by Liang (“*shòutāi gùrán shì fú-qì; dànnhì bié jiào nǚ ·de nǚ’ér shòutāi* 受胎固然是福氣；但是別教你的女兒受胎”), by Lin (“*Yóuxǐ shì fú-qì,—kě yěxǔ gěi nín gāo ·chu gè nǚ’ér déxǐ ·ne* 有喜是福氣,—可也許給您搞出個女兒得喜呢”), and by Zhu (“*Huáiyùn shì yī zhǒng xìngfú, kěshì nǚ ·de nǚ’ér yào·shì huái ·le yùn* 懷孕是一種幸福，可是你的女兒要是懷了孕”) are all pun>selective non-pun translations. In my version (“*dùuzhōng yǒushù shì fú-qì, bùguò nǚ nǚ’ér yě kěnéng dùzhōng yǒushù* 肚中有數是福氣，不過你女兒也可能肚中有數”), I have kept both senses of the original in a pun>parallel pun translation by slightly modifying the four-character Chinese idiom “*xīnzhōng yǒushù* 心中有數” (“have an idea in one’s mind,” literally “the heart having a figure”), though the sense of “becoming pregnant” relies more on innuendo than does the source-language text. Apart from the actual translation process, both Huang and Liang have used editorial techniques (that is, footnotes) to explain the pun(s).

In the versions in European languages, the translators are much more successful. With the exception of Schlegel and Tieck, all the translators have come up with pun>parallel pun translations. The French “conception” and “concevoir,” the German “Empfänglichkeit” and “empfangen,” the Italian “concepire,” and the Spanish “concepción” and “concebir” all mean “to grasp with the mind; to apprehend” / “grasping with the mind; apprehending” and “to be pregnant” / “being pregnant”; no matter how the original words switch their signifieds, the French, German, Italian, and Spanish versions can follow suit with no difficulty whatsoever. Thus, even if Gide had not used the editorial technique of footnoting to indicate that there is a pun, his translation would have been equally effective, for the punning in French is just as unmistakable as that in the original. In Montale’s translation, the word “conceive” in the clause “but as your daughter may conceive” is translated by “farlo” ‘do it’ (an infinitive plus a pronoun); stylistically, this approach is less “pun-friendly” than repeating “concepire,” since “lo” does not echo “Concepire” as “conceive” echoes “Conception” in the original; nevertheless, it is still a pun>parallel pun translation. It is somewhat of a puzzle, though, that Schlegel and Tieck, elsewhere so felicitous in their translation, have substituted the non-pun “Gaben” (“gifts”) for the pun “Empfänglichkeit” (“conception”), thereby giving up a readily available pun>parallel pun translation and opting for a

pun>selective non-pun translation.

VI. Example 3

- HAMLET [...] – Whose grave's this, sirrah?
 GRAVEDIGGER Mine, sir. [...]
 HAMLET I think it be thine indeed, for thou *liest* in't.
 GRAVEDIGGER You *lie* out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours. For my part, I do not *lie* in't, yet it is mine.
 HAMLET Thou dost *lie* in't, to be in't and say 'tis thine. 'Tis for the dead, not for the *quick*: therefore thou *liest*.
 GRAVEDIGGER 'Tis a *quick lie*, sir, 'twill away again from me to you. (5.1.117-28)⁷⁷

There are two puns in this passage: “lie” (“[t]o be in a prostrate or recumbent position” / “to be buried (in a specified place)” / “[t]o tell a lie or lies; to speak falsely” / “[a]n act or instance of lying”)⁷⁸ and “quick” (“[c]haracterized by the presence of life; [l]iving; endowed with life” / “[r]apid, swift; [o]f an action, occurrence, process, etc.: [t]hat is done, happens, or takes place, rapidly or with speed”).⁷⁹ In the dialogue, there is

⁷⁷ Proudfoot et al., *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*, 326. My italics.

⁷⁸ Little et al., 1137. The *OED*'s definitions of *lie* in its various senses are as follows: “**lie** [...] *sb*¹. [...] **1. a.** An act or instance of lying; a false statement made with intent to deceive; a criminal falsehood. [...]” (*OED*, Vol. 8, 899); “**lie** [...] *v*¹. [...] **I.** [...] **1. a. intr.** Of persons or animals: To be in a prostrate or recumbent position. [...] **d.** Expressing the posture of a dead body: To be extended on a brier or the like; to be buried (in a special place)” (*OED*, Vol. 8, 900-902); “**lie** [...] *v*². [...] **1. intr.** To tell a lie or lies; to utter falsehood; to speak falsely” (*OED*, Vol. 8, 905).

⁷⁹ Little et al., 1640. The *OED*'s definitions of *quick* in its various senses are as follows: “**quick** [...] *a.* [...] **A. adj. I.** Characterized by the presence of life. **1. a.** Living, endowed with life, in contrast to what is naturally inanimate. [...] **2. a.** Of persons and animals: In a live state, living, alive. [...] **III.** Having in a high degree the vigour or energy characteristic of life, and hence distinguished by, or capable of, prompt or rapid action or movement. **19. a.** Of persons (or animals): Full of vigour, energy, or activity (now *rare*); prompt or ready to act; acting, or able to act, with speed or rapidity (freq. with suggestion or implication of sense 23). [...] **23.** Moving, or able to move, with speed. [...] **24.** Of movement or succession: Rapid, swift. [...] **25. a.** Of an action, occurrence, process, etc.: That is done, happens, or takes place, rapidly or with speed; *esp.* that is over within a short space of time; that is soon finished or completed” (*OED*, Vol. 13, 13-15). Given the large number

a lively alternation of repartees going on between Hamlet and the Gravedigger, which hinges on the words “lie” and “quick.”

The following are translations of the passage in Chinese and in European languages:

Chinese:

哈	{.....} 這是誰的墳呀， ⁸⁰ 喂？
甲	是我的，先生。{.....}
哈	我看這個坑倒真是你的，因為你在裏邊瞎鑽。
甲	你在外邊瞎轉，先生，所以這不是你的。
哈	我呢，我並不在裏面瞎纏，可還是我的。
甲	你是在裏邊瞎纏，因為你明明在裏邊說這是你的。這是給死的，不是給活的；因此你明明是瞎纏。
甲	先生，這就叫開着眼睛瞎纏呀，挺活的，一下子就會從我身上轉到你身上哩。 ⁸¹

of meanings listed in the *OED*, whether in respect of “quick” or “lie,” it is not possible, of course, to come up with homonymic puns in any target language that carry all shades of all definitions.

⁸⁰ The light-tone “啊” (“· a”), when phonetically influenced by the *yǐnmǔ* 韻母 ‘simple or compound vowel (of a Chinese syllable), sometimes with a terminal n or ng’ (Wu et al., 860) or *yǐnwěi* 韻尾 ‘tail vowel, the terminal sound (vowel or nasal consonant) of certain compound vowels, as o in ao, ng in iang’ (Wu et al., 860) of the word immediately preceding it, it can be written differently. When it is preceded by a, e, i, o, ü, the light-tone “呀” (“· ya”) can be used instead of the light-tone “啊” (“· a”). As the Chinese character “墳” is pronounced “fén,” the light-tone “· a 啊,” under the influence of “-n” should be written “哪” if the changed pronunciation is to be represented by the proper Chinese character. See *Xiandai Hanyu cidian* 現代漢語詞典 ‘*Modern Chinese Dictionary*,’ comp. *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yuyan yanjiusuo cidian bianjishi* 中國社會科學院語言研究所詞典編輯室 ‘Lexicography Unit, Language Research Institute, the Chinese Academy of Social Science’ (Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1996), 2.

⁸¹ Bian, 159. In elucidating this passage, Bian has added a footnote: “111-107 [*sic*, “111” should read “101,” which is the actual line number in the text] 原文用“躺”“謊”二字諧聲開玩笑，譯文用“瞎鑽”“瞎轉”“瞎纏”三詞來代替。但也不妨用“瞎踩”“瞎扯”二詞 ‘There is wordplay on a homonym in the original: *lie*, which means both “to be in a recumbent position” and “to utter falsehood.” This is replaced with three words in the translation: “*xiāzuàn*” ‘to blindly dash about,’

漢姆萊特	〔……〕這是誰的墳啊，漢子？
丑一	我的，大人。〔……〕
漢姆萊特	我想倒也真是你的，因為是你在它裏頭。
丑一	你不在它裏頭，大人，所以不是你的；至於我，我雖然將來不呆在裏頭，它可是我的。
漢姆萊特	你怎麼不呆在裏頭，你既在它裏頭又承認它是你的；可是為了死人用的，又不是為了活人用的；所以你除了呆在裏頭之外還是在扯謊。
丑一	這個謊倒是會扯，大人；這個謊是個活的，馬上就從我這裏跑到你那兒去了。 ⁸²
哈姆雷特	〔……〕老弟，這是誰的墳穴呢？
丑角甲	是我的墳穴，先生。〔……〕
哈姆雷特	我認為誑的確是你的，因為你身在墳中說誑。
丑角甲	先生，你身在墳外，所以墳穴不是你的。我呢，不是身在誑中，可是墳穴仍然是我的。
哈姆雷特	你身在墳中，說墳穴是你的；你分明在墳中誑我。墳穴掘給死人，不掘給活人。所以你在誑我。
丑角甲	我的誑是活的，會活活從我這邊霍然彈到你身上，叫你變成說誑的人。 ⁸³
哈	〔……〕——這是誰的墳墓，夥計？
鄉甲	我的，先生。——〔……〕
哈	我也以為是你的，因為你在裏面臥。 ⁸⁴
鄉甲	你在外面臥，先生，所以這墳不是你的；至於我呢，我雖不臥在裏面，這墳還是我

“*xiāzhuàn*” ‘to blindly turn around,’ and “*xiāchán*” ‘to keep pestering someone to no purpose.’ The two words “*xiācǎi*” ‘to stamp about to no purpose’ and “*xiāchē*” ‘to waffle’ can also be used, though.” (Bian, 159).

⁸² Cao, 147-48.

⁸³ Huang, *Jiedu Hamuleite*, Vol. 2, 591-92.

⁸⁴ Liang has a footnote here: “原文 lie 雙關語，有「臥」及「謊」二義 ‘lie in the original is a pun, meaning both “to be in a recumbent position” and “to tell a falsehood”’.” (Liang, 205).

- 的。
- 哈 真說謊，你在墳裏就說墳是你的；這是為死人的，不是為活人的；所以你必是說謊。
- 鄉甲 這真是個活活的謊，先生，還會跑呢，留神跑到你嘴上去。⁸⁵
- 哈姆雷 〔……〕喂，這是誰的墳墓啊？
- 甲丑 是我的，先生——〔……〕
- 哈姆雷 我想該是你的，可不是，你不就賴在裏邊兒嗎？
- 甲丑 先生，您在外邊兒賴，所以不是您的；我呢，我并不在裏邊兒賴，可偏是我的。
- 哈姆雷 你真會賴了——在裏邊，就說是你的。墳是給死了的人，不是給活的——你好死賴。
- 甲丑 這死賴倒活得滿地跑了，先生，它又打我這兒跑到您那兒去了。⁸⁶
- 哈 〔……〕——老頭兒，你這墓是誰的？
- 小丑 1 先生，這是我的。——〔……〕
- 哈 我也以為是你的，因為你不是在墓中間嗎？
- 小丑 1 先生，你在墓外，所以這墓不是你的；若是我呢，我並沒有睡在（lie）墓中間然這墓却是我的。
- 哈 你分明是撒謊（lie）你在墓中間說這墓是你的；這墓是為死者的，不是為生者（Quick）的：所以你是撒謊。
- 小丑 1 先生，你真是當面（Quick）撒謊；我拏這兩字來還敬先生罷。⁸⁷
- 哈姆萊特 〔……〕喂，這是誰的墳墓？
- 小丑甲 我的，先生——〔……〕
- 哈姆萊特 我看也是你的，因為你在裏頭胡鬧。
- 小丑甲 您在外頭也不老實，先生，所以這墳不是您的；至於說我，我倒沒有在裏頭胡鬧，

⁸⁵ Liang, 179.

⁸⁶ Lin, 141.

⁸⁷ Tian, 146-47. Tian has quoted the original in his translation to highlight the wordplay; this, however, only serves to draw the reader's attention to his inability to tackle the problem.

可是這墳的確是我的。
 您在裏頭，⁸⁸又說是你的，這就是“在裏頭胡鬧”。因為挖墳是為死人，不是為會蹦會跳的活人，所以說你胡鬧。
 小丑甲 這套胡鬧的話果然會蹦會跳，先生，等會兒又該從我這裏跳到您那裏去了。⁸⁹

French:

HAMLET [...] A qui est cette tombe, mon ami?
 LE PREMIER FOSSOYEUR A moi, monsieur... [...]
 HAMLET Sûrement qu'elle est la tienne: tu es dedans.
 LE PREMIER FOSSOYEUR Vous n'y êtes pas, monsieur...et c'est pourquoi ce n'est pas la vôtre. Pour ma part je n'y suis pas non plus et cependant c'est la mienne.
 HAMLET Tu veux me mettre dedans quand tu dis que c'est la tienne. Car les tombes sont pour les morts, elles ne sont pas pour les vifs, ainsi donc tu mens.
 LE PREMIER FOSSOYEUR Un mensonge, pris sur le vif, monsieur. Il vous reviendra vivement.⁹⁰
 HAMLET [...] À qui est cette tombe, l'ami?
 LE RUSTRE À moi, monsieur [...]
 HAMLET Je crois qu'elle est à toi, en effet, parce que tu es dedans.
 LE RUSTRE Vous n'y êtes pas, monsieur, donc elle n'est pas à vous. Pour ma part, je n'y suis pas couché dedans, et pourtant elle est à moi.
 HAMLET Toi qui es dedans, tu te donnes les dehors d'y être et dis qu'elle est à toi. Mais elle est pour les morts, pas pour les vivants, donc tu mens.
 LE RUSTRE Vivant mensonge, monsieur, qui va vous

⁸⁸ Hamlet has been addressing the clown as “nī 你” ‘thou’; he is now made to address him as “nín 您” ‘you,’ which is inconsistent. The inconsistency is due either to a mistake on the part of the translator or to a misprint.

⁸⁹ Zhu, 382-83.

⁹⁰ Bonnefoy, 182-83.

revenir.⁹¹

- HAMLET. [...] De qui est-ce la fosse, drôle?
 PREMIER MANANT. C'est la mienne, monsieur. [...]
- HAMLET. Je suppose, en effet, que c'est la tienne, car tu es dedans.
 PREMIER MANANT. Vous êtes dehors, donc ce n'est pas la vôtre. Pour ma part, je ne suis pas dedans et pourtant c'est la mienne.
- HAMLET. Tu mens en disant que c'est la tienne. Elle est pour la mort et non pour la vie. Donc tu mens.
 PREMIER MANANT. C'est un démenti donné vite, monsieur. Je saurai vous le rendre.⁹²
- HAMLET. — [...] A qui est cette tombe, mon ami?
 PREMIER PAYSAN — A moi, Monsieur. [...]
- HAMLET. — Tu dis qu'elle est à toi, parce que tu es dedans.
 PREMIER PAYSAN. — En vous disant qu'elle est à moi, c'est vous que je mets dedans, Monsieur, encore que vous restiez dehors.
- HAMLET. — Et toi qui es dedans, tu te donnes les dehors d'en être l'occupant. Mais tu t'en occupes, sans l'occuper. Les tombes, c'est pour les morts, non pour les vifs.
 PREMIER PAYSAN. — Le plus vif, c'est ce que nous disons là.⁹³
- HAMLET.— [...] Dites-moi, l'homme! de qui est-ce la fosse?
 PREMIER PAYSAN.— C'est la mienne, monsieur. [...]
- HAMLET.— En vérité, oui, je crois qu'elle est à toi, car tu y fais des tiennes, en voulant me mettre dedans.
 PREMIER PAYSAN.—

⁹¹ Déprats, 939, 941.

⁹² Duval, 103.

⁹³ Gide, 689.

- Là-dessus, monsieur, c'est bien plutôt vous qui voulez me mettre dedans; mais vous n'y êtes point, et ça prouve bien qu'elle n'est point à vous. Quant à vous mettre dedans, pour ma part, je n'y travaille point. Et pourtant, c'est ma fosse.
- HAMLET.— Si fait, tu travailles à me mettre dedans, puisque tu y travailles, à cette fosse, et puisque tu dis qu'elle est à toi; tu sais bien qu'elle est faite pour tenir le mort, et non pour saisir le vif. Voilà comment tu veux me mettre dedans.
- PREMIER PAYSAN.— Ce qui est vif, monsieur, c'est de vouloir me mettre dedans. Mais ces vivacités-là pourront bien rebrousser chemin de vous à moi.⁹⁴
- HAMLET. — [...] Qui occupe cette fosse, drôle?
- PREMIER PAYSAN. — Moi, monsieur. [...]
- HAMLET. — Vraiment, je crois que tu l'occupes, en ce sens que tu es dedans.
- PREMIER PAYSAN. — Vous êtes dehors, et aussi vous ne l'occupez pas; pour ma part, je ne suis pas dedans et cependant je l'occupe.
- HAMLET.— Tu veux me mettre dedans en me disant que tu l'occupes. Cette fosse n'est pas faite pour un vivant, mais pour un mort. Tu vois! tu veux me mettre dedans.
- PREMIER PAYSAN. — Démenti pour démenti.⁹⁵ Vous voulez me mettre dedans en me disant que je suis dedans.⁹⁶
- HAMLET. [...] A qui est cette fosse, l'ami?
- LE FOSSOYEUR. A moi, seigneur. [...]
- HAMLET. Je crois effectivement qu'elle est à toi; car tu es dedans.

⁹⁴ Guizot, 260.

⁹⁵ Hugo has a footnote here: “Les deux hommes se renvoient des quiproquos sur le mot *to lie*, gésir et mentir” (817).

⁹⁶ Hugo, 817.

LE FOSSOYEUR.	Vous êtes dehors, et certes elle n'est pas à vous; mais moi, bien qu'elle ne me soit pas destinée, elle est pourtant à moi.
HAMLET.	Tu mens; elle est pour un mort et non pour un vivant.
LE FOSSOYEUR.	Voilà un démenti bien prompt et bien alerte; il ne se fera pas faute d'aller de moi à vous. ⁹⁷

German:

HAM.	[...] Wessen Grab ist das, heda?
1.T.-GR.	Meines, Herr. [...]
HAM.	Ich glaube wahrhaftig dass es deines ist, denn du liegst darin.
1. T-GR.	Ihr liegt draussen, Herr, und also ists nicht eures...ich liege nicht darin, und doch ist es meines.
HAM.	Du lügst darin, weil du darin bist und sagst dass es deines ist. Es ist aber für die Toten, nicht für die Lebendigen: also lügst du.
1. T-GR.	's ist eine lebendige Lüge, Herr, sie will von mir weg, zu euch zurück. ⁹⁸
<i>Hamlet.</i>	[...] – Wessen Grab ist das: heda?
<i>Erster Totengräber.</i>	Meines, Herr. [...]
<i>Hamlet.</i>	Ich glaube wahrhaftig, daß es deines ist, denn du liegst darin.
<i>Erster Totengräber.</i>	Ihr liegt draußen, Herr, und also ists nicht Eures; ich liege nicht darin, und doch ist es meines.
<i>Hamlet.</i>	Du lügst darin, weil du darin bist und sagst, daß es deines ist. Es ist aber für die Toten, nicht für die Lebendigen: also lügst du.
<i>Erster Totengräber.</i>	's ist eine lebendige Lüge, Herr, sie will von mir weg, zu Euch zurück. ⁹⁹
HAMLET.	[...]-Wessen Grab ist das, heda?
ERSTER TOTENGRÄBER.	Meines, Herr. [...]
HAMLET.	Ich glaube wahrhaftig, daß es deines ist,

⁹⁷ Laroche, 723.

⁹⁸ Gundolf, 91.

⁹⁹ Schlegel and Tieck, 207.

- denn du liegst darin.
 ERSTER TOTENGRÄBER.
 Ihr liegt draußen, Herr, und also ist's nicht
 Eures; ich liege nicht darin, und doch ist es
 meines.
 HAMLET.
 Du lügst darin, weil du darin bist und sagst,
 daß es deines ist. Es ist aber für die Toten,
 nicht für die Lebendigen: also lügst du.
 ERSTER TOTENGRÄBER.
 's ist eine lebendige Lüge, Herr, sie will von
 mir weg, zu Euch zurück.¹⁰⁰

Italian:

- AMLETO
 PRIMO BECCHINO [...] Di chi è questa tomba, buon uomo?
 È mia, signore. [...]
 AMLETO
 PRIMO BECCHINO Tua perché ci stai dentro?
 Ci sono e non ci sto. E voi non ci siete per
 nulla, perché non l'imbroccate.¹⁰¹
 Am. [...] Di chi è questa fossa, marraiuolo?
 I° Bec. Mia, signore [...]
 Am. Credo infatti che sia tua perchè vi stai
 dentro.¹⁰²
 I° Bec. Voi state fuori di essa, e perciò non è vostra:
 per mia parte io non sto in essa, sebbene sia
 mia.
 Am. Menti, essendo in essa, e dicendo che è tua;
 è pei morti, non pei vivi; perciò menti.
 I° Bec. È un'alacre mentita questa che mi date,
 signore, e ve la renderò.¹⁰³

Spanish:

¹⁰⁰ Schücking, 168.

¹⁰¹ Montale, 174.

¹⁰² Rusconi has a footnote here: "È qui e in quello che segue un giuoco di parole che versa nella somiglianza dei due verbi *to lye* GIACERE, e *to lye*, MENTIRE." See Carlo Rusconi, trans., *Amlito: Principe di Danimarca*, by William Shakespeare, in *Teatro completo di Shakespeare voltato in prosa intaliana*, quarta edizione [4th ed.], Vol. 2, 5-98 (Torino: Unione Tipografico, 1858), Vol. 2, 82; 6 vols.

¹⁰³ Rusconi, 82-83.

- HAMLET. [...] amigo, ¿ de quién es esta tumba?
ALDEANO PRIMERO. Mía, señor: [...]
- HAMLET. Creo que es tuya, desde luego, pues metes la pata en ella.¹⁰⁴
ALDEANO PRIMERO. Vos os metéis donde no os llaman, así que no es vuestra: por mi parte, no me meto en ella, y sin embargo es mía.
- HAMLET. Metes la pata al meterte en ella y decir que es tuya: es para los muertos, no para los vivos; ahí está la metedura.
ALDEANO PRIMERO. Es muy viva esta metedura, que rebota de mí a vos.¹⁰⁵
- HAMLET.— [...] (*Al sepulturero.*) Oye, tú: ¿ de quién es esa fosa?
SEPULTURERO 1.^o — Mía, señor. [...]
HAMLET.— Sí, ya lo creo que es tuya, porque estás ahora dentro de ella. Pero la sepultura es para los muertos, no para los vivos: conque has mentito.
SEPULTURERO 1.^o — Como es una mentira viviente, os la devuelvo.¹⁰⁶

Let us look at the Chinese versions of the “lie / lie” pun first. In the face of the challenging task, Bian and Liang each use a footnote to explain the pun; Tian uses brackets to introduce the original “lie”. As for actual translation, Bian’s is a pun>non-parallel pun translation; but instead of being simultaneous, it has become sequential, working on the phonological level, that is, hinging on a play on similar sounds (“*xīāzhuàn* 瞎鑽,” “*xīāzhuàn* 瞎轉,” “*xīāchán* 瞎纏”).¹⁰⁷ The versions by Cao, Liang, and Tian are pun>non-selective non-pun translations. Shifting the

¹⁰⁴ María Valverde has a footnote here: “Desde aquí, hay varios juegos de palabras sobre *lie*, 《mentire》 y 《yacer》 (99).

¹⁰⁵ María Valverde, 99-100.

¹⁰⁶ Martínez Lafuente, 184.

¹⁰⁷ “鑽” as a verb can be pronounced in either the first tone (“*zuān*”) or the fourth tone (“*zuàn*”). Bian must have intended it to be pronounced in the fourth tone, since this tone echoes “*zhuàn* 轉” (also in the fourth tone) in “瞎轉” better.

“lie / lie” pun to “grave / lie” (“*kuàng* 壙” / “*kuáng* 誑”), Huang has come up with a pun>semi-parallel pun translation, which also works sequentially on the phonological level. Of all the pun translations, only Lin’s is simultaneous, but it is a pun>non-parallel pun translation, since “*lài* 賴” has deviated from both senses of “lie,” though both of its senses (“*lài zài mǒu yī chù bù kěn zǒu-kai* 賴在某一處不肯走開” and “*dīlài* 抵賴” or “*wūlài* 誣賴”) share some affinity with the two senses of “lie.”¹⁰⁸ It is a case of two homonyms in Chinese replacing two homonyms in English. In Zhu’s version, a source-language pun has become what Delabastita calls “diffuse paraphrase,”¹⁰⁹ which is described as follows:

This third main type of PUN>NON-PUN translations groups all the remaining cases, i.e. those in which a particular T.T. fragment that contains no wordplay can clearly be identified as a translational solution to a particular punning S.T. fragment, and in which the transfer of s1 and s2 (S.T.) tends to elude exact semantic description inasmuch as the whole fragment has been rendered by means of low-equivalence T. ling. code items. Both s1 and s2 have been translated ‘beyond recognition’ due to the rather free treatment of the *entire* punning passage.¹¹⁰

Using this technique, Zhu has made no effort to repeat the wording of neither sense of the original pun in the T. T.: with the word “*húnào* 胡鬧” “*zài lǐ-tou húnào* 在裏頭胡鬧,” he is apparently rendering one sense of “lie” (“[t]o tell a lie or lies; to speak falsely” / “[a]n act or instance of lying”), but this wording is not repeated in Hamlet’s response; instead, it is replaced by “*yě bù lǎo-shi* 也不老實,” so that the continuity of the punning process is broken.

In translating the second pun, “quick / quick,” which is homonymic, with the exception of Tian, all the translators have used the Chinese word “*huó* 活,” which happens roughly to have meanings similar to the two carried by “quick”: (1) “*shēngcún* 生存 ‘to live; alive’; “*yǒu shēngmìng* 有生命 ‘having life; alive’; (2) “*shēngdòng huó-po* 生動活潑 ‘lively and vivacious’; “*bù sǐbǎn* 不死板 ‘not rigid or stiff.’¹¹¹ Though the second meaning of the Chinese word does not match the second meaning of “quick” perfectly, it shares some semantic features with it: when something is “*shēngdòng huó-po* 生動活潑 ‘lively and vivacious,’ it

¹⁰⁸ For the various senses of “*lài* 賴,” see *Xiandai Hanyu cidian*, 749.

¹⁰⁹ Delabastita, *There’s a Double Tongue*, 206.

¹¹⁰ Delabastita, *There’s a Double Tongue*, 206.

¹¹¹ For the various senses of “*huó* 活,” see *Xiandai Hanyu cidian*, 571.

normally moves with speed. In giving up the common word “*huó* 活,” which is the word most likely to cross the translator’s mind, and choosing “*shēngzhě* 生者” ‘the living one’ and “*dāngmiàn* 當面” ‘face to face,’ Tian has produced a pun>non-pun translation, forgoing an easily available opportunity to translate an English pun into a Chinese pun. In preserving the two senses of “quick” in “*huó* 活” ‘alive; living’ and “*huì bèng huì tiào* 會蹦會跳” ‘bouncy,’ Zhu has produced a pun>non-selective non-pun translation.

Translating between European languages, the French, German, Italian, and Spanish translators have used various techniques.

With regard to the “lie / lie” pun, Déprats, Duval, and Laroche have come up with pun>non-selective non-pun renderings:

“tu es dedans,” “je n’y suis pas couché dedans” / “tu mens,” “mensonge” (Déprats);

“car tu es dedans,” “je ne suis pas dedans,” “Tu mens,” “tu mens” (Duval);

“car tu es dedans,” “Tu mens.” (Laroche)

The source-language text senses have been preserved (“dedans” ‘[lie] inside’; “tu / Tu mens” ‘thou liest’), but the signifiers are no longer homonymic.¹¹² To indicate that the original is a “lie / lie” pun, Déprats has added a footnote.

Unlike Déprats, Duval, and Laroche, Gide, Guizot, and Hugo have produced pun>non-parallel pun translations: instead of retaining the two senses of the source-language text, they have introduced a new pun, “mettre dedans,” which, apart from its literal meaning (“put inside”), also signifies “to let in, to take in, to deceive; to imprison,”¹¹³ so that the same sounds resonate across the page. To explain his translation technique, Guizot has added a footnote to both the “lie / lie” and the “quick / quick” pun:¹¹⁴

Il y a dans ce passage une joute de quiproquos volontaires dont la traduction ne saurait être aussi brève que le texte. Dans le texte ils roulent

¹¹² It must be pointed out, though, that “tu es dedans” ‘thou art inside’ is somewhat different from “thou liest in’t,” in that “es” ‘art’ in the French version, being the second person singular present indicative of the verb “être” (“to be”), is not equivalent to “liest” (second person singular present indicative of the verb “to lie”).

¹¹³ Abel Chevalley and Marguerite Chevalley, comp., *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 236.

¹¹⁴ The “quick / quick” pun will be discussed later.

sur l'absolue ressemblance du verbe *to lie, mentir*, et de l'autre verbe *to lie, être couché, enterré, situé, etc.* Ils roulent aussi sur le double sens de *quick*, qui, dans le langage usuel, signifie *vif, prompt, impétueux*, et dans une acception spéciale *vivant*, quand on dit *the quick*, par opposition à *the dead*, come en français *le vif*, dans quelques termes de la langue juridique. Mais tel est l'imbroglio de ces subtilités qu'on courrait grand risque, en les commentant, de les emmêler au lieu de les dénouer; les équivalents de la traduction suffiront à eux seuls si le lecteur, dans son esprit, voit bien la scène, s'il voit bien le fossoyeur dans sa fosse, le paysan narquois et lent qui bavarde entre deux coups de pioche, tient tête au gentilhomme et veut avoir le dernier.¹¹⁵

In Guizot's view, the challenge for the translator lies in the "absolute resemblance" ("absolute resemblance") between the two verbs "to lie" and "to lie," with their different meanings, as well as in the double sense of "quick."

The three German versions by Gundolf, Schlegel and Tieck, and Schücking are "pun>punoid" translations, since the wordplay hinges on *liegen* ("lie, rest, be recumbent; be situated"¹¹⁶), which appears in three conjugated forms ("liege," "liegst," "liegt"), *lügen* ("lie, fib, tell a lie or fib"¹¹⁷), and the noun *Lüge* ("lie").

In the two Italian versions, there are no corresponding puns. Omitting the *lie* part which means "[t]o tell a lie or lies; to speak falsely" / "[a]n act or instance of lying," Montale has only half-heartedly tried to quip on "Ci sono" '[I] am here' or '[I] am in it,' "non ci sto" '[I] am not staying here' or '[I] am not in it,' "non ci siete" '[you] are not here' or '[you] are not in it,' producing a pun>selective non-pun translation. Rusconi has opted for a pun>non-selective non-pun translation ("vi stai dentro," "state fuori di essa," "non sto in essa" / "Menti," "mentita"), in which there is no punning between the two Italian verbs *stare* ("to stay") and *mentire* ("to lie"); however, he is more conscientious than Montale, who has opted for omission.

In handling the "lie / lie" pun, María Valverde has come up with a pun>non-parallel pun translation, in which the newly created pun hinges on *meter* ("to put in," "to engage") in its different conjugations ("meto," "metéis") and in different parts of speech: verb and noun ("metedura"), as well as in different collocations, in which the phrase "meter la pata"

¹¹⁵ Guizot, 260-61.

¹¹⁶ Harold T. Betteridge, ed., *Cassell's German and English Dictionary*, 1st ed. 1957, based on the editions by Karl Breul (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 12th ed. 1968), 300.

¹¹⁷ Betteridge, 306.

(“metes la pata” in the actual target-language text) has the sense of “doing something foolish” or “making a blunder,” and “metéis donde no os llaman” has the sense of “meddling in others’ business.” Martínez Lafuente has adopted the pun>non-selective non-pun technique, translating the two senses of the original: “Sí, ya lo creo que es tuya, porque estás ahora dentro de ella” (“Yes, I surely believe it is thine, for thou art in it”); “has mentito” (“thou hast lied”). But there is no punning between the two utterances.

In translating the “quick / quick” pun, the three French translators have made use of the different senses of the French word *vif*: “elles ne sont pas pour les vifs [...] pris sur le vif [...], monsieur. Il vous reviendra vivement” ‘they are not for the living [...] taken from life [...], sir. It will come back to you sharply’ (Bonnefoy);¹¹⁸ “pas pour les vivants [...] Vivant mensonge” ‘not for the living [...] Living lie’ (Déprats); “Les tombes, c’est pour les morts, non pour les vifs. [...] Le plus vif, c’est ce que nous disons là” ‘The graves, they are for the dead, not for the quick. [...] The most quick, that’s what we say there’ (Gide); “elle est faite pour tenir le mort, et non pour saisir le vif. [...] Ce qui est vif, monsieur, c’est de vouloir me mettre dedans. Mais ces vivacités-là pourront bien rebrousser chemin de vous à moi” ‘it is made for holding the dead, not for seizing the living. [...] That quick one, sir, it’s to want to take me in. But that quickness there can soon turn back from you to me’ (Guizot). Since *vif* can mean “[I]ive, living, alive; quick; animated, lively, spirited, sprightly; [...] hasty,”¹¹⁹ the above translations can all be considered pun>parallel pun translations. To help the reader appreciate Shakespeare’s punning, Déprats has added an endnote, which is an editorial technique.¹²⁰

The definition of *vif* (“[I]ive, living, alive; quick; animated, lively, spirited, sprightly; [...] hasty”), quoted above from Chevalley and Chevalley, shows that the French word is a readily available pun in French. However, not all the French translators seem to have been aware that there is such a convenient lexical item standing by to be of service to them. As a result, Duval has translated the original pun into a selective non-pun, with

¹¹⁸ The English gloss cannot bring out the pun in Bonnefoy’s French version. To do so, it would have to deviate slightly from the signifieds of the original: “they are not for the quick [...] taken from the quick [...], sir. It will come back to you quickly.”

¹¹⁹ Chevalley and Chevalley, 869.

¹²⁰ Though Delabastita has divided “editorial techniques” only into “footnotes” and “anthological translation” (Delabastita, 217-21), “endnotes” should be grouped with “footnotes” as an editorial technique.

only one sense retained: “Elle est pour la mort et non pour la vie. [...] C'est un démenti donné vite” ‘It is for the dead and not for the living. [...] It is a lie given quickly’ (Duval).¹²¹ Except for the echoing in the sound /vi/ between the two words in the paronymic “vie / vite” (pronounced /vi/ and /vit/ respectively) pair, there is little punning created. In the two versions by Hugo and Laroche respectively, the original pun has been translated into a selective non-pun, which does not even have Duval's type of sound-echoing: “Cette fosse n'est pas faite pour un vivant, mais pour un mort” ‘This grave is not dug for the living, but for the dead’ (Hugo);¹²² “elle est pour un mort et non pour un vivant” ‘it is for a dead one, and not for a living one’ (Laroche).

In the English-Italian direction, Rusconi uses the pun>non-selective non-pun technique: “è pei morti, non pei vivi [...] È un'alacre mentita questa che mi date” ‘[it] is for the dead, not for the living [...] [It] is a quick lie—this one—that you give me.’ Both senses of the original are preserved, but there is no punning between “vivi” ‘living’ and “alacre” ‘quick.’ In Montale's version, the “quick / quick” pun is omitted in a pun>zero translation.¹²³

In the English-Spanish direction, María Valverde has come up with a pun>punoid solution: “es para los muertos, no para los vivos; ahí está la metedura. [...] Es muy viva esta metedura” ‘[it] is for the dead, not for the living; there you're putting your foot in it. [...] It's a pretty quick sort of putting-your-foot-in-it—this one.’ The “vivos / viva” ‘the living (plural) / alive (adjective, feminine gender)’ pair, containing both senses of “quick,”¹²⁴ sets off an echoing through the use of similar sounds in

¹²¹ The French expression “donner un démenti à qn [quelqu'un]” means “to give the lie to someone”; the French expression “donner un démenti à quelque chose” means “to belie something.” See *Harrap's New Standard French and English Dictionary*, eds. J. E. Mansion, R. P. L. Ledésert, and Margaret Ledésert, Part One, French-English, 2 vols., Part Two, English-French, 2 vols., 1st ed. 1934 (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., revised ed. 1972), Part One, French-English, Vol. 1, D: 28.

¹²² The expressions “un vivant” and “un mort” are, of course, singular, respectively meaning, literally, “a living person” and “a dead person.”

¹²³ Although a fine poet himself, Montale does not seem to be a very competent translator in dealing with puns. Overall, his performance is disappointing. This is somewhat puzzling, since a poet, supposed to have more linguistic “tricks” at his disposal or “up his sleeve,” should be more ingenious, more resourceful than a non-poet. In his case, the opposite is true: he has proved much less impressive than his compatriots, who are all non-poets.

¹²⁴ The Spanish translation is complicated. The word “metedura” has to be taken

Spanish.¹²⁵ Martínez Lafuente's version is a pun>selective non-pun translation: "Pero la sepultura es para los muertos, no para los vivos [...] Como es una mentira viviente" 'living' (Martínez Lafuente); only one sense of "quick" ("living" or "alive") is retained.

VII. Conclusion

From the wide range of examples discussed and analysed above, which span two centuries and cover six languages belonging to two language families, a number of observations can be made about the translation of puns in *Hamlet*.

First, as *Hamlet* in particular and drama in general have to be performed on stage, the puns in both the source and target languages have to be instantly audible and recognized by the audience. Otherwise, they will lose their effect as puns. For this reason, the puns have to be homonymic (having the same sound and spelling), homophonic (having the same sound but not the same spelling), or paronymic (having neither the same sound nor the same spelling but with partial echoing in sound). Homographic puns, such as the horizontal pun ("How the *US* put *US* to shame") and the vertical pun ("The-rapist"), both cited by Delabastita,¹²⁶ cannot be easily recognized by the audience in the theatre. In the above discussion, the most challenging puns are homonymic ("conceive / conceive," "lie / lie," "quick / quick") and homophonic ("sun / son"). In

in context. Hamlet's sentence is as follows: "Metes la pata al meterte en ella y decir que es tuya: es para los muertos, no para los vivos; ahí está la metedura." The Spanish expression "meter la pata" ("Metes la pata" in Hamlet's response, in which "Metes" is the present indicative second person singular of *meter*) means "to put one's foot in it," which is a colloquial expression. According to the definition given by the Real Academia Española's *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, "metedura" is "f. Acción y efecto de meter" 'the act and effect of *meter*.' Given the context of María Valverde's translation, "metedura" can, naturally, mean "to put one's foot in." At the same time, *meter* can also mean "Arrogarse alguna capacidad o facultades que no se tienen" 'to arrogate to oneself some capacity or certain powers which one does not have.' It is also collocated with "una mentira" 'a lie' or "una trola" 'a lie or a whopper.' For this reason, the Spanish translation is itself a complex pun, matching the original on more than one level. For the Spanish definitions of *metedura*, *metedura de pata*, and *meter*, see Real Academia Española, ed., *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, vigésima segunda edición [22nd ed.] (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2001), 1015.

¹²⁵ The "vivos / viva" pair is in itself a paronymic pun in Spanish.

¹²⁶ Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue*, 81.

translating these puns, the translator has to search for a word or group of words in the target language which carry the two or more senses expressed by the original. While it is almost always possible to find a word or group of words that carry one sense of the source-language text, finding a target-language text with the exact equivalents of all the senses expressed by the source-language text is most difficult; it is an operation that depends not only on the translator's command of the target language, on his resourcefulness, and on his imaginativeness, but also on a certain degree of luck.

Second, in a work of literature, the pun is an integral part of the author's message; failure to translate the pun inevitably affects the accuracy of the message. It is, therefore, desirable for the translator to try to convey all, or, at least, part, of the punning effect. To do so, he may, to a certain extent, have to adjust the overall context. As to the extent to which the overall context should be adjusted, the good judgement of the translator plays an important role, for, in so doing, he may have to distort the overall message in varying degrees. In such an operation, the translator has to ask himself whether the degree of distortion is outweighed, in dramatic and stylistic terms, by the punning effect. This question may appear rather straightforward at first glance; on closer examination, however, it will prove more complicated. For example, when a homonymic or homophonic pun turns out to be too intractable, should the translator adopt the pun>non-selective non-pun technique, which enables him to retain, in a non-pun format, both senses of the source-language text, or a technique which enables him to retain, in a pun format, part of the total meaning of the original pun, as is the case of a pun>semi-parallel pun translation?

Third, from the dramatic and stylistic perspective, it is easy to rank the various pun-translation techniques. The best is pun>parallel pun translation, followed in descending order by pun>semi-parallel pun and pun>non-parallel pun ones. Solely from the perspective of semantic fidelity, though, the pun>non-selective non-pun technique may be preferable to both the pun>semi-parallel pun and the pun>non-parallel pun technique. The least desirable, whether dramatically, stylistically, or semantically, is the pun>zero pun approach, as is the case with Montale's handling—or, more precisely, non-handling—of the “quick / quick” pun.

Fourth, editorial techniques, such as using footnotes to explain the pun, are not useful for the stage; they are effective only in printed form, and are meant for the eye. Nevertheless, to be a responsible translator, such techniques have to be used, especially in scholarly translations, sometimes to make up for the untranslatability of the pun concerned or to elucidate a

pun>parallel pun translation. In the examples discussed above, quite a number of translators have used footnotes for such purposes. Montale is *the* notable exception; using the pun>zero technique, he did not even care to supply a footnote to make up for his incompetence as a translator.

Finally, with reference to a particular pun, target languages may differ widely in terms of “punning-friendliness,” which is evident in the translations discussed above. Take the “sun / son” pun in the first passage, for example. While the Chinese translators have to search hard—without much success—for words that can re-create the punning effect, coming up at best with solutions that strain usage to various degrees, their counterparts (Gundolf, Schlegel and Tieck, Schücking), translating the pun from English into German, readily find the “Sohn / Sonne” pun “standing by.” The same kind of difference can be seen in the translators’ rendering of the second example. While most of the Chinese translators have to stretch their imagination or ingenuity to the utmost limit without finding a homonymic pun to match the “conceive / conceive” pun, their counterparts, translating the pun from English into the other European languages, have no difficulty whatsoever in accomplishing their task. With the exception of Schlegel and Tieck, all the translators, whether in the English-French, English-German, English-Italian, or English-Spanish direction, have come up with pun>parallel pun versions. The French “conception” and “concevoir,” the German “Empfänglichkeit” and “empfangen,” the Italian “concepire,” and the Spanish “concepción” and “concebir” all mean “to grasp with the mind; to apprehend” / “grasping with the mind; apprehending” and “to be pregnant” / “being pregnant”; no matter how the original words switch their signifieds in the dialogue, the French, German, Italian, and Spanish versions can automatically “follow suit.”

In the light of the above observations, then, the level of difficulty in pun translation can, in ascending order, be graded roughly as follows: (1) self-replication (for example, “translating” “conceive / conceive” as “conceive / conceive”), a process which requires no effort at all, but which is not translation in the strict sense of the word; (2) translating between languages that share various degrees of cognation: the closer the cognation, the easier the pun translation; (3) translating puns between different language families, as is the case with translating English puns into Chinese. In pun translation, therefore, the degree of translatability depends, by and large, on the relatedness between source and target languages,¹²⁷ whether

¹²⁷ The following point, made by Delabastita (*There’s a Double Tongue*, 233), is applicable to European languages, which are, to various degrees, phonetic, but not to Chinese, which is ideographic: “*When the S. T. pun is phonetic, the chances of*

semantically or morphologically.

finding a congenial T. T. pun are relatively higher to the extent that the S. ling. code and the T. ling. code are historically related."

TRANSLATING GARCILASO DE LA VEGA INTO CHINESE: WITH REFERENCE TO HIS “ÉGLOGA PRIMERA”

[ABSTRACT]

Of all Spanish poets, Garcilaso de la Vega is undoubtedly the one most influenced by Virgil and Dante, as can be seen, among other things, in the themes and techniques of his work. With reference to his “Égloga primera,” this paper examines the influence of the Latin and the Italian poet, and shows how translating the poem into Chinese is particularly challenging.

I. Garcilaso de la Vega and the Latin-Italian Influence on Spanish Poetry

In any study of the Latin-Italian influence on Spanish poetry,¹ Garcilaso de la Vega (1503-1536) will stand out as the most prominent figure. Although he was not the first to “enrol” in the Latin-Italian school,²

¹ The earliest influence on Spanish poetry came from France, as can be seen in the *Poema del Cid*, an anonymous twelfth-century epic, or, in Spanish, a *cantar de gesta*, which is equivalent to the French *chanson de geste*, as well as in the work of Gonzalo de Berceo (c. 1195-after 1246), “the earliest Spanish poet whose name is recorded” (J. B. Trend, ed., *The Oxford Book of Spanish Verse: xiiith Century—xxth Century*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), Vol. 1, v). The predominance of “French ideas and French artistic methods” continued “till almost the close of the fourteenth century” (Trend, v).

² Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana (1398-1458), generally considered to be “almost the first Spanish poet to write in Italian forms” (J. M. Cohen, ed., *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1988), viii), preceded Garcilaso by more than a century. Juan de Mena (1411-1456), who was influenced particularly by Dante’s *Vita nuova*, was born ninety-two years earlier than Garcilaso. When the Italian tradition began to take root in Spanish poetry, Gómez Manrique (1412?-1490?) further strengthened it. Garcilaso’s friend, Juan Boscán (c. 1490-1539), who was thirteen years his senior, also did much to “naturalize the Italian verse-forms” (Trend, xviii).

no other Spanish poets before or after him had modelled themselves on the Latin and Italian masters more studiously;³ nor was there any other Spanish poet who had done as much as he did to establish this influence for later generations, an influence that left a lasting stamp on the work of such poets as Fernando de Herrera (1534-1597), Francisco de la Torre (mid-sixteenth century), and Lope Félix de Vega Carpio (1562-1635).⁴

³ By “Latin and Italian masters,” I mean particularly Virgil and Dante, though not excluding Horace, Ovid, and Publius Papinius Statius. That Garcilaso was conversant with Latin poetry can be deduced from the fact that he himself wrote a considerable amount of verse in Latin. See his Latin odes in Garcilaso de la Vega, *Works*, ed. Hayward Keniston (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1925), 211-19 and his Latin epigram in *Obras de Garcilaso de La Vega, Príncipe de los Poetas Castellanos*, por Pedro Crasbeeck (Lisboa: 1626), 138.

⁴ The important role played by Garcilaso in establishing the Latin-Italian influence for later generations is succinctly described by Hurtado y J. de la Serna and Gonzalez-Palencia (275) in their discussion of the poet’s *lira* (lyric), “A la flor de Gnido”: “Deriva de un paradigma de B. Tasso y demostró que la oda horaciana se aclimata bien a la lengua española. Las *liras* tuvieron fortuna insuperable en nuestro Parnaso: Fray Luis de León, San Juan de la Cruz y muchos poetas de los siglos XVI y XVII las autorizaron con tanto gusto como acierto, y es estrofa que desde entonces se ha mantenido viva.” [“A la flor de Gnido”] derived from a model of B. Tasso, and demonstrated that the Horatian ode is well acclimatized to the Spanish language. These lyrics had an unsurpassed fortune on our Mount Parnassus: Fray Luis de León, St. John of the Cross, and many other poets of the 16th and 17th centuries gave them their blessing with taste and skill; they represent the verse-form that has maintained its vitality to the present day’ (Juan Hurtado y J. de la Serna and Angel Gonzalez-Palencia, *Historia de la Literatura Española*, sexta edición [6th ed.] (Madrid: Saeta, 1949), 275). His place among poets of later generations is summed up by T. Navarro Tomás: “Cervantes y Lope mostraron frecuentemente en sus obras su admiración por Garcilaso. Góngora y Quevedo hablaron de él también con elogio.” ‘Cervantes and Lope often showed their admiration for Garcilaso in their work. Góngora y Quevedo also eulogized him’ (Garcilaso de la Vega, *Obras*, edición y notas de T. Navarro Tomás, Clásicos castellanos (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1953), lxiii). The Spanish word *lyra*, apart from meaning “lyre,” also means “a poetical composition of 5 verses in a stanza, two long and three short, or broken, so call’d because sung to the harp” (Lidio Nieto Jiménez and Manuel Alvar Esquerria, *Nuevo Tesoro Lexicográfico del Español (S. XIV-1726)*, Real Academia Española edition, 11 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Arco Libros, S. L.: 2007), Volumen VII [Volume 7], 6212, under the entry “lira” (6211-12); “Combinación métrica de cinco versos, heptasílabos el primero, tercero y cuarto, y endecasílabos los otros dos, de los cuales suelen rimar el primero con el tercero, y el segundo con el cuarto y el quinto” ‘Metrical combination (that is,

II. Garcilaso's "Égloga Primera" and the Influence of Virgil and Dante

Generally speaking, in coming under the influence of a foreign literature, one can move in either or both of the following directions: to make use of its themes and techniques, including the technique of image-making; to imitate its linguistic features. In the case of Poe's influence on Baudelaire, or of Laforgue's influence on Eliot, we see an influence of the first kind. In Eliot's early poetry, for example, one can hear echoes of "Ah! que la Vie est quotidienne" 'Oh, how mundane Life is'⁵ and come across startling images like "And I have known the eyes already, known them all— / The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase [...]"⁶ which can be traced to "On voudrait saigner le Silence" 'One would like to bleed the Silence.'⁷ The following lines by Eliot, too,

The reminiscence comes
Of sunless dry geraniums
And dust in crevices,
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,
And female smells in shuttered rooms,
And cigarettes in corridors
And cocktail smells in bars [...]⁸

remind one of the drab, prosaic world depicted by Laforgue's "L'Hiver qui vient" 'The Coming of Winter':

metrical composition) of five verses, the first and fourth being heptasyllabic, and the other two hendecasyllabic, of which the first usually rhymes with the third, and the second with the fourth and fifth'; "Combinación métrica que consta de seis versos de distinta medida, y en la cual riman los cuatro primeros alternadamente, y los dos últimos entre sí" 'Metrical combination (that is, metrical composition) which consists of six verses of different lengths, in which the first four rhyme alternatively, and the last two with each other' (Real Academia Española, ed., *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, vigésima segunda edición [22nd ed.] (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 2001), 939, "lira."

⁵ "Complainte sur certains ennuis," in Jules Laforgue, *Poésies complètes*, présentation, notes et variantes de Pascal Pia, Le Livre de Poche (Paris: Gallimard et Librairie Générale Française, 1971), 86.

⁶ "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems: 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), 15.

⁷ "Complainte sur certains ennuis," in Laforgue, 86.

⁸ "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," in Eliot, *Collected Poems: 1909-1962*, 28.

C'est la toux dans les dortoirs du lycée qui rentre,
 C'est la tisane sans le foyer,
 La phthisie pulmonaire attristant le quartier,
 Et toute la misère des grands centres.

Mais, lainages, caoutchoucs, pharmacie, rêve,
 Rideaux écartés du haut des balcons des grèves
 Devant l'océan de toitures des faubourgs,
 Lampes, estampes, thé, petits-fours,
 Serez-vous pas mes seules amours!⁹

'It is the cough in the school dormitory that returns,
 It is the herb-tea without the hearth,
 The pulmonary phthisis saddening the neighbourhood,
 And all the misery of the large towns.

But, woollens, waterproofs, pharmacy, dreams,
 Curtains opened above the shores' balconies,
 Before the ocean of suburban roofs,
 Lamps, prints, tea, small cakes,
 Won't you be my only love'

Very much in reaction against the Romantic concept of poetry and heralding the modernist school, the apparently disparate and “unpoetic” details conjure up an “uninspired” everyday scene, made all the more objective and realistic by the absence of interference on the part of the narrator.

Like Eliot, Garcilaso also drew on his predecessors' themes and techniques. His “Égloga primera” (“The First Eclogue”),¹⁰ the poem to be discussed in this paper, for example, is indebted to Virgil's eclogues in conception,¹¹ as is clear from the title, which declares the lineage of the

⁹ Laforgue, 281.

¹⁰ In Garcilaso's complete works, there are three eclogues altogether, making up the greater, and most important, part of the entire corpus. What Alonso says of “Égloga tercera” (“The Third Eclogue”) is, to a large extent, also true of “Égloga primera”: “representa su total impregnación en el medio renacentista de Italia (pensamiento, arte, poesía) [...]” ‘represents his total immersion in the Renaissance influence of Italy (thinking, art, and poetry) [...]’ (Damaso Alonso, *Poesía Española: Ensayo de Metodos y Limites Estilísticos* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1952), 51). For this reason, it will be rewarding to look at the poem from the perspective of translation studies.

¹¹ Virgil's eclogues, in their turn, “were written in imitation of the idylls of

piece even before it begins. At the same time, its mode of image-making is unmistakably Dantesque:

Cual suele el ruiseñor con triste canto
 quejarse, entre las hojas escondido,
 del duro labrador, que cautamente
 le despojó su caro y dulce nido
 de los tiernos hijuelos, entre tanto
 que del amado ramo estaba ausente,
 y aquel dolor que siente,
 con diferencia tanta
 por la dulce garganta
 despide, y a su canto el aire suena,
 y la callada noche no refrena
 su lamentable oficio y sus querellas,
 trayendo de su pena
 al cielo por testigo las estrellas;

desta manera, suelta ya la rienda
 a mi dolor, y así me quejo en vano
 de la dureza de la muerte airada.¹²

As the nightingale, hidden among the leaves, is wont to complain with sad song of the harsh countryman who has cunningly despoiled her dear, sweet nest of its tender fledglings whilst she was away from her favourite branch; and as she, in so changed a plight, expresses the grief she feels with her sweet voice; and as the air resounds with her song, and the silent night does not hold back her doleful dirge and her complaints, but calls on the skies and the stars to witness her sorrow; even so do I give full rein to my grief, and thus lament in vain the sternness of proud death.¹³

The “Cual” ‘as’—“desta manera”¹⁴ ‘even so’ formula is descended from

Theocritus” (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 65), the Greek bucolic poet (fl. c. 270 B. C.).

¹² Garcilaso de la Vega, *Obras*, edición y notas de T. Navarro Tomas, Clásico castellanos (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1953), 20-21.

¹³ Cohen, 168.

¹⁴ “desta” is a fourteenth-century Spanish word, meaning “de esta.” See Martín Alonso (“Martín Alonso Pedraz” in the “Presentación” ‘Introduction’), *Diccionario Medieval Español: Desde las Glosas Emilianenses y Silenses (s. X) hasta el siglo XV*, 2 vols. (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1986), Tomo II [Vol. 2], 939, “DESTA”: “(suple vez, común), s. XIV. De esta:

Dante's "Come" 'As'—"così" 'so';¹⁵ the elaborate comparison, in which

«Que...*desta* venia çertero», J. Ruiz: *Buen Amor*, ed. *Clás. cast.*, t. 14, 480.” See also Lidio Nieto Jiménez and Manuel Alvar Esquerra, *Nuevo Tesoro Lexicográfico del Español (S. XIV-1726)*, Real Academia Española edition, 11 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Arco Libros, S. L., 2007), Volumen IV [Volume 4], 3652, “**deste/a/o**”: “(desta, DESTA) MINSHEU 1599: deste, *id est* de este, *of this man, or of this*. || MINSHEU 1617: de-ste, *id est*, de este, *angl. of this man*; desto, *id est*, de esto, *angl. of this*. || HENRÍQUEZ 1679: desta parte, *cis, citra, citerior*; lo que está desta parte, *citerior, us, Hispania citerior* [...]. || STEVENS 1706: deste, *id est* de este, *of this*; desto, *id est*, de esto, *of this*. || MORATORI 1723: deste, desta, destos, destas, destos, *dieser, diese*.”

¹⁵ Another example of the Dantesque simile transplanted into Garcilaso's poem can be found in stanza 23, which reads: “Como al partir del sol la sombra crece, / [...] tal es la tenebrosa / noche de tu partir [...]” ‘As when the sun departs the shadows grow [...] even so is the dark night of your departure [...]’ (Cohen, 168-69). In this example, the second half of the formula is “tal” ‘so’ instead of “desta manera” ‘even so.’ Following the ascendancy of the Latin-Italian influence through Garcilaso, whether in subject-matter, in imagery, or in syntax, poets of later generations borrowed liberally from Latin and Italian literature. For example, Fray Luis de León (1527?-1591) echoes Dante's *Paradiso* in stanza 4 of his “Oda a Francisco Salinas Catedrático de música de la Universidad de Salamanca” ‘Ode to Francisco Salinas Reader in Music at the University of Salamanca’: “Traspasa el aire todo / hasta llegar a las más alta esfera, / y oye allí otro modo / de no precedera / música, que es de todas la primera.” ‘It soars through the whole air till it reaches the highest sphere, and there it hears another system of imperishable music, which is the first of all’ (Cohen, 190-91). In his “Por la pérdida del Rey don Sebastián” ‘For the Loss of the King Don Sebastian,’ Fernando de Herrera (1534-1597) uses a syntax that reminds one of Latin, giving stanza 1 an impressive sweep (Cohen, 202-203). In a poem that begins with “Aunque de godos ínclitos descendias” ‘Although you may be the descendant of illustrious Goths’ (Cohen, 246-47), Lupercio or Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola withholds the climax until the end of a 14-line periodic sentence, very much in keeping with the characteristically involved Latin or Italian syntax. This kind of structure can be found in the work of Luis de Góngora (1561-1625), too, such as “Mientras por competir con tu cabello” ‘Whilst, in competition with your hair,’ which is a single sentence culminating in a climax in the last line (line 14) (Cohen, 258-61). In essence, these one-sentence stanzas or poems are structurally similar to the first four stanzas of Garcilaso's “A la Flor de Gnido” ‘To “The Flower of Gnido”,’ which make up one sentence of 20 lines (Cohen, 175). They are in sharp contrast to the syntactically much less involved “Glosa de las vacas” (Cohen, 145-47) by Cristóbal de Castillejo (1492?-1550), who “was the chief” of “a group of poets” that “resisted” Juan Boscán and Garcilaso de la Vega's “Italianate innovations”

the vehicle (“el ruiseñor” ‘the nightingale’) carries a huge amount of information before the tenor (“yo” ‘I’ understood in “así me quejo” ‘thus lament’) is introduced, constitutes one of the most outstanding characteristics of a typical Dantesque simile,¹⁶ as can be seen in the following lines by the Italian master:

Come l’augello, intra l’amate fronde,
 posato al nido de’ suoi dolci nati
 la notte che le cose ci nasconde,
 che, per veder li aspetti disciati
 e per trovar lo cibo onde li pasca,
 in che gravi labor li sono aggrati,
 previene il tempo in su aperta frasca,
 e con ardente affetto il sole aspetta,
 fiso guardando pur che l’alba nasca;
 così la donna mia stava eretta
 e attenta, rivolta inver la plaga
 sotto la quale il sol mostra men fretta [...]

(Cohen, xxxiv).

¹⁶ *Tenor* and *vehicle* are terms in rhetoric, normally used to describe a metaphor or a metaphorical statement. *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* defines *vehicle* as “the literal content of a metaphorical statement,” and *tenor* as “the concept, object, or person meant in a metaphor: the latent aspect of a metaphorical statement.” See Philip Babcock Gove et al., eds., *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam—Webster Inc., Publishers, 1986), 2356, “¹tenor” 1 c., 2538, “vehicle” 2 b. Here, the two words are loosely used of images made up of similes. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* has given a brief historical account of the terms *tenor* and *vehicle*: “Because he was dissatisfied with the traditional grammatical and rhetorical account of *metaphor, which he believed emphasized its merely decorative and embellishing powers, I. A. Richards in 1936 reintroduced this pair of terms—already reflected, as Engell points out, in the 18th c. in Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* (1755) and used by such later Augustan rhetoricians as George Campbell and Hugh Blair—with the notion of ‘a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts.’ Since any metaphor at its simplest gives two parts, the thing meant and the thing said, Richards used *tenor* to refer to the thing meant—purport, underlying meaning, or main subject of the metaphor—and *vehicle* to mean the thing said—that which serves to carry or embody the tenor at the analogy brought to the subject.” See *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Roland Greene et al., 4th ed. (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1421, “TENOR AND VEHICLE.”

(*La Divina Commedia: Paradiso, Canto 23, ll. 1-12*)¹⁷

As the bird among the loved branches, having sat on the nest of her sweet brood through the night that hides things from us, anticipates the time on the open spray that she may see their longed-for looks and find the food to nourish them for which her heavy toils are welcome to her, and with ardent longing awaits the sun, watching with fixed gaze for the dawn to break; so my Lady stood erect and intent, turned towards the part beneath which the sun shows less haste.¹⁸

In piling detail upon detail before the tenor comes into play, the “introductory” images created by Garcilaso and Dante both have the effect of whetting the reader’s appetite for what is to follow; like two mini-dramas with a beginning, a middle, and a dénouement, they each have a tenor (the understood “yo” ‘I’ in the Spanish poem; “la donna mia” ‘my Lady’ in the Italian) that functions as the protagonist.

III. Translating “Égloga Primera” into Chinese

For one wishing to translate such images into Chinese, the poetry of the target language provides no model to go by, because traditional Chinese poetry does not have similes of this kind. The first of two poems by Su Shi 蘇軾, entitled “*Baibu hong* 百步洪” ‘The Hundred-Step Rapids’ (二首其一) does contain a breath-taking series of similes that hurl the reader headlong *in medias res*, enabling him to experience—almost kinaesthetically—a journey which is as thrilling as a roller-coaster ride:

長洪斗落生跳波，
輕舟南下如投梭。
水師絕叫鳧雁起，
亂石一綫爭磋磨。
有如兔走鷹隼落，
駿馬下注千丈坡。
斷絃離柱箭脫手，
飛電過隙珠翻荷。¹⁹

¹⁷ Dante Alighieri, *Le opere di Dante: Testo critica della Società Dantesca Italiana*, seconda edizione [2nd ed.] (Firenze: Nella Sede della Società, 1960), 759.

¹⁸ John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, by Dante Alighieri, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Inferno*, Vol. 2, *Purgatorio*, Vol. 3, *Paradiso* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Vol. 3, *Paradiso*, 331.

¹⁹ Su Shi 蘇軾, *Su Shi shiji* 蘇軾詩集 ‘*The Collected Poems of Su Shi*,’ [清]王

'The long rapids plunge, churning up leaping waves.
 Like a shooting shuttle the light boat southward speeds.
 The boatman's shouts are sending wild ducks and geese flying.
 Closing in on a thread, jagged rocks vie to scrape and grind.
 The boat is like an eagle or falcon swooping when a hare flees,
 A steed charging down a slope that tumbles a league,
 A string breaking from a zither bridge, an arrow darting from the hand,
 Lightning flashing across a crack, or a dewdrop overturning on a
 lotus-leaf.'²⁰

However, in the quotation from Su Shi, the stylistic effect is produced by the sum total of five similes (lines 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8),²¹ each of which can

文詁輯註，孔凡禮點校，中國古典文學基本叢書 'Basic Classical Chinese Literature Series,' 8 vols. (Peking: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1982), 891-92. Page numbers in the eight volumes are continuous; the two poems can be found in Vol. 3.

²⁰ My translation.

²¹ All the similes in lines 6, 7, and 8 have each a “*ru* 如” ‘like’ or ‘as’ suppressed or understood; as they are all governed by “*youru* 有如” in line 5, the repetition of “*ru* 如” or “*youru* 有如” at the beginning of each of these lines is no longer necessary. On closer examination, one will see that lines 7 and 8 each have two similes instead of one: “*Duan xian li zhu* 斷絃離柱” ‘A string breaking from a zither bridge’ and “*jian tuoshou* 箭脫手” ‘an arrow darting from the hand’ in line 7; “*Feidian guo xi* 飛電過隙” ‘Lightning flashing across a crack’ and “*zhu fan he* 珠翻荷” ‘a dewdrop overturning on a lotus-leaf’ in line 8. Line 4, while not being a simile, is a personification, as is indicated by the word “*zheng* 爭” ‘vie.’ The expression “*yi xian* 一綫” can be interpreted in two ways, since it can refer either to the rapids (the rapids are so narrow that they look like a thread, which the jagged rocks vie to scrape and grind) or to the rocks (the jagged rocks are forming a line or standing in a line). If the first interpretation is taken, “*yi xian* 一綫” should be regarded as a metaphor or a metaphorical statement, in which the tenor (the rapids) is suppressed or understood, and the vehicle is “*yixian* 一綫”: “the rapids are a thread.” Upon further analysis, the line will prove even more complicated, more condensed. According to the grammar or syntax of the line, the jagged rocks are vying to scrape and grind the rapids (a thread); however, the true meaning of the line takes the reader a step further: it is the boat speeding down the rapids that the jagged rocks are vying to scrape and grind. Lines 1 and 3 do not each constitute a simile, a metaphor, or a personification, but they are both images in the broader sense of the word. The seven similes in Su Shi’s poem make up what traditional Chinese critics call “*boyu* 博喻” ‘multiple similes’ or “*lianyu* 連喻” ‘linked similes.’ For the broader sense of *imagery*, see Chris Baldick, *The*

stand alone, and is relatively simple, with the vehicle carrying a much lighter load of information; there is no withholding of the climax built up by details piled on the vehicle, details that keep the reader expectant. For a translator wishing to render the Spanish image into Chinese, this difficulty is compounded by the fact that, unlike Eliot under the influence of Laforgue, Garcilaso has transplanted Dante's techniques as well as the linguistic features of his master's Italian—in this case its highly malleable syntax. Because of this, his image, in the form of a complex sentence consisting of 17 lines, cannot be comfortably accommodated by a corresponding formula in Chinese. This apparent inadequacy of the Chinese language stems mainly from a syntax that does not work in the same way as its counterpart in the major European languages does. In two articles entitled respectively "The Translation of Poetry" and "*Bing fen liu lu qin xian yin*: Shenqu *chang ju de fanyi* 兵分六路擒仙音—《神曲》長句的翻譯" 'Dispatching Troops in Six Directions to Capture the Music of Heaven: Translating Long Sentences in *The Divine Comedy*,' I have made two points about translation which are also relevant to the present discussion: that images are relatively easy to translate; and that complex sentences are more intractable than compound ones. As Garcilaso, in coming under Dante's influence, has transplanted the syntactic features of his master's Italian, the most outstanding of which is the abundant use of subordination in complex sentences, what challenges the translator is no longer the uninvolved syntax of indigenous Spanish,²² but a syntax that

Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 106:

a rather vague critical term covering those uses of language in a literary work that evoke sense-impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptible or 'concrete' objects, scenes, actions, or states, as distinct from the language of abstract argument or exposition. The imagery of a literary work thus comprises the set of images that it uses; these need not be mental 'pictures', but may appeal to senses other than sight. The term has often been applied particularly to the figurative language used in a work, especially to its metaphors and similes.

In the light of the above analysis, then, the poem undoubtedly provides us with one of the most condensed image-clusters in all classical Chinese literature; it is also one of the most breathtaking descriptions of action and speed in all literature, whether Chinese or non-Chinese.

²² By "indigenous Spanish," I mean the kind of Spanish used by poets before Garcilaso, that is, before the genius of the Spanish language was considerably

harks back to Latin through Italian.

That Garcilaso can so readily tap the linguistic resources of Dante's Italian is due largely to the fact that Spanish and Italian are members not only of the same family, but also of the same branch and, indeed, of the same group, the group that comprises all the Romance languages,²³ so that linguistic transplants between them are less likely to meet with rejection. As a result, even though Spanish and Italian were developing along different lines in the sixteenth century, Garcilaso could still, by a *tour de force*, write a language similar to the Italian of Dante or, for that matter, even to the Latin of Virgil, Ovid, and Statius, whereas Eliot was hard put to perform a similar feat in coming under Laforgue's influence, since French and English are members of different language branches and are separated by a much wider gap.²⁴

To one who had translated Dante's *Divine Comedy* into Chinese verse,²⁵ Garcilaso's linguistic feat was of particular interest from the point of view of translation studies. First, I found that my approach to the Italian poem could also be applied to "Égloga primera." Second, in applying the techniques I used in tackling *The Divine Comedy*, I was, once again, made to see their limitations. Third, in rendering the Spanish poem into Chinese, I was reminded of the gap between Chinese, a member of the Sino-Tibetan family, and Spanish, a member of the Indo-European family, just as I was reminded of the gap between Chinese and Italian when I was translating the Italian poem.

Take the two passages quoted respectively from "Égloga primera" and Canto 23 of the *Paradiso*. The large number of lines that follow the vehicle ("el ruiseñor" 'the nightingale' in the Spanish poem, "l'augello" 'the bird' in the Italian) of the simile prior to the introduction of the tenor ("yo" 'I' understood in "así me quejo" 'thus lament' in the Spanish poem, "la donna mia" 'my Lady' in the Italian) compress a huge amount of information with ease, and keep the reader in suspense. In rendering such a simile into Chinese, I could certainly have introduced a similar mode of

altered by the Latin-Italian influence.

²³ See *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, 1153 for a detailed classification of the Indo-European languages.

²⁴ Whether Eliot was more—or less—fortunate than Garcilaso as a poet is a topic for further discussion.

²⁵ This refers to my three-volume *terza-rima* Chinese translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. See Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), trans., *Shenqu* 神曲, 3 vols., Vol. 1, *Diyu pian* 地獄篇 'Inferno,' Vol. 2, *Lianyu pian* 煉獄篇 'Purgatory,' Vol. 3, *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 'Paradise,' *Jiuge Wenku* 九歌文庫, 927, 928, 929 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, September 2003).

image-making by piling an equal amount of information on the vehicle, thereby “foreignizing” the target language as preached by Lawrence Venuti and going against Chinese idiom. In so doing, however, I would have had to pay a heavy price: to wait for twenty, thirty, or even a hundred years before there is any likelihood of this distortion becoming a speech habit of the target-language speech community, or to face the possibility of non-communication in what was meant to be a communication process.

With the existing linguistic resources of the Chinese language at my disposal, I found it more fruitful to respect Chinese idiom, a practice that I followed when I translated *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese verse. For example, in dealing with Dante’s image quoted above, I first dismantled the 12-line simile, and then reassembled the various sense-units in a way permitted by the speech habits of the Chinese-speaking community:

一隻鳥兒，整夜在鍾愛的樹枝間
 棲息巢內，看顧可愛的幼雛，
 由於景物被周圍的黑暗所掩，
 黎明將臨的時候，為了讓雙目
 重睹心愛的樣貌，為了找餵養
 幼雛的食物——她樂於接受的辛苦——
 會一邊期待，一邊望向
 樹隙，凝眸等待破曉的時分，
 看心中渴望的太陽放亮。
 我的娘娘也如此：佇立凝神，
 回首望着天際。在她顧盼
 所及的下方，太陽凌空的馳奔
 顯得較慢。²⁶

Working within the constraints imposed by Chinese prosody, which required me to pay attention to line-length, pauses, and, above all, an extremely “tyrannical” rhyme scheme (the *terza rima*), I found myself faced almost with a “mission impossible.” Naturally and inevitably, certain stylistic effects are left unaccounted for. In the original, the “Come” ‘As’-‘così’ ‘so’ formula is perfectly natural to Italian readers, consisting of two words that echo each other. When Dante uses “Come” to introduce the vehicle together with a series of details, an aesthetic tension that

²⁶ Huang Guobin, trans., *Tiantang pian* 天堂篇 ‘Paradise,’ 345-46. It should be noted that, to meet the requirements of prosody, my Chinese translation has overrun the 12-line limit, which is “remedied” in the lines that follow (not quoted here), where “metric space” is found for the overrunning sense-units.

arouses the reader's expectation is set up, which is resolved only when "Come" is responded to by "così"; between "Come" and "così," there is plenty of room for variation, including the creation of one crescendo after another and the modulation of emotions through the subtle manipulation of rhythm and pauses. With this literary device, he can send the reader on a journey full of twists and turns before it reaches "così." In my Chinese translation, some of these stylistic effects are lost; once my version begins without a Chinese equivalent of "Come," it has given up a useful signpost that can hold the reader's attention and keep him anticipating what is to follow; it is only when I come to the tenth line that I can, with the phrase "*Wo de niangniang ye ruci* 我的娘娘也如此" 'In like manner, my Lady,' set up a faint echo of the first half of the simile that contains the vehicle. To re-create the missing stylistic effects at all costs, I could have used such expressions as "*xiang* 像' 'as,' "*ru* 如' 'as,' "*jiuxiang* 就像' 'just as,' "*youru* 有如' 'just as,' or "一如" 'in the same way as,'²⁷ but then, I would have had to import a language that violates Chinese idiom, a language that grates on the native speaker's ear. Of the two evils, I had chosen the lesser.

Turning to "*Égloga primera*" with the techniques acquired in tackling *The Divine Comedy*, I had the feeling of going through more or less the same translating experience. With the simile mentioned above, for example, I found that the "Cual" 'As'- "desta manera" 'even so' formula could be rendered in the same way as Dante's "Come" 'As'- "così" 'so': dismantling followed by reassembling and prosodic adjustments:

殘忍的農夫，趁夜鷺不在
 所寵的枝椏時，偷偷
 把她的嫩雛從安舒
 而叫她疼愛的鳥巢掠走，
 她就會藏身葉叢，哀哀
 鳴叫，把暴行向外界揭露；
 同時，情況驟變，身處
 愁苦間以動聽的嗓音
 把所受的悲傷從內心
 唱出，叫歌聲在空中迴盪；
 寂靜的黑夜，也讓
 她的喪曲和戚吟盡情騰騁，

²⁷ The Chinese words "*xiang* 像" and "*ru* 如" have the same meaning, except that the former is more colloquial than the latter.

並替她祈呼眾星和上蒼，
來為她的苦痛作證。

放開了羈勒傷悲的繩韉，
我也是這樣，徒然呻吟，
怨死亡狂暴，麻木不仁。

To avoid the fate of Laocoön, I first untangled the python-like syntax of the original by splitting it into smaller sense-units, which were then recast into readable Chinese. Having struggled with Dante's *terza rima* for years, I found the Spanish rhyme scheme (abcbaccddeefef) relatively easy.²⁸ To preserve the original climax, which is heightened by the postponement of "despide" ("expresses") to the tenth line, I made a point of putting "*changchu* 唱出" (the equivalent of "despide") in a corresponding position. Nevertheless, while conscious of what I had done, I was also aware of what I had not done—or what I could not do. Translating an Indo-European language into a Sino-Tibetan language, I was not able, for example, to reproduce the syntactic malleability of the original, which is essential to the highly flexible and continuous movement of Garcilaso's sentence. Allowing the poet to insert phrases almost at will (one example being "entre las hojas escondito" 'hidden among the leaves,' which is inserted between "quejarse" 'to complain' and "del duro labrador" 'of the harsh countryman'), Garcilaso's Spanish can take an extremely tortuous course, pausing here and there to pick up minor yet relevant details without breaking the main line of development. In the hands of a master, Chinese syntax can also be highly flexible, accelerating or decelerating in accordance with the stylistic effects he wants to create; nevertheless, because of the linear nature of Chinese syntax, there is much less "room for manoeuvre."²⁹ Under these constraints, I was able to achieve only

²⁸ Garcilaso's "Égloga primera" consists of thirty stanzas; with the exception of stanza 20, which has fifteen lines rhyming abcbaccddeefgfg, all the others are stanzas of fourteen lines each, rhyming abcbaccddeefef.

²⁹ On the linear nature of Chinese syntax, see my article "Yi fang ying yuan: Cong Shenqu Hanyi shuo dao Ouzhou shishi de jufa 以方應圓—從《神曲》漢譯說到歐洲史詩的句法" 'The Square Responding to the Circle: From Translating *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese to the Syntax of European Epics,' in Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), in *Yin nan jian qiao: Mingjia fanyi jingyantao 因難見巧—名家翻譯經驗談 'From Hardship to Craftsmanship: Masters on the Translating Experience,'* eds. Jin Shenghua 金聖華 (Serena Jin) and Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong) (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian (Xianggang)

partial success in translating the above image.

If Garcilaso's syntax were involved only in one or two images, the task of translating his "Égloga primera" would still be relatively simple; as it is, it challenges the translator almost at every turn. For example, the use of inversion in units of one or two lines seems, at first sight, unlikely to pose serious problems:

¿De un alma te desdeñas ser señora [...]?³⁰

Word-for-word translation:

Of a soul yourself [you] despise to be mistress [...]?³¹

Free translation:

Do you despise yourself for being mistress of a soul [...]?³²

Lo que cantó tras esto Nemoroso [...]³³

Word-for-word translation:

That which sang after this Nemoroso [...]

Free translation:

What Nemoroso sang after this [...]³⁴

hasta que muerte el tiempo determine
que a ver el deseado
sol de tu clara vista me encamine.³⁵

Word-for-word translation:

till death shall fix the time
that to see the welcome
sun of your clear gaze I shall set out.

youxian gongsi 三聯書店 (香港) 有限公司 (Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co., Ltd.), 1996), 219-38; now collected in Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Yuyan yu fanyi 語言與翻譯 'Language and Translation,' Jiuge Wenku 九歌文庫*, 620 (Taipei: Jiuge (Chiuko) chubanshe 九歌出版社, October 2001), 47-72.

³⁰ Garcilaso, *Obras*, 5.

³¹ To show what the Spanish word order is like, I have given word-for-word translations of the quotations alongside Cohen's English versions.

³² Cohen, 154.

³³ Garcilaso, *Obras*, 15.

³⁴ Cohen, 164.

³⁵ Garcilaso, *Obras*, 20.

Free translation:

till death shall fix the time when I shall set out to see the welcome sun
of your clear gaze.³⁶

On close examination, however, it will be found that this common rhetorical device is less straightforward than it appears. In opposition to the norm of Spanish word order, which is one of non-inversion, inversion can create a stylistic effect which modern Chinese cannot faithfully reproduce. To illustrate this point, let us look at the famous American motto: “In God we trust.” Because of the inversion of the normal word order (“We trust in God”), the utterance has become much more emphatic, throwing into relief the word “God,” which, because of its prominent position, has become the focus of the entire sentence. As a result, the motto takes on solemnity, and conveys a much stronger sense of faith than its counterpart does in the normal word order, which is the word order of a casual utterance. In modern Chinese, one could use a similar inversion to express more or less the same idea, “*Shen shi women suo xinkao* 神是我們所信靠” or “*Zhu shi women suo xinkao* 主是我們所信靠,” instead of “*Women xinkao Shen* 我們信靠神” or “*Women xinkao Zhu* 我們信靠主.” But the Chinese inversion is less common in modern Chinese than the English inversion in modern English, so that the opposition between the two types of utterance (inversion and non-inversion), on which the stylistic effect hinges, is also less functional.³⁷

If English word order is freer than Chinese word order,³⁸ the word order of other major European languages, particularly Latin, is much more so. To make clear what I mean, a few lines taken from Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and accompanied by their word-for-word

³⁶ Cohen, 168.

³⁷ It should be noted, too, that in employing the same rhetorical device in Chinese, one has to add two words (“*shi* 是” and “*suo* 所”) to meet the requirements of idiom, thus failing to reproduce the symmetry of “In God we trust” and “We trust in God.”

³⁸ How much freer English word order is can be seen in everyday speech, too. For example, a speaker of English can freely switch between the periodic sentence, “If you like it, take it,” and the loose sentence, “Take it if you like it,” without sounding contrived. In Chinese, the periodic sentence, “*Ni xihuan, jiu ba ta na zou ba* 你喜歡, 就把它拿走吧,” is predominant, whereas the loose sentence, “*Ba ta na zou ba, yaoshi ni xihuan* 把它拿走吧, 要是你喜歡,” is used much less frequently. As a result, the “binary opposition” in Chinese—to borrow a term from the structuralists—on which stylistic contrast depends, is much less obvious.

translations will suffice:

Ut belli signum Laurenti Turnus ab arce
extulit et rauco strepuerunt cornua cantu[...]
(Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 8, ll. 1-2)³⁹

Word-for-word translation:
When of-war flag Laurentine Turnus from the-citadel
Raised and with-hoarse rang the-horns notes [...]⁴⁰

Free translation:
When Turnus raised up the flag of war from the Laurentine citadel and the
horns rang with their hoarse notes [...]⁴¹

Hanc deus et melior litem natura diremit.
nam caelo terras et terris abscidit undas [...]
(Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 1, ll. 21-22)⁴²

Word-for-word translation:
This God or kindlier strife nature composed;
For from-sky land and from-land rent-asunder sea [...]⁴³

Free translation:
God—or kindlier Nature—composed this strife; for he rent asunder land
from sky, and sea from land [...]⁴⁴

The insertion of one or more than one word into the phrases “Laurenti...ab arce” and “rauco...cantu” in the first example and into the phrase

³⁹ Virgil, [*Works*], in two vols., Vol. 1, *Eclogues, Georgics, The Aeneid I-VI*, Vol. 2, *Aeneid VII-XII, The Minor Poems*, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough, revised by G. P. Goold, The Loeb Classical Library, first published 1918 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, revised ed. 2000), Vol. 2, 60.

⁴⁰ To highlight the word order, I have modified Fairclough’s translation. Hyphenated words in English are equivalent to single words in the Latin original.

⁴¹ Virgil, *The Aeneid VII-XII*, 60.

⁴² Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, in 2 vols., Vol. 1, Books I-VIII, Vol. 2, Books IX-XV, with an English translation by Frank Justus Miller, revised by G. P. Goold, The Loeb Classical Library 42, 43, 1st ed. 1916 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 3rd ed. 1977), Vol. 1, 2.

⁴³ Again, as with the quotation from the *Aeneid*, I have modified Miller’s English translation to highlight the original word order.

⁴⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Vol. 1, 3.

“melior...natura” in the second, thereby interposing them between units of an utterance which are not normally separable in English—much less in Chinese—is typical of Latin.⁴⁵ With this flexible word order relative to that of Chinese, poets writing in Latin and in those European languages which have inherited this feature of Latin can create many stylistic effects denied to poets writing in Chinese.⁴⁶

Compared with Latin, Italian, or Milton’s English, Spanish is not famous for syntactic malleability.⁴⁷ With deliberate effort, however, Garcilaso has succeeded in beating it into a medium with great syntactic malleability, a syntactic malleability not found in the work of his contemporaries, such as Cristóbal de Castillejo (1492?-1550), or of his compatriots who lived one to three centuries before him, such as Gonzalo de Berceo (c. 1195-after 1246), Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita (fourteenth century), Pedro López de Ayala (1332-1407), and Alfonso Álvarez de

⁴⁵ Readers of Spanish poetry will readily notice that the word order of the following line from “Égloga primera,” accompanied by my word-for-word rendering and Cohen’s translation, is directly descended from Latin:

Materia diste al mundo de esperanza [...] (Garcilaso, *Obras*, 10)

Word-for-word translation:

Cause you-gave to-the world of hope [...]

Free translation:

You gave the world cause to hope [...] (Cohen, 160)

In Latin, the word order as represented by the Spanish line is regular fare. Without getting accustomed to this syntactic feature, one would come up against “road blocks” everywhere in the work of Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero.

⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion of how Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton make use of this feature of Greek, Latin, Italian, and English, see my article “*Yi fang ying yuan: Cong Shenqu Hanyi shuo dao Ouzhou shishi de jufa* 以方應圓—從《神曲》漢譯說到歐洲史詩的句法” ‘The Square Responding to the Circle: From Translating *The Divine Comedy* into Chinese to the Syntax of European Epics.’

⁴⁷ If a further distinction is to be made, Dante’s Italian, still reminiscent of Latin when *The Divine Comedy* was written, has a higher flexibility than modern Italian, capable of more “syntactic contortions,” as it were, than its modern counterpart. Similarly, Milton’s English, modelled very much on Latin and Italian, can perform more syntactic feats than Yeats’s or Eliot’s English. As to whether “Milton [really] writes English like a dead language” (T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 141), there is plenty of room for debate.

Villasandino (died about 1424). Of this newly created syntactic malleability, the inversions discussed above are some cogent examples. Were such examples few and far between in “Égloga primera,” my task would have been less daunting; the fact is: going through the poem, I was constantly waylaid by inversions, parentheses, and turns of phrase that deviate from the norm of indigenous Spanish. Nor is this the end of the story; for, apart from dealing with minor units that keep harrying me like guerrillas, I had constantly to worry about the onslaught of larger, regular forces: single sentences that can easily run to more than 10 lines:

Tú, que ganaste obrando
 un nombre en todo el mundo,
 y un grado sin segundo,
 agora estés atento, solo y dado
 al ínclito gobierno del Estado,
 Albano; agora vuelto a la otra parte,
 resplandeciente, armado,
 representando en tierra al fiero Marte;
 agora de cuidados enojosos
 y de negocios libre, por ventura
 andes a caza, el monte fatigando
 en ardiente jinete, que apresura
 el curso tras los ciervos temerosos,
 que en vano su morir van dilatando;
 espera, que en tornando
 a ser restituido,
 al ocio ya perdido,
 luego verás ejercitar mi pluma
 por la infinita innumerable suma
 de tus virtudes y famosas obras;
 antes que me consuma,
 faltando a ti, que a todo el mundo sobras.⁴⁸

You who have gained by your labours worldwide renown and a place second to none, listen to me now, Albano, you who are alone, devoting yourself to the illustrious government of the Realm; or, turning in another direction, may now be brilliantly armed, the earthly representative of Mars, the cruel; or, free from tiresome worries and affairs, may now, perhaps, be tearing down the mountainside, an eager horseman galloping after the timorous deer, who struggle in vain to postpone their deaths; wait, for when the leisure I have lost is restored to me, you shall see my pen busy with the infinite and countless sum of your virtues and famous deeds, ere I

⁴⁸ Garcilaso, *Obras*, 2-3.

pine away for lack of you, who are greater than all the world.⁴⁹

In the original, relative clauses (“que ganaste obrando / un nombre en todo el mundo [...]” ‘who have, working [hard], won / a name in the whole world’; “que apresura / el curso tras los ciervos temerosos” ‘who are speeding up / the [hunting] course behind the frightened deer’; “que en vano su morir van dilatando” ‘who are struggling in vain to postpone their deaths’; “que a todo el mundo sobras” ‘who surpass all the world’) as well as adjectival and participial constructions (“obrando” ‘working,’ “dado / al ínclito gobierno del Estado” ‘devoted / to the illustrious government of the State’; “vuelto a la otra parte, / resplandeciente, armado, / representando en tierra al fiero Marte” ‘turning in another direction, / shining, armed, representing on earth fierce Mars’; “de cuidados enojosos / y de negocios libre” ‘free from tiresome worries / and from business’; “el monte fatigando en ardiente jinete” ‘tiring out the mountain on an eager horse’; “en tornando / a ser restituído / al ocio ya perdido” ‘in having the leisure now lost restored to me’)⁵⁰ modify the movement of the sentence in accordance with the poet’s needs, creating a seemingly unending sweep as well as introducing subtle modulations.

IV. Conclusion

To translate these lines and many others in the Spanish poem into

⁴⁹ Cohen, 150, 152.

⁵⁰ In glossing the relative clauses and the adjectival and participial constructions, I have deviated considerably from Cohen’s version, and tried to be as literal as possible, so that their syntactic structure and word order can be highlighted. In modern Spanish, the word “jinete” means “horseman, rider [...] horsewoman [...] cavalryman” (Beatriz Galimberti Jarman et al., eds., *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English · English-Spanish / Gran Diccionario Oxford: Español-Inglés · Inglés-Español*, 1st ed. 1994 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th ed. 2008), 475). However, according to Martín Alonso, ed., *Enciclopedia del Idioma: Diccionario Histórico y Moderno de la Lengua Española (Siglos XII al XX), Etimológico, Tecnológico, Regional e Hispanoamericano*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1958), Vol. 2, 2454, “jinete” also means “Caballo castizo y generoso” ‘a thoroughbred horse of an excellent pedigree.’ The sense of “generoso” as used in Alonso’s definition of “jinete” is not found in Galimberti Jarman (see p. 399, “generoso”). For the sense of “generoso” as used by Alonso, see Alonso, Vol. 2, 2130, “generoso,” which means “Noble y de ilustre prosapia” ‘Noble and of illustrious lineage’; the sense is applicable to both human beings and animals. In Spanish, “el noble bruto” means “the horse” (See Galimberti Jarman, 570).

Chinese, I had to mobilize all the techniques under my command, working within the parameters of Chinese idiom and Chinese prosody. However, because of the gap between the syntax of Garcilaso's Spanish and that of Chinese, success remained elusive, tantalizing me from a short but untraversable distance. Dejected, I was about to give up, as many intermediaries between languages must have done in moments of despair, when, all of a sudden, I realized that it was precisely this feeling in the translation process that had enticed many a Tantalus throughout the ages to reach up for the unreachable branch. In a flash of enlightenment, I took heart and made up my mind to continue wrestling with the poem in the months to come.

PART FIVE

SEEKING THE GOLDEN MEAN: ARTHUR WALEY'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE *XI YOU JI*

[ABSTRACT]

If one is to draw up, in order of usage frequency, a list of words whose authority has most often been invoked in translation studies during the past decades, *domestication* and *foreignizing* will most likely appear at the top. When they were first coined or given their new *signifiés*, these words may well have been applicable to the approaches or strategies used by certain translators in certain periods, certain cultures, or certain parts of the world. One should not, however, be misled into thinking that they are applicable to all translators or all translations, for, apart from the “domesticating” and “foreignizing” approaches or strategies, there is a wide range of other possibilities into which the vast majority of translations can fall, and to which the concepts of “domestication” and “foreignizing” do not apply. This paper looks at *Monkey*, Arthur Waley’s English translation of the classical Chinese novel *Xi you ji* (*Journey to the West*), and shows how the above-mentioned concepts are not universally relevant, and how the translator, as an empathic and creative mediator, moves freely between source and target languages / cultures to seek the golden mean with respect to the effectiveness of the translation in artistic and communicative terms, neither “domesticating” nor “foreignizing.”

I. Domestication” and “Foreignizing”

The terms “domestication” and “foreignizing” have now a currency hardly rivalled by other terms in translation studies.¹ When it first appeared in 1995, “domestication” was “used by Venuti (1995) to describe the translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for TL readers.”² On

¹ It is interesting to note that many students, teachers, and even scholars of translation studies frequently use the words *domesticate* and *domestication* today as if they were respectively neutral equivalents of *idiomatize* and *idiomatization*, apparently unaware of the negative connotations attributed to these words by Lawrence Venuti, thereby unwittingly contributing to their currency.

² Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie, *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997), 43-44.

the history, nature, connotations of this term, Shuttleworth and Cowie further elaborate:

Venuti traces the roots of the term back to Schleiermacher's famous notion of the translation which "leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Schleiermacher 1938/1963: 47, 1938/1977:74; Venuti 1995: 19-20). However, for Venuti, the term *domestication* has negative connotations as it is identified with a policy common in dominant cultures which are "aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign", and which he describes as being "accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with [target-language] values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other" (1995: 15). The notion of *invisibility* is important here, as this is the term used to describe the translator's role in preparing a TT likely to be acceptable in a culture where domesticating translation is standard; indeed, it is the translator's very invisibility which simultaneously "enacts and masks an insidious domestication of foreign texts" (1995: 16-17). An approach based on domestication will thus involve such steps as the careful selection of texts which lend themselves to being translated in this manner, the conscious adoption of a fluent, natural-sounding TL style, the adaptation of TT to conform to target discourse types, the interpolation of explanatory material, the removal of SL REALIA and the general harmonization of TT with TL preconceptions and preferences. Venuti argues that domestication is the predominant translation strategy in Anglo-American culture, and that this is consistent with the asymmetrical literary relations which generally exist between this and other cultures. He further argues that, since domestication serves broader domestic agendas, it is necessary to challenge its domination by consciously adopting other translation strategies.³

³ Shuttleworth and Cowie, 44. In *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, from which Shuttleworth and Cowie are quoting, Venuti links *domestication* to economics: "British and American publishing, in turn, has reaped the financial benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a vast foreign readership, while producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States that are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other. The prevalence of fluent domestication has supported these developments because of its economic value: enforced by editors, publishers, and reviewers, fluency results in translations that are eminently readable and therefore consumable on the book market, assisting in their commodification and insuring the neglect of foreign texts and English-language translation discourses that are more resistant to easy readability"

To resist domestication, Venuti proposes “foreignizing translation,” which “designate[s] the type of translation in which a TT is produced which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original.”⁴ Quoting Venuti, Shuttleworth and Cowie comment on this strategy:

Adopting the strategy in this way would represent “a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs” (Venuti 1995: 20), as it would challenge the mentality of the dominant culture which sought to suppress the foreignness (or “otherness”) of translated texts. Describing foreignizing translation as an “ethnodeviant pressure” (1995: 20), Venuti thus sees its rôle as being to “register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (1995: 20). In concrete terms such a strategy would entail not only a freedom from absolute obedience to target linguistic and textual constraints, but also where appropriate the selection of a non-fluent, opaque style and the deliberate inclusion of SL REALIA or TL ARCHAISMS; the cumulative effect of such features would be to provide TL readers with an “alien reading experience” (1995: 20). However, since even the construction of the foreign “depends on domestic cultural materials” (1995: 29), Venuti concedes that foreignizing translations are “equally partial [as domesticating translations] in their interpretation of the foreign text”, yet points out that they “tend to flaunt their partiality instead of concealing it” (1995: 34). Examples of a foreignizing strategy in English include many of Ezra Pound’s translations, and Nabokov’s (1964/1975) famous LITERAL

(Venuti, 15-16). By “invisibility,” Venuti means two things: the invisibility of the translator behind the fluent translation and the lack of recognition which he / she, as translator, deserves. Quoting Ronald Christ, Venuti bemoans the latter kind of invisibility as follows: “‘many newspapers, such as *The Los Angeles Times*, do not even list the translators in headnotes to reviews, reviewers often fail to mention that a book is a translation (while quoting from the text as though it were written in English), and publishers almost uniformly exclude translators from book covers and advertisements’ (Christ 1984: 8). [...] Reviewers who may be expected to have a writerly sense of language are seldom inclined to discuss translation as writing” (Venuti, 8). While theorists and practitioners may have different views on the first kind of “invisibility,” the vast majority of them must be in the same camp as Venuti when it comes to the second kind of “invisibility.” For the above quotations (with page numbers given), see Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, Translation Studies, General Editors, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁴ Shuttleworth and Cowie, 59.

translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*.⁵

The following quotation, all in Venuti's words, suggests a struggle between opposing forces, and echoes the idea of "power" highlighted in the General Editor's preface to Venuti's book:⁶

Foreignizing translation signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language. In its effort to do right abroad, this translation method must do wrong at home, deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience—choosing to translate a foreign text excluded by domestic literary canons, for instance, or using a marginal discourse to translate it.

I want to suggest that insofar as foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others. Foreignizing translations in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations.⁷

⁵ Shuttleworth and Cowie, 59.

⁶ See Venuti, vii.

⁷ Venuti, 20. This quotation reminds one very much of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, which, published in 1848, called the proletariat to arms; words like "hegemonic" and "imperialism" smack of the idea of class struggle and of oppression of the weak. As such, they amount to the expression of an attitude, a conviction, or a belief rooted in politics; only history will show whether the attitude, conviction, or belief thus expressed is right or wrong. As far as Marxism goes, its main tenets still remain to be substantiated: "that the state throughout history has been a device for the exploitation of the masses by a dominant class, that class struggle has been the main agency of historical change, and that the capitalist system, containing from the first the seeds of its own decay, will inevitably, after the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, be superseded by a socialist order and a classless society" (Stuart Berg Flexner et al., eds., *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., unabridged (New York: Random House, 1983), 1181). Before that day comes, if it comes at all, "the capitalist system" has been going from strength to strength—even in the People's Republic of China, which is the most populous Communist country in history, and which is one of the four Communist countries remaining after the disappearance of all the others in the world. As for the idea of class struggle, which coloured even literary criticism over many decades in the twentieth century, it no longer has so many devotees as it once did. Since the publication of *The Translator's Invisibility* in 1995, the vast majority of practitioners of translation whose language and other

II. “Domestication” and “Foreignizing” in Perspective

With reference to the history of translation, whether Eastern or Western, it can easily be shown that Venuti’s argument has only limited validity. Over the years, there may have been translators who did seek “to suppress the foreignness (or “otherness”) of translated texts” to “provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other.” But the practice of the vast majority of translators, especially translators who are generally recognized as masters,⁸ indicates

abilities can enable them to move between “foreignization” and “domestication” still keep “domesticating” (not in Venuti’s sense, though, or with the motivation attributed to “domesticators” by Venuti). As for those who have no choice but to “foreignize” because they are not equipped linguistically or culturally to “domesticate” and who have only “a non-fluent, opaque” style at their disposal, they can easily take shelter under the umbrella of “foreignization,” as is the case with incompetent practitioners of translation. In discussing Schleiermacher, Venuti takes André Lefevere to task for subscribing to Nida’s concept of “dynamic equivalence”: “Lefevere argued that translation should be domesticating, as ‘most theoreticians’ recommended, and he specifically referred to Eugene Nida’s version of this theory, quoting Nida to criticize Schleiermacher: ‘In effect, we are faced here with a not-illogical and very spirited defence of what we know now as “translationese” or, with another phrase: “static equivalence,” and which is still very much with us, in spite of the fact that most theoreticians would now subscribe to the concept of dynamic equivalence, which “aims at complete naturalness of expression and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture”’ (Lefevere 1981 [“German Translation Theory: Legacy and Relevance,” *Journal of European Studies*, 11: 9-17]: 11). Schleiermacher’s concept of foreignizing translation seems odd to Lefevere only because the latter prefers to submit to the contemporary regime of fluency—in Nida’s words, ‘complete naturalness of expression.’ The canonicity of fluent translation during the post-World War II period coincides with the emergence of the term ‘translationese’ to designate unidiomatic language in a translated text (*OED*). Lefevere approves of Nida’s ‘dynamic equivalence,’ a concept that now, with the increasing recognition of Schleiermacher’s contemporary importance, must be viewed as an egregious euphemism for the domesticating translation method and the cultural political agendas it conceals. Because this method is so entrenched in English-language translation, Lefevere is unable to see that the detection of unidiomatic language, especially in literary texts, is culturally specific: what is unidiomatic in one cultural formation can be effective in another” (Venuti, 117-18).

⁸ One such master is Arthur Waley, whose English translation of the *Xi you ji* 西遊記 (*Monkey*) is the subject of this paper. As the *pinyin* 拼音 ‘phonetic’ romanizing system is more widely used today than the Wade-Giles romanizing

that the non-domesticating approach is the norm. To be sure, the approach of these masters does “involve such steps as [...] the conscious adoption of a fluent, natural-sounding TL style, the adaptation of TT to conform to target discourse types, the interpolation of explanatory material, the removal of SL REALIA and the general harmonization of TT with TL [...] preferences,”⁹ steps that coincide with those involved in Venuti’s idea of “domestication.” But, very often, depending on what the translators want to achieve in artistic and communicative terms, their approach may also involve steps that coincide with those involved in Venuti’s idea of “foreignization,” “entail[ing] not only a freedom from absolute obedience to target linguistic and textual constraints, but also where appropriate the [...] deliberate inclusion of SL REALIA [so that the reader is provided with an ‘alien reading experience’].”¹⁰ In the entire process of translation, in which the translators can move freely in different directions, what is uppermost in their minds does not appear to be “domestication” or “foreignizing” as described by Venuti; instead, their primary and, indeed, sole concern is, more often than not, how best or most effectively to convey the original message, linguistic or cultural, to readers of the target language / culture, taking into consideration such factors as reception and the type of readership the translators have in mind. As to what is “best” or “most effective,” different translators may have different views. In translating the *Xi you ji*, Waley clearly shows by his decision-making as well as by the strategies and techniques he uses that artistic and communicative considerations override other considerations. And I do not think that the idea of “provid[ing] readers with the narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other,” or the idea of “[suppressing] the foreignness (or ‘otherness’) of translated texts,” or the idea of bringing about “a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs” ever crossed Waley’s mind when he was taking the above steps in one direction or the other. As a matter of fact, “domestication” without Venuti’s derogatory connotations is “the predominant translation strategy” not only “in Anglo-American culture,” but also in many—indeed in the vast majority of—other cultures: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, and so on. This is because once a text undergoes translation, it is inevitably subjected to “domestication” and

system, I shall use the former in this paper except when quoting names already romanized in the latter.

⁹ Shuttleworth and Cowie, 44.

¹⁰ Shuttleworth and Cowie, 59.

“foreignizing” simultaneously,¹¹ again not in Venuti’s sense of the words, as when *apple* (a word from Anglo-American culture) is translated “pomme” (French), “Apfel” (German), or “*pingguo* 蘋果” (Chinese). Take the Chinese version, for example. In the process of translation, the connotations relating to such allusions as “An apple a day keeps the doctor away” are “suppressed,” which involves “domestication”; at the same time, once *apple* is translated, the target-language text “*pingguo* 蘋果” immediately stands out amidst “indigenous” Chinese fruits like lychee and longan by virtue of the associations it has for target-language readers, thereby providing them with an “alien reading experience,” which involves “foreignizing.” Yet the process is not “domestication” or “foreignizing” in Venuti’s sense of the words. As to whether translators *should* or *should not* “foreignize” to “challenge the mentality of the dominant culture” and, to use another term coined by Venuti, introduce “resistancy” into their translation,¹² there can be no right or wrong, since

¹¹ The process of translation inevitably entails the subjection of the source-language text to the parameters of the target language; once the process begins, the translator will have to decide to what extent he should move within these parameters; the decision can be dictated by various motives, only some of which may coincide with those attributed to the “domesticator” (in the negative sense of the word) by Venuti.

¹² “Resistancy” or “Resistance” is “[a] term used by Venuti (1995) to refer to the strategy of translating a literary text so that it retains something of its foreignness; as such it is broadly synonymous with FOREIGNIZING TRANSLATION. [...] In practice resistancy involves including unidiomatic usage and other linguistically and culturally alienating features in the translated text so as to create the impression of foreignness; in this way it requires the translator to become ‘a nomad in [his or her] own language, a runaway from the mother tongue’ (1995: 291). However, as Venuti points out, the adoption of a policy of resistancy does not necessarily lead to increased FAITHFULNESS in the translation, but rather establishes an ‘abusive fidelity’ (1995: 29)” (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 144-45). Again, a mere conviction motivated by personal preference, this cannot be proved right—or wrong—for that matter. In fact, the vast majority of translators who do not share Venuti’s persuasion or ideology are simply doing what I would call “idiomatizing” and “de-idiomatizing.” When a translator is idiomatizing, respecting the speech habits and rules of idiomatic usage of the community that speak and write the target language, he is not “domesticating” in Venuti’s sense of the word; he is helping the author communicate with the target-speech community as best he can, discharging the proper duties of a translator, for translation is, by definition, the process of turning a text from one language into another (see J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary* [hereafter

Venuti was only putting forward a belief or conviction, like one who proclaims that “self-respecting translators should go to the movies instead of the theatre,” or vice versa.

III. Domestication,” “Foreignizing,” and Arthur Waley’s English Translation of the *Xi you ji*

Like many English translations by master hands, such as David Hawkes and John Minford’s *The Story of the Stone* and Burton Watson’s *Records of the Grand Historian*, Arthur Waley’s *Monkey* is a good example to show that Venuti’s concepts of *domestication* and *foreignization* are not universally applicable; on the contrary, like the vast majority of great translations, whether in the Chinese-English, English-Chinese, English-French, French-English, English-German, German-English, French-German, or German-French direction, or, indeed, in any other direction, it shows, with cogent evidence, that “domestication” or “foreignization” in Venuti’s sense of the words did not have a role to

referred to as *OED*], first ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, and W. A. Craigie, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989), Vol. 18, 409, “translate [...] II. 2. a. *trans.*”). In so doing, he has to abide by certain parameters required by the target language; in disregarding these parameters, he would not be doing his job properly, that is, not translating *into the target language*, but translating into a “nonce-language” “created” by the foreignizer motivated by ideological considerations. In cases like this, communication takes place only at a discount; in extreme cases, there could even be a total breakdown of communication. From the perspective of communication or of interlingual translation, a “foreignizing” translation which is motivated by ideological considerations but which is not justified on artistic, stylistic, or communicative grounds is a task unaccomplished or, at best, only half accomplished. As a matter of fact, since Venuti came up with the concepts of “domesticating translation” and “foreignizing translation,” I have seen many translators deficient in language skills justifying their bad translations as “foreignizing translations” and disparaging accurate, idiomatic translations as “domesticating translations.” As a teacher of translation, I have also come across students who completely disregarded rules of grammar and usage when translating from English to Chinese. When asked why they did so, they said they were encouraged by their teacher to “foreignize,” to adopt the strategy of “resistancy” against “the hegemony of the imperialists.” In Venuti’s world, anything goes; there is no such thing as competence or incompetence in translation.

play during the process of translation.¹³ All strategies indicate that they are motivated by artistic and communicative considerations rather than by a desire to “domesticate” or “foreignize,” as can be inferred from Waley’s Introduction to *Monkey*:

The original book [*Xi you ji*] is indeed of immense length, and is usually read in abridged forms. The method adopted in these abridgements is to leave the original number of separate episodes, but drastically reduce them in length, particularly by cutting out dialogue. I have for the most part adopted the opposite principle, omitting many episodes, but translating those that are retained almost in full, leaving out, however, most of the incidental passages in verse, which go very badly into English.

Monkey is unique in its combination of beauty with absurdity, of profundity with nonsense. Folk-lore, allegory, religion, history, anti-bureaucratic satire, and pure poetry—such are the singularly diverse elements out of which the book is compounded. [...]

As regards the allegory, it is clear that Tripitaka stands for the ordinary man, blundering anxiously through the difficulties of life, while Monkey stands for the restless instability of genius. Pigsy, again, obviously symbolizes the physical appetites, brute strength, and a kind of cumbrous patience. Sandy is more mysterious. The commentators say that he represents *ch’eng*, which is usually translated ‘sincerity’, but means something more like ‘whole-heartedness’. He was not an afterthought, for he appears in some of the earliest versions of the legend, but it must be admitted that, though in some inexplicable way essential to the story, he remains throughout singularly ill-defined and colourless.

Extracts from the book were given in Giles’s *History of Chinese Literature* and in Timothy Richard’s *A Mission to Heaven*, at a time when only the abridgements were known. An accessible, though very inaccurate account of it is given by Helen Hayes, in *A Buddhist Pilgrim’s Progress* (Wisdom of the East Series). There is a very loose paraphrase in Japanese by various hands, with a preface dated 1806 by the famous novelist Bakin.¹⁴

In the quotation, the translator discusses the principle he adopted in translating the source-language text (the principle of abridgement), his

¹³ Though Waley is no longer able to respond to my question with a definite “Yes” or “No,” my close reading of *Monkey* has convinced me that the translation is not the product of domestication or foreignization in Venuti’s sense of the words, but that it was shaped from beginning to end by a desire to convey Wu Cheng’en’s message as effectively as possible from an artistic perspective.

¹⁴ Arthur Waley, trans., *Monkey*, by Wu Ch’êng-ên, first published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1942 (London: Penguin Books, 1961), 7-8.

aesthetic appreciation of it (“unique in its combination of beauty with absurdity, of profundity with nonsense”), its nature (“Folk-lore, allegory, religion, history, anti-bureaucratic satire, and pure poetry”), its characterization, and the translations of his predecessors (“An accessible, though very inaccurate account,” “a very loose paraphrase in Japanese”). Throughout, there is no hint, much less hard evidence, that Waley had any intention of “domesticating” or “foreignizing” the source-language text; instead, he is looking at the novel from an artistic point of view and from the perspective of the craft of fiction. Nothing could be further from the truth, therefore, to yoke Waley’s translation with the ideologically loaded words *domestication* and *foreignizing*. It would be much closer to the truth to say that his translation of the great Chinese classic is an example of a translator seeking the golden mean in terms of language, culture, drama, and reception, the kind of pursuit that engages the vast majority of translators, regardless of what culture they are translating from or into.

IV. Waley’s Strategies in Translating the *Xi You ji*

In seeking the golden mean, Waley has, first of all, to decide on the abridging strategy he is to adopt: “omitting many episodes but translating those that are retained almost in full, leaving out, however, most of the incidental passages in verse, which go very badly into English.”¹⁵ In terms of magnitude, he is going to produce a version not comparable to Yu’s or Jenner’s complete translation. As such, it has inevitable limitations, as has been pointed out by Yu:

Waley has chosen to translate chapters 1-15, 18-19, 22, 37-39, 44-49, and 98-100, which means that he has included less than one-third of the original. Even in this attenuated form, however, Waley’s version further deviates from the original by having left out large portions of certain chapters (e.g., 10 and 19). What is most regrettable is that Waley, despite his immense gift for, and magnificent achievements in, the translation of Chinese verse, has elected to ignore the many poems—some 750 of them—that are structured in the narrative. Not only is the fundamental literary form of the work thereby distorted, but also much of the narrative vigor and descriptive power of its language which have attracted generations of Chinese readers is lost.¹⁶

¹⁵ The clause “which go very badly into English” points again to artistic considerations on the part of the translator.

¹⁶ Anthony C. Yu, trans. and ed., *The Journey to the West*, by Wu Ch’eng-en, 4 vols., Vol. 1, 1977, Vol. 2, 1978, Vol. 3, 1980, Vol. 4, 1983 (Chicago: The

Take the novel's "incidental passages in verse," for example. Even if those samples of verse by Wu Cheng'en that "survive in an anthology of Ming poetry and in a local gazetteer" are "rather commonplace,"¹⁷ those that appear in the *Xi you ji* are functional: they can set the scene, heighten the drama, depict a character, or present a combat scene in vivid terms.¹⁸

University of Chicago Press, 1977-1983), Vol. 1, x. With reference to the edition published by Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, which is largely based on the Shidetang 世德堂 edition of the Ming Dynasty, Waley has also translated part of Chapter 40 (from "却說那孫大聖, 兄弟三人, 按下雲頭, 徑至朝內" (Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩, *Xi you ji* 西遊記, *quan er ce* 全二冊 'Two Volumes' (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju Xianggang fenju 中華書局香港分局, April 1972), Vol. 1, 457) to "那皇帝閣淚汪汪, 遂與眾臣回去了" (Wu, Vol. 1, 458)), which precedes his translation of Chapter 44. See Waley, 241-43. Jenner (Vol. 1), in the Publisher's Note to his 3-volume complete translation and to his 1-volume abridged version (1994), has given detailed information about the Shidetang edition when he explains the edition on which his translation is based: "Many different editions of the novel have appeared over the past 400 years. The Chinese edition of 1955 [the edition of the Beijing People's Literature Publishing House, which is basically the same as the Zhonghua shuju edition] was based on the earliest known edition, the Shidetang woodblock edition printed in Nanjing in the 20th year of the Wanli reign (1592) in the Ming Dynasty, and was further checked against six different editions from the Qing Dynasty." See W. J. F. Jenner, trans., *Journey to the West*, by Wu Cheng'en, 3 vols., Vol. 1, 1982, Vol. 2, 1984, Vol. 3, 1986 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1982-1986), Vol. 1, Publisher's Note [no page number]; W. J. F. Jenner, trans., *Journey to the West*, by Wu Cheng'en, an abridged version (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1994), Publisher's Note [no page number].

¹⁷ Waley, 7.

¹⁸ The importance of Wu Cheng'en's verse is especially obvious in the novel's climax, when Tripitaka and his three disciples arrive in the Land of the Buddha. By then the four characters have already gone through some eighty ordeals. To be able to anchor the whole story and bring the reader to the pinnacle of his reading experience, the climax, like the last cantos of *The Divine Comedy*, has to be of sufficient length and weight. Any abridging of it would risk making it bathetic. In literature, nothing is more effective than poetry in heightening the drama or action of a story, as can be found in all the great epics from Homer through Virgil and Dante to Milton. In the *Xi you ji*, when the story comes to a crisis, a dramatic moment, an extraordinary scene, an impressive building, an important character, a weapon worthy of note, or a combat scene, the author invariably switches from prose to verse. The description of the most important building in the novel, the "Temple of the Thunder Clap" ("Leiyin Si 雷音寺") on the "Holy Mountain" ("Ling Shan 靈山"), is no exception. Like the Emyrean in *The Divine Comedy*, it

Nevertheless, despite its inevitable limitations, which resulted from abridgement, Waley's *Monkey* is, on the macro level, the product of a judicious story-abridging strategy. By "translating those [chapters] that are retained almost in full," including the dialogue, Waley can do at least two things at the same time: (1) to ensure the integrity, suspense, and continuity of individual episodes; (2) to re-create the author's vivid characterization. Not so with other versions that are the products of a different abridging strategy, which is also described by Waley in his Introduction:

The original book is indeed of immense length, and is usually read in abridged forms. The method adopted in these abridgments is to leave the original number of separate episodes, but drastically reduce them in length, particularly by cutting out dialogue.¹⁹

By using the method described above, translators have the advantage of

is the *raison d'être* of the entire Journey. At this point, therefore, Wu Cheng'en has to summon all his imaginative powers to describe the temple in verse: "頂摩霄漢中，根接須彌脉。巧峰排列，怪石參差。懸崖下瑤草琪花，曲徑旁紫芝香蕙。仙猿摘果入桃林，却似火燒金；白鶴棲松立枝頭，渾如煙捧玉。彩鳳雙雙，青鸞對對。彩鳳雙雙，向日一鳴天下瑞；青鸞對對，迎風耀舞世間稀。又見那黃森森金瓦疊鴛鴦，明幌幌花磚鋪瑪瑙。東一行，西一行，盡都是蕊宮珠闕；南一帶，北一帶，看不了寶閣珍樓。天王殿上放霞光，護法堂前噴紫燄。浮屠塔顯，優鉢花香。正是地勝疑天別，雲閑覺晝長。紅塵不到諸緣盡，萬劫無虧大天堂。" (Wu, Vol. 2, 1106). In Waley's version, the whole passage is simplified: "the Temple of the Thunder Clap, with its mighty towers brushing the firmament, its giant foundations rooted in the seams of the Hill of Life" (Waley, 325). With little of the grandeur, majesty, and weightiness of the original description retained, the English version is hardly able to anchor the story. But as Waley has adopted the abridging strategy, this is the inevitable price he has to pay. Given his track record as a fine translator of Chinese poetry, had he chosen to translate all "the incidental passages in verse," he would surely have shone, even though he thought that "most of the incidental passages in verse" "go very badly into English" (Waley, 7). The following specimen of his verse translation (an abridged version of the original) in Chapter 1 will suffice to show "his immense gift for [...] the translation of Chinese verse" (Yu, Vol. 1, x): "不會機謀巧算，沒榮辱，恬淡延生。相逢處，非仙即道，靜坐講黃庭。" (Wu, Vol. 1, 8) "I hatch no plot, I scheme no scheme; [/] Fame and shame are one to me, [/] A simple life prolongs my days. [/] Those I meet upon my way [/] Are immortals, one and all, [/] Who from their quiet seats expound [/] The Scriptures of the Yellow Court" (Waley, 14-15). The rhythmic precision, the easy grace, and the deceptive simplicity are cogent testimony to the artistry of a master.

¹⁹ Waley, 7.

preserving the entire story in outline. However, with the dialogue cut out, the characters, particularly Sun Wukong 孫悟空 (Monkey) and Zhu Bajie 豬八戒 (Piggy), who depend so much on dialogue for their portrayal, invariably suffer, turning out to be shadowy figures which are a far cry from their counterparts in the original.²⁰ As far as abridging is concerned, of the four greatest classical Chinese novels,²¹ the *Xi you ji* is most suited to Waley's method, since the episodes of the novel, often coterminous with the chapters, are largely independent of one another, put there to provide the eighty-one ordeals which Tripitaka has to go through before reaching Paradise and woven together by the four principal characters: Tripitaka,

²⁰ How the cutting out of the novel's dialogue can affect the story will immediately become apparent if we compare, with reference to the original, the two abridged versions respectively by Waley and Jenner. Take Chapter 1 of the original, for example. The passage that begins with the sentence “又飄過西海，直至西牛賀洲地界” and ends with the sentence “果然望見一座洞府” (Wu, Vol. 1, 7-9) describes Monkey's encounter with a woodman. In the passage, the woodman, singing a song taught by the Immortal Patriarch Subhodi, is mistaken by Monkey for the Immortal himself. In their conversation, there is a human touch as well as a comic element. Fully translated in Chapter 1 of Waley's version (“He floated on over the Western Ocean till he came to the Western Continent, where he went ashore [...] and sure enough found a cave-dwelling” (Waley, 14-16)), it enables the target-language reader to appreciate the author's comic spirit. In Jenner's version (Chapter 2), only what goes before and after the encounter is presented: “he reached the Great Western Ocean and came to the Western Continent of Cattle-gift. He went ashore and made extensive and lengthy enquiries until he came to a high beautiful mountain. On climbing it he saw a magnificent cave” (Jenner, 7). With the dialogue gone, the target-language reader is deprived of the opportunity to share the fun with readers of the original. To be fair to Jenner, I have to add, though, that he is keenly aware of the importance of the novel's dialogue, as can be seen in the Translator's Introduction to his abridged version: “Monkey and Pig's dialogues are one of the greatest joys of the novel. Sometimes very warm, sometimes needling, sometimes getting at each other, sometimes discussing the situation, often joking, their talk is an unending source of pleasure. For many readers they are the heart of the novel; and because they are so true to human nature everywhere they give the book its immortality and universal appeal” (Jenner, *Journey to the West*, an abridged version, 13). Because of the need to abridge, he may have made a wrong judgement in respect of the passage which has been cut out.

²¹ The *Xi you ji*, the *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義, the *Shui hu zhuan* 水滸傳, and the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 are generally considered to be the four greatest classical Chinese novels.

Monkey, Pigsy, and Sandy. The majority of the other characters, including humans, deities, and demons, play only secondary roles;²² once they have appeared in one episode, they can often be dispensed with in the episodes that follow,²³ so that, even if certain episodes are cut out, the integrity of the storyline or the novel's overall characterization can remain relatively intact.²⁴ Not so with the other three great classical Chinese novels, particularly the *Hong lou meng*, in which a large number of characters keep reappearing, contributing to the storyline, impelling the action, and forming an intricate web of relationships and interactions; if one chapter is cut out, the plot as well as the characterization can be seriously impaired. Though certainly not “half done,” therefore, Waley's translation project was “well begun” when he made the right decision as to what sort of abridged version he should produce.

V. Abridging

In abridging the original, Waley does not simply leave out chapters and translate every single word of those he has chosen to translate. In the abridging-translating process, he does something more complex. Aware of space limitations, he often makes sure that, with respect to the chosen chapters, the action is always presented effectively. An example of how this is achieved can be found in the transition between Waley's Chapter 25 (Chapter 47 of the original) and Chapter 26 (Chapter 48 of the original). At the end of Waley's Chapter 25, Monkey and Pigsy change respectively into the boy and girl to be sacrificed to a demon. The part that concludes Chapter 47 of the source-language text reads:

兄弟正然談論，只聽得外面鑼鼓喧天，燈火照耀，同莊眾人打開前門。
叫：『抬出童男童女來！』這老者哭哭啼啼，那四個後生將他二人抬將

²² There are, of course, exceptions, of which Buddha and Kuanyi, who repeatedly appear in the story, are the most notable.

²³ In the “Translator's Introduction” to his abridged English version, Jenner has made a perceptive comment about the structure of the *Xi you ji*: “The structure of the novel is thus something like a pair of book ends, the opening chapters and the closing one in the present version, between which stand a number of booklets, each of which is a self-contained story or short set of related stories about the same group of pilgrims in a new location every time” (Jenner, *Journey to the West*, an abridged version, 3). Because of this structure, the novel is especially amenable to Waley's method of abridging.

²⁴ I say “relatively” because the chapter or chapters being cut out may still contribute in part to the portrayal of the principal characters.

出去。端的不知性命何如，且聽下回分解。²⁵

Immediately following the above quotation, Chapter 48 of the source-language text begins:

話說陳家莊眾信人等，將猪羊牲醴與行者、八戒，喧喧嚷嚷，直抬至靈感廟裏排下。將童男女設在上首。行者回頭，看見那供桌上香花蠟燭，正面一個金字牌位，上寫『靈感大王之神』，更無別的神像。眾信擺列停當，一齊朝上叩頭道：『大王爺爺，今年、今月、今日、今時，陳家莊祭主陳澄等眾信，年甲不齊，謹遵年例，供獻童男一名陳關係，童女一名陳一秤金，猪羊牲醴如數，奉上大王享用，保祐風調雨順，五穀豐登。』祝罷，燒了紙馬，各回本宅不題。²⁶

Proceeding in sync, Waley's Chapter 25 and the original Chapter 47 end with the same sentences:

兄弟正然談論，只聽得外面鑼鼓喧天，燈火照耀，同莊眾人打開前門。叫：『抬出童男童女來！』這老者哭哭啼啼，那四個後生將他二人抬將出去。端的不知性命何如，且聽下回分解。²⁷

While they were talking, there was a great din of gongs and drums outside, and the glow of many lanterns. Someone opened the gate and cried, 'Bring out the boy and girl!' The old men burst into loud weeping, while the four strong men carried the two victims away. And if you do not know whether in the end they escaped with their lives, you must listen to what is told in the next chapter.²⁸

At the beginning of his Chapter 26, however, Waley skips the following sentences that appear at the beginning of the original Chapter 48, which are descriptive and contain less drama:

話說陳家莊眾信人等，將猪羊牲醴與行者、八戒，喧喧嚷嚷，直抬至

²⁵ Wu, Vol. 1, 551. In traditional Chinese publications, personal names, place names, and names of countries, of dynasties, of races, of organizations, and so on are punctuated with the *zhuanninghao* 專名號 'punctuation mark for proper names,' which is a fine line printed vertically on the left of the names. In the original version from which the passage is quoted, this punctuation mark is used. However, as it is rarely seen in printing today, it is omitted in this paper.

²⁶ Wu, Vol. 1, 552.

²⁷ Wu, Vol. 1, 551.

²⁸ Waley, 297.

靈感廟裏排下。將童男女設在上首。行者回頭，看見那供桌上香花蠟燭，正面一個金字牌位，上寫『靈感大王之神』，更無別的神像。[.]²⁹

and makes straight for the action:

眾信擺列停當，一齊朝上叩頭道：『大王爺爺，今年、今月、今日、今時，陳家莊祭主陳澄等眾信，年甲不齊，謹遵年例，供獻童男一名陳關保，童女一名陳一秤金，豬羊牲體如數，奉上大王享用，保佑風調雨順，五穀豐登。』³⁰

‘Great King, our Father,’ said the worshippers, when all was ready, ‘following our yearly custom, we now offer up to you a male child, War Boy, and a female child, Load of Gold, together with a pig, a sheep, and a due portion of liquor. Grant that the winds may be temperate, that rain may fall in due season and all our crops thrive.’ They then burned paper horses, and returned to their homes.³¹

In view of the limited space of an abridged version, Waley’s strategy is wise, since it can keep holding the reader’s attention and avoid descriptive passages which may slow down the tempo.³²

VI. Reader-Friendly English Names

As an abridged version of the *Xi you ji*, *Monkey* is obviously aimed at the general reading public, not at the more demanding, more sophisticated readers, whom only a complete translation can satisfy. As such, it benefits from “reader-friendly” English names: with the exception of “Tripitaka” (“三藏”), which is Sanskrit, the names of the other three principal characters, Sun Wukong 孫悟空, Zhu Bajie 豬八戒, and Sha Seng 沙僧, are respectively translated “Monkey,” “Pigsy,” and “Sandy,”³³ which

²⁹ Wu, Vol. 1, 552.

³⁰ Wu, Vol. 1, 552.

³¹ Waley, 298.

³² The same is not true of complete translations, as is the case of Yu’s or Jenner’s version, in which the pace of the original can be retained without doing the story any harm, since any kind of pace, whether quick or slow, is part of the overall design; being functional, it fits in with or anticipates those passages that contain high drama.

³³ One should not take Waley’s felicitous rendering of the names for granted, for it must have been the result of careful thinking, which took the artistic effect of each of the original names and its English version into consideration. Jenner, at least in

accord not only with the overall comic spirit of the novel, but also with the need to be memorable and readily recognizable to readers who know no Chinese. In so doing, Waley is, again, not “domesticating” in Venuti’s sense of the word, but making a decision in accordance with the type of readership he has in mind. This, of course, will lead us to Skopos theory, a theory proposed by Katharina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer, who argue “that the shape of TT should above all be determined by the function or ‘skopos’ that it is intended to fulfil in the target context,”³⁴ and “that the translator should use the translation strategies which are most appropriate to achieving the purpose for which TT is intended.”³⁵ Though considered too obvious by many translators and theorists to qualify as a theory, Skopos theory, free from ideological bias and more widely applicable, can, at least, explain and justify the translator’s strategies more convincingly than the concepts of *domestication* and *foreignization*. It is interesting to note, though, that, as early as 1942, when the first edition of *Monkey* was published by Allen & Unwin, Waley was already practising what Reiss and Vermeer were to preach some forty years later, that is, in 1984.³⁶

rendering the names of the principal characters, is less sensitive. His rendering of “Zhu Bajie 猪八戒” as “Pig” (Jenner, *Journey to the West* (Vol. 2, 125), for example, does not convey the comic overtones of the original, whereas Waley’s “Pigsy” does, suggesting endearment as most pet names do. Worse still, “[a]ppplied opprobriously to a person, etc.” (William Little et al., prepared and eds., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 1st ed. 1933 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd ed. with corrections 1970), 1499), or, in the words of a greater authority, “[a]ppplied, usually contemptuously or opprobriously, to a person, or to another animal. (Cf. F. *cochon.*)” (*OED*, Vol. 11, 805). “Pig” tends towards the derogatory and fails to harmonize with the character portrayed by the author, for there is no evidence whatsoever that Wu Cheng’en is contemptuous of Zhu Bajie 猪八戒, or wants his reader to regard him with contempt.

³⁴ Shuttleworth and Cowie, 156.

³⁵ Shuttleworth and Cowie, 156.

³⁶ *Monkey* was first published in 1942 by Allen & Unwin; Skopos theory was “proposed in the late 1970s and early 1980s by [Katharina] Reiss & [Hans J.] Vermeer” (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 156). From this lapse of time between practice and theory, it can be seen that a great practitioner of translation can move ahead of theory without waiting for theorists to tell him what to do; on the contrary, theorists can engage in meaningful theorizing only when they have adequate knowledge of what actually happens in practice. What is wrong with so many translation theories propounded in the past decades is that most of them fail to tally with practice. Had the theorists concerned been practitioners at the same time, or known better what actually happens in translation, they might have theorized

Once the strategy of abridging is decided upon, the translator has to consider the micro level: the actual translation of the novel in terms of language, culture, reception, and other factors relating to the production of the target-language text.

VII. Chinese Chapter Headings

Known as *zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說 (*zhanghui* novel), that is, “novel divided into chapters,” with each of them headed by a couplet summarizing the episode, the *Xi you ji* has story-telling formulas unique to this sub-genre. In translating the source-language text, Waley has omitted the chapter headings, called “*huimu* 回目” in Chinese. From the point of view of culture transmission, this choice is not ideal, since, in so doing, the translator has denied the reader the opportunity of appreciating a distinctive characteristic of the *zhanghui* novel.³⁷

VIII. Chinese Story-Telling Formulas

In handling other devices or story-telling formulas of the *zhanghui* novel, however, Waley is ingenious, introducing them to readers in a way that takes care of English idiom on the one hand and freshness of expression on the other, as when he renders formulas used in the middle of a story, where the story-teller wants to draw the reader’s attention to a climax or an extraordinary action or event:

你看他瞑目蹲身，將身一縱，徑跳入瀑布泉中 [.....]³⁸

Look at him! He screws up his eyes and crouches; then at one bound he

differently—and *better*, a blatantly non-descriptive word to use! A translation theory that fails to tally with practice is but the product of futile speculation.

³⁷ For this characteristic, the reader has to refer to Yu’s or Jenner’s complete translation. The latter’s abridged version uses an adapted form for chapter headings, in which the couplet used in the original is reduced to one sentence or phrase, such as “The Stone Monkey is Born and Takes the Throne in the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit” (Chapter 1), “The Handsome Monkey King Becomes Sun Wukong” (Chapter 2), “Sun Wukong Gets Rid of the Demon King of Confusion with Magic Transformations” (Chapter 3), and “Meeting the Primal Sage of Ninefold Numinosity in Yuhua City.” See Jenner, *Journey to the West*, an abridged version, 1, 5, 10, and 418.

³⁸ Wu, Vol. 1, 4.

jumps straight through the waterfall.”³⁹

噫！這句話，頓教跳出輪迴網，致使齊天大聖成。⁴⁰

This determination it was that led him to leap clear of the toils of Reincarnation and turned him at last into the Great Monkey Sage, equal of Heaven.”⁴¹

悟空聞說，滿心歡喜道：『汝等在此頑耍，待我去來。』

好猴王，急縱筋斗雲，霎時間過了二百里水面。果然那廂有座城池，六街三市，萬戶千門，來來往往，人都在光天化日之下。⁴²

Monkey was delighted with this idea. ‘You stay here and amuse yourselves,’ he said, ‘while I go off and see what can be done.’

Dear Monkey! He set out on his cloud trapeze, and in a twinkling he had crossed those two hundred leagues of water, and on the other side there was indeed a city with walls and moat, with wards and markets, and myriad streets where men walked up and down in the happy sunshine.⁴³

正是：鴻濛初闢原無姓，打破頑空須悟空。畢竟不知向後修些甚麼道果，且聽下回分解。⁴⁴

So that was his name in religion. And if you do not know whether in the end, equipped with this name, he managed to obtain enlightenment or not, listen while it is explained to you in the next chapter.⁴⁵

In the first quotation, “*Ni kan ta* 你看他” ‘Look at him’ calls attention to what Monkey is going to do. In the second, “*Yi* 噫” signals a sudden change in the story, emphasizing the importance of what has just been said (“*Zhei ju hua* 這句話”). In the third, “*Hao Hou Wang* 好猴王” ‘Good Monkey King’⁴⁶ indicates an important transition, and highlights what is going to follow.⁴⁷ Originating from *shuoshu* 說書 (oral story-telling)

³⁹ Waley, 10.

⁴⁰ Wu, Vol. 1, 6.

⁴¹ Waley, 13.

⁴² Wu, Vol. 1, 25.

⁴³ Waley, 34-35.

⁴⁴ Wu, Vol. 1, 12.

⁴⁵ Waley, 18.

⁴⁶ To show the semantic structure with greater precision, I have glossed the phrase literally.

⁴⁷ Waley’s rendering of such a formula is equally accurate in the following

conventions and unique to Chinese literature, they are transplanted by Waley with great success, so that, while readily chiming in with the context, they defamiliarize the target-language text, providing the reader with a glimpse of the source-language culture.⁴⁸

IX. Chinese Sayings

In Waley's translation of Chinese sayings, defamiliarization also plays a part, as can be seen in the following examples:

行者道：『你也忒自重了，更不讓我遠鄉之僧。——也罷，這正是「強龍不壓地頭蟲」。』⁴⁹

‘That’s not very good manners, is it?’ said Monkey. ‘Strangers first is the rule. But “the dragon does not deign to crush the earthworm.” [...]’⁵⁰

行者道：『在家人，這時候溫牀暖被，懷中抱子，腳後蹬妻，自自在在睡覺；我等出家人，那裏能夠！便是要帶月披星，餐風宿水，有路且行，無路方住。』⁵¹

translation: “Dear Pigsy! With a cry he set off in pursuit, and Sandy, leaving Tripitaka, hastened to the attack with his priest’s staff” (Waley, 238) (“好八戒，喝一聲，也駕雲頭趕上，慌得那沙和尚丟了唐僧，也掣出寶杖來打”) (Wu, Vol. 1, 455).

⁴⁸ The word *defamiliarize* is a more accurate description of the translation process than *foreignize*. While *foreignize* has ideological connotations which are inapplicable to the vast majority of literary translations, including Waley’s *Monkey*, *defamiliarize*, referring to an artistic process or effect, can be used of the majority of literary works and translations. *Defamiliarization* is “[a] concept and term introduced by Viktor Shklovsky (1893-?), an important member of the Russian School of Formalism. It is a translation of the Russian *ostranenie* ‘making strange’. To ‘defamiliarize’ is to make fresh, new, strange, different from what is familiar and known” (J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 226). In the field of literary or translation theory, a chronologically “newer” concept or theory is not necessarily better than a chronologically “older” one; sometimes, it may only be newfangled. On the other hand, a chronologically “older” concept or theory may often prove more serviceable than a chronologically “new” one; *defamiliarization*, especially when compared with *foreignization*, is a case in point.

⁴⁹ Wu, Vol. 1, 521.

⁵⁰ Waley, 263.

⁵¹ Wu, Vol. 1, 541.

‘Ordinary people at this hour,’ said Monkey, ‘are hugging their children or cuddling their wives in soft beds under warm coverlets, lying snug and comfortable as you please. But how can we pilgrims expect any such thing? By moonlight or starlight on we must go, supping on the air, and braving the wet, as long as the road lasts.’⁵²

『此恩重若邱山，深如大海。——且不但我等蒙恩，只這一莊上人，免得年年祭賽，全了多少人家兒女，此誠所謂「一舉而兩得」之恩也！敢不報答？』⁵³

‘My gratitude for this is high as the hills and deep as the sea. But we are not the only ones to benefit. The people of the village will no longer have to supply children for the yearly sacrifice. It is indeed a case of two gains at one move! Surely it is natural that I should wish to show my gratitude.’⁵⁴

Expressions like “the dragon does not deign to crush the earthworm” (for “*qiang long bu ya ditouchong* 強龍不壓地頭蟲”), “supping on the air, and braving the wet” (for “*can feng su shui* 餐風宿水”), and “My gratitude for this is high as the hills and deep as the sea” (for “*ci en zhong ruo qiushan, shen ru dahai* 此恩重若邱山，深如大海”) correspond to the originals on low levels, that is, only with respect to minor semantic units,⁵⁵ and have a defamiliarizing effect, focusing readers’ attention on the strangeness or freshness of the expressions. On coming across them,

⁵² Waley, 285-86.

⁵³ Wu, Vol. 1, 572.

⁵⁴ Waley, 318.

⁵⁵ This kind of correspondence is what I would call “centripetality.” For a detailed discussion of “centripetality” and “centrifugality” in translation, concepts applicable to all language pairs, see “Centripetality and Centrifugality in Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese” in this volume. Roughly speaking, “centripetality” refers, among other things, to the translation approach in which individual semantic units or syntactic structures of the target-language text correspond to those of the source-language text at low levels, whereas “centrifugality” refers to the approach in which the target-language text departs from the source-language text in semantic and syntactic terms, with the degree of departure depending on the occasion. Unlike bipolar oppositions like *domestication* and *foreignization*, *literal* and *free*, or *semantic* and *communicative*, the terms “centripetality” and “centrifugality” are neutral, carrying neither favourable nor derogatory connotations; depending on the nature of the source-language text and the needs of the translation process taking place at the time, one can be as good as the other.

readers know that they must be foreign turns of phrase.⁵⁶ In creating defamiliarizing effects, Waley can move between centripetality and centrifugality with dexterity. Thus, in rendering “*geng bu rang wo yuan xiang zhi seng* 更不讓我遠鄉之僧” (“Strangers first is the rule”), “*dai yue pi xing* 帶月披星” (“By moonlight or starlight”), and “*yi ju er liang de* 一舉而兩得” (“two gains at one move”), he goes centrifugal, idiomatizing the target-language text, complying as far as possible with rules of English usage while retaining the freshness of the original expressions. In the following translation, such an effect is even more obvious:

『我明日就辭汝等下山，雲遊海角，遠涉天涯 [...]』⁵⁷

“To-morrow [...] I shall say good-bye to you, go down the mountain, wander like a cloud to the corners of the sea, far away to the end of the world [...]”⁵⁸

The images “*yun* 雲” ‘cloud,’ “*hai* 海” ‘sea,’ and “*ya* 涯” ‘end’ are retained without going against the speech habits of the English people. The style is neither “non-fluent” nor “opaque”; yet it has achieved the goal of “[providing] TL readers with an ‘alien reading experience.’”

X. Language-Specific Obstacles

Despite his ingenuity, though, there are language-specific obstacles that Waley cannot always surmount. A case in point is the antithetical effect of the following source-language text:

我等日日歡會，在仙山福地，古洞神洲 [...] ⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The defamiliarizing approach can be found everywhere in Waley’s translation. Thus “*hu feng huan yu* 呼風喚雨” (Wu, Vol. 1, 507) is translated “summon the wind or bring rain” (Waley, 245), “*nai chui hui zhi li* 乃吹灰之力” (Wu, Vol. 1, 507) translated “the thing would be as easy as blowing ashes from a tray” (Waley, 245), and “*feng juan can yun* 風捲殘雲 [describing the speed of eating]” (Wu, Vol. 1, 516) translated “vanished swiftly as a cloud swept away by a hurricane” (Waley, 256).

⁵⁷ Wu, Vol. 1, 6.

⁵⁸ Waley, 13.

⁵⁹ Wu, Vol. 1, 6.

Every day we have happy meetings on fairy mountains, in blessed spots, in ancient caves, on holy islands.⁶⁰

In his choice of words, Waley's meticulousness is unmistakable: “*xian* 仙,” “*fu* 福,” “*gu* 古,” and “*shen* 神” are all carefully differentiated and closely matched with the TL lexical items; nevertheless, the antithetical effect of the original is missing. This is because classical Chinese, being largely monosyllabic, lends itself readily to antithesis, while English, being largely polysyllabic, does not favour antithesis as much as Chinese does. In the writings of John Lyly, such as *Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit*, and of Samuel Johnson, such as *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, antithesis is liberally employed, but compared with Chinese antithesis, which can be introduced effortlessly, it often appears contrived. Perhaps aware of this linguistic difference, Waley has avoided antithesis in translating the following sentences:

二將果奉旨出門外，看的真，聽的明。⁶¹

At his bidding these two captains went out to the gate and looked so sharply and listened so well [...]⁶²

花果山福地，水簾洞洞天 [...]⁶³

This cave of the Water Curtain in the blessed land of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit [...]⁶⁴

Had he gone out of his way to preserve the rhetorical effect of the original, his target-language text would have sounded artificial.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Waley, 12.

⁶¹ Wu, Vol. 1, 3.

⁶² Waley, 9.

⁶³ Wu, Vol. 1, 4.

⁶⁴ Waley, 10-11.

⁶⁵ Wherever possible, though, Waley can unobtrusively retain the antithesis of the original, as can be seen in his translation of “*zhao you Huaguo Shan, mu su Shuilian Dong* 朝遊花果山，暮宿水簾洞” (Wu, Vol. 1, 5): “By day they wandered about the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit; [/] at night they slept in the Cave of the Water Curtain” (Waley, 12).

XI. Bipartite Expressions

In translating Chinese *xiehouyu* 歇後語, a bipartite expression in which the meaning is contained in the second half, with the first half presenting a literal description or a memorable image, Waley, while subtly idiomatizing the target-language text, can effectively preserve the freshness of the original expression, achieving simultaneously what would have required two contradicting operations as postulated by Venuti: “domestication” and “foreignization”:

八戒聞言，走近前，就摸了一把。笑道：『這妖精真個是「糟鼻子不吃酒——枉擔其名」了！』⁶⁶

At this Pigsy came up to the wizard and felt him. ‘Quite true,’ he announced, laughing. ‘This is a “blotchy nose that never sniffed wine”; “a bad name and nothing to show for it.”’⁶⁷

The episode from which the expression “*zao bizi bu chi jiu—wang dan qi ming* 糟鼻子不吃酒——枉擔其名” is quoted concerns Bodhisattva Manjuśrī’s 文殊師利 lion,⁶⁸ which turns into a demon, becomes a wizard, kills the ruler of the Kingdom of Crow-cock 烏雞國, usurps his throne, and takes possession of “all the ladies of the Court.”⁶⁹ When the lion is tamed by the Bodhisattva, Monkey asks what has happened to “all the ladies of the Court who have been sleeping with him and unwittingly been led into a heinous and unnatural offence.”⁷⁰ The Bodhisattva replies that the demon is “a gelded lion” and “isn’t in a position to defile anyone.”⁷¹ On hearing this, Pigsy utters the above expression. In rendering the source-language text, Waley has succeeded in making it readily comprehensible to readers of the target-language text, and provided them with “an alien reading experience” within the parameters of idiomatic English.

⁶⁶ Wu, Vol. 1, 456.

⁶⁷ Waley, 240.

⁶⁸ The romanized Sanskrit word for the Bodhisattva is usually spelled Mañjuśrī. See Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, ed., *Zongjiao cidian* 宗教詞典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe 上海辭書出版社, 1981), 217.

⁶⁹ Waley, 240.

⁷⁰ Waley, 240.

⁷¹ Waley, 240.

XII. Names of Deities, of Places, of Institutions, and of Things

While the above expression is largely linguistic in nature, involving some cultural element, names of deities, of places, and of institutions, especially those related to Buddhism, Taoism, mythology, and astrology, are largely cultural:

行者道：『我如今一筋斗雲，撞入南天門裏，不進斗牛宮，不入靈霄殿，徑到那三十三天之上，離恨天宮兜率院內，見太上老君，把他「九轉還魂丹」求得一粒來，管取救活他也。』⁷²

‘I will rise on my cloud trapeze,’ said Monkey, ‘and force my way into the southern gate of Heaven. I shall not go to the Palace of the Pole and Ox, nor to the Hall of Holy Mists, but go straight to the thirty-third heaven,⁷³ and in the Trayaśimstra Courtyard of the heavenly palace of Quit Grief I shall visit Lao Tzu and ask for a grain of his Nine Times Sublimated Life Restoring Elixir, and with it I shall bring the king back to life.’⁷⁴

In rendering the culture-related items in the above source-language text, Waley moves freely between what is readily acceptable to English culture and what appears foreign. Within this range, various gradations are differentiated: “the southern gate of Heaven” and “the thirty-third heaven” are well within the general target-language reader’s realm of knowledge and experience, since Heaven is a concept well known to Christians as well as to non-Christians; “the Palace of the Pole and Ox” can easily be

⁷² Wu, Vol. 1, 445.

⁷³ The Sanskrit word for “the thirty-third heaven” is *Trāyastriṃśa* (Ren, 76). Being too learned, it is less reader-friendly than “the thirty-third heaven.”

⁷⁴ Waley, 224. Unlike Waley’s “the heavenly palace of Quit Grief,” Jenner’s “the Lihen Heaven” (Jenner, Vol. 2, 125) for “*Lihen Tian* 離恨天” fails to convey the meaning of the original Chinese term, which has rich connotations for the Chinese reader. On the other hand, his “the Supreme Lord Lao Zi” (Jenner, Vol. 2, 125) for “*Taishang Laojun* 太上老君” has accurately captured the meaning of “*Taishang* 太上.” Compared with Jenner’s version, Waley’s “Lao Tzu,” being just a personal name, cannot enable the reader to imagine the supremacy of the character. Jenner’s “Nine-cycle Soul-returning Pills” (Jenner, Vol. 2, 125) for “*jiuzhuan huanhundan* 九轉還魂丹,” however, is problematic, because “returning,” which can be transitive as well as intransitive, is ambiguous; Waley’s “Nine Times Sublimated Life Restoring Elixir,” in which “Restoring” is transitive, conveys with greater precision the true meaning of the original. The downside of Waley’s rendering is its wordiness.

comprehended because it is associated with the Pole Star, which is an everyday term in Western astronomy; “the Hall of Holy Mists” requires a little imagination; “Lao Tzu” is remote from the average English reader’s experience; “the Trayaśimstra Courtyard” is difficult, since it contains the learned Sanskrit word “Trayaśimstra”; “the heavenly palace of Quit Grief,” having close semantic correspondence with the original, is strikingly outlandish; and “Nine Times Sublimated Life Restoring Elixir” is much more so. The last example, in particular, shows to what lengths Waley is ready to go when he wants to get the cultural experience across, authentic and undistorted.

Going to even greater lengths, Waley can provide readers of the target-language text with new cultural experiences that rival those presented by means of the most radical “foreignizing” process:

這大聖上前，把個雷公嘴，噙着那皇帝口唇，呼的一口氣，吹入咽喉，度下重樓，轉明堂，徑至丹田，從湧泉倒返泥垣宮。⁷⁵

So Monkey stepped forward, and putting his wide mouth against the Emperor’s lips he blew hard into his throat. The breath went down to the Two-Storeyed Tower, round the Hall of Light, on to the Cinnabar Field, and from the Jetting Spring went back again to the Mud Wall Palace.⁷⁶

The quotation from the original describes how Monkey’s breath travels through various parts of the Emperor’s body, which are designated by the acupuncture points in Chinese medicine and in alchemy.⁷⁷ In coping with these highly culture-specific terms, a translator has three options: (1) to generalize and come up with something like “Monkey’s breath courses through various parts of the Emperor’s body”; (2) to do some research, so

⁷⁵ Wu, Vol. 1, 448.

⁷⁶ Waley, 229.

⁷⁷ The terms are explained in detail by Yu: “The Mud-Pill Chamber [“Mud Wall Palace” in Waley] (*Ni-wan kung* 泥丸宮 [“泥垣宮” in Wu, Vol. 1, 448]) refers to the spot at the very top of one’s head. [...] Not only in acupuncture lore, but even in alchemy, the human body is divided into a system of interconnecting points or holes (*hsüeh* 穴). The Jetting-Spring Points [“Jetting Spring” in Waley] (*Yung-ch’üan* 湧泉) are points at the center of the soles” (Yu, Vol. 1, 524-25). “Bright Hall [“Hall of Light” in Waley] (*ming-t’ang*) refers to the space, one inch inside the skull, between the eyebrows. [...] The Tower (*ch’ung-lou*) refers to the windpipe or the trachea. Since the Chinese alchemists thought that it had twelve sections, it was frequently called the Twelve-Tiered Tower [*shih-êrh ch’ung-lou* 十二重樓]” (Yu, Vol. 1, 528).

as to find out what anatomically the Chinese terms refer to in modern medicine, and then translate the source-language text accordingly; (3) to translate the semantic units of the terms literally and, in the case of scholarly versions, add some footnotes. The first option ensures readability, but it suppresses the cultural element. The second option is scientific and has anatomical precision, but it cannot preserve the Chinese flavour of the original. The third option, used by Waley without annotation and oriented towards the source-language text, has the advantage of getting a new and interesting piece of Chinese culture across. To be sure, one may argue that to the general English reader, the terms “the Two-Storeyed Tower,” “the Hall of Light,” “the Cinnabar Field,” “the Jetting Spring,” and “the Mud Wall Palace” are esoteric, unlikely to be understood; the counter-argument is: that to the vast majority of native speakers of Chinese, the terms “*chonglou* 重樓,” “*mingtang* 明堂,” “*dantian* 丹田,” “*yongquan* 湧泉,” and “*niyuangong* 泥垣宮” are equally esoteric.⁷⁸ All in all, therefore, the third option is the best, since it can convey the cultural element of the original to English readers while bringing with it freshness of expression.

Taking into consideration the question of reception as well as the kind of audience he has in mind, Waley knows when to strike a balance and adjust the information load to suit the occasion. Thus, in translating “*Gaotian Shangsheng Daci Renzhe Yuhuang Datianzun Xuanqiong Gaoshangdi* 高天上聖大慈仁者玉皇大天尊玄穹高上帝,”⁷⁹ he has given up trying to reproduce every semantic unit of the original;⁸⁰

⁷⁸ The average Chinese reader may be vaguely aware that “*dantian* 丹田” is somewhere in the abdomen.

⁷⁹ Wu, Vol. 1, 2.

⁸⁰ Appealing to a different kind of audience, at whom the impact of a complete translation is aimed, Yu and Jenner have translated the title as “the Great Benevolent Sage of Heaven, the Celestial Jade Emperor of the Most Venerable Deva” (Yu, Vol. 1, 68) and “the Supreme Heavenly Sage, the Greatly Compassionate Jade Emperor of the Azure Vault of Heaven” (Jenner, Vol. 1, 4) respectively. In Jenner’s version, even the image of “*qiong* 穹” is attended to. In this connection, it is worth while pointing out that classical Chinese words, being largely monosyllabic, can condense with ease a huge amount of information in a title. Take the imperial title of Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, for example: “*Taizu Kaitian Xingdao Zhaoji Liji Dasheng Zhishen Renwen Yiwu Junde Chenggong Gaohuangdi* 太祖開天行道肇紀立極大聖至神仁文義武俊德成功高皇帝” (Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., eds., *Ming shi* 明史, 28 vols. (Peking: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1974), Vol. 1, 1). Epithet after epithet can keep hurling praises on the emperor without sounding overburdened, so

otherwise he would have to increase the general reader's reception burden, thereby reducing the pleasure of his reading experience with no apparent gain to outweigh the disadvantage. Hence the abridged version: "the Jade Emperor."

In the following passage, the strategy involved is more complicated:

行者聞言，捻訣念聲呪語，叫那護法諸天、六丁六甲、五方揭諦、四值功曹、一十八位護駕伽藍、當坊土地、本境山神道：『老孫至此降妖，妖魔變作我師父，氣體相同，實難辨認。汝等暗中知會者，請師父上殿，讓我擒魔。』⁸¹

Interesting as it is to readers of the source-language text, the reference to various deities ("hufa zhutian, liuding liujia, wufang jiedi, sizhi gongcao, yishiba wei hujia qielan, dangfang tudi, benjing shanshen 護法諸天、六丁六甲、五方揭諦、四值功曹、一十八位護駕伽藍、當坊土地、本境山神") could be baffling to the general reader of the English version, who may just want to enjoy a good story. For this kind of reader, minute differentiation of the various types of deities would only result in an undesirable information burden and detract from his pleasure of reading. For this reason, Waley gives only an abridged version of the list:

When Monkey heard this, he made a single pass and recited a spell to summon the *devas* that protect the Law, the local deities and the spirits of the neighbouring hills, and told them of his predicament. [...]⁸²

The above strategy of abridging, however, is not followed rigidly. When the full listing of deities is important to the story, when an increase in the information load can be offset by the advantage gained, Waley omits none, as when he translates the following passage:

孫大聖認得他，即叫：『師父，此乃是靈山腳下玉真觀金頂大仙，他來接我們哩。』⁸³

that he ends up having accomplished / possessed almost all the mighty deeds and enviable virtues of mankind. Translated word for word into English, the target-language text would have a highly defamiliarizing effect, standing out in stark contrast to idiomatic titles in English.

⁸¹ Wu, Vol. 1, 454.

⁸² Waley, 237. It should be noted, too, that, along with the abridging of the list of deities, the dialogue is also simplified.

⁸³ Wu, Vol. 2, 1103.

‘This,’ he said to Tripitaka, ‘is the Golden Crested Great Immortal of the Jade Truth Temple at the foot of the Holy Mountain.’⁸⁴

佛爺爺大喜。即召聚八菩薩、四金剛、五百阿羅、三千揭諦、十一大曜、十八伽藍，兩行排列，却傳金旨，召唐僧進。⁸⁵

Father Buddha was delighted. He ordered the Bodhisattva, Vajrapanis, Arhats, Protectors, Planets, and Temple Guardians to form up in two lines.⁸⁶

Describing the four principal characters’ arrival in Buddha’s land, the passage marks the climax of the entire novel. In view of the important role the deities play in contributing to the total impact, they are presented in great detail to readers of the target-language text, that is, within the scope of an abridged version.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Waley, 321.

⁸⁵ Wu, Vol. 2, 1106-1107.

⁸⁶ Waley, 326.

⁸⁷ In comparison with Yu’s complete version, Waley’s still falls short of the grandeur and majesty of the description of the original. In the original, the names of the deities that “form up in two lines” are all preceded by a numeral, which is preserved in Yu’s version: “Highly pleased, Holy Father Buddha at once asked the Eight Bodhisattvas, the Four Vajra Guardians, the Five Hundred Arhats, the Three Thousand Guardians, the Eleven Great Orbs, and the Eighteen Guardians of Monasteries to form two rows for the reception” (Yu, Vol. 4, 386). The limitations of an abridged version will become most obvious when Waley’s generalized description of Buddha’s temple is compared with the source-language text, which reads: “三藏稱謝不已。一個個身輕體快，步上靈山。早見那雷音古剎：頂摩霄漢中，根接須彌脉。巧峰排列，怪石參差。懸崖下瑤草琪花，曲徑旁紫芝香蕙。仙猿摘果入桃林，却似火燒金；白鶴棲松立枝頭，渾如煙捧玉。彩鳳雙雙，青鸞對對。彩鳳雙雙，向日一鳴天下瑞；青鸞對對，迎風耀舞世間稀。又見那黃森森金瓦疊鴛鴦，明幌幌花磚鋪瑪瑙。東一行，西一行，盡都是蕊宮珠闕；南一帶，北一帶，看不了寶閣珍樓。天王殿上放霞光，護法堂前噴紫燄。浮屠塔顯，優鉢花香。正是地勝疑天別，雲閑覺晝長。紅塵不到諸緣盡，萬劫無虧大法堂。” (Wu, Vol. 2, 1106). The original, which is worthy of the climax, is drastically abridged and generalized: “Tripitaka still murmured his thanks, and with a strange feeling of lightness and exhilaration they all set off up the Holy Mountain and were soon in sight of the Temple of the Thunder Clap, with its mighty towers brushing the firmament, its giant foundations rooted in the seams of the Hill of Life” (Waley, 325). Though Waley has done a good job within the limits he has set himself, the description is a far cry from the source-language text.

The same meticulous attention to detail can be seen when the semantic content of the names concerned is essential to the understanding of the magical powers of the deities. On such occasions, Waley invariably makes a point of getting every semantic unit across and goes highly centripetal, as when he renders “Qianli Yan 千里眼” (“Thousand-league Eye”) and “Shunfeng Er 順風耳” (“Down-the-wind Ears”).⁸⁸

In handling cultural items, Waley is not infallible, though. Sometimes, in his attempt to idiomatize the target-language text, he may use words that have too modern a flavour. A case in point is his translation of the following passage:

此時唐三藏醒來，叫：『徒弟，徒弟，伏侍我倒換關文去來。』
 [...] 國王聞奏道：『這和尚沒處尋死，却來這裏尋死！那巡捕官員，
 怎麼不拿他解來？』⁸⁹

‘Now we are all going to Court to get our passports put in order,’ Tripitaka

⁸⁸ Though it has the advantage of conveying to the target-language audience the cultural experience of the source-language text, this strategy has to be used judiciously. With principal human characters, it may result in outlandishness and make the names appear too wordy or even ludicrous. In translating the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 into French, for example, Li and Alézaïs do not seem to have taken note of this. They are certainly right when they choose to go centripetal in translating “Kongkong Daoren 空空道人” as “Vanité des Vanités,” “Mangmang Dashi 茫茫大士” as “le Bodhisattva Immensité de l’Immense,” and “Miaomiao Zhenren 渺渺真人” as “l’Homme immortalisé Vague du Vague” (Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 and Gao E 高鶚, *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢, 4 vols. (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1971), Vol. 1, 2; Li Tche-houa and Jacqueline Alézaïs, trans., révision par André d’Hormon, *Le Rêve dans le pavillon rouge* (*Hong lou meng*), by Cao Xueqin, 2 vols. (Bourges: Gallimard, 1981), Vol. 1, 10), for mythological names, often being outlandish fictional names exempt from the criteria of idiomatity and rarely used in everyday life, can readily lend themselves to centripetal translation. However, with the character Jia Yucun 賈雨村 (Cao and Gao, 7; Li and Alézaïs, Vol. 2, 21), the rendering “Jia Village sous Pluie” has gone too far, since, as a name in French for one of the human characters, it sounds weird to the average French reader. As is well known to readers of the *Hong lou meng*, “賈雨村” is a pun, which, apart from being a name, can also mean “賈語存” (“the false words remain”). In translating the name as “Jia Village sous Pluie,” the translators, instead of conveying the pun to the target-language reader, have sacrificed economy of expression and idiomatity to no avail.

⁸⁹ Wu, Vol. 1, 519-20. In translating this passage, Waley has abridged quite a number of sentences and done some rewriting.

announced when he woke.

The king of the country, on hearing that three Buddhist pilgrims sought admittance to the palace, was in a tearing rage. 'If they must needs court death,' he said, 'why should they do it here, of all places? And what were the police doing, I should like to know. [...]'⁹⁰

The words *passport* and *police* were respectively used as early as the sixteenth and the eighteenth century.⁹¹ With their antique origins, they should, in theory, be considered accurate equivalents of “*guanwen* 關文” and “*xunbu guanyuan* 巡捕官員.” Upon closer analysis, however, we will see that they differ considerably from the originals. This is because, since the time they became current in the English language, *passport* and *police* have remained very much so through the centuries, and still feature prominently in the active vocabulary of the average speaker of English today, whereas “*guanwen* 關文” and “*xunbu guanyuan* 巡捕官員,” though commonly used in ancient China, are no longer current in modern or contemporary Chinese. In other words, the “currency duration,” as it were, of each of the originals is not the same as that of its translation. By using *passport* and *police* respectively to translate “*guanwen* 關文” and “*xunbu guanyuan* 巡捕官員,” Waley has given the two Chinese terms unduly modern associations, which do not fit in with the context of the original. With respect to the word *passport*, in particular, the reader, misled by the modern context in which the word is almost always used

⁹⁰ Waley, 260.

⁹¹ The *OED* has recorded two senses relevant to *passport*: “1. Authorization to pass from a port or leave a country, or to enter or pass through a country. [...] 2. a. A formal document authorizing a person to pass out of or into a country or state, or to pass through a foreign country; in the latter case orig. = safe-conduct, and granted usually with defined limitations of destination, time, and purpose; but gradually extended in use, until it now means a document issued by competent authority, granting permission to the person specified in it to travel, and authenticating his right to protection” (*OED*, Vol. 11, 315). According to the citations, it was first used around 1500, and last used in 1845. As for *police*, the two relevant senses are as follows: “4. The department of government which is concerned with the maintenance of public order and safety, and the enforcement of the law: the extent of its function varying greatly in different countries and at different periods. [...] 5. a. The civil force to which is entrusted the duty of maintaining public order, enforcing regulations for the prevention and punishment of breaches of the law, and detecting crime; constructed as *pl.*, the members of a police force; the constabulary of a locality” (*OED*, Vol. 12, 23). According to the citations, it was first used around 1730 and last used in 1976.

today, could ask, “Is Tripitaka in Paris, London, or New York, telling his disciples to get their passports put in order for the next stop?”

Another word that is equally off-key is *dough nut* in the following translation:

旁邊小的道：『這位老爺忒沒算計，不籠饅頭，怎的把飯籠了，却不污了衣服？』八戒笑道：『不曾籠，喫了。』⁹²

A servant standing near him was much astonished. ‘This reverend gentleman’s doing things in the wrong order,’ he said. ‘Why does he help himself to rice before helping himself to dough nut? Won’t he mess his clothes?’

‘I didn’t help myself to it,’ said Pigsy, laughing. ‘I ate it.’⁹³

With its modern Western connotations that remind one of McDonald’s or Starbucks, “dough nut” is not the best choice for “*mantou* 饅頭,” which is rendered with greater precision by Yu as “steamed buns.”⁹⁴

Perhaps with no experience of living in China and aware of the challenge posed by the names of various items of food, Waley sometimes just quietly leaves them out, as is the case with the following passage, which describes Monkey, Pigsy, and Sandy impersonating the Great Primordial (*Yuanshi Tianzun* 元始天尊), the Lord of the Sacred Treasure (*Lingbao Daojun* 靈寶道君), and Lao Tzu (*Taishang Laojun* 太上老君) and enjoying the dishes sacrificed to the three deities:

三人坐下，盡情受用。先喫了大饅頭，後喫簇盤、襯飯、點心、拖爐、餅錠、油爍、蒸酥，那裏管甚麼冷熱，任情喫起。⁹⁵

The fool Pigsy then took Lao Tzu’s seat and began to help himself to the offerings. Dumplings, pasties, rice-balls, cakes [...]⁹⁶

Being a native speaker of Chinese, Yu is better able to rise to the challenge:

⁹² Wu, Vol. 1, 545.

⁹³ Waley, 290.

⁹⁴ Yu, Vol. 2, 361. Jenner’s “steamed bread” (Jenner, Vol. 2, 281), though less off-key than Waley’s “dough nut,” lacks the specificity of Yu’s version.

⁹⁵ Wu, Vol. 1, 516.

⁹⁶ Waley, 256. Waley’s translation does not seem to be following the original closely, perhaps because the Chinese edition he used differs here from the Zhonghua shuju edition, or he may be “retelling” the story.

[...] the three of them took their seats and abandoned themselves to enjoyment. They ate the huge buns first; then they gobbled down the side dishes, the rice condiments, the dumplings, the baked goods, the cakes, the deep-fried dishes, and the steamed pastries—regardless of whether these were hot or cold.⁹⁷

Lacking the knowledge of a native speaker of Chinese, which cannot always be fully compensated for by research, Jenner comes up with versions which have an unduly Western flavour, erring, in particular, as Waley does with “dough nut”:

[...] the three of them sat down to eat their fill. First they ate the steamed bread, and then they went on to the assorted cold dishes, the rice, the pastries, the buns, the biscuits, the pancakes, the doughnuts, and the steamed pies.⁹⁸

XIII. Action Scenes

If Waley’s rendering of the cultural element is not always successful despite his mastery of the English language and his understanding of the source-language text, his treatment of the novel’s action scenes and hilarious passages almost always is. On the back cover of the 1961 Penguin edition of *Monkey*, a brief summary of the book reads: “Entertaining and highly readable, *Monkey* is a unique blend of charm, wisdom and imagination.” With many other novels in translation, what is printed on the back cover should normally be regarded as the publisher’s blurb, which tends to exaggerate. With *Monkey*, the above sentence is a true description of the fact. For, in reading the translation, one never ceases to be entertained, especially by scenes of action, of high drama, of amusement, and of hilarity.⁹⁹ Take the following passage and Waley’s

⁹⁷ Yu, Vol. 2, 316.

⁹⁸ Jenner, Vol. 2, 233.

⁹⁹ While the word “scenes” implies relatively long stretches of discourse, there are also brief descriptions which do not make up a scene in the strict sense of the word, but which contribute to the excitement and suspense of the story. Examples are: “*Ni kan ta ru feng chui bai ye, si yu da can hua, jiang ta liangge gan chu shuimian* 你看他如風吹敗葉，似雨打殘花，將他兩個趕出水面。” (Wu, Vol. 1, 567) “Look at him [the Bodhisattva’s goldfish turned monster] ! Like a leaf driven by the autumn wind or a fallen petal struck down by the rain, he fled after them to the outer air” (Waley, 314). “*Hao Dasheng, ji zong xiangguang, duoli hekou, jing fu Nanhai* 好大聖，急縱祥光，躲離河口，徑赴南海。” (Wu, Vol. 1, 569) “Dear

version, which describe the fight between Monkey and the Demon of Havoc (*Hunshi Mowang* 混世魔王):

那魔王丟開架子便打，這悟空鑽進去相撞相迎。他兩個拳搥脚踢，一沖一撞。原來長拳空大，短簇堅牢。那魔王被悟空掏短脇，撞了襠，幾下筋節，把他打重了。他閃過，拿起那板大的鋼刀，望悟空劈頭就砍。悟空急撒身，他砍了一個空。悟空見他兇猛，即使身外身法，拔一把毫毛，丟在口中嚼碎，望空噴去，叫一聲『變！』即變做三二百個小猴，週圍攢簇。

原來人得仙體，出神變化，無方不知。這猴王自從了道之後，身上有八萬四千毛羽，根根能變，應物隨心。那些小猴，眼乖會跳，刀來砍不着，鎗去不能傷。你看他前踉後躍，鑽上去，把個魔王圍繞，抱的抱，扯的扯，鑽襠的鑽襠，扳脚的扳脚，踢打擗毛，摳眼睛，捻鼻子，抬鼓弄，直打做一個攢盤。這悟空纔去奪得他的刀來，分開小猴，照頂門一下，砍為兩段。¹⁰⁰

The demon relaxed his guard and struck. Monkey closed with him, and the two of them pommelled and kicked, blow for blow. A long reach is not so firm and sure as a short one. Monkey jabbed the demon in the lower ribs, pounded him in the chest, and gave him such a heavy drubbing that at last the demon stood back, and picking up his great flat sword, slashed at Monkey's head. But Monkey stepped swiftly aside, and the blow missed its mark. Seeing that the demon was becoming savage, Monkey now used the method called Body Outside the Body. He plucked out a handful of hairs, bit them into small pieces, and then spat them out into the air, crying

Monkey! He shot up on a shaft of magic light and was soon at the Southern Ocean" (Waley, 314). "*Xingzhe ting de lao shifu jingwen nian jin, que qu erduo nei qu chu tiebang, ying feng huang le yi huang, jiu you zhang er changduan, wan lai cuxi, jiang gun wangkong yi zhi. Na Feng Popo jianle, jimang che kai pidai; Xun Erlang jiefang kousheng. Zhi ting de huhu fengxiang, man cheng zhong jie wa fan zhuan, yang sha zou shi.* 行者聽得老師父經文念盡，却去耳朵內取出鐵棒，迎風幌了一幌，就有丈二長短，碗來粗細，將棍望空一指。那風婆婆見了，急忙扯開皮袋；巽二郎解放口繩。只聽得呼呼風響，滿城中揭瓦翻磚，揚砂走石。” (Wu, Vol. 1, 525) “When Tripitaka had finished reciting, Monkey took out his cudgel and, expanding it, pointed towards the sky. The Old Woman of the Wind at once brought out her bag, Erh-lang loosed the rope at its mouth, and with a great roar the wind rushed out. All through the city tiles were lifted through the air, bricks hurtled, sand and stones flew” (Waley, 266). The last quotation is only a very small portion of the whole description; in the original novel, the episode is fully described on pages 524-26, which is epic and worthy of Milton. For the full description in English, see Jenner, Vol. 2, 246-49; Yu, Vol. 2, 330-33.

¹⁰⁰ Wu, Vol 1, 22.

‘Change!’ The fragments of hair changed into several hundred small monkeys, all pressing round in a throng. For you must know that when anyone becomes an Immortal, he can project his soul, change his shape, and perform all kinds of miracles. Monkey, since his Illumination, could change every one of the eighty-four thousand hairs of his body into whatever he chose. The little monkeys he had now created were so nimble that no sword could touch them or spear wound them. See how they leap forward and jump back, crowd round the demon, some hugging, some pulling, some jabbing at his chest, some swarming up his legs. They kicked him, beat him, pommelled his eyes, pinched his nose, and while they were all at it, Monkey slipped up and snatched away the Demon’s sword. Then pushing through the throng of small monkeys, he raised the sword and brought it down with such tremendous force upon the demon’s skull, that he clove it in twain.¹⁰¹

The action, drama, visual quality, and suspense in the original are accurately reproduced in English, so that readers of the target-language text are presented with a scene as gripping as that created by Wu Cheng’en.

In the following passage and its English translation, in which Tripitaka and his three disciples approach a house and ask to be put up for the night, we have action of a different kind:

三藏道：『我是東土大唐欽差往西天取經者。今到貴處，天色已晚。聽到府上鼓鈸之聲，特來告借一宿，天明就行也。』那老者搖手道：『和尚，出家人休打誑語。東土大唐，到我這裏，有五萬四千里路，你這等單身，如何來得？』三藏道：『老施主見得最是。但我還有三個小徒，逢山開路，遇水疊橋，保護貧僧，方得到此。』老者道：『既有徒弟，何不同來？』教：『請，請，我舍下有處安歇。』三藏回頭，叫聲『徒弟，這裏來。』

那行者本來性急，八戒生來粗魯，沙僧却也莽壯，三個人聽得師父招呼，牽着馬，挑着擔，不問好歹，一陣風，闖將進去。那老者看見，謊得跌倒在地，口裏只說是『妖怪來了！妖怪來了！』三藏攙起道：『施主莫怕。不是妖怪，是我徒弟。』老者戰兢兢道：『這般好俊師父，怎麼尋這樣醜徒弟！』三藏道：『雖然相貌不終，却倒會降龍伏虎，捉怪擒妖。』老者似信不信的，扶着唐僧慢走。

却說那三個兇頑，闖入廳房上，拴了馬，丟下行李。那廳中原有幾個和尚念經。八戒掬着長嘴，喝道：『那和尚，念的是甚麼經？』那些

¹⁰¹ Waley, 31. The translation “pommelled his eyes” is not the same thing as the original “*kou yanjing* 搥眼睛” ‘trying to gouge out his eyes,’ though. It is possible that Waley was following a variant reading in rendering the passage.

和尚，聽見問了一聲，忽然抬頭：

觀看外來人，嘴長耳朵大，身粗背膊寬，聲響如雷咋。行者與沙僧，容貌更醜陋。廳堂幾眾僧，無人不害怕。闍黎還念經，班首教行罷。難顧磬和鈴，佛像且丟下。一齊吹息燈，驚散光乍乍。跌跌與爬爬，門限何曾跨！你頭撞我頭，似倒葫蘆架。清清好道場，翻成大笑話。

這兄弟三人，見那些人跌跌爬爬，鼓着掌哈哈大笑。那些僧越加恐懼，磕頭撞腦，各顧性命，通跑淨了。三藏攙那老者，走上廳堂，燈火全無，三人嘻嘻哈哈的還笑。唐僧罵道：『這潑物，十分不善！我朝朝教誨，日日叮嚀。古人云：「不教而善，非聖而何！教而後善，非賢而何！教亦不善，非愚而何！」汝等這般撒潑，誠為至下至愚之類！走進門不知高低，謊倒了老施主，驚散了念經僧，把人家好事都攪壞了，却不是墮罪與我？』說得他們不敢回言。那老者方信是他徒弟，急回頭作禮道：『老爺，沒大事，沒大事，纔然關了燈，散了花，佛事將收也。』

102

Its development takes rapid dramatic turns and grips the reader's attention without slackening a moment. As it unfolds, it looks more and more like a play being enacted on stage.

In translating the above source-language text, Waley has abridged the part in verse; yet the resultant action is still highly vivid:

'I am from China and am going to fetch scriptures from India,' said Tripitaka. 'Night overtook me when I was near your exalted abode, and hearing a sound of Buddhist music I have come to ask you whether I may lodge here tonight.'

'Sir,' said the old man, 'it is incumbent upon those who have left the world to adhere strictly to truth. Are you aware that China is 54,000 leagues away? You cannot pretend that you have come that distance, travelling all alone.'

'Aged benefactor, you are right,' said Tripitaka. 'But I have three disciples who have helped me over mountains and across rivers, and constantly mounted guard over me. Otherwise I should never have got here.'

'Where are they?' said the old man. 'Please ask them to come in and rest.' Tripitaka turned and called to his disciples.

Monkey was by nature too restless, Pigsy too coarse, and Sandy too simple to need a second bidding. Leading the horse and shouldering the luggage they came tumbling in, without a thought for what might come of it. The old man was so frightened that he fell flat upon the ground, mumbling: 'There are demons in the yard, demons!'

¹⁰² Wu, Vol. 1, 543-44.

‘Aged benefactor,’ said Tripitaka, dragging him to his feet, ‘you need not be afraid. These are not demons; they are my disciples.’

‘How comes it,’ he asked trembling, ‘that a nice-looking gentleman like yourself has managed to get such monsters for his disciples?’

‘I know they are ugly,’ said Tripitaka, ‘but they are very good at subduing dragons and tigers and capturing ogres.’

The old man, only half reassured, walked on slowly, supported by Tripitaka. In the courtyard were some priests reciting the scriptures. ‘What’s that you are reading?’ cried Pigsy, raising his long snout. Suddenly catching sight of these three terrifying apparitions the priests leapt up and fled in utter panic, upsetting the Buddhist images, stumbling, crawling, and banging into one another. Highly diverted by this spectacle the three disciples clapped their hands and roared with laughter. More frightened than ever, the priests now ran for their lives. ‘You wretches,’ cried Tripitaka, ‘you’ve spoilt everything. No one would think that I have been teaching you and preaching to you in season and out for all these months. The ancients said, “To be virtuous without instruction is superhuman. To be virtuous after instruction is reasonable. To be instructed and remain incorrigible is to be a fool.” You three have just shown yourselves to be fools of the very lowest description. Fancy charging in at the gate like that, without any regard for what was going on inside, frightening our benefactor, scaring away the priests who were reading the scriptures, and spoiling the whole ceremony! Don’t you see that it is I who will bear the blame for all this?’

Thus addressed, they did not dare reply, which fortunately convinced the old man that they were indeed his disciples. ‘It’s of no consequence,’ he said, bowing to Tripitaka. ‘We were just going to remove the lamps, scatter the flowers and terminate the proceedings.’¹⁰³

The fear, the helter-skelter, and the confusion all match the description in the original, so that the reader has the feeling of participating in the drama himself.

XIV. Translating Hilarity

Though quoted to illustrate action scenes and Waley’s handling of them, the above source- and target-language texts have many other qualities, among them the novelist’s ability to create hilarity and the translator’s ability to convey it faithfully to the target-language reader. In the two texts, both the narrative and the dialogue provide the reader with fun and entertainment, portraying in unforgettable strokes the characters, whether serious, comical, timid, or mischievous.

¹⁰³ Waley, 288-89.

In other scenes, hilarity can arise from the dialogue alone. Take Chapter 40 of the original, in which several hundred Buddhist priests, oppressed by three demons, tell Monkey how miserable they are. On hearing about their plight, Monkey, with his identity not yet revealed, asks why they have not ended their lives, which leads to a comic conversation:

行者道：『既然如此，你們死了便罷。』眾僧道：『老爺，有死的。到處捉來與本處和尚，也共有二千餘眾。到此熬不得苦楚，受不得燻煎，忍不得寒冷，服不得水土，死了有六七百，自盡了有七八百；只有我這五百人不得死。』行者道：『怎麼不得死？』眾僧道：『懸梁繩斷，刀刎不疼；投河的飄起不沉，服藥的身安不損。』行者道：『你却造化，天賜汝等長壽哩！』眾僧道：『老爺呀，你少了一個字兒，是「長受罪」哩！我等日食三餐，乃是糙米熬得稀粥。到晚就在沙灘上冒露安身。纔合眼，就有神人擁護。』行者道：『想是累苦了，見鬼麼？』眾僧道：『不是鬼，乃是六丁六甲、護教伽藍。但至夜，就來保護。但有要死的，就保着，不教他死。』行者道：『這些神却也沒理；只該教你們早死早生天，却來保護怎的？』眾僧道：『他在夢寐中，勸解我們，教「不要尋死，且苦捱着，等那東土大唐聖僧，往西天取經的羅漢。他手下有個徒弟，乃齊天大聖，神通廣大，專秉忠良之心，與人間報不平之事，濟困扶危，恤孤念寡。只等他來顯神通，滅了道士，還教你們沙門禪教哩。』』

行者聞得此言，心中暗笑道：『莫說老孫無手段，預先神聖早傳名。』

104

In the exchange between Monkey and the Buddhist priests, there is grim humour as well as wit and surprise; the way the strands of the plot are woven together by dialogue, too, is remarkable: one event leads convincingly to another, falling naturally into place with no straining after effect. In Waley's version, all these qualities are effectively reproduced:

'I wonder you are alive to tell the tale,' said Monkey.

'Father,' they cried, 'many have died. The priests who belonged to this place, together with those who were arrested in various parts of the kingdom, were about two thousand in all. Of these some six or seven hundred died of exhaustion, of exposure to heat and cold, or through lack of food; and seven or eight hundred took their own lives. The five hundred whom you see here are those who failed to die.'

'What do you mean by "failed to die"?' asked Monkey.

'The rope broke,' they said, 'or the blade was blunt, or the poison did not work, or the backwash carried them to the surface of the water and they

did not drown.'

'Lucky fellows!' said Monkey. 'Heaven has blessed you with long life.'

'Say rather "cursed us with eternal torment",' they cried. 'What do you suppose they give us to feed on? Water that the cheapest rice has been cooked in, three times a day! And where do we sleep? Here in the open, at the foot of this cliff. But the moment we close our eyes, spirits come to keep watch over us.'

'Quite so,' said Monkey. 'You have nightmares as the result of all your sufferings.'

'That is not so at all,' they said. 'The Six Guardians and the Defenders of Religion come to watch over us, and if any of us is at the point of death they revive him.'

'More fools they!' said Monkey. 'They ought to let you die and go to Heaven as quickly as possible.'

'They tell us in our dreams,' the Buddhists said, 'that we must hold out a little longer, despite our torments. For soon, they said, a pilgrim will come, who is on his way to India to get scriptures. With him is a disciple named the Great Sage Equal of Heaven, who has great magic powers, which he uses to right the wrongs of the oppressed. He will destroy the Taoists and bring the followers of Zen once more into respect.'

Monkey smiled to himself. 'That really makes me feel quite important,' he said to himself. 'Fancy having spirits announcing one's arrival beforehand!'¹⁰⁵

The translation flows on effortlessly, also with no straining after effect, preserving the liveliness, the pace, the grim humour, and the comic spirit of the original with a naturalness of style only masters of English prose are capable of. It is as amusing as the original.

XV. Waley's Language

In reading the original *Xi you ji*, one is also struck with the effectiveness of its dialogue, which performs various functions: to portray characters, to create fun, hilarity, and humour, and to impel the action of the story. In reading Waley's translation, one sees all these functions faithfully performed. At first sight, one may not know how this is possible; upon closer analysis, one will discover that the reason for success lies in the malleability of the translator's language, which, with an amazingly wide stylistic range, can create all sorts of desirable effects. Thus, it can rise to the most formal, as when the translator handles the passage in

¹⁰⁵ Waley, 249-50.

which the Chinese Emperor Li Shimin 李世民 speaks in deprecation of himself:

『朕才愧珪璋，言慚金石。至於內典，尤所未聞。口占敍文，誠為鄙拙。穢翰墨於金簡，標瓦礫於珠林。循躬省慮，覩面惡心。甚不足稱，虛勞致謝。』¹⁰⁶

Antithetical, balanced, dignified, drawing on the vocabulary of classical Chinese, the speech reminds one very much of the genre *pianwen* 駢文 ‘parallel prose,’ which is neatly structured and highly stylized. In his translation, Waley pays close attention to the stylistic features of the original, and renders them accordingly:

‘My talent,’ the Emperor continued, ‘pales before the wisdom that is inscribed on tablets of jade, my words are put to shame by the maxims that are incised on bronze and stone. As to the Esoteric Texts, my ignorance of them is alas profound. This, remember, is an essay composed in my head, and necessarily rough and clumsy. It is, I fear, not worth your notice and you have no need to thank me.’¹⁰⁷

Elevated to the upper rungs of the style ladder with lexical items drawn from a vocabulary not normally used in everyday conversation, the English speech is made equally formal by such features as circumlocution (“my words are put to shame by the maxims that are incised on bronze and stone”), self-abasement (“My talent [...] pales before the wisdom [...], “my ignorance of them”), and parenthesis (“alas,” “I fear”), with some of them (circumlocution and self-deprecation, for example) overlapping. As a result, the register befits the status of an emperor making a formal speech at court.

When the characters talk to each other on less formal occasions, especially in hilarious scenes, or in scenes where there are emotional exchanges between fighting parties, Waley can switch with felicity to a racy, colloquial, and highly vigorous prose, which accurately matches that of the original:

八戒〔……〕默對行者道：『這是我們的不是，喫了東西，且不走路，只等這般禱祝。却怎麼答應？』¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Wu, Vol. 2, 1128.

¹⁰⁷ Waley, 347.

¹⁰⁸ Wu, Vol. 1, 518.

‘Brother,’ whispered Pigsy to Monkey, ‘there was no need to let ourselves in for this. Directly we finished eating we ought to have bolted. How are we going to answer their prayer?’¹⁰⁹

八戒道：『〔……〕快早送我師父出來，萬事皆休！牙迸半個「不」字，你只看看手中鈿！決不饒你！』¹¹⁰

‘[...] Give him back to us at once, and we will say [no more about it. But if so much as half the word “No” leaves your lips—just have a look at this rake, and know what to expect!’¹¹¹

In the following source- and target-language texts, in which Monkey, having changed into the girl Pigsy had taken by force when the latter was still an untamed monster, the racy style is found not only in the dialogue, but also in the narrative:

行者道：『他〔Old Mr. Kao, Pigsy’s reluctant “father-in-law”〕要請法師來拿你哩。』那怪笑道：『睡着！睡着！莫睬他！我有天罡數的變化，九齒的釘鈿，怕甚麼法師、和尚、道士？就是你老子有虔心，請下九天蕩魔祖師下界，我也曾與他做過相識，他也不敢怎的我。』行者道：『他說請一個五百年前大鬧天宮姓孫的齊天大聖，要來拿你哩。』那怪聞得這個名頭，就有三分害怕道：『既是這等說，我去了罷。兩口子做不成了。』行者道：『你怎的就去？』那怪道：『你不知道。那鬧天宮的弼馬溫，有些本事，只恐我弄他不過，低了名頭，不像模樣。』說罷，套上衣服，開了門，往外就走；被行者一把扯住，將自己臉上抹了一抹，現出原身。喝道：『好妖怪，那裏走！你抬頭看看我是那個？』那怪轉過眼來，看見行者咨牙俵嘴，火眼金睛，磕頭毛臉，就是個活雷公相似，慌得他手麻腳軟，劃刺的一聲，掙破了衣服，化狂風脫身而去。行者急上前，掣鐵棒，望風打了一下。那怪化萬道火光，徑轉本山而去。行者駕雲，隨後趕來，叫聲『那裏走！你若上天，我就趕到斗牛宮！你若入地，我就追至枉死獄！』¹¹²

‘They are looking for an exorcist to drive you away,’ he said to the monster.

‘Go to sleep,’ said Pigsy, ‘and don’t worry about them any more. Am not I strong enough, with my nine-pronged muck-rake, to frighten off any exorcist or priest or what-not? Even if your old man’s prayers could bring down the master of all devils from the Ninth Heaven, as a matter of fact

¹⁰⁹ Waley, 258.

¹¹⁰ Wu, Vol. 1, 565.

¹¹¹ Waley, 312.

¹¹² Wu, Vol. 1, 210-11.

he's an old friend of mine and wouldn't do anything against me.'

'He's done more than that,' said Monkey. 'He has called in the Great Sage, who five hundred years ago made turmoil in Heaven.'

'If that's so,' said Pigsy, 'I'm off! There'll be no more kissing tonight!'

'Why are you going?' asked Monkey.

'You don't know,' said Pigsy. 'That chap is terribly powerful, and I don't know that I could deal with him. I'm frightened of losing my reputation.' He dressed hastily, opened the door, and went out. But Monkey caught hold of him and making a magic pass changed himself back into his true form. 'Monster, look round,' he cried, 'and you will see that I am he.'

When Pigsy turned and saw Monkey with his sharp little teeth and grinning mouth, his fiery, steely eyes, his flat head and hairy cheeks, for all the world like a veritable thunder-demon, he was so startled that his hands fell limp beside him and his legs gave way. With a scream he tore himself free, leaving part of his coat in Monkey's hand, and was gone like a whirlwind. Monkey struck out with his cudgel; but Pigsy had already begun to make for the cave he came from. Soon Monkey was after him, crying, 'Where are you off to? If you go up to heaven I will follow you to the summit of the Pole Star, and if you go down into the earth I will follow you to the deepest pit of hell.'¹¹³

This is Wu Cheng'en and Waley *par excellence*. Though I have quoted the original passage and its English version at great length, I have still not done full justice to the author or the translator, for the whole chapter, whether in Chinese or in English, is one of the best in terms of fun, hilarity, action, and comedy in which the dialogue is extremely effective in character-portrayal. By reading only a few sentences spoken by Pigsy—both in the original and in the translation—the reader will find it hard to forget the character or to contain his amusement: first he sees a simple Pigsy, who is overconfident through ignorance, and shows genuine affection for the “girl”; then he sees an honest Pigsy, who, on hearing that his “father-in-law” has “called in the Great Sage,” shows his lovable honesty by admitting that he is no match for Monkey. After providing readers with material for a chuckle, the drama gathers momentum: Pigsy dresses, opens the door, leaves the room, and is caught by Monkey, who has changed “himself back into his true form.” Immediately after this, one action follows another at full speed (Pigsy “[tearing] himself free, leaving part of his coat in Monkey's hand, and [...] gone like a whirlwind”), culminating in a climax and riveting the reader's attention upon every detail that follows: Monkey striking out with his cudgel, Pigsy “[making] for the cave he came from,” Monkey in hot pursuit from behind.

¹¹³ Waley, 174-75.

Waley's translation closely matches the original on more than one level: semantically, stylistically, and dramatically. The language is colloquial, made possible by a vocabulary used in everyday conversation: "what-not," "bring down," "called in," "I'm off," "chap," "terribly powerful," "for all the world like a veritable thunder-demon," "make for," "where are you off to?" The action-verbs are forceful and direct: "tore himself free," "struck out with his cudgel"; and the descriptive phrases are strikingly fresh: "to the summit of the Pole Star," "to the deepest pit of hell."¹¹⁴

XVI. Conclusion

In his younger days, when he was a less cautious, less seasoned critic, T. S. Eliot had dismissed Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as "most certainly an artistic failure,"¹¹⁵ saying: "And probably more people have thought *Hamlet* a work of art because they found it interesting, than have found it interesting because it is a work of art."¹¹⁶ Wrong-headed and blasphemously unfair, this judgement drew fire from many critics, including the famous C. S. Lewis, who, in defence of the Bard, delivered a forceful and convincing rebuttal:

Mr. Eliot suggests that "more people have thought *Hamlet* a work of art because they found it interesting, than have found it interesting because it is a work of art". When he wrote that sentence he must have been very near to what I believe to be the truth. This play is, above all else, *interesting*. But artistic failure is not in itself interesting, nor often interesting in any way: artistic success always is. To interest is the first duty of art; no other excellences will even begin to compensate for failure in this, and very serious faults will be covered by this, as by charity.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Using dialogue with precision, Wu has succeeded in portraying the two characters, particularly Pigsy, in vivid terms, so that the reader can visualize both of them: Monkey fooling Pigsy; Pigsy first boasting, then becoming diffident and frightened, turning out to be a likeable figure by virtue of his honesty in confessing that he is inferior to Monkey. The humour and fun of the passage is enhanced by the fact that, unlike the reader, Pigsy does not know that he is being fooled and made fun of by Monkey.

¹¹⁵ T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1960), 143.

¹¹⁶ Eliot, 144.

¹¹⁷ C. S. Lewis, "Hamlet: The Prince or the Poem," in Laurence Lerner, ed., *Shakespeare's Tragedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 76; for the entire article, see 65-77.

When one is reading Waley's *Monkey*, what comes readily to mind is Lewis's view on the "first duty of art." On finishing reading it, one feels that Waley's abridged English version of the *Xi you ji* has not only discharged "the first duty of art" beautifully, but also impressed the reader with many other excellences, which are there not to "compensate for failure in this [that is, in discharging the first duty]," but to make the translation an even greater success.

With all the strategies, techniques, and stylistic devices at his disposal, together with his deep understanding of Chinese culture and of the source-language text, as well as with his superb mastery of the English language, Waley, as an empathic scholar-abridger-translator, has succeeded marvellously in conveying the fun, humour, drama, characterization, style, and action of the original *Xi you ji* to readers of the target-language text. Throughout the translation, one does not see how in any way he was motivated by a desire to "domesticate" or "foreignize" in Venuti's sense of the words. Instead, one sees the translator concentrating from beginning to end on seeking the golden mean in artistic and communicative terms. What he has put before the reader at the end of the quest is not, of course, *the* golden mean, for *the* golden mean, being equivalent to *the perfect translation*, is never attainable, but it is certainly one of those translations which have come closest to it.

SURPRISING THE MUSES:
DAVID HAWKES'S
A LITTLE PRIMER OF TU FU

[ABSTRACT]

David Hawkes's *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, a selection of the great classical Chinese poet's work with accompanying English translations in prose, together with ample explanatory and exegetical matter for the beginner, is a primer and more than a primer. It is a primer because it can effectively introduce the beginner to Tu Fu's poetry in linguistic, literary, and cultural terms; it is more than a primer because the prose translations it contains transcend the limitations of prose, capturing the poetic qualities of the originals at a level beyond all the other translations, including verse translations, of the same pieces I have had access to. By examining Hawkes's translations closely alongside those by other translators, one can see how he is unrivalled by his peers in almost all respects, and how he has achieved much more than all the other translators of Tu Fu's poetry, thereby surprising the Muses with a medium generally considered unsuited for the translation of poetry.

I. Introduction

David Hawkes's *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, published by Oxford University Press in 1967, is a primer and more than a primer if we go by the second definition of the word given by *The Oxford English Dictionary*:

2. a. An elementary school-book for teaching children to read; formerly, 'a little book, which children are first taught to read and to pray by' [...]; 'a small prayer-book in which children are taught to read' [...].¹

b. By extension, a small introductory book on any subject.²

¹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, first ed. James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, W. A. Craigie, 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. 12, 480. The dictionary will hereafter be referred to as *OED*.

² *OED*, Vol. 12, 481.

In the sense that it teaches beginners elementary Chinese grammar, Chinese prosody, and basic historical facts about the poet Du Fu, it is a primer.³ In the sense that it is the product of meticulous research and rigorous scholarship, containing fine prose translations of Du Fu's poems, it is more than a primer. In this paper, I shall discuss Hawkes's prose translations, and show to what extent the translator has succeeded in preserving many of the qualities of the originals in poetic terms despite the inherent limitations of prose as a medium for poetry translation.⁴ Whenever necessary, I shall examine Hawkes's translations alongside those by other translators, closely analysing them, so that we can see more clearly the merits of Hawkes's versions relative to those of other versions, and draw conclusions which are more objective.

³ The romanization in the Wade-Giles system for 杜甫 is "Tu Fu"; in the *Pinyin* 拼音 system, the name of the poet is romanized as "Du Fu." Throughout this paper, I shall be using the *Pinyin* system except in cases where I am quoting names already romanized in the Wade-Giles system. In indicating aspirates, sinologists and translators have used different signs: the apostrophe ("'"), the inverted apostrophe ("'"), and the single initial quotation mark ("'"). To avoid confusion, I have consistently used the apostrophe ("'") throughout this paper.

⁴ In the author's Introduction, Hawkes says, "I have written this book in order to give some idea of what Chinese poetry is really like and how it works to people who either know no Chinese at all or know only a little. To write it I have taken all the poems by Tu Fu contained in a well-known Chinese anthology, *Three Hundred Tang Poems*, arranged them chronologically, transliterated them, explained their form and historical background, expounded their meaning, and lastly translated them into English prose. The translations are intended as cribs. They are not meant to be beautiful or pleasing. It is my ardent hope that a reader who is patient enough to work his way through to the end of the book will, by the time he reaches it, have learned something about the Chinese language, something about Chinese poetry, and something about the poet Tu Fu" (David Hawkes, *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), ix). The statement is modest, likely to give one the impression that the book is nothing more than a primer. On close scrutiny, however, one will see that it is more than a primer, with "beautiful" and "pleasing" prose translations of Du Fu's poems, which only a master can produce. Throughout the book, Hawkes's learning, including his understanding of Chinese prosody, of Tang history in general and of Du Fu's life in particular, of Chinese culture, of the Chinese language, and of Chinese and English literature, is impressive without being intrusive. Judging by the lucid presentation of his wealth of knowledge, Hawkes's "ardent hope" is totally realizable with any "patient enough" reader. As a thorough discussion of Hawkes's learning and scholarship is a topic for another paper, I shall concentrate only on his translations.

II. Prose as a Medium of Translation

When a translator opts for prose instead of verse as his medium, there are qualities or stylistic effects he has to sacrifice, among them music and rhythmic variety, which verse, with its many prosodic resources, such as metre, rhyme, and phonological devices, is best equipped to reproduce. In Act I, scene i, ll. 141-49 of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, in which Lysander contends that "The course of true love never did run smooth," we can see the resources of verse being skilfully tapped by the poet:

Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
 War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
 Making it momentary as a sound,
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
 That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
 And, ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
 So quick bright things come to confusion.⁵

The parallelism and the series of similes in lines 3-5 emphasize the brevity of love. The deployment of three similes in the same syntactic pattern creates a piling-up effect, so that the speaker's point is relentlessly driven home. At the same time, rhythmic variety that reinforces semantic meaning is created through the manipulation of syntax and pauses. Thus line 3, with five feet running on without an internal pause, contrasts with line 2, which has two internal pauses (one after "war," the other after "death"); line 4, with an internal pause after "shadow," contrasts with line 3, and slows down the rhythm, which picks up in line 5 because of the absence of an internal pause. Having swept across the page in line 5, the speech is briefly checked by "That" and "in a spleen" in line 6, only to be followed by the onslaught of "unfolds both heaven and earth." Then, the speech is slightly held back in line 7 by a subordinate clause ("ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'" after "And," which makes the climax ("The jaws of darkness do devour it up") all the more overwhelming. Coming as it does after the climax, the last line, in the form of a comment ("So quick

⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*, eds. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan, and H. R. Woudhuysen, Consultant Editor, Harold Jenkins (London: Cengage Learning, 1998), 892.

bright things come to confusion.”), again without an internal pause, brings the whole passage to a satisfying close. In just nine lines, Shakespeare has, by exploiting the possibilities of verse to the full, succeeded in accelerating and decelerating his language in sync with the message he wants to convey to his audience, thereby staging a mini-drama in auditory terms, in which the speaker’s train of thought rises and falls, going through exciting twists and turns and gripping the audience’s attention from beginning to end.

Discussing, in his famous essay entitled “Poetry and Drama,” the function of Shakespeare’s dramatic poetry, which is in blank verse, Eliot has convincingly argued that certain qualities or feelings can only be expressed by poetry, which are beyond the reach of prose:

There are great prose dramatists—such as Ibsen and Chekhov—who have at times done things of which I would not otherwise have supposed prose to be capable, but who seem to me, in spite of their success, to have been hampered in expression by writing in prose. This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry. Nevertheless, I have before my eyes a kind of mirage of the perfection of verse drama, which would be a design of human action and of words, such as to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order.⁶

In commenting in the same essay on the following line spoken by Othello,

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them,

Eliot says, “The line of Othello expresses irony, dignity, and fearlessness; and incidentally reminds us of the time of night in which the scene takes place. Only poetry could do this.”⁷ Opting to translate Du Fu’s poetry into prose, therefore, Hawkes has to forgo the opportunity to “touch the border of those feelings which only music can express.”

Similar qualities created through verse can be found in Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”:

⁶ T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1957), 86-87.

⁷ Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets*, 83.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
 The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
 Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
 Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
 Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
 Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
 And seeing that it was a soft October night,
 Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.⁸

In describing “the smoke that blew across the Mississippi from the factories of his home-town of St Louis, Missouri,”⁹ Eliot exploits rhythm, pauses, and repetition to personify the “yellow fog,” so that, in the rhythmic movement of the lines, the image reminds one of a cat that lingers,¹⁰ then rouses from sloth and executes a series of quick actions suggested by the stressed first syllable at the beginning of lines 3, 4, 5, and 6 (“Licked” (/likt/), “Lingered” (/ˈlɪŋgəd/), “Let fall” (/ˈlet ˈfɔ:l/), “Slipped” (/slɪpt/)). Following this series of quick actions, Eliot further turns the rhythm to account: after the stressed “Slipped,” he introduces two unstressed syllables (“by (/bʌɪ/), the (/ðə/)”), then a stressed one followed by an unstressed one (“ter/race” (/ˈtɛrəs/)), then a clause in which three stressed syllables suggest effort (“made a ‘sudden ‘leap” (/ˈmeɪd ə ˈsʌdn ˈli:p/))¹¹ and the actual leaping of a cat; after the stressed “leap” in line 6,

⁸ T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), 13.

⁹ B. C. Southam, *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, 1st ed. 1968 (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 6th ed. 1994), 50.

¹⁰ This is suggested by two seven-foot lines which are in iambic metre (“The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes, / The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes”) and are structurally similar (“The yellow [...] that rubs its [...] the window-panes”) with a slight variation (with “fog,” “back,” and “upon” replaced respectively by “smoke,” “muzzle,” and “on”), thereby preserving similarity while preventing monotony.

¹¹ In isolation, monosyllabic words in English do not have stress signs. For discussion purposes, when two or three syllables appear in a row, their relative prominence in pronunciation is indicated by the stress sign (a raised vertical line [ˈ]). In the American structuralist tradition, four degrees of stress are distinguished: primary, secondary, tertiary, weak. However, as David Crystal has pointed out, “[t]hese contrasts are [...] demonstrable only on words in isolation, as in the compound *elevator operator*.” See the entry “stress” in David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, 1st ed. published 1980 by André Deutsch

the rhythm slows down (“And seeing that it was a soft October night” (/’ænd ‘si:ɪŋ ðæt ɪt wəz ə ‘sɒft ɒk’təʊbə ‘nɔɪt/)), and relaxes, suggesting a cat that, after so much activity, eventually falls asleep (“Curled once about the house, and fell asleep” (/’kɜ:lɪd wʌs ə ‘baʊt ðə ‘hʌʊs, ənd fɛl ə ‘sli:p/)), an image further reinforced by the neat rhyme “leap-asleep” (/li:p-ə ‘sli:p/) As one reads on, one can feel the rhythm tightening and relaxing in accordance with the semantic meaning,¹² so that the lines are functional not only semantically and phonologically, but also kinaesthetically.¹³

III. Hawkes’s Prose as a Medium That Goes Beyond Prose

Choosing to translate Du Fu’s poems into prose, which is not capable of the subtleties of Shakespeare’s or Eliot’s verse, Hawkes has settled for something less ambitious. Yet, despite the limitations of his medium, he has succeeded in reproducing or re-creating many of the poetic effects found in the originals, excelling all other translators, including those who use verse as their medium.¹⁴

(Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 5th ed. 2003), 435-36. It should be noted that in analysing the pronunciation of English words in this paper, I am using phonemic transcription (enclosed by oblique line) instead of phonetic transcription (enclosed by square brackets). For a detailed account of transcription, see the entry “transcription” in Crystal, 470-71. The broadly phonetic system is also briefly explained in Clive Upton, William A. Kretzschmar, Jr., and Rafal Konopka, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Pronunciation for Current English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), x: “Transcriptions in the text are broadly phonetic. That is, the transcriptions represent actual pronunciations, often with several variant forms per headword, not abstract sound units which include and hide potential variation. For instance, both [ru:m~rum] and [rɒm] are possible pronunciations of *room*, both [eks-] and [ɛgz-] are presented for some words beginning with ex- + vowel. A limited symbol set results in broad transcriptions, and may suggest de facto phonemicization to some readers, but our intention is always to indicate actual sounds to be produced.”

¹² The meaning of a poem generally consists of two levels: the semantic and the non-semantic. The latter consists of, among other things, the phonological and syntactic levels.

¹³ For a detailed discussion of the music of Eliot’s poetry, see Helen Gardner, *The Art of T. S. Eliot* (London: The Cresset Press, 1949), especially Chapters 2 and 3, entitled “Auditory Imagination” and “The Music of *Four Quartets*” respectively.

¹⁴ It must be admitted, though, that there are qualities in Du Fu’s poetry which can never be adequately translated into another language no matter whether the translator uses prose or verse as his medium, and no matter who the translator is.

IV. Du Fu's Natural Scenery in Words

As “China’s Greatest Poet,”¹⁵ Du Fu has inherited and created almost all the qualities that typify the finest of traditional Chinese poetry, one of which is the ability to re-create natural scenery in words, as can be seen in the following lines of “*Lǚ yè shu huai* 旅夜書懷” (“Thoughts Written While Travelling at Night”):¹⁶

These qualities include those which are strictly language-bound, such as qualities dependent on the paratactic nature of Chinese, on the symmetry and antithetical structure of the Chinese couplet, on Chinese phonology, including the interplay of level-tone (*pingsheng* 平聲) and oblique-tone (*zesheng* 仄聲) words, and on the often indeterminate grammatical relationship between words in a line. Thus the famous couplet “*Wan li bei qiu chang zuo ke, bai nian duo bing du deng tai* 萬里悲秋常作客，百年多病獨登台” in “*Deng gao* 登高” (“From a Height”) loses its pleasing semantic symmetry as well as the interplay between its level- and oblique-tone words when translated as “Through a thousand miles of autumn’s melancholy, a constant traveller racked with a century’s diseases, alone I have dragged myself up to this high terrace” (Hawkes, 205). The English translation has a beauty of its own, but that beauty is the beauty of English poetry, not the beauty peculiar to the antithetical structure of the Chinese couplet. As a matter of fact, Hawkes was aware of what could not be translated, particularly in the case of Du Fu. Thus, in commenting on the form of “*Chun wang* 春望,” he made the following perceptive remark: “This is a formally perfect example of a pentasyllabic poem in Regulated Verse. Not only the middle couplets, but the first couplet, too, contain verbal parallelism. It is amazing that Tu Fu is able to use so immensely stylized a form in so natural a manner. The tremendous spring-like compression which is achieved by using very simple language with very complicated forms manipulated in so skilful a manner that they don’t show is characteristic of Regulated Verse at its best. Its perfection of form lends it a classical grace which unfortunately cannot be communicated in translation. That is the reason why Tu Fu, one of the great masters of this form, makes so comparatively poor a showing in foreign languages” (Hawkes, 46-47). But, as Du Fu’s untranslatability, or the untranslatability of classical Chinese poetry, for that matter, is a topic for another full-length paper, I shall not go into further details here.

¹⁵ This is the subtitle of William Hung’s book on Du Fu, which expresses a view likely to be shared by the majority of discerning critics of classical Chinese poetry. See William Hung, *Tu Fu: China’s Greatest Poet* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952).

¹⁶ In quoting Du Fu’s poems, I use *Pinyin* in romanizing the original titles; the English translations of the titles, with *Pinyin* replacing Wade-Giles romanization,

細草微風岸
危檣獨夜舟
星垂平野闊
月湧大江流 [.]¹⁷

The lines present a quiet scene in which there is a boat by the river bank, with the waters flowing under the moon and the stars hanging down over a vast expanse of land. There is peace as well as motion.

In Hawkes's translation, a similar scene is re-created with equally vivid details:

By the bank where the fine grass bends in a gentle wind, my boat's tall mast stands in the solitary night. The stars hang down over the great emptiness of the level plain, and the moon bobs on the running waters of the Great River.¹⁸

With strokes as delicate as those in the original, the translation first paints a quiet scene which is near the narrator's point of observation, and then, with a panning shot, lets the reader see "the stars" hanging down "over the great emptiness of the level plain," together with the bobbing moon, and "the running waters of the Great River." The movement from what is close by to what is panoramic is controlled with great precision.

In his version, "Thoughts While Travelling at Night," Hung describes the boat as moving:

Between two shores of tender grass, in the slight breeze, Glides this lonely high-masted boat. The stars seem to reach down to the fields, flat and wide; The moon seems to be swimming as the Great River flows [.]¹⁹

In so doing, he has destroyed the functional ambiguity of the original, which, not indicating whether the boat is moving or moored by the river bank, allows the reader's imagination free play. At the same time, because of the fluidity of Chinese syntax, "*du* 獨" 'solitary'²⁰ in the phrase "*du ye zhou* 獨夜舟" 'solitary-night-boat'²¹ can be applied to "*ye* 夜" 'night,'

are Hawkes's unless indicated otherwise.

¹⁷ Hawkes, 200.

¹⁸ Hawkes, 202.

¹⁹ Hung, 256.

²⁰ The gloss is Hawkes's.

²¹ To highlight the fluidity of Chinese syntax, I have hyphenated "solitary," "night,"

creating a kind of pathetic fallacy, an effect which Hawkes has accurately conveyed to the English reader.²² In Hung's version, not only has this suggestiveness disappeared, but the word “*ye* 夜” is left untranslated; when the translator wishes to convey the original's imagery, he can, either because of his insufficient sensitivity to the source-language text or because of his inadequate command of the target language, turn a dynamic image (“*Yueyong* 月湧” ‘The moon surges’)²³ into one which is feeble and comical: “The moon seems to be swimming.”

In comparison with Hawkes's version, the versions of two other translators of the poem, namely, Hamill and Waley, also pale:²⁴

Thin grass bends on the breezy shore,
and the tall mast seems lonely in my boat.

Stars ride low across the wide plain,
and the moon is tossed by the Yangtze.
 (“Night Thoughts While Travelling”)²⁵

Fine grasses	ruffled by breeze
Tall mast	lone boat moored by the bank.
Stars overhang	the unending plain

and “boat,” indicating that the Chinese word “*du* 獨” ‘solitary’ can qualify, respectively, “*ye* 夜” ‘night,’ “*zhou* 舟” ‘boat,’ and “*ye zhou* 夜舟” ‘night boat.’

²² Pathetic fallacy is “the poetic convention whereby natural phenomena which cannot feel as humans do are described as if they could: thus rain-clouds may ‘weep’, or flowers may be ‘joyful’ in sympathy with the poet’s (or imagined speaker’s) mood. The pathetic fallacy normally involves the use of some metaphor which falls short of full-scale personification in its treatment of the natural world. [...] The rather odd term was coined by [...] Ruskin in the third volume of his *Modern Painters* (1856). Ruskin’s strict views about the accurate representation of nature led him to distinguish great poets like Shakespeare, who use the device sparingly, from lesser poets like Wordsworth and Shelley, whose habitual use of it becomes ‘morbid’. Later critics, however, employ the term in a neutral sense” (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 163).

²³ In my gloss of “*Yueyong* 月湧,” I have departed slightly from Hawkes’s translation, sticking more closely to the water image of “*yong* 湧.”

²⁴ This Waley (Jonathan Waley) should not be confused with the more famous translator Arthur Waley.

²⁵ Sam Hamill, trans., *Facing the Snow: Visions of Tu Fu*, with calligraphy by Yim Yse (New York: White Pine Press, 1988), 95.

hypotactic, this technique makes the poem sound un-English against the background of English poetry, which is very rarely pared down to this extent. Moreover, whereas the absence of connectives in Chinese poetry does not destroy the implied linkage between words, which is automatically supplied by native speakers of Chinese when they are reading, the artificial deletion of connectives in English not only makes the lines sound unnatural, but also takes away the linkage, so that the words or phrases function almost as disparate lexical items. Watson's choice of words, too, is not altogether felicitous. On the one hand, the words "Delicate" and "faint" tend to evoke associations with weakness. On the other, though presenting a sharp, even startling, image of the mast, "stark," being unnecessarily forbidding, evokes associations with bareness, desolation, stiffness, rigidity, the unpleasant, and the negative, failing to harmonize with the peaceful atmosphere described in the original. The same can be said of "lone," which is at odds with the tranquillity of the scene and the poet's feeling of contentment, which are implied by Hawkes's "solitary."³⁰

³⁰ It must be admitted, though, that, because of its special syntactic structure, the line "*Xing chui ping ye kuo* 星垂平野闊," which is not the same thing as "*Xing chui kuo ping ye* 星垂闊平野," already borders on the untranslatable. Of all the versions quoted, Hawkes's comes closest to the original; still, it is more a version of "*Xing chui kuo ping ye* 星垂闊平野" than of "*Xing chui ping ye kuo* 星垂平野闊." The latter, because of the ambiguous relationship between "*kuo* 闊" and the rest of the line and between "*kuo* 闊" and "*ping ye* 平野," has more than one layer of meaning. While sharing exactly the same lexical items with "*Xing chui kuo ping ye* 星垂闊平野," it can also have the following meaning: "As the stars hang down [the level plain], the level plain expands in dimension (or increases in vastness)," in which "*kuo* 闊," primarily a static adjective, has taken on verbal force and become dynamic. In European languages, an adjective can also come after a noun, as in *consul general* in English, or *la Maison Blanche* 'the White House' (literally 'the House White') in French, or *la Casa Bianca* 'the White House' (literally 'the House White') in Italian, but the postposition of the adjective in these phrases does not normally add any new layer of meaning to the collocation as does its counterpart in Chinese. Watson's translation (118), "stars hang down, over broad fields sweeping; / the moon boils up, on the great river flowing," shows that the translator is aware of the original's syntactic fluidity, and tries to reproduce the same effect in English. However, because of the syntactic limitations of the English language, despite their postposition ("fields sweeping," "river flowing"), the two keywords ("sweeping" and "flowing") have only become participial; because of this, they still fail to convey the functional ambiguity of the original, which adds an additional layer of meaning to the line. In his exegesis of lines 5 and

Alley's rendering, "Night Thoughts of a Traveller," is a mixed performance:

Thin reeds, and from the land
 A soft breeze; our mast stands
 Tall and stark in the night
 And I am alone; stars hang
 Over the great plain, and
 The moon moves with the flowing river [...] ³¹

"A soft breeze," a close equivalent of "*weifeng* 微風," is as sensitive as Hawkes's "a gentle wind." However, "reeds" is not the same thing as "*cao* 草" 'grass'; "stark" is, as in Watson's version, at odds with the tranquillity depicted by Du Fu. In taking the adjective "*du* 獨" 'solitary' in "*du ye zhou* 獨夜舟" 'solitary-night-boat' to describe the narrator ("And I am alone") instead of the night or the night boat, Alley has either miscomprehended the original or deliberately avoided tackling the poet's bold and evocative phrase, which can describe the night, the boat, or the night boat as solitary at the same time. In the last line ("The moon moves with the flowing river"), too, the verb "moves," lacking specificity, has reduced the dynamic scene ("*yue yong* 月湧" 'The moon surges'), which makes a powerful impact on the reader, to something general and vapid.

In McCraw's version, "Expressing My Feelings, on a Night of Travel,"

A fine grassy, light breezy bank;
 A tall masted, lonesome night boat.
 The stars droop, as flat wilds widen;
 The moon bobs, in great Jiang's flow [...]³²

the functional ambiguity arising from the fluidity of Chinese syntax, which

6 ("San gu pin fan tianxia ji [...] *Liang chao kaiji lao chen xin* 三顧頻煩天下計 [...] 兩朝開濟老臣心") of "*Shu xiang* 蜀相" ("The Chancellor of Shu"), Hawkes (107) shows that he is aware of this peculiarity of Chinese syntax: "The grammar of these two lines may seem more than a little puzzling. They are examples of the sort of 'pregnant construction' which is fairly common in Chinese syntax, where predication includes a much wider range of relationships than it does in European languages."

³¹ Rewi Alley, trans., *Tu Fu: Selected Poems*, compiled by Feng Chih (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1962), 135.

³² David R. McCraw, *Du Fu's Laments from the South* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 63.

allows the reader's imagination plenty of freedom, is destroyed because of an ill-chosen translation strategy: using the subordinate endocentric construction to translate the first and second lines, in which "bank" ("*an* 岸") is the head word of "A fine grassy, light breezy bank" and "boat" ("*zhou* 舟") is the head word of "A tall masted, lonesome night boat," the translator has failed to bring about a free interplay between words, which is a prominent feature of the original. The choice of words, too, is less than felicitous. Whereas "*du* 獨" 'solitary' in the original is neutral, "lonesome" in the translation carries negative connotations. The word "droop" in the third line, suggesting weakness and lifelessness, is not equivalent to "*chui* 垂" in "*Xing chui ping ye guo* 星垂平野闊," either, for the Chinese word suggests no weakness or lifelessness; it is a less accurate rendering than Hawkes's "hang" in "The stars hang down over the great emptiness of the level plain." Finally, romanizing "*jiang* 江" as "Jiang," the translator is more likely to bewilder the reader than to help him enter the world of the original.

Bynner's version, entitled "A Night Abroad," is largely a deviation:

A light wind is rippling at the grassy shore....
Through the night, to my motionless tall mast,
The stars lean down from open space,
And the moon comes running up the river.³³

Even where the interpretation is generally correct, the translator's handling of the imagery lacks the sensitivity expected of translators of poetry. For example, translating "*Yue yong Dajiang liu* 月湧大江流" as "the moon comes running up the river," Bynner has rendered the scene not only void of poetic suggestiveness, but also bathetic and comical, intrusively evoking the image of a runner.³⁴

³³ Witter Bynner, trans., *The Jade Mountain: A Chinese Anthology, Being Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty 618-906*, from the texts of Kiang Kang-hu (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), 152.

³⁴ In his Introduction, Bynner has made the following remark about Chinese poetry:

Because of the absence of tenses, of personal pronouns and of connectives generally, the translator of Chinese poetry, like the Chinese reader himself, has considerable leeway as to interpretation. If even in English, so much more definite a language, there may be varying interpretations of a given poem, it is no wonder that critics and annotators have differed as to the

Kenneth Rexroth, a poet himself, adopts a totally different approach, an approach similar to Pound's when the latter translated Chinese poetry into English: taking the original as a point of departure so as to write his own poem. The result is what one would call a piece of "transwriting," entitled "Night Thoughts While Travelling":

A light breeze rustles the reeds
 Along the river banks. The
 Mast of my lonely boat soars
 Into the night. Stars blossom
 Over the vast desert of
 Waters. Moonlight flows on the
 Surging river.³⁵

A fine poem in its own right, the "translation" cannot bear scrutiny alongside the original if one tries to identify corresponding sense-units in both.³⁶ For example, nowhere in the original does Du Fu say that "The /

meaning of poems in Chinese. There have been frequent instances in this volume where Dr. Kiang and I have discussed several possible meanings of a poem and have chosen for translation into the more definite language the meaning we preferred. (Bynner, xviii)

It is true that, because of the characteristics of Chinese poetry enumerated by Bynner, the translator "has considerable leeway as to interpretation"; however, the meanings of lines 1-3 and 5-6 in the original are so clear and unambiguous that they leave no "leeway as to interpretation" in this instance. The deviation from the meaning of the original can only be explained by two possible causes: either Bynner, "a westerner [...] without a knowledge of the Chinese tongue" (Bynner, xiii), has not been able to re-present the correct interpretation made by Kiang Kang-hu, Bynner's collaborator, or Kiang himself has misinterpreted the original. As, judging by his Introduction, Bynner appears to be trying to translate in accordance with his and Kiang's interpretation, one should not attribute his deviation to a deliberate attempt at "rewriting."

³⁵ Kenneth Rexroth, trans., *One Hundred Poems from the Chinese* (New York: New Directions, 1971), 33.

³⁶ Rexroth is to Hawkes very much as Pound is to Arthur Waley. As poets, Rexroth and Pound freely exploited Chinese poems for the purpose of re-creation, while Waley and Hawkes conscientiously and meticulously translated Chinese poems into English. In other words, Rexroth and Pound are not translators in the strict sense of the word, while Waley and Hawkes are. A distinction must be drawn between Rexroth and Pound, though: while Rexroth does follow certain parameters set by his "source-language text," Pound does not seem to have considered himself

Mast of my lonely boat *soars* / Into the night.”³⁷ It is worth noting, too, that, ending lines 2 and 6 with the definite article “the,” Rexroth tends to lead the reader to conclude that his poem is prose printed in lines separated at random. Upon closer examination, though, one may say that, in so doing, Rexroth is trying to highlight “Mast” in line 3 and “Surging” in line 7.³⁸

From the above discussion, it is clear that, though “*Lǚ ye shu huai*” “is one of Du Fu’s dearest-loved, most-translated, and best-analyzed poems in English,”³⁹ it does not seem to have benefited from the passage of time or from the large number of attempts by various translators; to date, no translation has yet succeeded in equalling, much less surpassing, Hawkes’s.

V. Natural Scenery Involving Large-Scale Motion

While the scene in “*Lǚ ye shu huai*” is relatively quiet and tranquil, moving from what is close by to what is far from the point of observation, the following scene, from “*Deng gao* 登高” (“From a Height”), is one of large-scale motion, a panorama right from the beginning:

風急天高猿嘯哀
渚清沙白鳥飛迴
無邊落木蕭蕭下
不盡長江滾滾來 [.]⁴⁰

In Hawkes’s translation, the scene is characterized by an equally grand sweep:

The wind is keen, the sky is high; apes wail mournfully. The island looks

under any obligation to follow any parameters; he is interested only in “rewriting” or “writing” his own poems. At times, though, Rexroth comes very close to Pound in his “rewriting” project. Thus he can, in “To Wei Pa, a Retired Scholar,” translate “*Ren sheng bu xiangjian* 人生不相見” as “The lives of many men are / Shorter than the years since we have / Seen each other” (Rexroth, 11), lines which are no longer recognizable as “translation.”

³⁷ My italics.

³⁸ Used too often, as is the case in Rexroth’s volume, this “technique” can cease to be effective and become irksome to the reader.

³⁹ McCraw, 64.

⁴⁰ Hawkes, 203.

fresh; the white sand gleams; birds fly circling. An infinity of trees bleakly divest themselves, their leaves falling, falling. Along the endless expanse of river the billows come rolling, rolling.⁴¹

In both the original and the translation, the reader is greeted by a scene of sound and motion set in a vast expanse of space; with the wind blowing, the apes wailing, the birds circling, and the “infinity of trees bleakly divest[ing] themselves” above the fresh island and the gleaming sand, autumn is heard, seen, and felt through the senses.

Watson’s translation, “Climbing to a High Place,” again dispensing with connectives, is remarkable by virtue of its concision:

Wind shrill in the tall sky, gibbons wailing dolefully;
beaches clean, sands white, overhead the circling birds;
leaves fall, no end to them, rustling, rustling down;
ceaselessly the long river rushes, rushes on.⁴²

In the four lines quoted above, only the essentials of the original poem are presented; the “spare parts” required by the hypotaxis of English are omitted, resulting, as pointed out earlier, in a loss in naturalness. The choice of words and the rhythm are not flawless, either. First, one does not know why Watson has preferred “tall” to “high” in his translation of “*tian gao* 天高.” Second, the word “dolefully” tends towards the funereal and the gloomy, which is much stronger than “*ai* 哀” ‘mournfully.’⁴³ To describe the grief-evoking wail of an ape or a gibbon, “mournfully” is a more appropriate word. Third, the word “beach,” likely to trigger associations with swimmers, sun-tanning, beach volleyball, beachheads, and so on, is too modern for the scene. Fourth, though “*bai* 白” normally has a pat equivalent in “white,” its appearance in the collocation “*sha bai* 沙白” has taken on a more specific shade of meaning, which is conveyed with precision by Hawkes’s “white [...] gleams” in “the white sand gleams.”

In re-presenting the scene, Watson is also less meticulous. His “overhead the circling birds,” though similar to Hawkes’s “birds fly circling” at first glance, suffers in comparison. In the original, Du Fu has not indicated whether or not the birds are overhead. As is clear from the title of the source-language text, the poet is observing the river, the

⁴¹ Hawkes, 205.

⁴² Watson, 146.

⁴³ The gloss is Hawkes’s.

“infinity of trees,” and the birds from a vantage point higher than the river, at times perhaps even higher than the birds; judging from the description in line 1 (“*Feng ji tian tao* 風急天高”), he must be looking at the islets (or sand-banks) and the birds from quite a distance; even if the birds may fly overhead at times, coming closer to the poet, they should not be constantly “overhead,” for they are circling, at one moment nearer the islets in the distance, at another nearer the observer. With “circling” put before “birds,” too, the dynamic scene in the original, rendered with great precision by Hawkes (“birds fly circling”), is reduced to something static, reminding the reader of the difference between “*Xing chui kuo ping ye* 星垂闊平野” and “*Xing chui ping ye kuo* 星垂平野闊” discussed in footnote 30.

Furthermore, any gain in concision resulting from the omission of connectives in line 3 is outweighed by the harm done to the rhythm. In the original, “*Wu bian luo mu xiaoxiao xia* 無邊落木蕭蕭下” is, in terms of rhythm, a continuous sweep, which is captured by Hawkes’s “An infinity of trees divest themselves, their leaves falling, falling,” in which the main clause, with a string of seemingly endless syllables, suggests the sweep, and the nominative absolute (“their leaves falling, falling”), loosely attached to the main clause, parallels the fluidity and flexibility of paratactic Chinese both rhythmically and syntactically; in Watson’s translation, the omission of connectives, with three pauses separating four units of almost equal length, gives the poem an abrupt rhythm, which bears little resemblance to the continuous music of the original. The phrase “rustling, rustling down,” though reproducing the onomatopoeic effect of “*xiaoxiao* 蕭蕭,” cannot adequately present the grand, panoramic scene of “*Wu bian luo mu xiaoxiao xia* 無邊落木蕭蕭下.” Unlike Hawkes’s phrase “falling, falling,” which is made up of two trochaic feet, both ending in an unstressed syllable, Watson’s rendering, with the line ending in a stressed syllable (“down”), is unduly emphatic, so that the feeling of something petering out as conveyed by “*xiaoxiao xia* 蕭蕭下” in the original fails to come through.

By virtue of its twelve syllables running on uninterrupted before coming to a halt, thereby suggesting the endless rolling of the waves, line 4 is rhythmically closer to the original. Nevertheless, it is not without flaws: “rushes, rushes on” is, in both rhythmic and semantic terms, too hasty; the large number of sibilants (/s/ and /ʃ/) in “ceaselessly the long river *rushes, rushes on*,”⁴⁴ too, is not in keeping with the majestic rolling

⁴⁴ My italics.

of billows.

In Young's translation, entitled "From a Height,"

Vast sky, sharp wind,
and the gibbons wailing sadly

the white sand on the island looks fresh
birds are wheeling above it

everywhere the trees
are silently shedding leaves

and the long river, ceaselessly
comes churning and rushing on [,]⁴⁵

line 1 of the first stanza dispenses with the definite article *the*, apparently to achieve concision and paratactic effects. Line 2 of the second stanza conveys the same vivid motion of birds flying above the island. However, the word "sadly," being a general word, lacks the narrower and more specific semantic field of "*ai* 哀," and "silently" fails to capture the meaning of "*xiaoxiao* 萧萧," which, being onomatopoeic, suggests the sound of the wind or of the leaves falling. In translating "*xiaoxiao* 萧萧" as "bleakly [...] falling, falling," Hawkes has succeeded in conveying the onomatopoeic effect, first with a word ("bleakly") that describes the mood of autumn, which is associated with the falling of leaves, then with a reduplication ("falling, falling"), which matches the reduplication of the original, and in which the alliteration in "*falling, falling*"⁴⁶ approximates to the repeated initial consonant of "*xiaoxiao* 萧萧."⁴⁷ In Young's version, there is no evidence that the translator has paid such meticulous attention to the original's subtle phonological effects.

The same can be said of Young's rendering of "*gungun* 滚滚." As a reduplication, the Chinese collocation not only describes the billows of the Changjiang (Yangtze) River rolling forward, but also conveys through onomatopoeia the sound of the surging billows. Whereas Hawkes's "rolling, rolling" has re-created this effect, Young's "churning and rushing on" suggests little of the original onomatopoeia; worse still, the word

⁴⁵ David Young, trans., *Du Fu: A Life in Poetry* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 198.

⁴⁶ My italics.

⁴⁷ My italics.

“churning,” in most everyday contexts taken to mean “To agitate, stir, and intermix any liquid, or mixture of liquid and solid matter; to produce (froth, etc.) by this process,”⁴⁸ tends to pull the reader towards its other common meaning: “To agitate *milk* or *cream* in a churn so as to make butter; to produce *butter* thus,”⁴⁹ reminding him more of a churner or a ship’s motor than of nature.

In terms of diction and comprehension of the original, Young is also less competent than Hawkes. Whereas Hawkes’s “mournfully” conveys the same plaintive quality as “*ai* 哀,” Young’s “sadly,” describing a generic feeling rather than a more specific one as the original does, fails to convey the precise emotive shade of the gibbons’ wailing. His “the white sand on the island looks fresh,” on the other hand, is an unwarranted telescoping of two ideas (“*zhu qing* 渚清” and “*sha bai* 沙白”) into one, thereby “short-changing” the reader by presenting him with only part of the scene depicted by Du Fu. Worse still, in the telescoping, the translator has distorted the meaning of the original, which unequivocally says it is the “*zhu* 渚” ‘island’ that is “*qing* 清” ‘fresh’;⁵⁰ in Young’s version, “*qing* 清” has been mistakenly made to qualify “*sha* 沙” ‘sand.’

Bynner, perhaps because of his need to rely on his collaborator for the interpretation of the original, comes up in his version, entitled “A Long Climb,” with images not found in the original:

In a sharp gale from the wide sky apes are whimpering,
Birds are flying homeward over the clear lake and white sand,
Leaves are dropping down like the spray of a waterfall,
While I watch the long river always rolling on.⁵¹

The birds that “fly circling”⁵² in the original have been made to fly “homeward”; the image of “the spray of a waterfall” has been read into “*Wu bian luo mu xiaoxiao xia* 無邊落木蕭蕭下”; at the same time, the word “dropping” fails to describe the more gentle but large-scale falling of the leaves of the “infinity of trees”⁵³ described by Du Fu, for *drop* normally suggests a quick and, very often, isolated movement, referring to objects heavier than leaves, such as a coin.

⁴⁸ *OED*, Vol. 3, 208.

⁴⁹ *OED*, Vol. 3, 208.

⁵⁰ The two glosses are Hawkes’s.

⁵¹ Bynner, 155.

⁵² Hawkes, 205.

⁵³ Hawkes, 205.

VI. Translating the Imagistic

Highly sensitive to Du Fu's techniques, Hawkes is able to go imagistic in the same way as the poet does whenever the original calls upon him to do so, as can be seen in his translation of the following lines in "Yong huai guji 詠懷古迹" (2) ("Thoughts on an Ancient Site" (2)):

諸葛大名垂宇宙
 宗臣遺像肅清高
 三分割據紆籌策
 萬古雲霄一羽毛 [.]⁵⁴

Chu-ko Liang's great fame resounds through the ages. The likeness of this revered statesman still impresses with its sublime expression. The tripartite division of empire hampered his great designs; yet he soars through all the ages, a single feather floating high among the clouds.⁵⁵

The first three lines both in the original and in the translation roam through time and history, like a camera panning up and down, enabling the reader to experience the vastness of Du Fu's imagination; in the fourth line, the camera first pans through eternity, then emerges from time into space, going up with a wide sweep, and, finally, zooms in on "a single feather," driving home the poet's point: that Zhuge Liang ("Chu-ko Liang" in Hawkes's translation) is way above all other statesmen or strategists. The fourth line, juxtaposing "a single feather" with "the clouds" on high, is imagistic in that the whole argument is clinched by one sharp image.

In Davis's translation of the same lines in his "Feelings on Ancient Sites" (V),

Chu-ko's great fame has been handed down to the world;
 The honored minister's surviving portrait is austere and lofty.
 Confined to a third of the empire, he contrived his plans;
 Over all antiquity, a solitary bird in the clouds [.]⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Hawkes, 178. "yixiang 遺像" in the line "zongchen yixiang su qinggao 宗臣遺像肅清高" is the reading of Du Fu 杜甫, *Dushi xiangzhu 杜詩詳註*, annotated by Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, 5 vols. (Peking: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1979), Vol. 4, 1506. Hawkes's (178) reading is "yixiang 遺象," which must be either a misprint or a variant reading of the Chinese edition used by Hawkes.

⁵⁵ Hawkes, 180.

⁵⁶ A. R. Davis, *Tu Fu*, Twayne's World Authors Series: A Survey of the World's Literature, General Editor, Sylvia E. Bowman, editors, Howard S. Levy and

not only is the phrase “*chui yuzhou* 垂宇宙” turned into a prosaic phrase with a less concrete action-verb, “handed down to the world,”⁵⁷ the cinematographic effect resulting from the juxtaposition of the grand with the tiny in the fourth line is also destroyed by the substitution of “a solitary bird” for “a single feather.”

Losing his way in the fluidity of Chinese syntax, Bynner, in his translation of the same poem, entitled “Thoughts of Old Time” (II), appears to have difficulty even in making out the relationships between the lexical items as well as in comprehending the original as a whole:

Chu-kê's prestige transcends the earth;
There is only reverence for his face;
Yet his will, among the Three Kingdoms at war,
Was only as one feather against a flaming sky.⁵⁸

In line 1, the image of “*chui yuzhou* 垂宇宙” is missing; in line 2, only one lexical item in the original line (“*xiang* 像”) is translated; the third and fourth lines, because of the translator's inability to comprehend the corresponding lines in the original, which are independent of each other, have been forcibly yoked together by a grammatical relationship of the translator's invention. As a result, even though the feather image is preserved, the dramatic effect resulting from the contrast between it and the vast space is missing, to say nothing of the puzzling phrase “flaming sky,” in which “flaming” arises out of nothing. At best, Bynner's “translation” can qualify only as a grossly curtailed, grossly distorted paraphrase of the original.

VII. Du Fu's Zoom-In Technique

If Du Fu in “*Deng gao*” (“From a Height”) has used what

William R. Schultz (TWAS 110) (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), 115.

⁵⁷ Though the first line in Hawkes's version, “Chu-ko Liang's great fame resounds through the ages” is more forceful than Davis's corresponding line, it must be pointed out that the original “*chui yuzhou* 垂宇宙” has the sense of a paragon, a shining example hanging down from high to be looked up to as a model for all ages and for all posterity, in which “*chui* 垂” is more static than Hawkes's dynamic “resounds.”

⁵⁸ Bynner, 157.

cinematographers would call panning in describing the wind, the sky, the islets, the birds that fly circling, and the trees shedding their leaves, the last two lines in “*Su fu* 宿府” (“A Night at Headquarters”) are what they would call zooming in:

清秋幕府井梧寒
 獨宿江城蠟炬殘
 永夜角聲悲自語
 中天月色好誰看
 風塵荏苒音書絕
 關塞蕭條行路難
 已忍伶俜十年事
 強移棲息一枝安 [.]⁵⁹

In the clear autumn air, the *wu-t'ung* trees beside the well in the courtyard of the Governor's headquarters have a chilly look. I am staying alone here in the River City. The wax candle is burning low. Through the long night distant bugles talk mournfully to themselves, and there is no one to watch the lovely moon riding in the midst of the sky. Protracted turmoils have cut us off from letters, and travelling is difficult through the desolate frontier passes. Having endured ten years of vexatious trials, I have perforce moved here to roost awhile on this single peaceful bough.⁶⁰

The first six lines are about the here and now, commenting on the present state of affairs; the last two lines sum up Du Fu's eight-and-a-half-year experience “since the outbreak of the An Lu-shan rebellion” and describes his feelings about life as Yan Wu's 嚴武 subordinate.⁶¹ In lines 1-7, the camera moves with a high degree of flexibility on the literal plane: first, it sweeps over the “*wu-t'ung* trees,” the “distant bugles,” and “the lovely moon”; then it shifts from specific objects and scenes to the general state of affairs (“*Fengchen renran yinshu jue* [;] *guansai xiaotiao xinglu nan* 風塵荏苒音書絕 [;] 關塞蕭條行路難”), as well as to a looking back upon the past ten years. Finally, rising to the metaphorical plane in line 8 and leaving behind the general, it zooms in on the very specific: “*qiang yi qixi yi zhi an* 強移棲息一枝安.” In Hawkes's translation, the camera follows the same path, ending with an equally effective zooming in: “I have perforce moved here to roost awhile on this single peaceful bough.”

In Davis's translation, “Spending the Night at Headquarters,”

⁵⁹ Hawkes, 129.

⁶⁰ Hawkes, 131-32.

⁶¹ Hawkes, 131.

At the general's headquarters in clear autumn the *wu-t'ungs* by the well
 are cold;
 As I pass the night alone in the river city, the candles burn low,
 While, the long night, horn notes wail, I mutter to myself;
 The beauty of the moon in the sky, who else watches?
 The wind and dust continue; news is cut off;
 The frontier is lonely; the roads are difficult.
 I have endured a state of distress for ten years;
 Now I am forced into the ease of "resting on a single branch [,]"⁶²

the last line is also a zooming in, but the progression from the cosmic to the last shot is interrupted by the clause "I mutter to myself" in line 3, which, apart from being a mistranslation,⁶³ focuses on the narrator "I" prematurely.

In McCraw's translation, "Lodging at Staff Bureau,"

Limpid Fall at the staff bureau, wellside paulownias chill;
 Lonely lodging in River Citadel, waxen candles gutter.
 Bugle notes thru an endless night make doleful monologue;
 Moonlight in the middle heavens: charming, but who sees it?
 Windblown dust interminable, news and letters curtailed;
 Border barriers so desolate, a hard road to travel.
 I have endured roaming alone through ten years of ado,
 & barely reached a restful roost, a single branch of repose [,]"⁶⁴

the camera follows the movement of the original and ends with a zooming in. However, the truncated syntax resulting from the omission of connectives gives the movement a staccato effect, which is not found in the original. Nor is the choice of words felicitous. "Citadel," meaning "The fortress commanding a city, which it serves both to protect and to keep in subjection" or "[a] strong fortress, a stronghold,"⁶⁵ is not the same thing as "*jiangcheng* 江城" in the original, which is just a city by the river,

⁶² Davis, 90.

⁶³ In the original line, "*Yongye jiaosheng bei zi yu* 永夜角聲悲自語," the subject of "*bei zi yu* 悲自語" is "*jiaosheng* 角聲," not the narrator. For this reason, Hawkes's "Through the long night distant bugles talk mournfully to themselves" is correct, and Davis's "While, the long night, horn notes wail, I mutter to myself" is wrong.

⁶⁴ McCraw, 39.

⁶⁵ *OED*, Vol. 3, 248.

as is accurately rendered by Hawkes. At the same time, it should be pointed out that, even in a short translation, McCraw is unable to remain consistent in his spelling, a flaw which can only be put down to sloppiness: using “thru” in line 3 but “through” in line 7, the former being the “informal, simplified spelling” of the latter;⁶⁶ using “and” in line 5 but the ampersand (“&”) in line 8.

The German version by von Zach, entitled “Nacht im Hauptquartier,” is semantically accurate:

Der kühle Herbst ist im Hauptquartier eingezogen; es frösteln die
Sterculia-Bäume am Brunnen.
Allein verbringe ich die Nacht in der Stadt am Strome (Ch'engtufu),
das Wachlicht geht seinem Ende entgegen.
Die lange Nacht hindurch ertönen die Klänge der Hörner, während ich
traurig Monologe halte.
Mitten am Himmel glänzt der Mond, um von wem gesehen zu werden?
(d. h. ich allein ergötze mich daran).
Ununterbrochen herrscht (in China) wildes Kriegsgetümmel, und aus
der Heimat kommen keine Nachrichten mehr.
Die Grenzpässe sind verlassen, die Wege gefährlich zu begehen.
Schon zehn Jahre lang ertrage ich diese Einsamkeit (fern von der
Heimat).
Geswungen bin ich hierher (ins Hauptquartier) übersiedelt, um wie ein
Vogel Ruhe zu finden auf einem Ast.⁶⁷

However, in rendering the images, von Zach is less sensitive to the original than Hawkes. In line 3 of the original, for example, it is the “distant bugles” (“*jiaosheng* 角聲”) that “talk mournfully to themselves” (“*bei zi yu* 悲自語”).⁶⁸ Von Zach has mistaken “I” (“ich”) for the subject (“distant bugles”): “während ich traurig Monologe halte” (literally “while I am holding a sad monologue,” that is, “talking to myself mournfully”). With the introduction of a simile (“wie ein Vogel,” meaning “like a bird”), the last line (“Geswungen bin ich hierher (ins Hauptquartier) übersiedelt, um wie ein Vogel Ruhe zu finden auf einem Ast”), literally translated into

⁶⁶ Stuart Berg Flexner et al., eds., *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., unabridged (New York: Random House, Inc., 1987), 1978.

⁶⁷ Erwin von Zach, übersetzt von, *Tu Fu's Gedichte*, Vol. 1, Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies VIII, edited with an introduction by James Robert Hightower (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952), 405-406.

⁶⁸ Hawkes, 131-32.

English, reads: "I have perforce, like a bird, moved to the headquarters to find rest on a branch." Because of the simile, which has to rely on "wie" 'like,' the direct and forceful metaphor in the original is diluted.

In his translation, entitled "Staying at the General's Headquarters," Bynner is able to capture the original's general drift, but its finer shades have escaped his grasp:

I hear the lonely notes of a bugle sounding through the dark.
[...]
My messengers are scattered by whirls of rain and sand.
[...]
Yet, I who have borne ten years of pitiable existence,
Find here a perch, a little branch, and am safe for this one night.⁶⁹

In the first line, "zi 自" 'to themselves'⁷⁰ is left untranslated. In the second, the translator has read "My messengers are scattered by whirls of rain" into the source-language text. The last line is semantically correct, but, with "Find here a perch, a little branch" put before "and am safe for this one night," the cinematographic progression of the original is disrupted, or, more precisely, reversed, so that the version fails to end in a zoom-in climax, which is a distinctive feature of the original and of Hawkes's translation.

In his version entitled "I Pass the Night at General Headquarters," Rexroth freely adapts the original for creative purposes, translating "*Yongye jiaosheng bei zi yu* 永夜角聲悲自語" as "All night long bugle / Calls disturb my thoughts,"⁷¹ which is hardly recognizable as a version of the original. In his last two lines, "I perch here like a bird on a / Twig, thankful for a moment's peace,"⁷² the climax of the original is replaced by an anticlimax. Had he been sensitive to the original, he would have ended his poem with the phrase "on a / Twig."⁷³

⁶⁹ Bynner, 156.

⁷⁰ The gloss is Hawkes's.

⁷¹ Rexroth, 25.

⁷² Rexroth, 25.

⁷³ One does not know whether Rexroth could read Chinese. If he could not, it would not be fair to Du Fu to tinker with or transmogrify his poems in this way and palm the products off as "translations" of Du Fu's work on readers who are not able to read Chinese, for, in so doing, the "translator" could mislead the readers, doing Du Fu a disservice rather than a service. The same can be said of translators like Bynner, who, having only a collaborator or collaborators to guide them, mess

In “*Li ren xing* 麗人行” (“Ballad of Lovely Women”), Du Fu makes use of the zoom-in technique again to show how sated “the great ladies of the court” are with the delicacies set before them:⁷⁴

犀筋厭飫久未下
鸞刀縷切空紛紛 [.]⁷⁵

But the chopsticks of rhinoceros-horn, sated with delicacies, are slow to begin their work, and the belled carving-knife which cuts those threadlike slices wastes its busy labours.⁷⁶

To emphasize the sumptuousness of the banquet, the poet focuses on the expensive chopsticks and the carving-knife instead of the people. In translating the two lines, Hawkes keeps the same focus, zooming in on the chopsticks and the carving-knife.

Watson’s version,

but ivory chopsticks, sated, dip down no more,
and phoenix knives in vain hasten to cut and serve [.]⁷⁷

though retaining the chopsticks and the knives as the focus, has moved towards generalization: whereas Hawkes’s “slow to begin their work” succeeds in reproducing the hesitancy conveyed by the original “*jiu wei xia* 久未下,” and the phrase “those threadlike slices” reinforces the focusing effect of “the belled carving-knife,” Watson’s “dip down no more” describes a forthright motion that suggests no hesitancy.

Davis’s rendering,

The rhinoceros-horn chopsticks, through satiety, long are unused;
Morsels, fine-shredded by the phoenix knife, lie vainly heaped [.]⁷⁸

is problematic for two reasons. First, “through satiety, long are unused” does not indicate that the lovely women have had so much of the delicacies that they just do not have any more appetite to pick up more food, so that their chopsticks are held in the air, no longer eager to descend

up Du Fu’s poems beyond recognition and pass them off as Du Fu’s work.

⁷⁴ Hawkes, 21.

⁷⁵ Hawkes, 19.

⁷⁶ Hawkes, 27.

⁷⁷ Watson, 17.

⁷⁸ Davis, 37.

on the dishes, as it were. Second, “long are unused” can lead the reader to think that the chopsticks, having been stowed away, have remained unused for a long time. Third, the shifting of the focus from the carving-knife (“phoenix knife” in Davis’s version) to the “Morsels” (“Morsels [...] lie vainly heaped”) in the second line is also undesirable, since the focus of the original is unequivocally on the carving-knife (“*luandao lüqie kong fenlun* 鸞刀縷切空紛綸”), just as the focus of the preceding line is on the “rhinoceros-horn chopsticks,” that is, on the cutlery rather than on the food.

With the imagery blurred through generalization, Bynner’s version, entitled “A Song of Fair Women,” is more like prose than poetry:

Though their food-sticks of unicorn-horn are lifted languidly
And the finely wrought phoenix carving-knife is very little used [...]⁷⁹

In the first line, the idea of “*yanyu* 厭飫” is missing. In the second, a concrete phrase, “*kong fenlun* 空紛綸,” is turned into an abstract generalization: “is very little used.”

VIII. Hawkes’s Superiority over Other Translators in the Choice of Words

From the above examples, we can see how sensitive Hawkes is to the poetic qualities of Du Fu’s originals. Sometimes, even the handling of a common expression can show his superiority over other translators. For example, in translating the following lines of “*Danqingyin: Zeng Cao Jiangjun Ba* 丹青引：贈曹將軍霸” (“A Song of Painting. To General Ts’ao Pa”),

良相頭上進賢冠
猛將腰間大羽箭
褒公鄂公毛髮動
英姿颯爽來酣戰 [...]⁸⁰

which describe the portraits of two great soldiers “distinguished for their services towards the founding of the [Tang] dynasty,”⁸¹ Hawkes has

⁷⁹ Bynner, 171.

⁸⁰ Hawkes, 134.

⁸¹ Hawkes, 140.

succeeded first in re-presenting equally vivid portraits of two great soldiers, then in capturing their spirit by preserving the freshness of the image “*hanzhan* 酣戰,” on which the liveliness of the portraits depends:

On the heads of good ministers you painted ‘Promotion of the Worthy’ hats; at the belts of fierce generals you painted ‘Big Feather’ arrows. The Duke of Pao and the Duke of O,⁸² their beards and hair bristling, appeared, from their heroic and forbidding expressions, to be drunk with many battles.⁸³

With their garments, armour, and expressions painted in memorable strokes, the characters stand out conspicuously, and are enlivened further by the finishing touch: “to be drunk with many battles,” which is a sensitive rendering of “*hanzhan* 酣戰.” In the eyes of an uninspired translator, “*hanzhan* 酣戰” may simply be regarded as a stock phrase, meaning, in abstraction and with no figurative force, “to fight fiercely” or “fierce battle,” and conveyed in the target language as such.⁸⁴

In William Hung’s translation, the characters are much less vivid, whether with respect to their physical description or to their spirit:

You can recognize the state ministers by their high hats. You know the great generals by the huge plumed arrows hanging from their belts. The hair of Marshals Tuan Chih-yüan and Yü-ch’ih Ching-tê shimmers; Their brave faces express thoughts of fierce battle.⁸⁵

On the one hand, “huge plumed arrows,” with its Latin origin in “plumed,” is less striking than “‘Big Feather’ arrows,” in which “Feather,” being of Anglo-Saxon origin, is bolder and more forceful; on the other, the word “shimmers,” though attractive in itself by virtue of its light image, is a deviation, for there is no light image in the original. What makes Hung’s version inferior to Hawkes’s version is, in particular, the line “Their brave

⁸² The “Duke of O” refers to Yuchi Jingde 尉遲敬德. As a one-character surname, “尉” is pronounced “Wei” and romanized as such; as a two-character surname, or compound surname, “尉” is romanized as “Yu” (“Yü” in the Wade-Giles system); Hawkes’s Wei-ch’ih Ching-te, should, therefore, read “Yü-ch’ih Ching-te [strictly speaking, Ching-tê in the Wade-Giles system].” As a matter of fact, Yü-ch’ih Ching-tê’s name is Yü-ch’ih Kung [“Yuchi Gong” in the *Pinyin* system] 尉遲恭; Ching-tê is Yü-chih Kung’s 字 (style).

⁸³ Hawkes, 144.

⁸⁴ As we shall see, this is exactly what Hung did.

⁸⁵ Hung, 212.

faces express thoughts of fierce battle,” which lacks the boldness and concreteness of Hawkes’s version, “appeared, from their heroic and forbidding expressions, to be drunk with many battles,” a rendering that has preserved the “intoxication” image of the original “*han 酣*.”⁸⁶

Davis’s rendering, entitled “Song of Painting: Presented to General Ts’ao Pa,” conveys much of the original’s spirit:

On the heads of noble ministers were “Promoted Worthy” hats;
At the waists of fierce Generals, great-feathered arrows.
The hair of the Dukes of Pao and O bristled;
Their heroic aspect was alive with love of battle.⁸⁷

The first three lines are generally comparable to Hawkes’s corresponding lines; however, when it comes to the translation of “*hanzhan 酣戰*,” it is Hawkes’s bold image that excels: compared with “drunk with many battles,” Davis’s “love of battle,” like Hung’s “thoughts of fierce battle,” appears abstract and vague.

With almost all the specific details missing, Bynner’s drastically generalized version, entitled “A Song of a Painting: To General Ts’ao,” also fails to evoke the original image:

You crowned all the premiers with coronets of office;

⁸⁶ Whether because of sloppiness, or because of incompetence, Hamill (101), in rendering the same poem (of 40 lines), has taken only lines 5-8 as his source-language text: “*Xue shu chu xue Wei Furen* [,] *dan hen wu guo Wang Youjun* [,] *Danqing buzhi lao jiang zhi* [,] *fugui yu wo ru fuyun* 學書初學衛夫人 [,] 但恨無過王右軍 [,] 丹青不知老將至 [,] 富貴於我如浮雲.” Even in rendering these much less challenging lines, on which his target-language text, “Homage to the Painter General Ts’ao,” is supposed to be based, the translator is unable to come up with an accurate version: “As Lady Wei’s star pupil, your calligraphy / was compared to General Wang’s. / Impervious to old age, when you painted, / prosperity slipped past you like clouds.” The original does not say that Ts’ao Pa was “Lady Wei’s star pupil,” nor does it say Ts’ao’s “calligraphy / was compared to General Wang’s,” nor does it say as a fact that “prosperity slipped past [Ts’ao Pa] like clouds.” The rendering appears particularly amateurish when compared with Hawkes’s much more accurate translation: “In calligraphy you first studied under the Lady Wei, your only regret being that you could not excel Wang Hsi-chih. Painting, you forget the advance of old age: to you wealth and rank are as insubstantial as floating clouds” (Hawkes, 143-44). Like Rexroth and Bynner, Hamill is also doing Du Fu an injustice.

⁸⁷ Davis, 134.

You fitted all commanders with arrows at their girdles;
 You made the founders of this dynasty, with every hair alive,
 Seem to be just back from the fierceness of a battle.⁸⁸

With “*jinxianguan* 進賢冠” and “*da yujian* 大羽箭” respectively generalized as “coronets” and “arrows,” with “*Bao Gong* 褒公” and “*E Gong* 鄂公” rendered as “the founders of this dynasty,” and with “*lai hanzhan* 來酣戰” mistranslated as “just back from the fierceness of a battle,” in which the image “*han* 酣” has disappeared in the process of generalization, the version is much less vivid than both the original and Hawkes’s translation.

IX. Translating Du Fu’s Startling Sense Impressions

Speaking in English for Du Fu, as it were, Hawkes can match the poet in his ability to convey, in just a couple of lines, startling sense impressions which work in mysterious ways. Take “*Ji Han Jianyi Zhu* 寄韓諫議注” (“For the Admonisher, Han Chu”), for example, in which two lines condense a good deal of the visual:

鴻飛冥冥日月白
 青楓葉赤天雨霜 [.]⁸⁹

In rendering these two lines, Hawkes is able to convey to readers of the target-language text a scene which, in terms of visual qualities, is equally evocative:

A wild swan flies in the dark depths of heaven; the sun is moon-white;
 frost descends on the reddening leaves of the green maples.⁹⁰

The colours of the original are reproduced, which is a relatively easy task for the translator; what makes the translation remarkable is not the substitution of English colour-words for Chinese ones; rather, it is the translator’s capturing of the elusive, the uncanny, and the ineffable that makes his version stand out. The word “*ming* 冥” in “*mingming* 冥冥” in the first line has a pat equivalent in Chinese-English dictionaries. It is

⁸⁸ Bynner, 164.

⁸⁹ Hawkes, 165.

⁹⁰ Hawkes, 173.

translated, for example, by “dark” or “obscure” in the *Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary*.⁹¹ But in the Chinese line quoted above, because of the interaction or, to use a metaphor, inter-induction, between the semantic units (“*Hong fei* 鴻飛,” “*mingming* 冥冥,” “*riyue bai* 日月白”), “*mingming* 冥冥” appears to the reader to have shed its normal dictionary meaning, and taken on a layer of meaning which cannot be immediately pinned down: while still retaining a trace of its original meaning, it has come to suggest something other-worldly, something mystical, made much more so by the preceding line (“*zhuo zu Dongting wang bahuang* 濯足洞庭望八荒”).⁹² By rendering it as “dark depths,” Hawkes has succeeded in conveying this suggestive and mystical quality, which is enhanced by “the sun is moon-white,” just as the suggestive and mystical quality in the original is enhanced by “*riyue bai* 日月白.”⁹³ In his translation of the second line, not only is the original visual impact reproduced (“the reddening leaves of the green maples”), but the subtle and intricate turn of phrase is closely attended to. In the Chinese

⁹¹ Wu Jingrong et al., comp., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* 漢英詞典 (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; New York / Chichester / Brisbane / Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 1983), 477.

⁹² As a matter of fact, because of this inter-induction between semantic units, which cannot be completely analysed or explained, the whole line “*Hong fei mingming riyue bai* 鴻飛冥冥日月白” is permeated by a sense of the mystical. Of all Chinese poets, Du Fu is the greatest master in creating this kind of magic, magic which the reader can feel, but which he can hardly dissect, analyse, or explain because of the subtle and elusive suggestiveness released as a result of various semantic units working upon one another, units which, when standing separately by themselves, are just common lexical items. Another example which is equally difficult to analyse and explain but which has the same kind of magic and casts a similar spell on the reader with its complex and inexplicably fugitive connotations is the line “*shan kong Niaoshu qiu* 山空鳥鼠秋” from no. 1 of the poet’s “*Qinzhou zashi* 秦州雜詩” (“Poems Written on Various Occasions in Qinzhou”) series, which consists of twenty-one poems. For a detailed discussion of this and other lines which share the same quality, see Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Zhongguo san da shiren xinlun* 中國三大詩人新論 (Taipei: Crown Press 皇冠出版社, 1984), 48-50. For Du Fu’s “*Qinzhou zashi* 秦州雜詩” (“Poems Written on Various Occasions in Qinzhou”) series, see Du Fu 杜甫, *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳註, annotated by Qiu Zhao’ao 仇兆鰲.

⁹³ It must be admitted, though, that “*riyue bai* 日月白” is open to other interpretations. For example, the adjective “*bai* 白” ‘white’ can be taken to qualify both “*ri* 日” ‘sun’ and “*yue* 月” ‘moon,’ that is, both the sun and the moon are white.

expression “*ye chi* 葉赤,” because of the quasi-verbal nature of the collocation, there is a fluid and dynamic relationship between “*ye* 葉” and “*chi* 赤,” which is different from the relationship between “*chi* 赤” and “*ye* 葉” in the more common collocation “*chi ye* 赤葉.” In “*chi ye* 赤葉,” with an adjective qualifying a noun, the relationship between the two words is static. Sensitive to this subtle difference, Hawkes makes a point of also using a verbal adjective (“reddening”) to translate “*chi* 赤.” Had the phrase “red leaves” or the clause “the leaves are red” been used, the dynamic scene in the original would have been destroyed. Having tapped the associative potentiality of the quasi-verbal “*chi* 赤,” Du Fu intensifies the sensuous appeal of the line by using the expression “*tian yu shuang* 天雨霜,” which contains a tactile and, again, dynamic image. Rising to the challenge once again, Hawkes has succeeded in coming up with an equally sensuous image: “frost descends.”

Translating the same lines into verse, Jenyns has not, in his version entitled “Sending a letter to Mr. Han, the Censor,” benefited from the medium he employs:

A Wild swan flew into the distance white as the sun or moon.
The leaves of the green maple turn red,
The sky is like to drop hoar frost [...]⁹⁴

Both “flew into the distance” and “white as the sun or moon” are much less startling than the original images. The second and third lines, which are the equivalent of only one line in the original, also suffer in terms of verbal economy as a result of the restructuring.

Again taking liberties with the source-language text, Bynner, in his version entitled “A Letter to Censor Han,” has left much of the original imagery untranslated:

Wildgeese flying high, sun and moon both white,
Green maples changing to red in the frosty sky [...]⁹⁵

The original “*mingming* 冥冥” is nowhere to be found; and the forceful “*tian yu shuang* 天雨霜,” in which there is a verb “*yu* 雨” adding to the drama, is reduced to a plain, static description: “in the frosty sky.”

⁹⁴ Soame Jenyns, trans., *A Further Selection from the Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty*, the Wisdom of the East Series, ed. J. L. Cranmer-Byng (London: John Murray, 1944), 36.

⁹⁵ Bynner, 165.

X. Translating the Dream-Like and the Phantasmagoric

If the lines discussed above are a formidable challenge to translators, lines in which Du Fu conjures up the dreamlike and the phantasmagoric are much more so. A case in point is “*Meng Li Bo* 夢李白” (1)⁹⁶ (“Dreaming of Li Po” (1)), in which he describes how the great poet Li Bo, who is eleven years his senior, comes and goes in his dream:

魂來楓林青
魂返關塞黑
落月滿屋梁
猶疑照顏色 [.]⁹⁷

The ingenious deployment of colour-words (“*Hun lai fenglin qing* [;] *hun fan guansai hei* 魂來楓林青 [;] 魂返關塞黑”) creates a surreal atmosphere marked by a feeling which is poignant yet elusive and, again, hard to pin down, reinforced by a sense of wistfulness and loss in the two lines that follow, “*Luo yue man wuliang* [;] *you yi zhao yanse* 落月滿屋梁 [;] 猶疑照顏色,” lines which are equally surreal, but which, in contrast to what is depicted in the first two lines, describe a scene that belongs to the real world.

Hawkes's translation conveys the same atmosphere with equally evocative visual images:

When your soul left, the maple woods were green: on its return the passes were black with night. Lying now enmeshed in the net of the law, how did you find wings with which to fly here? The light of the sinking moon illumines every beam and rafter of my chamber, and I half expect it to light up your face.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Traditionally pronounced “Li Bo,” the poet's name is more commonly pronounced “Li Bai” in modern spoken Chinese.

⁹⁷ Hawkes, 88.

⁹⁸ Hawkes, 92. The sentence, “Lying now enmeshed in the net of the law, how did you find wings with which to fly here?” is the English translation of two lines (“*Jun jin zai luowang* [;] *heyi you yuyi* 君今在羅網 [;] 何以有羽翼 [?]”) preceding the Chinese quotation. The whole poem in Chinese reads: “死別已吞聲 [;] 生別常惻惻 [;] 江南瘴癘地 [;] 逐客無消息 [;] 故人入我夢 [;] 明我長相憶 [;] 君今在羅網 [;] 何以有羽翼 [?] 恐非平生魂 [;] 路遠不可測 [;] 魂來楓林青 [;] 魂返關塞黑 [;] 落月滿屋梁 [;] 猶疑照顏色 [;] 水深波浪闊 [;] 無使蛟龍得” (Hawkes, 87-88).

As visually sharp as the original, the description of Li Bo's soul travelling to where Du Fu is and of his return home is etched into the reader's mind; the lines describing the moment Du Fu wakes up realistically present the feelings and mood of one still in a dreamy state, not knowing whether he is awake or still dreaming.

In Watson's translation,

His spirit came from where maple groves are green,
then went back, left me in borderland darkness.
Now you're caught in the meshes of the law;
how could you have wings to fly with?
The sinking moon floods the rafters of my room
and still I seem to see it lighting your face [.]⁹⁹

the waking moment is a closer rendering of the original than Hawkes's in that "seem" conveys the poet's uncertainty more accurately than "half expect," for it suggests more realistically the trance-like state of one having just woken up, whereas "half expect" expresses a state of mind closer to that of one who is able to exercise his volition. Watson's "floods," describing the moon when the poet wakes from his dream, is also preferable to Hawkes's "illuminates," though the latter, in isolation, is the normal equivalent of "zhao 照." This is because when one wakes up on a moonlit night, with one's eyes having grown used to the absence of light, one normally finds the moonlight dazzling. For this reason, "floods" is a more realistic description of the light the poet sees on waking up than "illuminates," which suggests a less intense, less overwhelming optical image. However, in rendering the two lines which are visually most evocative ("*Hun lai fenglin qing* [.] *hun fan guansai hei* 魂來楓林青 [.] 魂返關塞黑"), Watson has deviated from the original and offered an interpretation which is different from Hawkes's: Li Bo's soul resides where there are maple groves; Du Fu is an inhabitant of the borderland. This, however, is not what the original says. In the original, the two lines "*Hun lai fenglin qing* [.] *hun fan guansai hei* 魂來楓林青 [.] 魂返關塞黑" actually contrast two moments in time: the moment Li Bo's soul comes to visit Du Fu in the latter's dream and the moment he leaves Du Fu and makes his way "home"—that is, if a soul has a "home"; they do not

⁹⁹ Watson, 77. Like Hawkes, Watson has, in his translation, also reversed the order of the original's lines. The two lines, "Now you're caught in the meshes of the law; / how could you have wings to fly with?" are the translation of the Chinese lines "*Jun jin zai luowang* [.] *heyi you yuyi* 君今在羅網 [.] 何以有羽翼?"

indicate or suggest that Li Bo lives in a place “where maple groves are green” or that Du Fu is “in borderland darkness.” Moreover, though “黑” can be translated by either “dark” or “black,” the context of the original favours Hawkes’s “black,” which is visually sharp, evocative, and even startling. Hawkes’s superiority can also be seen in his use of the second person (“When your soul left, the maple woods were green”) in comparison with Watson’s use of the third person (“His spirit came from where maple groves are green”): Hawkes’s second person, tallying with the second person in the original, as is made clear by the line, “*Jun jin zai luowang* [,] *heyi you yuyi* 君今在羅網 [,] 何以有羽翼” (“Lying now enmeshed in the net of the law, how did you find wings with which to fly here?”), gives the translation the same kind of immediacy as the original does, whereas Watson’s third person has a distancing effect, detracting from the friendship between Li Bo and Du Fu.

In rendering the same lines, Davis, in his version entitled “Dreaming of Li Po,” has similar difficulties:

Your soul came from the green of maple forests;
 Your soul returns from the darkness of the passes.
 Just now you lie in the net’s meshes;
 How could you find wings?
 The sinking moon fills my house beams;
 I think it lights up your face.¹⁰⁰

In reading the translation, one misses the surreal atmosphere of the original; the temporal relationship between “*Hun lai fenglin qing* [;] *hun fan guansai hei* 魂來楓林青 [;] 魂返關塞黑,” expressed in Chinese without any connectives, disappears in the English version; perhaps not quite sure about this relationship and wanting to play safe, Davis has rendered the original lines as separate independent units. Equally unsatisfactory is the line “The sinking moon fills my house beams”: “fill,” often applied to vessels, such as a cup, and to liquids, such as water, fails to re-present accurately the scene depicted by the line “*Luo yue man wuliang* 落月滿屋梁.” Even with as simple a word as “*yi* 疑,” Davis’s imprecision is obvious: being too unequivocal, the word “think” in “I think it lights up your face” lacks the uncertainty denoted by “*yi* 疑,” which is more accurately translated by either Hawkes’s “half expect” and, in particular, Watson’s “seem to see.”

¹⁰⁰ Davis, 147.

Hamill's version, also entitled "Dreaming of Li Po," shows that the translator has difficulty comprehending the original:

Your spirit is in the heart of green maple,
your spirit returns to the dark frontier.

Tangled in nets of law, tell me,
how can the spirit soar?

Moonlight fills my room. Your poor face
shines, reflected in the rafters.¹⁰¹

The original does not say that Li Bo's "spirit is in the heart of green maple," nor does it say, "your spirit returns to the dark frontier." Reproducing—or, to be more precise, producing—a piece of writing in English that bears only a tangential relationship with the original, Hamill cannot be expected to come anywhere close to Hawkes or, for that matter, to Watson or Davis. In sloppily translating the original into two unrelated lines, he has, as is to be expected, overlooked the temporal relationship between "*Hun lai fenglin qing* 魂來楓林青" and "*hun fan guansai hei* 魂返關塞黑," which Hawkes has accurately preserved. Judging by the first two lines, it is also clear that the translator is unaware of the difference between "*fenglin qing* 楓林青" and "*qing fenglin* 青楓林" as well as between "*guansai hei* 關塞黑" and "*hei guansai* 黑關塞." Coming after a noun, the adjectives "*qing* 青" and "*hei* 黑" have each an opening-up effect, and take on verbal force, whereas, when put before the nouns "*fenglin* 楓林" and "*guansai* 關塞" respectively, they will become restricted, capable of qualifying only the nouns. In the fourth line ("how can the spirit soar?"), the concrete image of "*yuyi* 羽翼" in the original is reduced to a generalizing "soar." In the last two lines, a visually specific image in the original ("*Luo yue man wuliang* 落月滿屋梁") is watered down, becoming a general description: "Moonlight fills my room"; "*yanse* 顏色" is distorted, to be forcibly equated with "Your poor face"; and "*zhao yanse* 照顏色" is mistranslated as "reflected in the rafters."

Bynner's version, "Seeing Li Po in a Dream" (I), is equally problematic:

You came to me through the green of a forest,
You disappeared by a shadowy fortress [...]

¹⁰¹ Hamill, 49.

[...]
 [...] I woke, and the low moon's glimmer on a rafter
 Seemed to be your face, still floating in the air.¹⁰²

In the first two lines, “*fenglin* 楓林” is reduced to a generalized phrase (“a forest”), and a place or region (“*guansai* 關塞”) is changed to a single building (“fortress”). The third and fourth lines are surreal, even phantasmagoric, by themselves; however, grossly distorting the original, they can only be regarded as “rewriting.”

Von Zach's German version has, on the whole, retained the sense-units of the original:

Seine Seele kam aus dem Lande der grünen Ahornwälder und kehrte
 wieder dahin zurück aus der hiesigen dunklen Wüste der
 Grenzgegenden.
 Du bist doch jetzt als Verbannter gewissermassen in einem Netz
 verstrickt, wie konntest Du da Deine Flügel gebrauchen?
 Die Strahlen des sinkenden Mondes füllen das Innere meiner Kammer;
 noch kommt es mir vor, dass sie Deine Gesichtszüge bescheinen.¹⁰³

However, the relationship between “*Hun lai* 魂來” and “*fenglin qing* 楓林青” on the one hand and between “*hun fan* 魂返” and “*guansai hei* 關塞黑” on the other is misinterpreted; before “*hun lai* 魂來” and “*hun fan* 魂返,” a conjunction or a conjunctive phrase like “when” or “at the moment when,” is to be understood, which Hawkes's version has brought out in English by amplification. Apparently unable to detect this temporal relationship, von Zach has supplied only two adverbial phrases of place: “aus dem Lande der grünen Ahornwälder” ‘out of the land of green maple groves,’ “aus der hiesigen dunklen Wüste der Grenzgegenden” ‘out of the dark wilderness of the frontier region here’; the result is, again as to be expected, a mistranslation. In comparison, the last line appears less problematic, but even so, it has retained only part of the surreal quality of the original, for, in the first half, “Die Strahlen des sinkenden Mondes füllen das Innere meiner Kammer” ‘the rays of the sinking moon fill the interior of my room’ has reduced the concrete “*wuliang* 屋梁” to a general phrase, “das Innere meiner Kammer” ‘the interior of my room’ instead of Hawkes's much more vivid, much more concrete rendering, “The light of the sinking moon illumines every beam and rafter of my

¹⁰² Bynner, 160-61.

¹⁰³ von Zach, 185.

chamber,” which has reproduced the stark details of the original line.

XI. Translating Auditory Imagery

In the poem just discussed, what stands out in the imagery is the visual quality; in “*Yueye yi shedi* 月夜憶舍弟” (“Thinking of My Brothers on a Moonlit Night”), it is the auditory effect that arrests the reader’s attention—and at the very beginning of the poem:

戍鼓斷人行
 邊秋一雁聲
 露從今夜白
 月是故鄉明
 有弟皆分散
 無家問死生
 寄書長不達
 況乃未休兵 [.]¹⁰⁴

In the first two lines, the silence, remoteness, and solitariness of the far-off setting are suggested by “*duan ren xing* 斷人行” and “*bian qiu* 邊秋,” then reinforced by “*Shugu* 戍鼓” and “*yi yan sheng* 一雁聲.” In rendering these lines, Hawkes has paid meticulous attention to the auditory imagery, conveying the same kind of night-scene:

Travel is interrupted by the war-drums of the garrisons. The sound of a solitary wild goose announces the coming of autumn to the frontier.¹⁰⁵

In translating the second line, though, because of the non-paratactic nature of English, Hawkes has specified the relationship between “*bian qiu* 邊秋” and “*yi yan sheng* 一雁聲,” whereas in the original, the two phrases are just juxtaposed, meaning something like “frontier autumn, the sound of a wild goose,” so that the reader’s imagination is given total freedom to come up with various relationships between the two phrases. Though unable to retain the original’s functional ambiguity and imposing certain parameters on the reader’s imagination, Hawkes’s rendering gains in sharpness, concision, and dramatic immediacy, with “announces” working as the fulcrum of the second line, forcefully drawing the reader’s attention

¹⁰⁴ Hawkes, 73.

¹⁰⁵ Hawkes, 77.

to the transition between seasons, so much so that the line can almost be appreciated independently as an Imagist poem.¹⁰⁶

In the corresponding lines in Watson's version, entitled "On a Moonlit Night Thinking of My Younger Brothers,"

Martial drums cut off all human concourse;
borderland autumn, cry of a lone wild goose [...]¹⁰⁷

parataxis allows the reader's imagination free play, but "concourse," being an unduly formal word in the given context, fails to chime in with the general style of the translation; the word "borderland," too, is less sharp, less precise than Hawkes's "frontier" in suggesting the remoteness and solitariness of "*bian qiu* 邊秋."

In Davis's version, "Thinking of My Brothers on a Moonlit Night,"

The guard tower drum puts an end to men's passing;
In the frontier autumn—a single wild goose's cry [...]¹⁰⁸

"puts an end to men's passing," being in the same register as "*duan ren xing* 斷人行," is more in keeping with the original than Watson's "cut off all human concourse" and even Hawkes's "Travel is interrupted," since the original line describes the now and here, whereas "Travel" is a more fitting description of a general state of affairs. By using a dash, Davis has ingeniously preserved the Chinese parataxis of the original without making his English version sound unnatural or obtrusive.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ One could, of course, argue that these qualities are achieved at the expense of semantic accuracy.

¹⁰⁷ Watson, 64.

¹⁰⁸ Davis, 73.

¹⁰⁹ It should also be pointed out that both Davis's "Worse still there's no end to the war!" (73) and Watson's "much less now, with hostilities unceasing!" (64) are more accurate renderings of the original "*kuang nai wei xiu bing* 況乃未休兵" than Hawkes's "and it will be worse now that we are at war once more [...]" for the original means that the war has not yet ended. Hawkes, of course, knows what "*wei xiu bing* 未休兵" means, as can be seen in his exegesis of the line "*kuang nai wei xiu bing* 況乃未休兵": "Especially as not-yet end fighting" (Hawkes, 76), but he has chosen to interpret it differently, a strategy reflected even from his rendering of the first line: "Travel is interrupted by the war-drums of the garrisons" (Hawkes, 77). In other words, he has taken "*Shugu duan ren xing* 戍鼓斷人行" as a description of the general state of affairs in time of war, not the description of a particular moment. Appearing alongside "*bian qiu yi yan sheng* 邊秋一雁聲,"

In his translation, entitled “Under the Evening Moon Thinking of my Younger Brother,” Jenyns sets up no grammatical relationship between “*bian qiu* 邊秋” and “*yi yan sheng* 一雁聲,” thereby coming closer to the functional fluidity of the original; in rendering the first line, though, he has taken the phrase “*duan ren xing* 斷人行” as an observation about a general state of affairs rather than a comment on what is happening at a particular moment during the night:

The throb of drums from (distant) garrisons holds up all communications,
On the frontiers in autumn one goose is calling.¹¹⁰

Taking liberties with the original, Bynner’s version, entitled “Remembering My Brothers on a Moonlight Night,” cannot be regarded as translation in the strict sense of the word:

A wanderer hears drums portending battle.
By the first call of autumn from a wildgoose at the border,
He knows that the dews tonight will be frost.
...How much brighter the moonlight is at home!
O my brothers, lost and scattered,
What is life to me without you?
Yet if missives in time of peace go wrong—
What can I hope for during war?¹¹¹

Lines 1-3 and 5-6, except for certain similar lexical items, bear little resemblance to the original lines.

XII. Imagery That Appeals to Several Senses at the Same Time

The foregoing paragraphs, concentrating on the visual and the auditory, may lead one to think that Du Fu’s imagery tends to appeal to one sense at a time; the fact is otherwise: very often, the poet’s imagery can appeal to several senses at the same time, as can be seen in the following lines from

however, the first line is clearly a description of the here and now, that is, of a particular moment at night, to be followed by the poet’s reflections on the general: “*Lu cong jin ye bai* [;] *yue shi gu xiang ming* 露從今夜白 [;] 月是故鄉明。”

¹¹⁰ Jenyns, 59. One does not know, though, why he has translated “*yan* 雁” as “goose” instead of “wild goose.”

¹¹¹ Bynner, 150.

“*Bingju xing* 兵車行” (“Ballad of the Army Carts”):

君不見青海頭
古來白骨無人收
新鬼煩冤舊鬼哭
天陰雨溼聲啾啾 [.]¹¹²

In these lines, visual (“*baigu* 白骨,” “*tianyin* 天陰”), auditory (“*xin gui fanyuan jiu gui ku* 新鬼煩冤舊鬼哭,” “*sheng jiujiu* 聲啾啾”), and tactile images (“*yushi* 雨溼”) combine to drive home the horrors of war.

In Hawkes's version, “Ballad of the Army Carts,” the horrors of war are conveyed in equally evocative images:

“Why look, sir, on the shores of the Kokonor the bleached bones have lain for many a long year, but no one has ever gathered them up. The new ghosts complain and the old ghosts weep, and under the grey and dripping sky the air is full of their baleful twitterings.”¹¹³

“[B]leached bones” and “grey [...] sky” are visual; “the old ghosts weep” and “baleful twitterings” are auditory, and “dripping sky” is tactile, with “twitterings” and “dripping” being onomatopoeic. Working together, all the images present concrete details of the battlefield on which the soldiers died.

In comparison with Hawkes's version, Hung's “The Song of War Chariots” appears rather uninspired:

“Do you not know that in the region near Kokonor Since ancient times human bones have been left to bleach in the sun? New ghosts murmur

¹¹² Hawkes, 8. In Hawkes's version, “*fānyuān* 煩冤” in the line “*xīn guǐ fānyuān jīu guǐ kū* 新鬼煩冤舊鬼哭” reads “*fānyuàn* 煩怨.” See Du Fu, *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳註, Vol. 1, 116. Possibly, “*yuàn* 怨” is a misprint. In reading *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, one is impressed by Hawkes's meticulous and rigorous scholarship and unsurpassed translations. However, one also notices quite a number of errors in respect of *pinyin* and Chinese characters. Given the learning and calibre of the author-cum-translator, the errors must have been due to factors beyond his control. This hypothesis is, to a large extent, confirmed by the edition under discussion, in which the errata were corrected by having the correct characters in Chinese or *pinyin* script pasted on the page. In the 1987 reprint of the book (Hong Kong: Renditions Paperbacks), most of these errors were corrected by the editors, who included the late Professor D.C. Lau.

¹¹³ Hawkes, 17.

while the old ones weep, You can always hear them when night or rain comes.”¹¹⁴

Whether in visual or auditory terms, it is less vivid and concrete than Hawkes’s version: while “left to bleach in the sun” is an idiomatic way to suggest that no one gathers up the bones; the original, “*gu lai bai gu wu ren shen* 古來白骨無人收,” being so emphatic, calls for something more specific, as is supplied by Hawkes’s version. “[M]urmur,” which can be used of both favourable and unfavourable ways of expressing one’s feelings, is not an adequate rendering of “*fanyuan* 煩冤”; “night,” coming from a Du Fu expert like Hung, is an unexpected misinterpretation of “*tianyin* 天陰”; the last line, “You can always hear them when night or rain comes [,]” is the most unsatisfactory: it has reduced to a vague generalization an auditory image that drives home the eeriness of the scene.¹¹⁵

In Watson’s version, “Ballad of the War Wagons,”

“You’ve never seen what it’s like in Koko Nor?
Years now, white bones no one gathers up,
new ghosts cursing fate, old ghosts wailing,
skies dark, drizzly rain, the whimpering, whimpering voices [,]”¹¹⁶

the scene is also made vivid and concrete through the use of visual (“white bones”), auditory (“wailing,” “whimpering, whimpering voices”), and tactile (“drizzly rain”) images. However, judging by his choice of words, Watson’s ability to suggest the nuances of the original is not comparable to Hawkes’s: while “white” is the normal dictionary equivalent of “*bai* 白”

¹¹⁴ Hung, 65.

¹¹⁵ In the Introduction to his *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, Hawkes has paid tribute to Hung: “I make no apology for the inadequacy of this briefing, because I want the reader to meet Tu Fu straight away and to become acquainted with him through his poems. If, after reading them, he is still desirous of more information about Tu Fu’s life and work, he cannot do better than turn to Dr. William Hung’s excellent *Tu Fu* (Harvard, 1952), which contains a full biography of the poet and translations of many more of his poems than are contained in this little book” (Hawkes, xi-xii). Coming from a great translator like Hawkes, this is a compliment Hung could well have been proud of. But, judging by this and other translations in Hung’s book, one would tend to think that the above tribute must have been partly prompted by the generosity and modesty of a magnanimous fellow practitioner.

¹¹⁶ Watson, 9.

in “*bai gu* 白骨,” it does not fit in with the context as aptly as Hawkes’s “bleached,” which suggests the effect of wind and rain on the bones over the years, and which is what the context requires; “drizzly rain,” signifying fine rain as it does, is somewhat too poetic for a scene where so many soldiers have died in vain and where their spirits still mourn their futile deaths; finally, “whimpering,” though onomatopoeic like Hawkes’s “twitterings,” is more suitable for describing “a child about to burst into tears,”¹¹⁷ since its first meaning in the *OED* is “[t]o utter a feeble, whining, broken cry, as a child about to burst into tears; to make a low complaining sound”;¹¹⁸ in other words, it is less related to ghosts complaining under an overcast, “dripping sky.” As a result, it fails to suggest the eeriness of the scene as effectively as “twitterings” does.¹¹⁹ Apparently determined to adhere to parataxis at all costs, Watson has made his character, who is talking about history, speak unnatural and truncated English.

In Davis’s version, “Song of the War Carts,”

“Sir, have you not seen, near Kokonor,
The white bones from olden times, no one collects?
New ghosts complain, old ghosts lament;
At night or in the rain, their voices moan [.]”¹²⁰

apart from the mistranslation “At night” (for “*tianyin* 天陰”) and the generalized “rain” (for the more specific “*yu shi* 雨溼”), “moan” fails to re-present the auditory eeriness of “*jiujiu* 啾啾.”

In his translation, entitled “Song of the War Carts,” Young, paying scant attention to the original, has deviated from its sense-units or simply omitted them:

“Have you seen how the bones from the past
lie bleached and uncollected near Black Lake?

the new ghosts moan, the old ghosts moan—
we hear them at night, hear them in rain.”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ *OED*, Vol. 20, 235.

¹¹⁸ *OED*, Vol. 20, 235.

¹¹⁹ To be sure, the word “whimper” has other meanings too: “To complain pulingly; to ‘whine’: esp. *for, after*, † *to something*” (*OED*, Vol. 20, 235); “[t]o utter or express in a whimper”; “[o]f an animal, esp. a dog: To utter a feeble querulous cry” (*OED*, Vol. 20, 236).

¹²⁰ Davis, 36.

The reader is first struck by the translator's amazing "boldness" in substituting "Black" for "*qing* 青," which is normally translated by "blue."¹²² In the last but one line, the translator does not even care to distinguish between "*fanyuan* 煩冤" and "*ku* 哭." Even more unbelievable is his blatant disregard for the setting of the poem: whereas "*tianyin* 天陰" in the original clearly indicates that the drama takes place in the daytime, the translator has substituted "night" for day. Given this "free" approach on the part of the translator, the reader can no longer expect to see him conscientiously coming to grips with "*tian* 天陰," "*yushi* 雨溼," or "*sheng jiujiu* 聲啾啾"; these important sense-units, which Hawkes and Watson have painstakingly tackled, are simply omitted—the "easiest" way to surmount difficulties in translation.

In Wu Juntao's version, "The Chariots Rattle On,"

"Don't you see, far away at the Lake of Chinhai,
 "E'er since the ancient times skulls're spread under the sky?
 "The new ghosts are resentful while the old ones cry,
 "In the gloomy wet days they sadly wail and sigh [...]"¹²³

partly because of the translator's attempt at rhyming and partly because of his shaky command of the target language, the original has undergone a good deal of distortion or, to put it more mildly, refraction. First, "skulls" has unnecessarily narrowed down the meaning of "*bai gu* 白骨," which does not exclusively refer to "skulls." Second, "*wu ren shou* 無人收," a specific and concrete detail, is generalized as "spread under the sky." Third, "wail and sigh," being generic, is, in auditory terms, less memorable than either Watson's "whimpering, whimpering" or Hawkes's "twitterings." Fourth, the word "sigh," which is not the same thing as "*fanyuan* 煩冤," is introduced apparently because of the need to find a rhyme-word for "[...]hai," "sky," and "cry." Leaving the finer shades of meaning in the original unattended to, the version conveys much less of its message than either Watson's or Hawkes's has done.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Young, 44.

¹²² The collocation "*qingsi* 青絲," referring to hair, especially a woman's hair, is an exception, in which "*qing* 青" normally means "black."

¹²³ Wu, 50.

¹²⁴ It should also be pointed out that the romanization "Chinhai" for "青海" belongs neither to the Wade-Giles system nor to the *Pinyin* system of romanization. In the Wade-Giles system, "青海" is romanized as "Ch'ing-hai"; in the *Pinyin*

In Alley's translation, "Ballad of the War Chariots," the line "*Jun bu jian Qinghai tou* 君不見青海頭" is omitted; the remaining three lines are simply joined to those preceding "*Jun bu jian Qinghai tou* 君不見青海頭":

Now, we peasants have learnt one thing:
 To have a son is not so good as having
 A daughter who can marry a neighbour
 And still be near us, while a son
 Will be taken away to die in some
 Wild place, his bones joining those
 That lie bleached white on the shores
 Of Lake Kokonor, where voices of new spirits
 Join with the old, heard sadly through
 The murmur of falling rain.¹²⁵

The translation is not translation in the true sense of the word; it is, again, what translation theorists would call "rewriting," in which little or no attention need be paid to the actual sense-units, images, or nuances of the original; the "translator" is free to perform whatever operations he wishes to perform on the source-language text.

It is worth noting, too, that Alley's "translation," though printed as separate lines in the same way English verse is printed, is, strictly speaking, only prose divided into lines at random or in accordance with the constraints of space on the page; being printed as separate lines, it has the semblance of verse, but it is not verse—much less poetry—in prosodic or artistic terms.

Equally problematic is Alley's English style: whereas the original lines are lively and, at the time Du Fu wrote the poem, colloquial, with short units that characterize spoken language, the English version is one lengthy complex sentence with four subordinate clauses ("who can marry a neighbour / And still be near us"; "while a son / Will be taken away to die in some / Wild place"; "That lie bleached white on the shores / Of Lake Kokonor"; "where voices of new spirits / Join with the old"), a nominative absolute ("his bones joining those [...]"), and a past participial phrase ("heard sadly through / The murmur of falling rain"), which are well thought out, well organized, and marked by a syntactic sophistication rarely found in spoken English. In contrast to Alley, Hawkes has used a much less complex syntax, translating the three lines in the original into

system, it is romanized as "Qinghai."

¹²⁵ Alley, 13.

two English sentences, each of which is a compound sentence with its clauses joined by “but” or “and.” As compound sentences are more common than complex sentences in English conversations, in which speakers frequently tag one clause to another, using such conjunctions as “and” and “but,” Hawkes’s version is a much more realistic re-presentation of the dramatic scene.

Deviating widely—especially in the last few lines—from the source-language text, Bynner’s version, “A Song of War-Chariots,” is, again, an exercise in rewriting:

[...] Go to the Blue Sea, look along the shore
 At all the old white bones forsaken—
 New ghosts are wailing there now with the old,
 Loudest in the dark sky of a stormy day.¹²⁶

Two action-verbs in the original, “*fanyuan* 煩冤” and “*ku* 哭,” are merged into one, becoming “wailing.” In the last line, apart from the more general word “dark,” an inaccurate translation of “*yin* 陰,” which subtly distinguishes the sky in the original from any other sky, the translator has read “a stormy day” into the poem.

Von Zach’s German version, “Die Erzählung von den Kriegswagen,” is on the whole a competent rendering. However, its concluding lines are less concrete, less vivid than Hawkes’s:

Hast Du nicht gehört, wie an den Ufern des Kukurons seit den ältesten
 Zeiten gebleichte Knochen (chinesischer Soldaten) umherliegen,
 ohne dass sie begraben wurden?
 Die Geister der frisch Gefallenen sind von Unmut erfüllt, während jene
 der früher Getöteten weinen.
 Wenn der Himmel bewölkt ist und ein feiner Regen niedergeht,
 erheben sich dort traurige Stimmen.¹²⁷

“[G]ebleichte Knochen” ‘bleached bones’ and “Wenn der Himmel bewölkt ist” ‘when the sky is overcast’ are visually concrete renderings, but “erheben sich dort traurige Stimmen” ‘there arise doleful voices’ fails to translate the eerie and onomatopoeic image of the original “*jiujiu* 啾啾,” which Hawkes’s “baleful twitterings” has so vividly presented in English.

¹²⁶ Bynner, 170.

¹²⁷ von Zach, 27.

XIII. Tenderness and Lightness of Touch in Du Fu's Poetry

In discussing “*Lü ye shu huai* 旅夜書懷” (“Thoughts Written While Travelling at Night”), I have shown how the poem’s natural scenery contributes to the tranquil mood. In the second half of the poem, which has not been quoted, the tranquil mood gives place to the poet’s personal reflections about himself. In other poems by Du Fu, natural scenery can give rise to reflections not about the poet himself, but about his wife and children. A case in point is “*Yueye* 月夜” (“Moonlit Night”):

今夜鄜州月
 閨中只獨看
 遙憐小兒女
 未解憶長安
 香霧雲鬢溼
 清輝玉臂寒
 何時倚虛幌
 雙照淚痕乾 [.]¹²⁸

Tender and moving, the poem begins with the moon, which the poet and his wife, though far apart, can see in different places; then it describes the poet’s affectionate thoughts about his wife and children, finally ending on a poignant note: “*He shi yi xu huang* [.] *shuang zhao lei hen gan* 何時倚虛幌 [.] 雙照淚痕乾 [.]”

Successfully tuned in to the original’s wavelength, Hawkes’s version, “Moonlit Night,” captures the same kind of tenderness with the same lightness of touch:

Tonight in Fu-chou my wife will be watching this moon alone. I think with tenderness of my far-away little ones, too young to understand about their father in Ch’ang-an. My wife’s soft hair must be wet from the scented night-mist, and her white arms chilled by the cold moonlight. When shall we lean on the open casement together and gaze at the moon until the tears on our cheeks are dry?¹²⁹

The simplicity of language, just as the simplicity of language in the original does, matches the musings of a person away from home thinking

¹²⁸ Hawkes, 28.

¹²⁹ Hawkes, 32.

of his family. The second sentence, putting the poet in his children's consciousness, is as full of tenderness as the original; particularly effective is the phrase "my [...] little ones," which, like "*xiao ernü* 小兒女," conveys with a realistic touch the father's affection for his children. The third sentence, making use of images as visual and tactile as those in the original, presents, in equally vivid terms, the poet's imagined reunion with his wife, and ends on an equally poignant note.

As the original is relatively short, it will be especially revealing to compare Hawkes's translation with the full versions by other translators, namely, Hung's "Moonlight Night," Watson's "Moonlight Night," Davis's "Moonlit Night," Alley's "Moonlight Night," Young's "Moonlight Night," and Bynner's "On a Moonlight Night":

The same moon is above Fu-chou tonight; From the open window she will be watching it alone, The poor children are too little To be able to remember Ch'ang-an. Her perfumed hair will be dampened by the dew, The air may be too chilly on her delicate arms. When can we both lean by the wind-blown curtains And see the tears dry on each other's face? (Hung, 101)

From her room in Fuzhou tonight,
all alone she watches the moon.
Far away, I grieve that her children
can't understand why she thinks of Chang'an.
Fragrant mist in her cloud hair damp,
clear lucence on her jade arms cold—
when will we lean by chamber curtains
and let it light the two of us, our tear stains dried? (Watson, 28)

Tonight the Fu-chou moon,
In her chamber alone she watches.
From afar I pity my little children
Who know not enough to remember Ch'ang-an.
With fragrant mist her cloud-hair-knots are damp;
In the chill moonlight her jade arms are cold.
When shall we lie within the empty curtains
And it shine on both, our tear-traces dry? (Davis, 50)

This night at Fuchow there will be
Moonlight, and there she will be
Gazing into it, with the children
Already gone to sleep, not even in
Their dreams and innocence thinking

Of their father at Changan;
 Her black hair must be wet with the dew
 Of this autumn night, and her white
 Jade arms, chilly with the cold; when,
 Oh when, shall we be together again
 Standing side by side at the window,
 Looking at the moonlight with dried eyes. (Alley, 31)

Tonight
 in this same moonlight

my wife is alone at her window
 in Fuzhou

I can hardly bear
 to think of my children

too young to understand
 why I can't come to them

her hair
 must be damp from the mist

her arms
 cold jade in the moonlight

when will we stand together
 by those slack curtains

while the moonlight dries
 the tear-streaks on our faces? (Young, 69)

Far off in Fu-chou she is watching the moonlight,
 Watching it alone from the window of her chamber—
 For our boy and girl, poor little babes,
 Are too young to know where the Capital is.
 Her cloudy hair is sweet with mist,
 Her jade-white shoulder is cold in the moon.
 ...When shall we lie again, with no more tears,
 Watching this bright light on our screen? (Bynner, 148)

Hung's translation is a generally accurate rendering of the poem. There are three lines, though, which do not quite match the original. First, the

phrase “The poor little children” fails to convey the poet’s tender affection, for “poor” has a different meaning from “*lian* 憐,” which in classical Chinese poetry often means “to love,” “to treat with tender affection,” of which Hawkes’s “think with tenderness” is the more accurate translation. Second, “*Xiang wu yunhuan shi* 香霧雲鬢溼” does not say that the poet’s wife has perfumed hair; Hung’s “perfumed hair” is the result of his reading too much into the original. Third, in the original, the line “*qing hui yubi han* 清輝玉臂寒” conveys a husband’s love and tenderness through the juxtaposition of “*qing hui* 清輝” and “*yubi* 玉臂”; with “*qing hui* 清輝” omitted in Hung’s version, “The air may be too chilly on her delicate arms,” the same effect is nowhere to be found.

Compared with Hung’s version, Watson’s is more sensitive. As usual, his paratactic rendering is characterized by concision; “fragrant mist in her cloud hair damp” has retained the functional ambiguity of the original, conveying the same tender note. The last line, too, is a closer rendering of the original than Hawkes’s corresponding sentence, in that “light the two of us” treats the moon as the subject as does the original, whereas Hawkes’s “gaze at the moon” has turned the original’s subject into the object of the sentence; being in verse handled with precision, the translation also has a rhythm that is in keeping with the rise and fall of the mood.

Overall, though, Watson’s version is not without flaws. First, the tone of “children,” in terms of register, cannot convey the father’s tender affection in the original as effectively as Hawkes’s “little ones.” Second, “her children” creates an undesirable distancing effect between father and children, deviating from the immediacy of “*Yao lian xiao ernü* 遙憐小兒女,” which is translated accurately by Hawkes’s “I think with tenderness of my far-away little ones.” Third, “lucence,” an unduly formal word derived from the Latin *lucere*, meaning “to be bright, shine, glitter,”¹³⁰ is off-key; as a result, it detracts from the tender affection suggested by the original.

In Davis’s version, the phrase “fragrant mist” and the line “In the chill moonlight her jade arms are cold” have a lightness of touch in keeping with the original. Nevertheless, there are a number of lines and phrases that hamper the communication in English of the poet’s tender affection. First, lines 1 and 2 in the original are natural language by the standards of idiomatic Chinese; expressed as an inversion in English, the two

¹³⁰ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary: Latin-English / English Latin*, 1st ed. 1959 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 5th ed. 1968), 351.

corresponding lines sound artificial. Second, “pity” in line 2 is not the true sense of “*lian* 憐”; nor does it connote fatherly affection as the original does. Third, “When shall we lie within the empty curtains?” is a serious distortion of the original, carrying as it does associations that border on the risqué and suggesting that the translator, instead of *choosing* the wrong word in the target language, may simply have misinterpreted “*yi* 倚.”

Alley's version is largely a piece of rewriting, with a lot of meanings read into the original: “Gazing into it [the moon], with the children / Already gone to sleep, not even in / Their dreams and innocence,” “Her black hair.” Because of this major flaw, the version is not redeemed by the last four lines, which, apart from the unnecessary repetition (“when, / Oh when”) and the unwarranted substitution of “the window” for “*xu huang* 虛幌,” are tender and touching.

Freely omitting the original sense-units and appearing to be writing a poem of his own, Young is on a par with Alley. In the first two stanzas, the idea of the poet's wife watching the moon alone in Fuzhou is replaced by a drastically abridged version, even though one could argue that the act of moon-watching in the original is implied in the translation. With the exception of “children” and, to a lesser extent, “young,” the third and fourth stanzas have little in common with lines 3 and 4 of the original, which the English version is supposed to translate. Then, in stanza 6, apparently because of the paratactic nature of Chinese, the translator does not seem to have been able to know what to make of the two corresponding lines in the original, in which “*qing hui* 清輝,” “*yubi* 玉臂,” and “*han* 寒” are juxtaposed with no connectives indicating how they are related to one another; as a result, he can do nothing but mechanically enumerate the same items in English, misplacing “cold” in the process, and coming up with a line which, though poetic in itself, bears no resemblance whatsoever to the original.

By using the present tense (“she is watching the moonlight”) instead of the future in translating the first line, as Hawkes does (“will be watching this moon alone”), Bynner has changed the original's conjectural tone to an affirmative statement. The phrase “are too young to know where the capital is” also misses the point of the original, which is translated with precision by Hawkes: that the poet's “far-away little ones [are] too young to understand about their father in Ch'ang-an.”¹³¹ Furthermore, in rendering “*yi* 倚” as “lie,” the translator slips in the same way as Davis has done, evoking undesirable connotations that border on the erotic:

¹³¹ Hawkes, 32.

“When shall we lie again [...]” Finally, in rendering “*leihen gan* 淚痕乾” as “with no more tears,” the translator has failed to convey the tender touch suggested by “*leihen* 淚痕,” which is more subtly differentiated than the phrase “with no more tears.”

XIV. Translating the Dramatic in Du Fu’s Poetry

If Hawkes’s superiority in translating “*Yueye* 月夜” (“Moonlit Night”) is seen in his handling of the tender lyricism of the original, his mastery in translating “*Ai wangsun* 哀王孫” (“The Unfortunate Prince”) is unmistakable in his treatment of the dramatic:

長安城頭頭白烏
 夜飛延秋門上呼
 又向人家啄大屋
 屋底達官走避胡
 金邊斷折九馬死
 骨肉不得同馳驅
 [...]
 高帝子孫盡隆準
 龍種自與常人殊
 豺狼在邑龍在野
 王孫善保千金軀
 不敢長語臨交衢
 且為王孫立斯須
 [...]
 慎勿出口他人狙
 哀哉王孫慎勿疏
 五陵佳氣無時無 [.]¹³²

The poem describes the narrator’s “encounter in a Ch’ang-an street with a terrified young prince” during the An Lu-shan rebellion, in which “the families of princes, officials, and high-ranking officers who had accompanied the Emperor in his flight were hunted down and massacred, down to the smallest infant.”¹³³ The opening of the poem and the advice given by the narrator to the terrified young prince are presented in dramatic terms, the description of the setting is vivid, and the narrator’s words moving, objectively reflecting the poet’s loyalty to the imperial

¹³² Hawkes, 33-35.

¹³³ Hawkes, 36.

family.¹³⁴

In translating the poem, Hawkes once again excels the other translators:

Hooded crows from the battlements of Ch'ang-an flew cawing by night over the Gate of Autumn and thence to the homes of men, pecking at the great roofs, warning the high ministers who dwelt beneath to flee from the barbarian. Golden whips were flailed until they snapped and royal horses sank dead with exhaustion beneath them; but many of the Emperor's own close kin were unable to gallop with him.

[...] but descendants of the August Emperor all have the imperial nose; the Seed of the Dragon are not as other men are.

Wolves and jackals now occupy the city; the dragons are out in the wilds: Your Highness must take care of his precious person! I dare not talk very long with you here beside the crossroads, but I will stand with Your Highness just a little while.

[...] But we must mind what we say, with so many spies about. Alas,

¹³⁴ My interpretation of Du Fu's role in the poem is different from Hawkes's: "In order to enhance the pathos of the prince's predicament, Tu Fu assigns himself a very unflattering role in this poetic record of his encounter. He appears first of all as rather pleased with himself for having spotted, from the T'ang equivalent of the 'Hapsburg lip', a member of the imperial family; then rather proud to be talking to a real prince; then scared for his own safety; then garrulously retailing the rumours, which in an enemy-occupied city must pass for news; and then apparently abandoning him, after a lot of completely valueless admonitions, to fend for himself. There is no evidence in the poem that the assistance of which the unfortunate prince was so manifestly in need was forthcoming" (Hawkes, 37). I believe the poem is a true record of what actually happened. Given the helplessness of an old man in Ch'ang-an, where a horrifying massacre was taking place, Du Fu's reaction and behaviour are understandable and pardonable. In his speech, we can feel his loyalty to the imperial family. Though he cannot give really useful assistance, he has, considering his own predicament, done his best to console the prince. Lines 13-14 reveal the poet's reverence for and pride in the characteristic lineaments of the members of the imperial family. Line 15 is the utmost limit the speech of a loyal subject could go in his denouncing of An Lu-shan's treason. At the same time, lines 23-24 express his unflinching allegiance to the Emperor, line 27 conveys genuine sympathy and concern, and line 28 is cogent evidence of his faith in the imperial family's final victory. To readers brought up in democratic societies and unused to the general submissiveness of the people prevalent in China from ancient times to this day, Du Fu's trying to "fend for himself" is obnoxious. But I would take this as an example that shows how cultural or societal differences can affect readers' responses to a text.

poor prince! Be on your guard! May the protecting power that emanates from the Imperial Tombs go always with you!¹³⁵

The imminent danger depicted in the original is suggested with an equally strong ominous sense and the fleeing of the imperial family is presented in equally violent terms. After the scene is properly set, the dialogue begins, in which the reader sees the narrator coming to life the moment he begins to speak.

In Watson's translation, "Pitying the Prince," the scene is set with the same kind of suspense as the original:

Over Chang'an city walls white-headed crows
fly by night, crying above Greeting Autumn Gate.
Then they turn to homes of the populace, pecking at great mansions,
mansions where high officials scramble to flee the barbarians.
Golden whips broken, royal steeds dropping dead,
even flesh and blood of the ruler can't all get away in time.¹³⁶

In terms of diction, Hawkes's "hooded crows," "cawing," "snapped," "sank dead," and "gallop," being more vivid and specific, are respectively preferable to Watson's "white-headed crows," "crying," "broken," "dropping dead," and "get away in time." Being prose, though, Hawkes's translation is, at times, less compressed, particularly because of the presence of intratextual glosses: "warning the high ministers," "were flailed until," "with exhaustion beneath them." Hawkes's "flee from the barbarian" is also a less vivid description of the royal family running away helter-skelter than Watson's "scramble to flee the barbarians," in which the amplification "scramble" conveys what in the original is understood and need not be expressed. However, when it comes to translating the description of the Emperor's descendants in the poet's address to "himself or the reader,"¹³⁷

Sons and grandsons of the founder all have high-arched noses;
heirs of the Dragon line naturally differ from plain people [.]¹³⁸

Watson's "Sons and grandsons" (for "*zisun* 子孫"), "the founder" (for "*gaodi* 高帝"), "high-arched noses" (for "*longzhun* 隆準"), and "heirs of

¹³⁵ Hawkes, 43-44.

¹³⁶ Watson, 26.

¹³⁷ Hawkes, 40.

¹³⁸ Watson, 26.

the Dragon line” (for “*longzhong* 龍種”) lack the royal aura respectively of Hawkes’s “descendants,” “the August Emperor,” “the imperial nose,” and “the Seed of the Dragon,” which are in keeping with the overall register of the speech in the original. At the same time, while “*longzhun* 隆準” in Chinese, because of its long association with the first emperor of the Han Dynasty, Liu Bang 劉邦, is a respectable and formal collocation, Watson’s “high-arched noses” is too colloquial and somewhat comical, likely to trigger associations with modern plastic surgery, especially with the “nose job.”

When it comes to the poet’s speech, Watson’s version—especially with regard to the concluding lines—tends to sound somewhat curt because of the translator’s strategy of compressing meaning by making English as paratactic as possible:

“Wild cats and wolves in the city, dragons in the wilds,
 prince, take care of this body worth a thousand in gold!
 I dare not talk for long, here at the crossroads,
 but for your sake, prince, I stay a moment longer.
 [...]
 Take care, say nothing of this—others wait in ambush!
 I pity you, my prince—take care, do nothing rash!
 Auspicious signs over the five imperial graves never for a moment
 cease.”¹³⁹

The limitations of Watson’s translation strategy are especially obvious when the above lines are read alongside Hawkes’s: whereas Hawkes’s version reflects a loyal, empathic subject really caring about the prince’s person, Watson’s sounds like a string of blunt, unfeeling orders, bordering, in the case of “I pity you,” on the patronizing. In terms of accuracy and style, Watson’s translation also has room for improvement: the phrase “Wild cats and wolves” has translated only “*lang* 狼,” but not “*chai* 豺,” which has a close equivalent in Hawkes’s “jackals”; a word-for-word rendering of “*qianjinqu* 千金軀,” “this body worth a thousand in gold,” too, goes against idiomatic English, and sounds too wordy for conversational purposes. Lastly, “*aizai* 哀哉” is an interjection expressing pity or sympathy; it is not the same thing as “I pity you”; a much more accurate rendering than Watson’s, Hawkes’s “Alas, poor prince!” conveys with greater precision what the original is intended to convey.

Read alongside the original and Hawkes’s translation, Davis’s is very

¹³⁹ Watson, 26-27.

much a watered-down version of the high drama presented in the original:

A white-headed crow from Ch'ang-an's city wall,
 Flying by night, croaked over Staying-Autumn Gate,
 And going to men's houses, pecked at the mansions,
 Whence great officials fled to escape the Tartars.
 The golden whip was broken, the nine-horse team died;
 The family did not wait to gallop away together.¹⁴⁰

This is because “white-headed,” “croaked,” and “pecked at the mansions” are not, respectively, as specific as the corresponding source-language texts or as Hawkes’s “hooded,” “cawing,” and “pecking at the great roofs,” of which “cawing” is especially evocative of the ominous as well as of the imminent disaster suggested by the original lines. At the same time, “the nine-horse team died” is a less violent description of the death of the royal horses than either Watson’s “dropping dead” or Hawkes’s “sank dead with exhaustion,” even though Watson’s “dropping dead” is in the wrong register, sounding as it does comical rather than disturbing.

In describing the facial features of the members of the royal family, Davis’s version,

The founder’s descendants all have prominent noses;
 The dragon seed is naturally unlike ordinary men [.]¹⁴¹

is more accurate than Watson’s in terms of register: “descendants” is more formal than “Sons and grandsons,” which, though a word-for-word translation of the original “*zisun* 子孫,” does not have its broader sense (“descendants”), and is less formal, less suitable for the context of the poem. Davis’s “prominent noses,” too, is preferable to Watson’s literal rendering (“high-arched noses”), since it is favourable and does not evoke undesirable associations as “high-arched noses” does. Nevertheless, it still falls short of Hawkes’s “the imperial nose,” which, used generically, best describes the physiognomy common to all the members of the royal family. Like Hawkes’s “the Seed of the Dragon,” Davis’s “The dragon seed” also more readily evokes the aura associated with royalty than Watson’s “heirs of the Dragon line.” However, though his “naturally unlike ordinary men” expresses the tone of the original more precisely than Hawkes’s “are not as other men are,” the singular “is” after “The dragon seed” is less apt than

¹⁴⁰ Davis, 50.

¹⁴¹ Davis, 50.

Hawkes's plural "are," since "*longzhong* 龍種" in the original is used collectively, and refers to all the descendants of the "August Emperor," not just one member of the royal family in isolation.

Compared with Watson's version, Davis's concluding lines are less curt:

"Take care not to say a word! Others are spies!
Oh! my prince, be not careless!
From the Five Tombs the auspicious aura is never absent!"¹⁴²

"Take care not to say a word" and "Oh! my prince, be not careless" come closer to Hawkes's version, though they do not convey the same degree of empathy as Hawkes's "we" in "But we must mind what we say, with so many spies about." Overall, Hawkes's rendering of the conversation is more finely tuned to the original than either Watson's or Davis's version.

In respect of the dramatic, Hawkes's mastery is most unmistakably shown in his translation of "*Bingju xing* 兵車行" ("Ballad of the Army Carts"). Though the whole poem is a piece of high drama from beginning to end, space will allow me to concentrate only on the most salient points. First, let us look at the opening lines:

車麟麟
馬蕭蕭
行人弓箭各在腰
爺孃妻子走相送
塵埃不見咸陽橋
牽衣頓足攔道哭
哭聲直上干雲霄 [.]¹⁴³

The carts squeak and trundle, the horses whinny, the conscripts go by, each with a bow and arrows at his waist. Their fathers, mothers, wives, and children run along beside them to see them off. The Hsien-yang Bridge cannot be seen for dust. They pluck at the men's clothes, stamp their feet, or stand in the way weeping. The sound of their weeping seems to mount

¹⁴² Davis, 51.

¹⁴³ Hawkes, 6. In the line "*Yeniang qizi zou xiangsong* 爺孃妻子走相送," "爺" reads "耶" in Du Fu, Vol. 1, 113. Both characters mean "father." When enumerated one by one, "*Yeniang qizi*" should be written as four separate sense-units: "*Ye niang qi zi*." This makes for clarity especially because "*qizi* 妻子" in modern Chinese almost always means "wife," very rarely as "*qi* 妻 and *zi* 子" 'wife and son' or 'wife and children.'

up to the blue sky above.¹⁴⁴

Both the original and Hawkes's translation present the actors ("the conscripts," "their fathers, mothers, wives, and children"), the sounds ("The carts squeak and trundle"), the actions ("run along beside them to see them off," "pluck at the men's clothes, stamp their feet, or stand in the way weeping"), the confusion, and the setting ("The Hsien-yang Bridge" that "cannot be seen for dust") in great detail, which are concrete and vivid, so that an unforgettable picture of war-time Chang'an is etched into the reader's memory. As one reads the original and the translation aloud, one can feel a sense of urgency and immediacy conveyed by the rhythm, which is in keeping with the dramatic tension created on the semantic level.

As a translation of the same poem, Hung's "The Song of War Chariots" is also dramatic, but it does not convey the same kind of urgency and immediacy:

Chariots rumble, horses neigh, Men are marching with bows and arrows.
Parents, wives, and children rush to bid them farewell; The rising dust
obscures the Hsien-yang Bridge. They clutch at the soldiers' clothes,
stumble, and bar the road; Their cries pierce the clouds.¹⁴⁵

In terms of onomatopoeic effect, the line "Chariots rumble, horses neigh" is also evocative, but semantically "Chariots" is off-key, for the vehicles referred to in the original are unlikely to be chariots, since the poem only describes conscripts leaving their families, not a battle in action. The word "marching," too, paints too heroic a picture of the conscripts, who are unlikely to want to leave their parents, wives, and children. The original phrase "*Yeniang qizi* 爺孃妻子," with its sense-units enumerated in Hawkes's version one by one ("Their fathers, mothers, wives, and children"), has a crowding effect, which increases the tempo and intensity of the drama; with "*Yeniang* 爺孃" summed up in one word ("Parents"), the drama becomes less gripping. The phrase "rush to bid them farewell," too, is visually less effective than Hawkes's "run along beside them to see them off," since the fathers, mothers, wives, and children in the original are already running beside the conscripts, as is indicated by "*zou xiangsong* 走相送," not "rush[ing] to bid them farewell"; the phrase "bid them farewell," being unnecessarily formal, is inferior to Hawkes's

¹⁴⁴ Hawkes, 17.

¹⁴⁵ Hung, 64.

colloquial “see them off,” which closely matches the register of the original. Though a forceful action-verb in itself, Hung’s “clutch” (for “*qian* 牽”), meaning “[t]o seize with claws or clutches; to seize convulsively or eagerly”¹⁴⁶ or “[t]o make a clutch *at*, to make an eager effort to seize,”¹⁴⁷ tends to suggest someone desperate, such as a drowning man, trying, out of fear, to grasp something for support; in the context of the poem, Hawkes’s “pluck at” describes the action with more precision. Furthermore, Hung’s “stumble, and bar the road” (for “*dun zu lan dao* 頓足攔道”) are inaccurate both semantically and stylistically; “stumble,” being disyllabic, also impedes the rhythm, thereby reducing the intensity of the drama. Hawkes’s “stamp their feet, or stand in the way,” apart from being semantically and stylistically accurate, are rhythmically more effective because of the use of forceful monosyllables. Finally, Hung’s “pierce the clouds,” being unnecessarily violent, is, again both semantically and stylistically, less accurate than Hawkes’s corresponding rendering.

Compared with Hung’s version, Watson’s “Ballad of the War Wagons” is sensitive and readable:

Rumble-rumble of wagons,
horses whinnying,
war-bound, bow and arrows at each man’s waist,
fathers, mothers, wives, children running alongside,
dust so thick you can’t see Xianyang Bridge,
snatching at clothes, stumbling, blocking the road, wailing,
wailing voices that rise straight up to the clouds.¹⁴⁸

The onomatopoeia of “Rumble-rumble” makes the war wagons audible, though “*bingju* 兵車” in the original is something more humble than “war wagons,” and has been more precisely translated by Hawkes’s “army carts.” While “snatching at” is not quite the same thing as “*qian* 牽” in “*qianyi* 牽衣,” which is more precisely translated by Hawkes’s “pluck at,” it is stylistically less inapt than Hung’s “clutching at.” Like Hung, though, Watson has chosen “stumbling,” which suggests the action of nearly falling over, whereas the original (“*dun zu* 頓足”) only describes someone putting his feet down one after the other either in protest or in desperation, an action which is accurately described by Hawkes’s “stamp their feet.”

¹⁴⁶ *OED*, Vol. 3, 375.

¹⁴⁷ *OED*, Vol. 3, 376.

¹⁴⁸ Watson, 8.

Watson's last line, "wailing voices that rise straight up to the clouds," translating "*zhi shang* 直上" with precision, is more forceful even than Hawkes's corresponding version, which has not attended to "*zhi* 直" in "*zhi shang* 直上." Nevertheless, because of the staccato effect resulting from parataxis, as well as of the use of many disyllabic participles ("running," "snatching," "stumbling," "blocking"), all of which are trochaic and have a rise-fall intonation, the rhythm is less sinewy and lacks the vigour and force of Hawkes's monosyllables ("run," "pluck," "stamp," "stand"), which contribute in no small measure to the intensity of the drama. Further reducing the dramatic effect, there is the undesirable pause resulting from the passive voice expressed by the past participle "[...]bound" in "war-bound"¹⁴⁹ in line 3 as well as from a whole line ("dust so thick you can't see Xianyang Bridge") separating line 4 and line 6: the pause impedes the rhythm and the line separating line 4 and line 6 takes away the momentum built up by lines 1-4. Hawkes's keener sensitivity to the original drama and rhythm is unmistakably reflected in his sentence pattern and in his use of verbs in the first paragraph: apart from the third sentence, which is not key to the action, all the sentences are in the active voice and have the subject-verb pattern; with the exception of the present participle "weeping," which modifies the main action-verb "stand," all the other verbs are in the simple present tense, with no rhythm-weakening trochaic present participles. As a result of these stylistic and grammatical features, an irresistible on-going thrust is created, thereby intensifying the drama.

With the masterly re-creation of the dialogue that follows, the drama in Hawkes's translation, just as gripping as what has gone before, takes a new turn in the form of a speech delivered on stage. To illustrate my point, I need only quote the following lines from the original as well as Hawkes's and other translators' versions:

長者雖有問
 役夫敢申恨
 且如今年冬
 未休關西卒
 縣官急索租
 租稅從何出 [.]¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Here, "war-bound" is adjectival.

¹⁵⁰ Hawkes, 7.

“Though you are good enough to ask us, sir, it’s not for the likes of us to complain. But take this winter, now. The Kuan-hsi troops are not being demobilized. The District Officers press for the land-tax, but where is it to come from?” (Hawkes, 17)

“You are indeed kind to ask about our troubles; How dare we to air our grievances? Let us just take the present winter: You know the Kuan-hsi troops have not yet returned, The government is ruthlessly collecting taxes [...]” (Hung, 65)

“You, sir, ask these questions,
but recruits like us hardly dare grumble out loud.
Still, in winter this year,
troops from here, West of the Pass, not yet disbanded,
officials started pressing for taxes—
tax payments—where would they come from?” (Watson, 9)

In Hung’s translation, the tone is more like that of written than of spoken English: not using contractions, saying “You are indeed kind” instead of “You’re indeed kind” and “Let us take” instead of “Let’s take,” the conscripts do not seem to be engaged in conversation. Nor is the register appropriate: “air our grievances” does not sound like a phrase used by an apparently uneducated conscript; “ruthlessly” (for “*ji* 急”), on the other hand, is semantically inaccurate; and “ruthlessly collecting taxes” (for “*ji suo zu* 急索租”) is both imprecise and weak when compared with Hawkes’s “press for land-tax.” Grammatically, too, Hung’s “How dare we to air our grievances?” should be replaced by “How dare we air our grievances?”

Watson’s translation comes closer to the register of spoken English than Hung’s does. The staccato effect, again resulting from parataxis, is less objectionable here, since it is in keeping with the tone of someone speaking breathlessly.¹⁵¹ The phrase “pressing for taxes,” like Hawkes’s corresponding version, conveys the same nuance as “*ji suo zu* 急索租,” though “grumble out loud” (for “*shen hen* 申恨”) is over-emphatic, missing the subtle nuance of the original.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ It is arguable, though, whether such an impression is intended by Du Fu in view of the fact that the original lines are well-turned phrases in continuous syntax.

¹⁵² Perhaps because of the paratactic nature of Chinese, a grammatical link between “*wei xiu Guanxi zu* 未休關西卒” and “*xianguan ji suo zu* 縣官急索租,”

XV. “Story-Telling” in Du Fu’s Poetry

Closely following Du Fu, Hawkes can move effortlessly from high drama to “story-telling.” Thus, in translating “*Liren xing* 麗人行” (“Ballad of Lovely Women”), he is as masterly as Du Fu in recounting events, capturing beauty and re-presenting pomp and majesty before the eyes of his readers:

三月三日天氣新
 長安水邊多麗人
 態濃意軟淑且真
 肌理細膩骨肉勻
 繡羅衣裳照暮春
 蹙金孔雀銀麒麟
 [...]
 背後何所見
 珠壓腰極穩稱身 [.]¹⁵³

On the day of the Spring Festival, under a new, fresh sky, by the lakeside in Ch’ang-an are many lovely women. Their breeding and refinement can be seen in their elegant deportment and proud aloofness. All have the same delicate complexions and exquisitely proportioned figures. In the late spring air the peacocks in *pasement* of gold thread and unicorns of silver thread glow on their dresses of embroidered silk. [...] And what do we see at their backs? Overskirts of pearl net, clinging to their graceful bodies.¹⁵⁴

Though Hawkes confesses that “[i]t is virtually impossible to get much idea of the clothing and jewellery described in the last few lines,”¹⁵⁵ what he has achieved is remarkable, in that the details of the original are reproduced with highly realistic touches, depicting the festive spring scene by the lakeside, which can be visualized by the reader through the translation.

which is understood in idiomatic Chinese, has escaped the notice of all the translators under discussion. With the link supplied, a minor amplification called for by idiomatic English, the two lines might read: “Before the Guanxi (“Kuan-hsi” in the Wade-Giles system) troops were demobilized, the District Officers were already pressing for the land-tax.”

¹⁵³ Hawkes, 18-19.

¹⁵⁴ Hawkes, 26.

¹⁵⁵ Hawkes, 23.

XVI. Re-Creating Poetic Effects in Prose

In choosing to translate Du Fu's poetry into prose, Hawkes has, as I have pointed out at the beginning of this paper, given up the opportunity of tapping the resources of verse. Yet, being a sensitive translator able to use the target language with a skill and craftsmanship which many translators using verse cannot hope to aspire to, he can, very often, create effects which, normally, can only be created in verse. In discussing his translation of "*Deng gao* 登高" ("From a Height"), I have pointed out how, in terms of rhythm, his "An infinity of trees bleakly divest themselves, their leaves falling, falling. Along the endless expanse of river the billows come rolling, rolling" has captured the rhythm of the original "*Wu bian luo mu xiaoxiao xia, bu jin Changjiang gungun lai* 無邊落木蕭蕭下, 不盡長江滾滾來," and surpassed even corresponding verse translations of the two lines. In the following translation of "*Wen guanjun shou Henan Hebei* 聞官軍收河南河北" ("On Learning of the Recovery of Honan and Hopei by the Imperial Army"), he succeeds in exploiting rhythm on an even larger scale, so that the message communicated on the semantic level is powerfully reinforced by the rhythm:

劍外忽傳收薊北
初聞涕淚滿衣裳
卻看妻子愁何在
漫卷詩書喜欲狂
白日放歌須縱酒
青春作伴好還鄉
即從巴峽穿巫峽
便下襄陽向洛陽 [.]¹⁵⁶

To the land south of Chien-ko news is suddenly brought of the recovery of Chi-pei. When I first hear it, my gown is all wet with tears. I turn and look round at my wife and children, and have not a sorrow in the world. Carelessly I roll together the volumes of verse I have been reading, almost delirious with joy. There must be singing out loud in full daylight: we must drink and drink! I must go back home: the green spring shall be my companion. I shall go at once, by way of the Pa Gorge, through the Wu Gorge, then to Hsiang-yang, and so, from there, on towards Loyang!¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Hawkes, 117.

¹⁵⁷ Hawkes, 120.

The poem sings of the exultation brought about by the victory of an army standing for righteousness and royalty. Joy and the surging of emotions resonate throughout the poem. The opening is forceful and direct, gripping the reader's attention from the very first line, to be followed by a series of actions mirroring the poet's state of mind, finally culminating in two lines that hurtle along to the end at breath-taking speed. In Hawkes's translation, this rhythmic effect is accurately reproduced; the onward thrust is an effect only poets practised in their craft could create: "I shall go at once, by way of the Pa Gorge, through the Wu Gorge, then to Hsiang-yang, and so, from there, on towards Loyang!" As one reads this sentence, one is hurled forward, wave after wave, as though shooting through the Three Gorges in a swift boat, until it culminates in the final thrust: "on towards Loyang." One major difference between prose and verse is that, with the former, the writer is harder put to create various kinds of rhythmic effect; yet in the last sentence of Hawkes's translation, a kinaesthetic image is created by the skilful manipulation of the syntax, reminding the reader very much of Eliot's meticulous control of rhythm in the lines from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" quoted at the beginning of this paper.

In comparison with Hawkes's superb performance, Davis's version, entitled "Hearing that the Imperial Armies Have Recovered Ho-nan and Ho-pei," suffers considerably:

Beyond the Sword Pass suddenly is reported the recovery of Chi-pei;
 When I first hear of it, tears fill my robe.
 I turn to look at my wife and children; where is their grief now?
 Carelessly I roll up the *Songs* and *Documents*; my joy is almost mad.
 In broad daylight I start to sing; I must indulge in wine.
 With green spring for company, joyfully we'll go home.
 At once from the Pa Gorges we'll go through the Wu gorges,
 Then down to Hsiang-yang and on to Lo-yang.¹⁵⁸

The opening is as direct as that of Hawkes's version; however, the joy of the narrator is less dramatic, less impressive, suggesting much less of the original "*xi yu kuang* 喜欲狂." At the same time, "I start to sing," apart from being a misinterpretation of the original,¹⁵⁹ which describes only the

¹⁵⁸ Davis, 86.

¹⁵⁹ Davis's "tears fill my robe" for "*ti lei man yishang* 涕淚滿衣裳" is also a misinterpretation; by using "fill" for "*man* 滿," the translator has turned "*yishang* 衣裳" into a vessel which one can fill with liquid; Hawkes's translation, "my gown is all wet with tears," is a more accurate version based on the correct interpretation

narrator's thoughts, not action, is a far cry from Hawkes's "There must be singing out loud." "I must indulge in wine," too, is a distortion of the original: while "*xu zong jiu* 須縱酒" refers to the here and now, "I must indulge in wine" can refer to the narrator's resolution, something he makes up his mind to do over a longer span of time in the future. Added to these infelicities are the undesirably large number of pauses and the repetitive "subject-verb" pattern in lines 5-6, as a result of which the rhythm, instead of being emotionally stirring like that of the original and of Hawkes's corresponding lines, sounds monotonous and lethargic. Finally, in sharp contrast to Hawkes's version, the last two lines are rhythmically too unvaried, too predictable, so that they just grind wearily to a halt, in which the reader can no longer feel the poet's wild joy. Not so with Hawkes's version, in which there is acceleration as well as deceleration in the speed of language, made possible by the translator's skilful manipulation of the pauses and of the length of the units between them.

McCraw's version, "On Hearing Imperial Forces Have Recovered the Northeast," is marred by misinterpretations, ill-chosen words, and unwarranted generalizations:

Beyond Swords, we suddenly learn they regained North Thorn!
 When first I heard, falling tears flooded down my robes.
 Turning to see my wife & children—where is there any woe!
 Wildly roll up my verses & books—nearly crazed with joy.
 In broad daylight sing out loud, indulge yourself with wine!
 Green springtime will escort us, just right for going home.
 Once through the Ophid Gorge, we'll thread Witch Gorge,
 Then straight down to Xiangyang, and on toward Loyang!¹⁶⁰

Without a subject, "Wildly roll up my verses & books" reads like a personal reference to the general; like Davis's "tears fill my robe," "falling tears flooded down my robes" has distorted the meaning of "*man yishang* 滿衣裳"; the word "flooded," in particular, is grossly off-key because of its undesirable associations with torrential rains preceding a natural disaster. With pauses that impede the rhythm, the last two lines also lack the onward thrust of Hawkes's version.

Young's version, "Good News about the War," is, generally speaking, a vivid description of the poet's joy:

of the original.

¹⁶⁰ McCraw, 153.

Here in Sichuan we get word
of the full recovery of the Central Plains

I blubber so much at the news
I soak the clothes I'm wearing

I turn to my wife and children
all our cares are gone!

and like a maniac I start
packing, rolling up all my poems

now we can sing and dance
right here in broad daylight

drink some wine
and then some more

delirious, I want to start for home
the green spring my companion

I'll go out through the great
Yangzi River gorges

on to Xiangyang and finally
be back home in Luoyang!¹⁶¹

However, the choice of words is imprecise. First, "Here in Sichuan" does not suggest the remoteness of "*Jian wai* 劍外." Second, "blubber" reminds the reader of a child "weep[ing] nosily without restraint" or of a child "say[ing] [something], esp[ecially] incoherently while weeping,"¹⁶² something Du Fu, though overjoyed, would not have done. Third, "rolling up all my poems" is problematic, since poems, not being a material, cannot, strictly speaking, be rolled up; to make "poems" "roll-uppable," one would have to collocate the word with a more concrete noun, as Hawkes has done: "roll together the volumes of verse." Fourth, "drink some wine / and then some more" is a feeble rendering even when judged

¹⁶¹ Young, 153.

¹⁶² Flexner et al., 227. The *OED* definition is equally uncomplimentary: "To weep effusively; to weep and sob unrestrainedly and noisily. (Generally used contemptuously and in ridicule for 'weep'.)" (*OED*, Vol. 2, 322).

by the standards of prose, especially in comparison with Hawkes's "we must drink and drink." Finally, the last four lines, which are supposed to translate the climax of the whole poem, are even less satisfactory: though arranged as verse, that is, in separate lines, they are basically prose: limp, feeble, with the rhythm remaining untuned to the sense. By reading the translation, one cannot visualize the narrator being wild with joy, imagining himself to be going on a precipitous journey down the Changjiang River "by way of the Pa Gorge, through the Wu Gorge, then to Hsiang-yang, and so, from there, on towards Luoyang."¹⁶³

Unable to reproduce the sweep of the original's language and rhythm, Hung's version, "Hearing of the Recovery of Ho-nan and Ho-pei by the Imperial Forces," shares the same flaw:

Let us sail at once through the Gorges of Pa and the Gorges of Wu-shan,
Let us thence turn toward Hsiang-yang on our way to Lo-yang.¹⁶⁴

The repetition of the pattern "Let us" and the end-stopping of the first line make it impossible to suggest through rhythm the precipitous and sweeping movement of the original.

Also in verse but even less inspired is Bynner's version, entitled "Both Sides of the Yellow River Recaptured by the Imperial Army":

Back from this mountain, past another mountain,
Up from the south, north again—to my own town!¹⁶⁵

With the lines chopped up into almost equal portions, resulting in a staccato effect, the translation is a far cry from the hurtling sweep of both the original and Hawkes's translation.¹⁶⁶

XVII. Matching Du Fu's Stylistic Range

Generally considered to be the poet with the widest stylistic range in classical Chinese poetry, Du Fu has, in stylistic terms, probably written the largest number of poems that tax translators' linguistic resources to the utmost. In the following paragraphs, I shall show how Hawkes's stylistic

¹⁶³ Hawkes, 120.

¹⁶⁴ Hung, 193.

¹⁶⁵ Bynner, 154.

¹⁶⁶ It should be noted, too, that, with the specific place names replaced by common nouns, Bynner's version is another piece of "rewriting."

range matches Du Fu's much more closely than does the stylistic range of any other translator examined in this paper.

To begin with, let us see how he renders the homely, of which “*Ke zhi* 客至” (“The Guest”) is an example known by most Chinese readers:

舍南舍北皆春水
但見群鷗日日來
花徑不曾緣客掃
蓬門今始為君開
盤飧市遠無兼味
樽酒家貧只舊醅
肯與鄰翁相對飲
隔籬呼取盡餘杯 [.]¹⁶⁷

The waters of springtime flow north and south of my dwelling. Only the flocks of gulls come daily to call on me. I have not swept my flower-strewn path for a visitor, and my wicker-gate opens the first time today for you. Because the market is far away, the dishes I serve you offer little variety; and because this is a poor household, the only wine in my jars comes from an old brewing. If you are willing to sit and drink with my old neighbour, I shall call to him over the fence to come and finish off the remaining cupfuls with us.¹⁶⁸

In both the original and the translation, the language is plain and simple, and the tone intimate and conversational, perfectly suited to the purpose: to describe a friendship that reveals itself through the scenery, the objects, and the tone of the narrator's speech.

In comparison, Watson's version, “A Guest Arrives,” is less precise in terms of style, register, and comprehension:

North of my lodge, south of my lodge, everywhere spring rivers;
day by day all I see are flocks of gulls converging.
Flower paths never before swept for a guest,
my thatch gate, opening for you, opens for the first time.
For food—the market's far—no wealth of flavors;
for wine—my house is poor—only old muddy brew.
If you don't mind drinking with the old man next door,
I'll call across the hedge, and we'll finish off what's left.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Hawkes, 109.

¹⁶⁸ Hawkes, 111-12.

¹⁶⁹ Watson, 84.

In the first place, the phrase “North of my lodge, south of my lodge,” though a close imitation of “*she nan she bei* 舍南舍北” in structural terms, is monotonously repetitive. Without carefully comparing it with the original, one may argue that, since they are structurally equivalent, their stylistic effects should also be equivalent. On close scrutiny, however, one will see that they are stylistically different even though they are structurally similar. The reason is not far to seek: whereas the original places “*she* 舍” at the beginning of the first and the second half of the Chinese phrase, Watson’s English version puts the equivalent of “*she* 舍” (“of my lodge”) at the end of the two halves; as a result, in the Chinese original, because of the similarity (“*she* 舍”) between the first and the second half in respect of their initial units and because of the dissimilarity between them in respect of their final units (“*nan* 南,” “*bei* 北”), an aesthetic tension between similarity and dissimilarity as well as an antithetical relationship between “*nan* 南” and “*bei* 北” is set up, thereby giving the four-syllable phrase an aesthetically pleasing quality not present in Watson’s translation. To solve Watson’s problem, one would have to change the bipartite phrase to something like “my lodge’s north, my lodge’s south.”¹⁷⁰

Less difficult to detect is the second flaw of the version, which is the result of misinterpretations: “*jie chunshui* 皆春水” does not mean “everywhere spring rivers”; instead, the phrase only means that there is water both north and south of the poet’s “dwelling,” as is the case in Hawkes’s version; nor does it say whether there is one river or two rivers, much less “everywhere spring rivers.” By specifying the exact number of rivers, which is not warranted by the original, Watson has destroyed the poem’s functional ambiguity.

Third, being a much more formal word than the Chinese “*lai* 來,” “converging” is, in terms of register, off-key, reminding us of the translator’s use of the unduly formal expression “human concourse” for “*ren xing* 人行” in “Martial drums cut off all human concourse” (“*Shu gu duan ren xing* 戍鼓斷人行”), which has already been discussed.

Fourth, it is interesting to note that Watson’s liberal use of contracted forms (“market’s far,” “don’t mind,” “I’ll call,” “we’ll finish off,” “what’s left”) has not helped him capture Du Fu’s homely style; instead, it has, together with the truncation of sentences throughout the poem, given the

¹⁷⁰ Though stylistically desirable, this restructuring is not, of course, allowed by normal English idiom.

reader the impression of someone talking incoherently. In contrast, and curiously enough, Hawkes's version, though using uncontracted instead of contracted forms ("If you are willing," "I shall call to him"), is closer to the homely style of the original. Upon analysis, one will discover that the success of Hawkes's version lies in the translator's use of the right register, not in contractions and broken syntax, which are extraneous and easier to master. In other words, here, uncontracted forms and unorganized speech are not the stylistic features required to re-present the original's homely style and familiar tone.

In "*Zeng Wei Ba Chushi* 贈衛八處士," the style is also homely, but the stage is set for more characters:

人生不相見
 動如參與商
 今夕復何夕
 共此燈燭光
 少壯能幾時
 鬢髮各已蒼
 訪舊半為鬼
 驚呼熱中腸
 焉知二十載
 重上君子堂
 昔別君未婚
 兒女忽成行
 怡然敬父執
 問我來何方
 問答乃未已
 驅兒羅酒漿
 夜雨剪春韭
 新炊間黃粱
 主稱會面難
 一舉累十觴
 十觴亦不醉
 感子故意長
 明日隔山岳
 世事兩茫茫 [.]¹⁷¹

Often in this life of ours we resemble, in our failure to meet, the Shen and Shang constellations, one of which rises as the other one sets. What lucky chance is it, then, that brings us together this evening under the light of this

¹⁷¹ Hawkes, 67-68.

same lamp? Youth and vigour last but a little time.—Each of us now has greying temples. Half of the friends we ask each other about are dead, and our shocked cries sear the heart. Who could have guessed that it would be twenty years before I sat once more beneath your roof? Last time we parted you were still unmarried, but now here suddenly is a row of boys and girls who smilingly pay their respects to their father's old friend. They ask me where I have come from; but before I have finished dealing with their questions, the children are hurried off to fetch us wine. Spring chives are cut in the rainy dark, and there is freshly steamed rice mixed with yellow millet. 'Come, we don't meet often!' you hospitably urge, pouring out ten cupfuls in rapid succession. That I am still not drunk after ten cups of wine is due to the strength of the emotion which your unchanging friendship inspires. Tomorrow the Peak will lie between us, and each will be lost to the other, swallowed up in the world's affairs.¹⁷²

Whether in the original or in translation, the poem is like a mini-drama, in which the characters, because of the precision with which the poet and the translator handle the register, all appear before the reader's eyes like real people; the language in the original and in the translation is unadorned, just appropriate for the occasion; there is action that befits the scene, in which two old friends meet after a lapse of many years, during which a lot of changes have taken place ("Last time we parted you were still unmarried, but now here suddenly is a row of boys and girls who smilingly pay their respects to their father's old friend"). Images ranging from the visual ("Spring chives," "dark," "yellow millet") to the olfactory ("freshly steamed rice") to the synaesthetic ("rainy dark") in the translation appeal to the senses as much as those in the original. Ending on a note that is slightly melancholy and wistful, both the original and the translation show how a poem about friendship can be moving and life-like through the use of homely images and unadorned language.

Jenyns's translation, "A Presentation to Wei Pa, a retired Scholar,"¹⁷³ has conveyed the original in outline, but is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. First, line 1, translated as "Friendships are made only to be broken," is a misinterpretation; the line, "In life friends cannot often meet,"¹⁷⁴ offered in a footnote as an alternative rendering, is stylistically prosaic and semantically inaccurate.¹⁷⁵ Second, "But now I meet you my

¹⁷² Hawkes, 72.

¹⁷³ Jenyns, 18.

¹⁷⁴ Jenyns, 18.

¹⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that the original line ("*Rensheng bu xiangjian* 人生不

heart is warmed” (for “*jing hu re zhong chang* 驚呼熱中腸”) lacks the startling, dramatic quality of the original image. Third, the “*hang* 行” image in “*ernü hu cheng hang* 兒女忽成行” is generalized as “family” in “Now all of a sudden I find you with a family of sons and daughters.” Fourth, the lively and vivid description of the meeting between two friends in the original is reduced to a blurred sketch in the translation:

Politely and with looks of pleasure they wait on their father’s old friend
Asking me from where I come.
We have not yet come to the end of our questions and answers,
(When) you bid the youngsters bring wine and set it before us.¹⁷⁶

The line “*qu er luo jiujiang* 驅兒羅酒漿,” translated by Hawkes as “the children are hurried off to fetch us wine,” in which “hurried” closely matches the original “*qu* 驅,” is reduced to a generalized “you bid the youngsters bring wine and set it before us.” Fifth, “*ye yu* 夜雨,” which is synaesthetic, and which is rendered with precision as “rainy dark” by Hawkes, has been changed to a matter-of-fact phrase: “evening rain.” Finally, a homely and simple line, “*Zhu cheng huimian nan* 主稱會面難,” translated into an equally homely and simple line by Hawkes, has been shifted to an unduly formal register: “The host discourses of how difficult it is to bring about a meeting.”¹⁷⁷

Examined alongside Hawkes’s version, Bynner’s “To My Retired Friend Wēi,” also suffers:

We little guessed it would be twenty years

相見”) and Hawkes’s translation (“Often in this life of ours [...] in our failure to meet”), though also using simple language, do not give one the same impression as Jenyns’s line does. This is because in Du Fu’s and Hawkes’s line, the speaker gives one the impression that he has a large vocabulary from which he can choose the appropriate words to suit the occasion or the context, whereas in Jenyns’s version, the speaker, very much like a child, has only a limited vocabulary, so that, when he speaks, he has no choice but to use simple words, words which, though simple, cannot convey with precision the simplicity of language required by the context. In other words, whereas the simplicity of language in Du Fu’s original and in Hawkes’s translation is deliberate and intended to create the right kind of stylistic effect (which it has undoubtedly created), the “simplicity of language” in Jenyns’s version is involuntary, failing to suit the occasion.

¹⁷⁶ Jenyns, 18.

¹⁷⁷ Jenyns, 18.

Before I could visit you again.
 When I went away, you were still unmarried;
 But now these boys and girls in a row
 Are very kind to their father's old friend.
 They ask me where I have been on my journey;
 And then, when we have talked awhile,
 They bring and show me wines and dishes,
 Spring chives cut in the night-rain
 And brown rice cooked freshly a special way.¹⁷⁸

Though the register in general chimes in with that of the original, the line “Are very kind to their father's old friend” is vague and prosaic, preserving little of the original line “*Yiran jing fuzhi* 怡然敬父執,” which enables the reader to visualize the scene. This is because the words “*Yiran jing* 怡然敬” are sharper, more concrete, more specific than the words “are very kind to.” The original “*qu er luo jiujiang* 驅兒羅酒漿,” with the evocative verb “*qu* 驅” left untranslated, is, again, reduced to a general and unspecific statement: “They bring and show me wines and dishes.” In the last but one line, “night-rain” lacks the synaesthetic compression of the original, which Hawkes's “rainy dark” has succeeded in capturing. In the last line, the original “*huangliang* 黃梁,” which contributes so much to the visual appeal of the poem, is left untranslated.

Intimate and familiar, Rexroth's translation, “To Wei Pa, a Retired Scholar,” is in the right register. The following lines, for example, depict a homely scene in terms as realistic as those in the original:

When we parted years ago,
 You were unmarried. Now you have
 A row of boys and girls, who smile
 And ask me about my travels.
 How have I reached this time and place?
 Before I can come to the end
 Of an endless tale, the children
 Have brought out the wine. We go
 Out in the night and cut young
 Onions in the rainy darkness.
 We eat them with hot, steaming,
 Yellow millet.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Bynner, 158-59.

¹⁷⁹ Rexroth, 11.

However, there is too much rewriting in the “translation”: “*Wenda nai wei yi* 問答乃未已” is paraphrased as “Before I can come to the end / Of an endless tale”; “*qu* 驅” in “*qu er luo jiujiang* 驅兒羅酒漿” is omitted, so that the action described in the original is simplified: “the children / Have brought out the wine.” Of all the translators discussed in this paper, though, Rexroth is the only one after Hawkes to have accurately rendered the synaesthetic image “*ye yu* 夜雨”: “rainy darkness.”¹⁸⁰

Written in a diametrically opposite style, the following description of pomp and pageantry is illustrative of another level to which Du Fu’s style can freely move:

憶昔霓旌下南苑
苑中萬物生顏色
昭陽殿裏第一人
同輦隨君侍君側
輦前才人帶弓箭
白馬嚼齧黃金勒 [.]¹⁸¹

In rendering these lines from “*Ai jiangtou* 哀江頭” (“By the Lake”), Hawkes is able to re-create a scene of equal grandeur, painting an equally evocative picture in visual terms:

I remember how formerly, when the Emperor’s rainbow banner made its way into the South Park, everything in the park seemed to bloom with a brighter colour. The First Lady of the Chao-yang Palace rode in the same carriage as her lord in attendance at his side, while before the carriage rode maids of honour equipped with bows and arrows, their white horses

¹⁸⁰ It is not possible to decide whether Rexroth has been influenced by Hawkes or has, because of his sensitivity as a poet, been more capable than other translators of re-creating this synaesthetic image. Given the fact that his volume was published in 1971, that is, four years after *A Little Primer of Tu Fu* came out, he may well have read Hawkes’s translation before he produced his own, substituting “rainy darkness” for “rainy night” or “night rain” during the process of “translation.” In going through his volume, *One Hundred Poems from the Chinese*, one cannot find conclusive evidence that he could read Du Fu in the original, for nowhere does he appear to have produced his “versions” with direct reference to Du Fu’s Chinese text. Against this background, then, he may well have written poems based on translations of Du Fu’s work, including Hawkes’s *A Little Primer of Tu Fu*, without having been able to read Chinese.

¹⁸¹ Hawkes, 49-50.

champing at golden bits.¹⁸²

Though reproducing largely the same sense-units, Hung's rendering, "Lamentation by the River," is uninspired:

When the rainbow banners used to descend upon the South Park, The whole park burst into color. The first lady from the Chao-yang Palace Accompanied His Majesty in his carriage. Before it rode lady courtiers, each with bow and arrows, On white horses champing restlessly at golden bits.¹⁸³

The large number of pauses arising from end-stopped lines have a clogging effect, seriously hampering the rhythm, so that the majestic sweep of the original as well as of Hawkes's version is nowhere to be found.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Hawkes, 55.

¹⁸³ Hung, 106.

¹⁸⁴ At this point, it may be asked why the original, with every one of its lines being end-stopped, does not have the flaw of Hung's translation. The answer lies in the difference between classical Chinese poetry and Hung's version: while Du Fu's end-stopped lines give the poem a continuous movement, Hung's end-stopped lines have the effect of chopping up the sense-flow. Much more sensitive to language than Hung—indeed to all the other translators examined in this paper, Hawkes has at his command a prose which, if printed as separate lines, would be very much like blank verse even if the metre may not be regular. As a matter of fact, Hung's inferiority to Hawkes in using English can be seen even at the very beginning of his version. In translating "*Shaoling yelao tunsheng ku, chunri qianxing Qujiang qu* 少陵野老吞聲哭，春日潛行曲江曲" as "I am an old rustic from Shao-ling who cries hard but not loud, For I want to attract no attention as I stroll by the Meandering River in the spring sun" (Hung, 106), he has turned two highly vivid and concrete lines of poetry into bad prose: "cries hard but not loud" (for "*tunsheng ku* 吞聲哭") and "For I want to attract no attention as I stroll" (for "*qianxing* 潛行") are wordy and clumsy, which is evidence of the translator's limited vocabulary and of his inability to come up with the *mot juste*. This fumbling for the right word or right phrase, characteristic of translators who are incapable of using the target language effectively, becomes especially obvious when Hung's lines are put alongside Hawkes's: "The old fellow from Shao-ling weeps with stifled sobs as he walks furtively by the bends of the Serpentine on a day in spring" (Hawkes, 55). Like the original "*tunsheng ku* 吞聲哭," how much more economical and precise than Hung's "cries hard but not loud" is Hawkes's "weeps with stifled sobs"! And Hawkes's "walks furtively" (for "*qianxing* 潛行") is far superior to Hung's "For I want to attract no attention as I stroll[.]" In reading

Along with his exceptional ability to render scenes of grandeur, Hawkes's language can rise even to the epic, soaring together with Du Fu to heights which only epic poets are capable of reaching. Take Du Fu's description of horses in "*Wei Feng Lushi zhai guan Cao Jiangjun huamatu* 韋諷錄事宅觀曹將軍畫馬圖" ("On Seeing a Horse-painting by Ts'ao Pa in the House of the Recorder Wei Feng") and Hawkes's translation:

會貌先帝照夜白
龍池十日飛霹靂 [.]¹⁸⁵

On one occasion, when he painted our late Imperial Majesty's grey, Night Shiner, thunders rolled for ten days over the face of the Dragon Pool.¹⁸⁶

此皆騎戰一敵萬
縞素漠漠開風沙
其餘七匹亦殊絕
迥若寒空雜霞雪
霜蹄蹴踏長楸間 [.]¹⁸⁷

[...] both of them, a match for ten thousand in mounted combat. The white silk ground behind them seems to open out into a vast expanse of wind-blown sand.

The other seven horses in the painting are also magnificent specimens. Remote above them, sunset and snow commingle in a wintry sky. Their

Hung's translations (that is, not only his translation of "*Ai jiangtou* 哀江頭"), one has the feeling of seeing one missile after another failing to home in on its target. Perhaps like the vast majority of those translating Du Fu whose first language is not English (for example, Wu Juntao), Hung has only a limited command of the target language; for this reason, instead of saying "weeps with stifled sobs" and "walks furtively," both of which are beyond his linguistic competence and resources, he has to make do with a limited vocabulary and express the "same ideas" circuitously, involuntarily resorting to circumlocution. This is basically what beginners are taught to do in English courses with subtitles like "Saying whatever you want to say in 1,000 words." This does not mean, of course, that all native speakers are, ipso facto, competent users of their mother tongue; as my discussion in the foregoing paragraphs has shown, in translating Du Fu, native speakers of English can also bungle miserably. Needless to say, in making this observation, I assume that, apart from Hung and Wu, all the other translators studied in this paper are native speakers of English.

¹⁸⁵ Hawkes, 144.

¹⁸⁶ Hawkes, 154.

¹⁸⁷ Hawkes, 146-47.

frosty hooves paw and trample a road lined with tall catalpa trees.¹⁸⁸

In both the original and the translation, the horses are presented in magnificent terms, a stylistic feature which is the hall-mark of all great epics in Western literature.

In rendering the same lines in his version, “A Drawing of a Horse by General Ts’ao at Secretary Wēi Fēng’s House,” Bynner shows less sensitivity in his choice of words:

He painted the late Emperor’s luminous white horse.
 For ten days the thunder flew over Dragon Lake [...]
 [...]
 They are war-horses. Either could face ten thousand.
 They make the white silk stretch away into a vast desert.
 And the seven others with them are almost as noble....
 Mist and snow are moving across a cold sky,
 And hoofs are cleaving snow-drifts under great trees—¹⁸⁹

The lines are either “rewritten” or generalized, differing widely from the original. Unable to tackle with sufficient competence the visually evocative image “*Zhaoyebai* 照夜白,” Bynner can only come up with an uninspired version, “luminous white horse,” which pales in comparison with Hawkes’s highly accurate, highly evocative “[our late Imperial Majesty’s] grey, Night Shiner.” Because of the vague “flew” and of the glib flow of the rhythm, particularly in the relatively loose phrase “flew over Dragon Lake,” the line “For ten days the thunder flew over Dragon Lake” lacks the majesty and weightiness of Hawkes’s version in terms of both diction and rhythm: “thunders rolled for ten days over the face of the Dragon Pool.” In Hawkes’s version, the action-verb “rolled” (/rɔʊld/), because of its long diphthong /əʊ/ and its consonants /l/ and /d/, all of which help to prolong its utterance, forcefully grips the reader’s attention, thereby suggesting a more awesome movement of the “thunders.” With the phrase “for ten days” put after “rolled,” the duration of the movement is further lengthened before it comes to an end, so that the rolling of the “thunders” is emphasized. Perhaps less sensitive to the qualities of phonetic sounds or less adept at using the target language, Bynner is not able to give his translation the same kind of suggestiveness: his “flew,” apart from being a less specific, less apt word than Hawkes’s “rolled,”

¹⁸⁸ Hawkes, 155.

¹⁸⁹ Bynner, 162.

suffers because of the smoother vowel /u:/ in /flu:/, which takes less effort and time to pronounce, and is therefore less effective in suggesting the majestic rolling of thunders over the Dragon Pool. Even in his deployment of the same words, Bynner's auditory sensitivity is unimpressive: by putting "For ten days" before "flew," the action-verb on which the awesomeness and majesty of the rolling thunder hinge, the translator has given a shorter duration to the thunder's "flight," so that it comes to an end immediately after the phrase "over Dragon Lake."

On closer analysis, one will see that even between Bynner's "Dragon Lake" and Hawkes's "Dragon Pool," there is a significant difference in terms of stylistic effect. Though Bynner's "Lake," pronounced /leɪk/, has a diphthong (/eɪ/), which takes more time to pronounce than a short vowel, its final consonant is a velar plosive /k/, which tends to shorten the whole sound /leɪk/ in the process of pronunciation. Hawkes's "Pool," pronounced /pu:l/, is, in terms of sound value, phonologically preferable to "Lake": its long vowel /u:/ prolongs the duration of the pronunciation, and is then reinforced by /l/, which, when read aloud, can lengthen the whole line in temporal terms, thereby suggesting more effectively the majestic rolling of the thunder over "the Dragon Pool."¹⁹⁰ Semantically, in rendering "qizhan 騎戰" as "war-horses," Bynner has failed to convey the real meaning of the original, which Hawkes has accurately translated: "in mounted combat." His rendering of the line "*gaosu momo kai fengsha* 縞素漠漠開風沙" ("They make the white silk stretch away into a vast desert") is pedestrian when compared with Hawkes's corresponding line ("The white silk ground behind them seems to open out into a vast expanse of wind-blown sand"): the two series of three stressed syllables in a row ("white silk ground," "wind-blown sand") powerfully reinforce, by phonological means, a scene of epic proportions. Bynner's "vast" (/vɑ:st/) is effective by virtue of the labio-dental fricative /v/ and the long vowel /ɑ:/, both of which require much effort to pronounce properly, thereby kinaesthetically suggesting the space unfolding before the reader's eyes. However, "desert" (/ˈdez.ət/, being a trochee ending in an unstressed syllable (/ət/), which is made up of a short vowel (/ə/) and an alveolar plosive consonant (/t/), is anticlimactic. In the last but one line, "za 雜" is left untranslated, and "xia 霞" is mistranslated as "mist."

In "*Guan Gongsun Daniang dizi wu jianqi xing* 觀公孫大娘弟子舞劍

¹⁹⁰ When one appreciates a poem, even if one does not read it aloud, one still tends silently to vocalize the syllables, or, to personify the reading process, the poem still reads itself aloud to one's "mind's ear."

器行” (“On Seeing a Pupil of Kung-sun Dance the *Ch'ien-ch'i*—A Ballad”), Du Fu’s language and style come very close to the works written by such epic poets as Homer, Virgil, and Milton:

昔有佳人公孫氏
一舞劍器動四方
觀者如山色沮喪
天地為之久低昂
火霍如羿射九日落
矯如群帝驂龍翔
來如雷霆收震怒
罷如江海凝清光 [.]¹⁹¹

In time past there was a lovely woman called Kung-sun, whose *chien-ch'i* astonished the whole world. Audiences numerous as the hills watched awestruck as she danced, and, to their reeling senses, the world seemed to go on rising and falling, long after she had finished dancing. Her flashing swoop was like the nine suns falling, transfixed by the Mighty Archer’s arrows; her soaring flight like the lords of the sky driving their dragon teams aloft; her advance like the thunder gathering up its dreadful rage; her stoppings like seas and rivers locked in the cold glint of ice.¹⁹²

Let us first look at Book 8, lines 7-17 of Homer’s *Iliad*, in which Zeus addresses “a gathering of the gods upon the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus,” asserting his supremacy and omnipotence:¹⁹³

“μήτε τις οὖν θήλεια θεὸς τό γε μήτε τις ἄρσην
πειράτω διακέρσαι ἐμὸν ἔπος, ἀλλ’ ἅμα πάντες
αἰνεῖτ’, ὄφρα τάχιστα τελευτήσω τάδε ἔργα.
ὄν δ’ ἂν ἐγὼν ἀπάνευθε θεῶν ἐθέλοντα νοήσω
ἐλθόντ’ ἢ Τρώεσσι ἀρηγέμεν ἢ Δαναοῖσι,
πληγείς οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ἐλεύσεται Οὐλυμπόνδε·
ἢ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα,
τῆλε μάλ’, ἤχι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,
ἐνθα σιδήρειαι τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός,
τόσσον ἔνερθ’ Ἄϊδεω ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ’ ἀπὸ γαίης·

¹⁹¹ Hawkes, 189-90.

¹⁹² Hawkes, 199.

¹⁹³ Homer [Ὅμηρος], *The Iliad*, with an English translation by A. T. Murray, Vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library, 170, ed. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 339.

γνώσεται ἔπειθ' ὅσον εἰμὶ θεῶν κάρτιστος ἀπάντων."¹⁹⁴

Let not any goddess nor yet any god essay this thing, to thwart my word, but do ye all alike assent thereto, that with all speed I may bring these deeds to pass. Whomsoever I shall mark minded apart from the gods to go and bear aid either to Trojans or Danaans, smitten in no seemly wise shall he come back to Olympus, or I shall take and hurl him into murky Tartarus, far, far away, where is the deepest gulf beneath the earth, the gates whereof are of iron and the threshold of bronze, as far beneath Hades as heaven is above earth: then shall ye know how far the mightiest am I of all gods.¹⁹⁵

In the following lines (Book 8, lines 75-77), also from the *Iliad*, Homer describes how Zeus decides the fate of the Achaeans during their combat with the Trojans:

αὐτὸς δ' ἐξ Ἴδης μεγάλ' ἔκτυπε, δαιόμενον δὲ
ἦκε σέλας μετὰ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες
θάμβησαν, καὶ πάντας ὑπὸ χλωρῶν δέος εἶλεν.¹⁹⁶

Then himself he thundered aloud from Ida, and sent a blazing flash amid the host of the Achaeans; and at sight thereof they were seized with wonder, and pale fear got hold of all.¹⁹⁷

In the first passage, the imagined action of Zeus hurling the gods from heaven down to Tartarus involves vast spaces, just as the action in Du Fu's description as well as in Hawkes's version does. In the second passage, the language used by Homer to describe Zeus "thunder[ing] aloud from Ida" and the "blazing flash" he "sent" "amid the host of the Achaeans" bears a close resemblance to Du Fu's Chinese and Hawkes's English. Hawkes's translation, also in a European language,

Her flashing swoop was like the nine suns falling, transfixed by the Mighty Archer's arrows [...] her advance like the thunder gathering up its dreadful rage [.]

is especially Homeric. Indeed, without the sources indicated, the reader might well be led to think that the translation of Du Fu's lines by Hawkes

¹⁹⁴ Homer, 338.

¹⁹⁵ Homer, 339.

¹⁹⁶ Homer, 342.

¹⁹⁷ Homer, 343.

is quoted from the *Iliad*.

The same kind of illusion may be evoked after one has read Book 2, lines 692-98 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which the hero of the poem, Aeneas, describes how an omen was sent from heaven as his father Anchises was praying to Jupiter:

“Vix ea fatus erat senior, subitoque fragore
intonuit laevum, et de caelo lapsa per umbras
stella facem ducens multa cum luce cucurrit.
illam, summa super labentem culmina tecti,
cernimus Idaea claram se condere silva
signantemque vias; tum longo limite sulcus
dat lucem, et late circum loca sulphure fumant.”¹⁹⁸

“Scarcely had the aged man thus spoken, when with sudden crash there was thunder on the left and a star shot from heaven, gliding through the darkness, and drawing a fiery trail amid a flood of light. We watch it glide over the palace roof and bury in Ida's forest the splendour that marked its path; then the long-drawn furrow shines, and far and wide all about reeks with sulphur.”¹⁹⁹

The crash of thunder and the shooting star conjure up a scene as awesome as that in Du Fu's description in Chinese and in Hawkes's English translation quoted above.

When the reader looks at Book 1, lines 44-49 and Book 6, lines 749-53 of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in particular, he may be even more likely to be misled in his effort to identify the author, easily mistaking them for Hawkes's translation of Du Fu's poem and vice versa:

Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Virgil [Publius Vergilius Maro], *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI*, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough, revised by G. P. Goold, The Loeb Classical Library, edited by G. P. Goold, LCL 63 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 362.

¹⁹⁹ Virgil, 363.

²⁰⁰ John Milton, *Poetical Works*, ed. Douglas Bush (London: Oxford University

Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
 The chariot of Paternal Deity,
 Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel, undrawn,
 Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
 By four Cherubic shapes.²⁰¹

The above lines are characterized by a grand sweep, a large-scale movement, and a ferocious onslaught suggested by the rhythm, all of which share a close affinity with Du Fu's poem and Hawkes's translation. Depicting scenes or forces of cosmic proportions, the images and the language inspire awe and trigger associations with the sublime, bearing the hallmark of what Christopher Ricks calls "the Grand Style" in his famous book, *Milton's Grand Style*.²⁰²

Returning to Du Fu's original and Hawkes's translation and reading them aloud, we will see that the source- and target-language texts are similar in more respects than one: a majestic rise and fall like the flowing and ebbing of the sea; a symmetry in the movement of the rhythm, especially in the third and fourth couplets, in which Hawkes's English ("Her flashing swoop was like the nine suns falling, transfixed by the Mighty Archer's arrows; her soaring flight like the lords of the sky driving

Press, 1966), 213.

²⁰¹ Milton, 336.

²⁰² Christopher Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). Ricks begins Chapter 2, entitled "The Grand Style," by quoting, first, Arnold, "He is our great artist in style, our one first-rate master in the grand style," and then, Johnson, "The characteristick quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftiness. He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish" (Ricks, 22); afterwards he proceeds to discuss "four important Miltonic topics: rhythm or music, syntax, metaphor, and word-play" (Ricks, 23). The following words used by Ricks in discussing Belial's reply to Moloch in Book 2 of *Paradise Lost*, particularly lines 170-86 ("What if the breath that kindl'd ["kindled" in Bush's edition] those grim fires / [...] Ages of hopeless end; this would be worse"), are, to a large extent, also applicable to Du Fu's poem and Hawkes's translation: "He drives relentlessly through 'what if...or...what if...', and then sweeps to his annihilating climax, foreseen and deliberately held back [...] When a sentence surges forward like that, the end of it seems less a destination than a destiny" (Ricks, 30). "It is this ability to harness the thrust of his syntax which sustains Milton's great argument [...]" (Ricks, 31).

their dragon teams aloft; her advance like the thunder gathering up its dreadful rage; her stoppings like seas and rivers locked in the cold glint of ice.") dances in sync with Du Fu's Chinese.

In rendering the same lines, Hung has failed to rise to the same epic grandeur:

In former days, there was a beautiful woman, Madame Kung-sun, Whose performance of the Sword Pantomime Dance was everywhere applauded. Spectators, massed mountain-high, all bore a breathless countenance, For they felt as if heaven struggled against earth. She bent back: you saw nine falling suns shot down by the fabulous I; She leaped: you beheld gods astride flying dragons in the clouds. She advanced: you awaited the thunder and lightning from a gathering storm of anger and fury; She stopped: you contemplated the mellowed light over a vast sea.²⁰³

The register ("was everywhere applauded," "bent back," "leaped"), this time unduly colloquial, is not in tune with the language of epics. Nor is the translator's comprehension of the original satisfactory: "bore a breathless countenance" is not the same thing as "*se jusang* 色沮喪"; "as if heaven struggled against earth" has distorted "*tiandi wei zhi jiu di'ang* 天地為之久低昂." In the line "*Lai ru leiting shou zhennu* 來如雷霆收震怒," "*leiting* 雷霆" is the subject, "*shou* 收" the transitive verb, and "*zhennu* 震怒" the object; though enumerating the same lexical items in his translation, Hung does not seem to have been able to make out their grammatical relationships, so that Du Fu's real message gets lost in the translation: "She advanced: you awaited the thunder and lightning from a gathering storm of anger and fury."

Bynner, though using verse as his medium, turns out a piece which is closer to prose than to poetry—and with a large number of mistranslations:

There lived years ago the beautiful Kung-sun,
Who, dancing with her dagger, drew from all four quarters
An audience like mountains lost among themselves.
Heaven and earth moved back and forth, following her motions,
Which were bright as when the Archer shot the nine suns down the sky
And rapid as angels before the wings of dragons.
She began like a thunderbolt, venting its anger,
And ended like the shining calm of rivers and the sea...²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Hung, 251.

²⁰⁴ Bynner, 167-68.

Line 2 of the original is end-stopped, meaning “astonished the whole world”;²⁰⁵ by changing the direct object “*sifang* 四方” to an adverbial adjunct and linking it to the following line, Bynner shows that he has misinterpreted both line 2 and line 3. While “*jusang* 沮喪” refers to a specific and intense state of emotional change, Bynner’s “lost in themselves” is general and refers to a vague emotional state which is hard to pin down. “[*D*]i’ang 低昂,” correctly rendered by Hawkes as “rising and falling,” which is vertical, has been mistranslated as “moved back and forth,” which is horizontal. In lines 5-8 of the translation, the ferocity of the startling imagery, the grand sweep, and the rise and fall of the rhythm of the original have given place to vague and inaccurate images and a rhythm that sounds more like prose than poetry: “bright,” for example, is a much less forceful, much less sharp, and much less startling light image than both Du Fu’s “*huo* 熒” and Hawkes’s “flashing”; the word “angels,” with its associations with the lovely or the beneficent, fails to bring out the august and awe-inspiring associations with “*qun di* 群帝”; “*can long xiang* 驂龍翔,” which describes “the lords of the sky driving their dragon teams aloft” (Hawkes’s translation), suggesting majesty and grandeur, has been misinterpreted and translated as “before the wings of dragons.” Line 7, mistranslating “*lai* 來” as “began” and converting “*shou zhennu* 收震怒” into its opposite (“venting its anger”), has destroyed the original effect. Similarly, “ended like the shining calm of rivers and the sea,” with the catch-all verb “ended,” fails to convey the specific and forceful action-verb “*ning* 凝.” With this kind of translation, one cannot, of course, expect it to suggest the cosmic rise and fall described in the original, which Hawkes’s translation has succeeded so marvellously in conveying to readers of his version.

Wu, hampered by his deficient command of English and, apparently, by his attempt to rhyme, which he fails to sustain, has produced an even weaker version:

In former days there was a fair of Gongsun family,
 Her sword dance whene’er played always was a pageantry.
 A mountain of audience was moved, with looks of dismay;
 Even heaven and earth would heave and set their breath all day.
 With flashes like the Archer Yi shot down the nine bright suns,
 And vigour like the Genii drove the dragons on cloud-way,
 She rushed on, and it’s the thunders rolling in a fury,

²⁰⁵ Hawkes, 199.

And when finished, it's the sea calmed down with smooth rays.²⁰⁶

In the above lines, meanings are distorted or read into the poem: nowhere in the original does Du Fu say “heaven and earth would [...] set their breath all day”; nor is there “pageantry,” much less a “cloud-way”; and “smooth rays” is not “*qingguang* 清光.” By changing the active voice of line 8 to the passive, the translator has reduced a highly forceful line to an anticlimactic murmur.²⁰⁷ What is even more disappointing is the grammar of lines 5-8, which cannot be disentangled; to make the lines grammatical, one would have to rewrite all of them. The choice of words, too, shows that the translator has difficulty grasping even the most basic denotations of words: it is hard, for example, for the reader to establish any relationship between “Genii” and “*qun di* 群帝”; “calmed down,” signifying an action of negligible intensity, also fails to match the forceful “*ning* 凝.”

XVIII. Conclusion

In the above discussion, I have examined Hawkes's translations alongside corresponding versions of the same poems by Du Fu, and shown how other versions differ from those by Hawkes, though these other versions may at the same time differ from one another. In the cases studied, Hawkes's versions have proved superior in almost all respects. In the first place, his reading of the original is more meticulous and more accurate; to be sure, his interpretations are not infallible, but his errors of interpretation are extremely rare. Second, judging by his translations, he is much more sensitive to the poetic qualities of the originals, whether in terms of imagery or in terms of rhythm and of the various rhetorical devices used by the poet. Third, in his mastery of the target language, he is unequalled by all the other translators. While many of the other translators appear to be fumbling for the *mot juste*, ending up with the vague, the general, or expressions carrying undesirable connotations or associations, Hawkes is almost always able to employ the right word, the right expression, and the

²⁰⁶ Wu Juntao 吳鈞陶, trans., *Tu Fu: A New Translation* 杜甫詩新譯 (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1981), 216.

²⁰⁷ Hawkes's “locked in the cold glint of ice” is also in the passive voice, but it is a passive voice imaginatively used with “in the cold glint” to create the maximum impact in poetic terms. In other words, Wu's liability has become an asset in a master's hands.

right image, capturing the nuances that prove elusive to less competent or less sensitive translators. Fourth, when he renders Du Fu's imagery, he is equally adept at handling the visual, the auditory, the tactile, the olfactory, the gustatory, the kinaesthetic, and the synaesthetic, often with great felicity. Fifth, with his keen sense of rhythm and his masterly manipulation of syntax, he is able to re-create the syntactic effects of the originals with precision. Finally, he has the widest range of styles, which is beyond the reach of all the other translators.

In the light of these qualities, one feels what he claims in his Introduction to *A Little Primer of Du Fu*, which I have already quoted in footnote 2, is much less than what he has actually achieved:

I have written this book in order to give some idea of what Chinese poetry is really like and how it works to people who either know no Chinese at all or know only a little. To write it I have taken all the poems by Tu Fu contained in a well-known Chinese anthology, *Three Hundred Tang Poems*, arranged them chronologically, transliterated them, explained their form and historical background, expounded their meaning, and lastly translated them into English prose. The translations are intended as cribs. They are not meant to be beautiful or pleasing."²⁰⁸

From my discussion in this paper, we can see that Hawkes's translations of Du Fu's poems are much more than "cribs"; they are not only "beautiful" and "pleasing," but also unrivalled; for, of all the versions examined in this paper, Hawkes's are the most successful in translating or re-creating the tone, the stylistic features, and the rhetorical devices used by the poet in the source-language texts. In comparison with Hawkes's versions, many of those in verse and intended to be poetry are nothing more than prose—very often paltry prose—printed in separate lines.

When Hawkes set out to translate Du Fu, the Muses, whether Erato or Clio or Calliope, must have expected him to use verse as his medium, for, in the minds of most translators and readers, verse is the only medium capable of rising to the summit of Mount Parnassus; instead, he used prose—and surprised the Muses.

²⁰⁸ Hawkes, ix.

THE TRANSLATION OF NAMES IN DAVID HAWKES'S ENGLISH VERSION OF THE *HONG LOU MENG*

[ABSTRACT]

Ingeniously coined by Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, the names in the original *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢, whether of characters or of places, form a highly complex system. They help to suggest the novel's themes, to portray characters, and to create effects of various kinds. In translating the whole system of names in the novel into English, David Hawkes has proved highly imaginative and resourceful. This paper discusses the translator's rendering of names in his English version, including the techniques used and the respects in which the translator is superior to his peers. While showing how he succeeds marvellously in rising to a highly formidable challenge, it also examines problems which even a translator of Hawkes's stature cannot resolve.

I. Beyond Mere Signifiers

The following lines spoken by the heroine in *Romeo and Juliet* are often quoted when linguists or semioticians want to emphasize the arbitrary nature of signs: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet."¹ There is certainly much truth in what Juliet says, which anticipates an important tenet of Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language: "Premier principe: l'arbitraire du signe" (The First Principle: The Arbitrary Nature of the Sign):

Le lien unissant le signifiant au signifié est arbitraire, ou encore, puisque nous entendons par signe le total résultant de l'association d'un signifiant à un signifié, nous pouvons dire plus simplement: *le signe linguistique est arbitraire.*

¹ *Romeo and Juliet*, 2.2.43-44. See William Shakespeare, *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*, eds. Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan, first published 1998 by Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., reissued in 2011 with additional material by Methuen Drama (London: Methuen Drama, 2011), 1017.

Ainsi l'idée de «sœur» n'est liée par aucun rapport intérieur avec la suite de sons *s-ö-r* qui lui sert de signifiant; il pourrait être aussi bien représenté par n'importe quelle autre: à preuve les différences entre les langues et l'existence même de langues différentes: le signifié «bœuf» a pour signifiant *b-ö-f* d'un côté de la frontière, et *o-k-s* (*Ochs*) de l'autre.²

[The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Since I mean by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified, I can simply say: *the linguistic sign is arbitrary*.

The idea of "sister" is not linked by any inner relationship to the succession of sounds *s-ö-r* which serves as its signifier in French; that it could be represented equally by just any other sequence is proved by differences among languages and by the very existence of different languages: the signified "ox" has as its signifier *b-ö-f* on one side of the border and *o-k-s* (*Ochs*) on the other.]³

Language is, to be sure, a relational system in which "concepts are purely differential and defined not by their positive content but negatively by their relations with the other terms of the system."⁴ Yet precisely because of the defining of concepts by "their relations with other terms of the system," words take on associations and nuances through a cumulative process. When Cao Xueqin wrote the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 'Dream of the Red Chamber,'⁵ he was using the Chinese language against a vast

² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, publié par Charles Bally et Albert Sechehaye avec la collaboration de Albert Riedlinger, édition critique préparé par Tullio de Mauro (Paris: Payot, 1972), 100.

³ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, Introduction by Jonathan Culler, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger [spelt "Riedlinger" in the French original], translated from the French by Wade Baskin (Glasgow: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd.; New York: revised edition first published in Fontana 1974; first British Commonwealth edition published by Peter Owen Ltd. 1960), 67-68.

⁴ Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, 117. The original passage from which the English passage is translated and partially quoted reads: "Quand on dit qu'elles correspondent à des concepts, on sous-entend que ceux-ci sont purement différentiels, définis non pas positivement par leur contenu, mais négativement par leurs rapports avec les autres termes du système." (Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, 162.)

⁵ Although "Dream of the Red Chamber" is the most popular English translation of the Chinese title of the novel, other translations, perhaps more accurate, are also used by scholars, among them, "Red Chamber Dream" and "The Story of the

linguistic and cultural background, aware that a word, when accurately used, could bring into play not only its denotation, but also its connotations, tapping the vast resources of the relational system to which it belongs. In the original *Hong lou meng*, this awareness on the part of the author is evident even in the most minute details. In this paper, I shall discuss in what way this awareness is reflected in the original, whether Hawkes has succeeded in preserving the various qualities of the Chinese names, and how English readers will respond to his English translations of the names, which include personal names and place names, as well as forms of address used in direct and indirect speech.

Under the heading of personal names, I shall examine the names of the characters in the novel together with their titles and nicknames. As for place names, I shall look at all those related to places: buildings, gardens, scenic spots, and so on.

II. Characters' Names in the *Hong lou meng*

Characters' names in the *Hong lou meng*, the first category to be discussed, range from the most dignified to the most lowly; it is in this category that Cao Xueqin's genius manifests itself most unmistakably.⁶

Stone." The last, being the English translation of the novel's other title, *Shitou ji* 石頭記, is the English title of David Hawkes and John Minford's translation of the novel. See David Hawkes and John Minford, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, 5 volumes, Vols. 1-3 translated by David Hawkes, Vols. 4-5 translated by John Minford (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973-1986). There are many theories about the authorship of the *Hong lou meng*. One of them is that the first eighty chapters were written by Cao Xueqin, and the last forty chapters were forged by Gao E 高鹗. The other is that the entire novel was written by one single author, whether the author was called Cao Xueqin or not. The second is the one I subscribe to. For a discussion of the authorship of the *Hong lou meng*, see Laurence K. P. Wong, *Dreaming across Languages and Cultures: A Study of the Literary Translations of the Hong lou meng* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 53-74.

⁶ The *Hong lou meng* has more than 400 characters. To help readers of his version identify them, Hawkes has compiled three lists, which are appended to his volumes, namely "Characters in Vol. 1," "Characters in Vol. 2," and "Characters in Vol. 3." See Hawkes, Vol. 1, 535-40; Vol. 2, 595-601; Vol. 3, 629-637. To help readers identify the characters mentioned in this paper, I have, in the footnotes, made use of Hawkes's lists. To avoid burdening readers with too many quotation marks, quotation marks are omitted; where a lower-case letter is changed to an upper-case

In translating characters' names, Hawkes employs two methods: romanization and translation. The former is the transcription of the sounds of the names in the English alphabet, while the latter is the rendering of the names' meaning into English.

In general, the names of the major characters and of those who have a high social status, including members of the Jia family, are romanized. Thus, the names of Jia Baoyu 賈寶玉,⁷ Lin Daiyu 林黛玉,⁸ Xue Baochai 薛寶釵,⁹ Shi Xiangyun 史湘雲,¹⁰ Wang Xifeng 王熙鳳,¹¹ Jia Yuanchun 賈元春,¹² Jia Tanchun 賈探春,¹³ Jia Yingchun 賈迎春,¹⁴ Jia Xichun 賈惜春,¹⁵ Jia Zheng 賈政,¹⁶ Jia She 賈赦,¹⁷ and Jia Lian 賈璉¹⁸ are romanized as "Jia Bao-yu," "Lin Dai-yu," "Xue Bao-chai," "Shi Xiang-yun," "Wang Xi-feng," "Jia Yuan-chun," "Jia Tan-chun," "Jia

one, the change is not indicated by square brackets. In quoting romanized names, where the given name of a character is made up of two syllables, I have generally followed Hawkes's practice of putting a hyphen between them. In my own romanizing of these names, though, I have strictly followed the practice adopted by the *Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an* 漢語拼音方案 'Hanyu Pinyin Scheme,' that is, writing the two syllables as one word with no hyphen. For example, for "賈寶玉," I have written "Jia Baoyu" instead of Hawkes's "Jia Bao-yu."

⁷ Jia Bao-yu, incarnation of the Stone; the eldest surviving son of Jia Zheng and Lady Wang of Rong-guo House. In the footnotes, in helping readers identify the characters, I have, for convenience' sake, made no distinction between "the name of a character" and "the character," which should be differentiated in more precise language.

⁸ Lin Dai-yu, incarnation of the Crimson Pearl Flower, daughter of Lin Ru-hai and Jia Zheng's sister, Jia Min.

⁹ Xue Bao-chai, daughter of Aunt Xue.

¹⁰ Shi Xiang-yun, orphaned great niece of Grandmother Jia.

¹¹ Wang Xi-feng, wife of Jia Lian and niece of Lady Wang, Aunt Xue and Wang Ziteng.

¹² Jia Yuan-chun, daughter of Jia Zheng and Lady Wang and elder sister of Bao-yu; the Imperial Concubine.

¹³ Jia Tan-chun, daughter of Jia Zheng and "Aunt" Zhao; half-sister of Bao-yu and second of the "Three Springs."

¹⁴ Jia Ying-chun, daughter of Jia She by a concubine; eldest of the "Three Springs."

¹⁵ Jia Xi-Chun, daughter of Jia Jing and younger sister of Cousin Zhen; youngest of the "Three Springs."

¹⁶ Jia Zheng, Bao-yu's father; the younger of Grandmother Jia's two sons.

¹⁷ Jia She, Jia Zheng's elder brother.

¹⁸ Jia Lian, son of Jia She and Lady Xing and husband of Wang Xi-feng.

Ying-chun,” “Jia Xi-chun,” “Jia Zheng,” “Jia She,” and “Jia Lian” respectively. Titles attached to surnames, such as “*Jia Mu* 賈母,”¹⁹ “*Wang Furen* 王夫人,”²⁰ and “*Xing Furen* 邢夫人,”²¹ are partly romanized and partly translated: “Grandmother Jia,” “Lady Wang,” “Lady Xing.”

Forming a group of their own, the names of the maids in the Ninguo and Rongguo Houses of the Jia Clan are all semantically translated, with the meanings of the originals fully or partially preserved in the English versions. They can be divided roughly into six categories: (1) those related to nature or natural scenery; (2) those related to abstract ideas or qualities; (3) those related to objects of various kinds, such as jewels; (4) those related to plants, especially flowers; (5) those related to animals, especially birds; and (6) those related to work or occupations. In the first group, we have, for example, “*Qingwen* 晴雯” (“Skybright”),²² “*Sheyue* 麝月” (“Musk”),²³ “*Qiuwen* 秋紋” (“Ripple”),²⁴ “*Caiming* 彩明” (“Sunshine”),²⁵ “*Qianxue* 茜雪” (“Snowpink”),²⁶ “*Suyun* 素雲” (“Candida”),²⁷ “*Biyue* 碧月” (“Casta”),²⁸ and “*Caiyun* 彩雲” (“Suncloud”).²⁹ However, because of the terse structure of the Chinese names, each of which consists of two characters, with each character functioning as a semantic unit, it is not easy to convey in English the full meaning of these names without sounding wordy. “*Sheyue*” and “*Qiuwen*,” for example, mean “musk moon” and “autumn ripple” respectively. Hawkes could, of course, have consistently translated them in full, but in so doing, he would have risked churning out cumbersome and lengthy monstrosities that do not sound like English names or producing jaw-breakers which are alien to idiomatic English. Whereas the characters in the original *Hong lou meng*, when addressing these maids, can pronounce their names without much difficulty, rigid literal translations would produce too unpalatable a mouthful for anyone who has a mind to address the people to whom these

¹⁹ Grandmother Jia, née Shi; widow of Bao-yu’s paternal grandfather and head of the Rong-guo branch of the Jia family.

²⁰ Lady Wang, wife of Jia Zheng and mother of Jia Zhu, Yuan-chun and Bao-yu.

²¹ Lady Xing, wife of Jia She and mother of Jia Lian.

²² One of Bao-yu’s maids.

²³ One of Bao-yu’s maids.

²⁴ One of Bao-yu’s maids.

²⁵ Page employed by Wang Xi-feng for clerical duties.

²⁶ One of Bao-yu’s maids.

²⁷ Maid of Li Wan.

²⁸ Maid of Li Wan.

²⁹ Maid of Lady Wang.

names belong. Apparently for this reason, Hawkes has opted for readability instead of absolute semantic fidelity, which, as translation theorists have repeatedly shown, is, after all, not really attainable. Thus, he translates “*Sheyue*” and “*Qiuwen*” as “Musk” and “Ripple” respectively, not as “Musk Moon” and “Autumn Ripple,” which are, from a semantic point of view, closer to the originals.

To see the merits of this approach, one has only to compare Hawkes’s translations with Chi-chen Wang’s. In Wang’s English version of the *Hong lou meng*, entitled *Dream of the Red Chamber*,³⁰ we have “Musk Moon” for “*Sheyue*,” “Autumn Sky” for “*Qiuwen*,” “Welcome Spring” for “*Yingchun*,” “Compassion Spring” for “*Xichun*,” and “Precious Virtue” for “*Baochai*.” By English standards, these translations are too cumbersome, too wordy, and too alien to sound like personal names.³¹ The first two are merely descriptions of natural scenery; the third and fourth, apart from being wordy, are unidiomatic; and the last reminds one of characters in such allegories as *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, not characters in a novel like the *Hong lou meng*. Put alongside Wang’s versions, Hawkes’s sound more like names of characters in a novel written in English.³²

To avoid confusion, Hawkes makes a point of differentiating names that have a character in common. For example, in the original, both “*Caiyun* 彩雲” and “*Suyun* 素雲” contain the character “*yun* 雲” ‘cloud.’ Considering the vast number of maids that troop across the pages of the novel, to retain the word “cloud” in the translations of these two names would confuse the English reader, so that he might have difficulty making out which is which. To solve this problem, Hawkes has translated the two Chinese names as “Suncloud” and “Candida” respectively, the latter being the feminine gender of the Latin word *candidus*, which means “shining white” or “glittering white.”³³ In his translations of the names of two other

³⁰ See Chi-Chen Wang, trans., *Dream of the Red Chamber*, by Tsao Hsueh-chin [Cao Xueqin], with a continuation by Kao Ou [Gao E] (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958).

³¹ Championing foreignizing translation, Lawrence Venuti would have acclaimed Wang’s versions. For a detailed discussion of Venuti’s convictions relating to translation, see “Seeking the Golden Mean: Arthur Waley’s English Translation of the *Xi you ji*” in this volume.

³² Hawkes’s versions would most probably be frowned upon by Venuti and his followers as “domesticated translations,” though.

³³ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell’s New Latin-English / English-Latin Dictionary*, 1st ed. 1959 (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 5th ed. 1968), 87.

maids, “*Sheyue* 麝月” and “*Biyue* 碧月,” both of which contain the character “*yue* 月” ‘moon,’ the same technique is used. Instead of keeping the character “*yue* 月” ‘moon’ at the expense of conciseness and readability, Hawkes has translated the former as “Musk” and the latter as “Casta,” which is another Latin word in the feminine gender, meaning “clean” or “pure,”³⁴ and which, like “Candida” for “*Suyun* 素雲,” is, by extension, an adequate version for “*Biyue* 碧月,” evoking similar associations as the original.

Making up a group which is no less significant, names that are related to abstract ideas or qualities include “*Xiaohong* 小紅,”³⁵ “*Tongxi* 同喜,”³⁶ “*Tonggui* 同貴,”³⁷ “*Zhen'er* 臻兒,”³⁸ and “*Ping'er* 平兒,”³⁹ which are translated as “Crimson,” “Providence,” “Prosper,” “Advent,” and “Patience” respectively. The English versions are readable, suggestive of the qualities associated with their originals. For example, with the colour denoted by the original preserved, with its short, crisp half-close vowel /ɪ/ and bi-labial nasal /m/ in “Crim[-]” playing a role on the phonological level, the English version “Crimson” suggests to the reader a lovely little girl, just as the original “*Xiao Hong* 小紅” does. Similarly, a whole range of associations related to Chinese superstitions evoked by “*Tongxi* 同喜” and “*Tonggui* 同貴” are retained in “Providence” and “Prosper.” In “*Ping'er*,” the name of Wang Xifeng’s maid, the reader sees an equable temperament, which is reflected just as effectively in “Patience.”

Names related to objects, especially jewellery, include “*Ruizhu* 蕊珠” (“Pearl”),⁴⁰ “*Jinchuan* 金釧” (“Golden”),⁴¹ “*Baoguan* 寶官” (“Trésor” ‘Treasure’),⁴² “*Yuguan* 玉官” (“Topaze”),⁴³ “*Baozhu* 寶珠” (“Jewel”),⁴⁴ “*Ruizhu* 瑞珠” (“Gem”),⁴⁵ “*Yuchuan* 玉釧” (“Silver”),⁴⁶ “*Zhui'er* 墜兒”

³⁴ See D. P. Simpson, 94, “castus.”

³⁵ One of Bao-yu’s maids.

³⁶ Maid of Aunt Xue.

³⁷ Maid of Aunt Xue.

³⁸ Caltrop’s maid.

³⁹ Chief maid and confidante of Wang Xi-feng.

⁴⁰ Maid of Grandmother Jia.

⁴¹ Principal maid of Lady Wang.

⁴² Girl-actress in the Jia family troupe.

⁴³ Girl-actress in the Jia family troupe.

⁴⁴ Maid of Qin-shi’s who stood in place of a daughter at her mistress’s funeral.

⁴⁵ A maid of Qin-shi’s who committed suicide on the death of her mistress. The Chinese character “蕊” is pronounced “*ru*” in the third tone; the Chinese character

(“Trinket”),⁴⁷ “*Qiguan* 琪官” (“Bijou” ‘Jewel’),⁴⁸ “*Hupo* 琥珀” (“Amber”),⁴⁹ “*Moyu* 墨雨” (“Inky”),⁵⁰ and “*Cuimo* 翠墨” (“Ebony”).⁵¹ In this group of names, the characters “*zhu* 珠” and “*yu* 玉” recur a number of times. Whereas this is hardly a problem for Chinese readers (since they are modified by other Chinese characters when they are used, and since the names containing these characters can easily be differentiated), any word-for-word rendering of the original to achieve absolute equivalence would give rise to confusion, making it difficult for English readers to distinguish between the characters. Hawkes could easily have translated the second component in each of these names with precision. However, as any such attempt would produce unwieldy versions that would sound like descriptive phrases rather than concise and readable personal names, Hawkes gives the characters names which can readily help the reader identify them without sacrificing readability. Thus “*Ruizhu* 蕊珠,” “*Baozhu* 寶珠,” and “*Ruizhu* 瑞珠” are translated respectively as “Pearl,” “Jewel,” and “Gem.” With each of them given a distinctive name in English, the three characters have become easily identifiable to English readers. In rendering these names, Hawkes has proved to be an ingenious translator, for, even where romanization fails (when romanized, both “蕊珠” and “瑞珠” would turn out to be “*Ruizhu*,” which would in no way be able to help English readers identify the two maids, that is, unless the un-English tone marks are given),⁵² Hawkes has emerged triumphant: preserving the meaning of “珠,” “Pearl” and “Gem,” two names that can easily be remembered, are two distinct words that can help English readers readily identify the two characters; there is no ambiguity, no confusion

“瑞” is pronounced “*ruì*” in the fourth tone. With the tone marks added, the romanizations would be, respectively, “*ruì*” and “*ruì*.”

⁴⁶ One of Lady Wang’s maids; Golden’s sister.

⁴⁷ One of Bao-yu’s maids.

⁴⁸ Stage name of Jiang Yu-han.

⁴⁹ One of Grandmother Jia’s maids.

⁵⁰ One of Bao-yu’s pages.

⁵¹ Maid of Tan-chun.

⁵² The first Chinese character “蕊” ‘pistil’ or ‘stamen’ in the name “蕊珠” has the third tone (represented by the breve diacritical mark), and is pronounced “*ruǐ*”; the first character “瑞” ‘auspicious’ in the name “瑞珠” has the fourth tone (represented by the grave diacritical mark), and is pronounced “*ruì*.” To be precise, then, the two names should be romanized as “*Ruǐzhū*” and “*Ruìzhū*” respectively, the second component of both names being “珠” ‘pearl,’ which is a Chinese character in the first tone (represented by the macron diacritical mark).

whatsoever. No less noteworthy is Hawkes's ability to make use of the subtle difference between "Pearl" and "Gem." In the minds of Chinese readers, "蕊" 'pistil' or 'stamen' evokes the physical beauty associated with the word; the English word "Pearl," evocative of what is sheeny and lustrous, conjures up similar associations in English readers. On the other hand, the character "瑞" 'auspicious,' operating more on the abstract level, is adequately translated by "Gem," which, in terms of sensuousness, is less specific, less concrete than "Pearl," coming closer to the abstract level than "Pearl" does.

To take another example, the character "玉" 'jade' appears in many names in the novel, including those of the major characters: "*Baoyu* 寶玉" and "*Daiyu* 黛玉." To translate the character "玉" in "*Yuchuan* 玉釧" as "jade" or anything to that effect would put a minor character in the group made up of the major ones. To overcome this difficulty, Hawkes translates "*Yuchuan* 玉釧" as "Silver," a name which the reader can easily remember, and which stands clearly apart from the names of the major characters which carry the "jade" element. Often associated with the character "金" or even combined with it in the collocation "*jinyin* 金銀" 'gold and silver,' "Silver," the direct translation of "*yin* 銀" is the ideal complement to "Golden," and preserves the symmetry suggested by the two names ("*Jinchuan* 金釧" and "*Yuchuan* 玉釧") in the Chinese novel.

Names related to plants and fruits, especially those related to flowers, make up another large group. They include: "*Xiren* 襲人" ("Aroma"),⁵³ "*Huixiang* 蕙香" ("Citronella"),⁵⁴ "*Yunxiang* 芸香" ("Soldanella"),⁵⁵ "*Jiahui* 佳蕙" ("Melilot"),⁵⁶ "*Wenxing* 文杏" ("Apricot"),⁵⁷ "*Xiangling* 香菱" ("Caltrop"),⁵⁸ and "*Xiuju* 繡橘" ("Tangerine").⁵⁹ These are generally translated literally with a little adaptation. The resultant versions are easy to read and functional in helping the reader identify the characters to whom they refer.

Equally significant are names related to animals, especially those that

⁵³ Bao-yu's chief maid.

⁵⁴ Number Four, junior maid of Bao-yu, "Citronella" being her former name.

⁵⁵ One of Bao-yu's maids, renamed first "Citronella" by Aroma and then "Number Four" by Bao-yu. In other words, Citronella and Soldanella are the same person.

⁵⁶ One of Bao-yu's maids.

⁵⁷ Maid of Bao-chai.

⁵⁸ Xue Pan's "chamber wife"; originally daughter of Zhen Shi-yin, kidnapped in infancy.

⁵⁹ Maid of Ying-chun.

signify birds: “*Xueyan* 雪雁” (“Snowgoose”),⁶⁰ “*Yingge* 鸚哥” (“Nightingale”),⁶¹ “*Ying'er* 鶯兒” (“Oriole”),⁶² “*Yuanyang* 鴛鴦” (“Faithful”),⁶³ and “*Yingwu* 鸚鵡” (“Parrot”).⁶⁴ With the exception of “*Yuanyang* 鴛鴦,” all these names are literally translated. The reason why Hawkes, in translating “*Yuanyang* 鴛鴦,” has abandoned the apparently more “accurate” literal equivalent “mandarin duck” is not far to seek: the literal equivalent, no matter how accurate semantically, is too wordy to be used as a name; moreover, the word “duck,” being mundane, rustic, and void of the romantic overtones of the original, would, in an English reader, evoke associations widely different from those evoked by “*yuanyang* 鴛鴦.”

Sometimes, Hawkes may use the technique of substitution, freely replacing the object signified by the original name with something else. The translation “Kingfisher” for “*Cuilü* 翠縷,”⁶⁵ which literally means “green lock or green wisp (of silky substance),” is a case in point. By sticking to the literal meaning, Hawkes would have turned out a prosaic name, a name void of the rich associations evoked by the original. For this reason, he splits the name “*Cuilü*” into two components, takes the first component “*Cui* 翠,” which, by itself, can mean “kingfisher,” and translates it literally. The result is an English name which is as poetic as the original, a worthy companion to the translated names of the other maids. From this example, it is clear that Hawkes’s aim is to achieve not mechanical equivalence, but equivalence between the associations suggested by the original on the one hand and the associations suggested by the translation on the other.

The last group of the maids’ names are related to work or occupations.⁶⁶ They include: “*Siqi* 司棋” (“Chess”),⁶⁷ “*Shishu* 侍書” (“Scribe”),⁶⁸ “*Baoqin* 抱琴” (“Lutany”),⁶⁹ “*Saohong* 掃紅”

⁶⁰ One of Dai-yu’s maids.

⁶¹ One of Dai-yu’s maids.

⁶² Bao-chai’s maid.

⁶³ Grandmother Jia’s chief maid.

⁶⁴ Maid of Grandmother Jia.

⁶⁵ Shi Xiang-yun’s maid.

⁶⁶ This does not, of course, mean that the names are always the exact descriptions of the kinds of work done by the characters.

⁶⁷ Principal maid of Ying-chun.

⁶⁸ Principal maid of Tan-chun.

⁶⁹ A maid of Yuan-chun who continued to serve her mistress in the Imperial Palace.

(“Sweeper”),⁷⁰ and “*Chuyao* 鋤藥” (“Ploughboy”).⁷¹ Of all the names of the maids and pages in the novel, this group poses the most difficult problem for the translator. This is because all the names in this group begin with a verbal element, which does not lend itself readily to straightforward translation into English. For example, “*Saohong* 掃紅” is made up of “*Sao* 掃” ‘to sweep’ and “*hong* 紅” ‘red’; literally, it means “to sweep red,” which is, by extension, another way of saying “sweeping red petals or the petals of red flowers.” The original is a poetic name, a name that evokes a long, albeit somewhat well-worn, tradition of classical Chinese poetry, in which fallen red petals, associated with the passing of spring, function as an important motif. Faced with this name, however, even the most capable of translators would be hard put to compress its full meaning and associations into a readable English version. A phrase like “Sweeper of Red Petals” or “Sweeping Red Petals” may come very close to bringing out the total meaning of “*Saohong* 掃紅,” but it is a far cry from the original, which, being concise, has the virtue of brevity. Well aware of this insurmountable difficulty, which arises from a linguistic difference between Chinese and English,⁷² Hawkes has to settle for a plain and much less poetic name in English: “Sweeper.”⁷³ For the same reason, he is not altogether successful in translating “*Siqi* 司棋” and “*Shishu* 侍書.” While the Chinese original “*Siqi*” refers to an activity, meaning literally “to be in charge of chess or a game of chess,” the English version

⁷⁰ One of Bao-yu’s pages.

⁷¹ One of Bao-yu’s pages.

⁷² The Chinese language, free from the shackles of inflexion, and, as in the case of classical Chinese, often free from the encumbrance of prepositions and copulas, lends itself much more readily than Indo-European languages to the kind of semantic compression which Ezra Pound must have had in mind when he made the following pronouncement: “Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree” (Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading*, New Directions Paperback, No. 89 (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1960), 28). Pound’s pronouncement is true even of names. The largely monosyllabic nature of the Chinese language, which allows two syllables to carry a wealth of meaning and associations, makes it extremely challenging to translate the above names into equally compressed versions without paying the price of what a Chinese reader would consider verbosity.

⁷³ The same cannot be said of his translation of “*Chuyao* 鋤藥” (“Ploughboy”), though. Evoking no poetic associations as “*Saohong* 掃紅” does, and being a male page’s name, “*Chuyao* 鋤藥” is adequately matched by its English translation, which is equally non-poetic, equally felicitous as a male page’s name.

has left out the verbal element, retaining only the noun, “*qi* 棋” ‘chess,’ which fails to suggest the life of the leisured, well-to-do class in traditional Chinese society as the original does. In comparison, “Scribe” is more satisfactory in that it does refer to one of the duties of a “*Shishu*.” Even so, on closer examination, one will see that it matches the original only partially, for “*Shishu*,” being much more than a scribe, is someone, usually a boy in ancient China, attending upon his master in all matters related to his academic pursuits. Due, not to any incompetence of the translator, but to a major difference between Chinese and English, this difficulty constitutes a case of “linguistic untranslatability,” which has been discussed by Catford in considerable detail.⁷⁴

By translating the names of the maids and pages instead of romanizing them as he has done with the names of the major characters, Hawkes, like Cao Xueqin, has achieved a number of goals.

In an article entitled “Linguistic Perspectivism in the *Don Quijote*,” the American critic Leo Spitzer declares: “perhaps a linguistic analysis of the names can carry us further toward the center, allowing us to catch a glimpse of the general attitude of the creator of the novel toward his characters.”⁷⁵ In the name *Quijote* (= *quij*- “jaw” + the comic suffix *-ote*), Spitzer sees a pointer to the author’s attitude towards the hero of the book. After closely examining the names coined by Cao Xueqin, the reader will feel that the same can be said of the *Hong lou meng*.

In general, the names of the maids and pages in the novel carry a less dignified aura than those of the major characters. The difference between “*Baoyu* 寶玉,” “*Daiyu* 黛玉,” and “*Baochai* 寶釵” on the one hand and “*Xiren* 襲人,” “*Ruizhu* 瑞珠,” and “*Qianxue* 茜雪” on the other may not be readily discernible, but the difference between the first three names mentioned above on the one hand and “*Siqi* 司棋,” “*Shishu* 侍書,” “*Xiaohong* 小紅,” “*Saohong* 掃紅,” “*Chuyao* 鋤藥,” and “*Mingyan* 茗煙”⁷⁶ on the other would hardly escape the notice of an attentive reader. The latter group of names, both by their denotations and by the associations they evoke, suggest roles inferior or subordinate to those suggested by the names of the former group. One can hardly imagine Cao Xueqin giving such names as “*Chuyao* 鋤藥,” “*Mingyan* 茗煙,” “*Siqi* 司

⁷⁴ See J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Stevans (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 94.

⁷⁵ Leo Spitzer, *A Method of Interpreting Literature* (New York: Russell, 1967), 50.

⁷⁶ Tealeaf, one of Bao-yu’s pages.

棋,” and “*Shishu* 侍書” to the principal characters of his novel. However, such a distinction would not be discernible to English readers if all the names in the novel were romanized; the social status of each of the characters, the importance of the role played by one character in relation to that played by another, and the hierarchy indicated or suggested by the Chinese names would all disappear in a jumble of syllables, in which “*Baoyu*” is not distinguishable from “*Mingyan*,” or, for that matter, “*Daiyu*” from “*Siqi*.” To preserve this highly significant feature of the *Hong lou meng*, Hawkes, with his remarkable sensitivity to the source-language text, gives up romanization in translating the maids’ and pages’ names, and takes pains to render their meanings as accurately as possible.

In contrast to their maids and pages, the major characters all have romanized names in the English version of the novel. With their names romanized instead of being translated, they appear more dignified than their maids and pages, whose names are associated with objects, animals, work, and so on. Whereas names like “Amber,” “Skybright,” “Parrot,” and “Chess” remind the reader of the familiar style, which has an intimate touch and is associated with the light-hearted and the informal, romanized names are stylistically neutral. Juxtaposed with the names of the maids and of the pages, “*Bao-yu*,” “*Dai-yu*,” “*Bao-chai*,” “*Xi-feng*,” and the names of other major characters take on an air of dignity. In the original, the names “*Xing Furen* 邢夫人” and “*Wang Furen* 王夫人,” with their honorific titles added, easily distinguish themselves from those of the maids and of the pages; even names like “*Baoyu* 寶玉,” “*Daiyu* 黛玉,” and “*Baochai* 寶釵” form a class of their own and appear to the Chinese reader as superior to such names as “*Hupo* 琥珀,” “*Yuanyang* 鴛鴦,” and “*Xueyan* 雪雁”—and by far superior to “*Siqi* 司棋,” “*Shishu* 侍書,” “*Saohong* 掃紅,” and “*Chuyao* 鋤藥.”⁷⁷ With honorific titles in Chinese

⁷⁷ One could argue, though, that the names “*Baoyu* 寶玉,” “*Daiyu* 黛玉,” and “*Baochai* 寶釵” appear superior just because the characters to whom these names belong are superior in the novel. “As mere personal names,” one could continue, “in what way is ‘*Baochai* 寶釵’ superior to ‘*Jinchuan* 金釧’ and ‘*Yuchuan* 玉釧’? Are they not all on a par, signifying as they do women’s ornaments?” The argument is certainly not without a grain of truth, but there is no denying the fact that the opposition between romanized and non-romanized names set up by Hawkes is functional, helping English readers to tune in to the frequency of the Chinese novel; it is cogent testimony to Hawkes’s imaginativeness and creativeness as a translator, which stand him in good stead in his attempt to get Cao Xueqin’s message across effectively.

attached to them, names like “*Xing Furen* 邢夫人” and “*Wang Furen* 王夫人” lend themselves readily to faithful translation; a translator will have no difficulty in suggesting in the target language the high social station implied by the originals. What is remarkable about Hawkes’s version of the novel is its delineation of the gradations of the hierarchy in ancient Chinese society through romanization and semantic translation. A fine line is drawn not only between Bao-yu, Dai-yu, Bao-chai, and Xi-feng on the one hand and Aroma, Skybright, Amber, and Faithful on the other; but also between the names of the major servants, such as Aroma and Patience, on the one hand and those of the minor ones, such as Ploughboy, Sweeper, and Scribe, on the other. Once this differentiation is preserved, the reader’s attitude to the characters and, consequently, his reception of Cao Xueqin’s overall message will become fine-tuned, as it were. A comparison of Hawkes’s version with Chi-chen Wang’s will again help the reader appreciate the superiority of the former.

In Wang’s version, there is no consistency in the use of romanization: one cannot tell from the names whether or not one character is superior to another in station. For example, while “*Baoyu* 寶玉” is romanized according to the Wade-Giles system as “*Pao-yu*,” “*Daiyu* 黛玉,” “*Baochai* 寶釵,” and “*Xifeng* 熙鳳,” the names of three characters having the same status as Baoyu, are translated as “Black Jade,” “Precious Virtue,” and “Phoenix.” As a result, these three major characters are no different from such maids as Amber, Chess, and Golden Bracelet. To add confusion to confusion, Wang has romanized “*Liu Laolao* 劉姥姥”⁷⁸ and “*Ma Daopo* 馬道婆” as “*Liu Lao-lao*” and “*Ma Tao-po*.” The former of the characters signified by these two names is an old woman drawn in comic strokes, and the latter is a wise woman, a woman practising witchcraft; they are in no way comparable to Baoyu or Daiyu in status. Worse still, in romanization, Liu Laolao’s liveliness as a comic character is totally destroyed. Put alongside Wang’s unimaginative translations, Hawkes’s (“*Grannie Liu*” for “*Liu Laolao* 劉姥姥” and “*Mother Ma*” for “*Ma Daopo* 馬道婆”)⁷⁹ appear all the more creative, all the more colourful, all the more in keeping with the characters portrayed by Cao Xueqin.

In Hawkes’s translation of names, there is yet another technique, a technique which no other translator of the Chinese novel has ever

⁷⁸ Grannie Liu, an old countrywoman patronized by Wang Xi-feng and the Rong-guo Jias.

⁷⁹ A Wise Woman; Bao-yu’s godmother.

employed: the use of foreign languages.⁸⁰

Let us begin by examining the following passage from the original alongside Hawkes's translation:

寶玉拿了本書，歪着看了半天，因要茶，抬頭見兩個小丫頭在地下站着，那個大兩歲清秀些的，寶玉問他道：『你不是叫甚麼「香」嗎？』那丫頭答道：『叫「蕙香」。』寶玉又問：『是誰起的名字？』蕙香道：『我原叫「芸香」，是花大姐改的。』寶玉道：『正經叫「晦氣」也罷了，又「蕙香」咧！〔……〕』 (C., 21, 241)⁸¹

In the inner room Bao-yu took up a book and reclined on the kang to read. For a considerable while he remained engrossed in his reading. When eventually he did look up, intending to ask someone for some tea, he saw two little maids waiting there in silence, one of whom—evidently the older by a year or two—was an attractive, intelligent-looking girl. He addressed himself to her:

'Isn't your name "Nella" something or other?'

'Citronella.'

'Citronella? Who on earth gave you that name?'

'Aroma, sir. My real name is "Soldanella", but Miss Aroma altered it to "Citronella".'

'I don't know why she didn't call you "Citric Acid" and have done with it.' (H., 1, 419-20)⁸²

Having read the two quotations above, a careful reader will have noticed that the character “*hui* 蕙” in “*huixiang* 蕙香” is a species of orchid (a

⁸⁰ By “foreign languages,” I mean languages in opposition to English, not to Chinese.

⁸¹ In this paper, the following abbreviations are used when references to the original *Hong lou meng* are given: “C.” = “Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 (Hong Kong 香港: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1971)”; the first numeral refers to the chapter, and the second to the page number(s); thus, “C., 21, 241” means “Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1971), Chapter 21, page 241.”

⁸² When references to David Hawkes's version are given, the following abbreviations are used: “H.” = “David Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin, 3 vols., Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973-80)”; the first numeral refers to the volume number, and the second to the page number(s). Thus, “H., 1, 419-20” = “David Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin (Harmondsworth: 1973-1980), Vol. 1, pages 419-20.” It should be noted that, being a co-translated work, *The Story of the Stone* has five volumes, Vols. 4 and 5 translated by John Minford, published 1982-86.

plant of the family *Orchidaceae*), not “citronella,” a plant of the family *Verbenaceae*. Similarly, the character “yun 芸” in “yunxiang 芸香” is *rue* in English (Latin name being *Ruta graveolens*), a plant of the family *Rutaceae*, not “Soldanella,” which is an Italian word meaning “blue moonwort,” and which belongs to the family *Primulaceae*. Surely, such obvious differences could not have escaped Hawkes’s notice, for, all along, he has proved highly meticulous. His use of two Italian words instead of English ones indicates a deliberate departure from the source-language text.

In the original, there is a pun on the character “Xiang 香” as well as on the sound “hui” in “Huixiang 蕙香” and “huiqi 晦氣.” To preserve this stylistic feature, Hawkes has used two Italian words which allow him to play on “[-]nella” and “citr[-]” repeatedly. As the play on words hinges on certain phonological units which, semantically, are not equivalent to those in the original, the stylistic effect is preserved at the expense of semantic fidelity. In translation, this kind of choice must often be made when it is not possible to find a target-language text that matches the source-language text on both the phonological and semantic levels.

Together with Italian, French also figures prominently in Hawkes’s translation of names. For example, “Lingguan 齡官,”⁸³ “Wenguan 文官,”⁸⁴ “Yun’er 芸兒,”⁸⁵ and “Qiguan 琪官” are translated as “Charmante,” “Élégante,” “Nuageuse,” and “Bijou” respectively. In addition to their accuracy as translations of the originals, these French words have the added merit of sounding *chic* and classy. Because of these two qualities, they are well suited to the social station and occupation of the characters. Lingguan, Qiguan, and Wenguan are members of the troupe hired by the Jia family. French names or names of French origin enable the reader to establish links between them on the one hand and France on the other, the latter being a country which has a long tradition associated with the *chic*, with high society, and with good taste in the performing arts. Through what Jonathan Culler calls “cultural references and stereotypes,” these names are put in a wider context, which Roland Barthes calls a “general social language.”⁸⁶ With an English reader, a French name for a character engaged in show business matches his expectations, and is therefore the

⁸³ A child-actress; member of the Jia family troupe.

⁸⁴ One of the Jia family’s troupe of child actresses.

⁸⁵ A sing-song girl.

⁸⁶ Jonathan D. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 141-42.

right code.

The third non-English language used by Hawkes is Latin. As a learned language which is no longer spoken in Europe, Latin serves a different purpose in Hawkes's version: to contrast with the living languages, such as English, Italian, and French, giving the names an antique flavour. It is used to translate names that are extraordinary, names remote from the mundane, or names that are seldom encountered in everyday speech. The most outstanding in this group are those related to religion. For example, the names of three characters in the first chapter, Kongkong Daoren 空空道人, Mangmang Dashi 茫茫大士, and Miaomiao Zhenren 渺渺真人,⁸⁷ all have an antique flavour, and are closely associated with the Buddhist or Taoist classics. To preserve this stylistic effect, Hawkes has rendered them as "Vanitas" (meaning "emptiness," "worthlessness," "unreality," "untruth," "vanity"⁸⁸), "the Buddhist mahāsattva Impervioso," and "the Taoist illuminate Mysterioso."⁸⁹ The last two are not Latin words *per se*; they are words of Hawkes's own coinage, etymologically linked to Latin ("Impervioso" is derived from *impervius*,⁹⁰ and "Mysterioso" from *mysterium*,⁹¹ which can, in its turn, be traced to the Greek word

⁸⁷ C., 1, 2.

⁸⁸ D. P. Simpson, 630. "Vanitas" can also mean: "nothingness," "nullity," "want of reality," "falsity," "falsehood," "deception," "untrustworthiness," "fickleness," "vainglory" (Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten, *A Latin Dictionary*, founded on Andrews' [sic] edition of Freund's *Latin Dictionary*, 1st ed. 1879 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, impression of 1962), 1957); "[u]nsubstantial or illusory quality," "untruthfulness" (A. Souter et al., eds., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 2010). In translating the Chinese name as "Vanitas," then, Hawkes has condensed in one word all the motifs suggested by "Kongkong 空空" in the original.

⁸⁹ H., 1, 48.

⁹⁰ The Latin *impervius* means "impassable," "impervious" (D. P. Simpson, 290); "that cannot be passed through" (Lewis and Short, 902); "[n]ot affording a way through itself" (Souter et al., 845).

⁹¹ The Latin "mysterium," derived from the Greek *μυστήριον*, means "a secret thing, secret, mystery," "[s]omething transcending mere human intelligence" (Lewis and Short, 1183). The Greek *μυστήριον* means "mystery or secret rite: mostly in pl.," "generally, *mystery, secret*" (Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, compiled, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1st ed. 1843, new edition revised and augmented throughout by Henry Stuart Jones et al., with a revised supplement 1996 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, new (ninth) ed. 1940), 1156).

μυστήριον) and modelled on the paradigm of Italian adjectives.⁹² Again, in Chapter 14, “*Zhuchi Sekong* 住持色空”⁹³ is translated as “Father Sublimitas,”⁹⁴ in which the word “Sublimitas” means “loftiness,” “height,” or “sublimity,” a fitting description of the transcendental spiritual state suggested by “*Sekong*.”⁹⁵ In Chapter 15, “*Zhishan* 智善” and “*Zhineng* 智能”⁹⁶ are rendered as “Benevolentia” and “Sapientia,”⁹⁷ which mean “kindness” and “wisdom” respectively. One may object to Hawkes’s choice of “Benevolentia” for “*Zhishan*” on the grounds that it has only brought out part of the original’s meaning, with the idea of “*Zhi*” (“Wisdom”) left out. However, as has been shown earlier in my discussion of the maids’ names, this kind of “infidelity” is due not to the translator’s incompetence, but, rather, to the limitations of the English language.

⁹² Italian has the word *misterioso*, which means “mysterious,” “enigmatic” (Cristina Barezzi et. al., eds., *Oxford-Paravia Italian Dictionary: English-Italian · Italian-English / Oxford-Paravia: Il dizionario Inglese Italiano · Italiano Inglese*, 1st ed. 2001 (Oxford: Paravia Bruno Mondadori Editori and Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 2006), 2182). In coining the name “Mysterioso,” Hawkes has substituted “y” for “i,” apparently to make it sound more like Latin, which is a more ancient language, of which Italian is a descendant.

⁹³ C., 14, 159.

⁹⁴ H., 1, 281.

⁹⁵ “*se* 色” and “*kong* 空” are Buddhist terms. The former, in opposition to “*xin* 心” ‘heart,’ refers to everything that can be perceived by the senses. The latter refers to the idea that things are illusive and unreal, having no independent existence; that all things and phenomena result only from the coincident converging of causes. Hawkes’s “Sublimitas” is a highly accurate translation for two reasons: first, it sums up in one word two complicated Buddhist concepts, functioning effectively as a name; second, the word, being Latin, chimes in with the register of the original with precision. The Latin word “sublimitas” means: “1 Height (i.e. either altitude or upward extent), elevation; a high place, a height. [...] 2 a An elevated state of mind, a sense of exaltation. b loftiness of character, magnanimity. [...] 3 Loftiness of style, grandeur, sublimity.” See A. Souter et al., eds., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1843. Relevant to Hawkes’s translation are the senses under 2 a and 2 b, which suggest that the character has transcended the material world, the world of the five senses, even though the Buddhist overtones in the original cannot be brought out in Latin.

⁹⁶ C., 15, 167.

⁹⁷ H., 1, 295. Benevolentia and Sapientia are novices at Water-moon Priory, described by Hawkes as “a young novice” (H., 1, 535) and “a little novice” (H., 1, 539) respectively.

Given his exceptional command of the target language, the translator could easily have translated “Zhi,” too, with a high degree of accuracy, but then the translation would have been too lengthy to be readable.

The use of Latin to lift the style out of the ordinary dates back to classical writers like Milton, whose use of Latinate words in *Paradise Lost* is well known. The principle behind this stylistic device is what the Russian formalists called “defamiliarization,” a way of making the familiar unfamiliar, so that a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a description can take on new stylistic effects even though the word, the phrase, the sentence, or the description appears in a context which is already familiar to the reader. Thus, in the above examples, defamiliarization has lifted the names to a higher plane and given them an otherworldly aura.

The groups of names discussed above are those which appear quite frequently in the *Hong lou meng*. There are other groups which are independent of or cut across them and which also testify cogently to Hawkes’s ingenuity and inventiveness. The first group to be discussed is made up of nicknames or names not used in formal address.

Nicknames, together with the characters to whom they belong, provide the reader with comic relief. From Hawkes’s English version of the *Hong lou meng*, it is obvious that the translator attaches great importance to nicknames, and takes great pains to preserve their literary effects. A glance at the following list of translations together with the originals in parentheses will suffice to show that he is as resourceful in capturing what is comic, hilarious, mundane, or vulgar as in bringing out what is serious or dignified: “Sannikins” (“老三”), “Piggy’ Feng” (“馮胖子”), “Darling” (“香憐”),⁹⁸ “Precious” (“玉愛”),⁹⁹ “Droopy’ Duo” (“多渾蟲”),¹⁰⁰ “the Mattress” (“多姑娘”),¹⁰¹ “the Drunken Diamond” (“醉金剛”),¹⁰² “Bandy Wang” (“王短腿”).¹⁰³ Though appearing in a different language, the English versions are just as idiomatic, memorable, and vivid as the originals, sounding like nicknames in an English novel and suggesting with great precision the personality of the characters hinted at by the original “labels.”

⁹⁸ A pupil at the Jia family school.

⁹⁹ A pupil at the Jia family school.

¹⁰⁰ A drunken cook on the staff of Rong-guo House.

¹⁰¹ Nickname of “Droopy” Duo’s wife, who subsequently became Jia Lian’s mistress.

¹⁰² Ni Er, gangster neighbour of Jia Yun.

¹⁰³ Not included in the lists of characters in Vols. 1-3.

For those which are not nicknames *per se* but names belonging to minor characters (such as nannies, pages, housekeepers, and children) whom Cao Xueqin wants to present as foils to the major ones, or as characters to reveal the lower strata of society and to provide comic relief, Hawkes creates another gradation in the same way as Cao Xueqin does, and comes up with versions marked by subtle shades of difference. The rendering of “*Liu Laolao* 劉姥姥,” “*Zhou Rui Jiade* 周瑞家的,”¹⁰⁴ “*Zhang Cai Jiade* 張材家的,”¹⁰⁵ “*Li Mama* 李嬭嬭,” “*Wang Er Saozi* 王二嫂子,”¹⁰⁶ “*Jinrong* 金榮,”¹⁰⁷ and “*Jiao Da* 焦大”¹⁰⁸ as “Grannie Liu,” “Zhou Rui’s wife,” “Zhang Cai’s wife,” “Grannie Li,” “Brightie’s wife,” “‘Jokey’ Jin,” and “Big Jiao” respectively is based on this principle. Contributing as a kind of literary shorthand to characterization as the Chinese names do, they are adequate translations of the originals.

Hawkes’s sensitive and imaginative approach can be seen even in the translation of names assigned to spirits. In Chapter 5, for example, Mu Jushi 木居士 and Hui Shizhe 灰使者, the two boatmen in the Land of Illusion (*Taixu Huanjing* 太虛幻境), who have their counterpart in Charon in Dante’s *Inferno*,¹⁰⁹ are translated as “Numb” and “Dumb.” The two names in Chinese allude to a famous quotation from Zhuang Zi’s 莊子 famous essay, “*Qi wu lun* 齊物論” ‘On the Parity of Things’: “*Xing*

¹⁰⁴ Both Zhou Rui and his wife were employed on the staff of Rong-guo House.

¹⁰⁵ Both Zhang Cai and his wife were employed on the staff of Rong-guo House.

¹⁰⁶ Both Wang Er (Brightie) and his wife were employed by Jia Lian and Wang Xifeng.

¹⁰⁷ “Jokey” Jin, a pupil at the Jia family school.

¹⁰⁸ Big Jiao, an old retainer of the Ning-guo Jias.

¹⁰⁹ See *La Divina Commedia: Inferno*:

Ed ecco verso noi venir per nave
 un vecchio, bianco per antico pelo,
 gridando: ‘Guai a voi, anime grave!
 Non isperare mai veder lo cielo:
 i’ vegno per menarvi all’altra riva,
 nelle tenebre etterne, in caldo e ’n gelo.’ (Canto 3, ll. 82-87)

And lo, coming towards us in a boat, an old man, his hair white with age, crying: ‘Woe to you, wicked souls, hope not ever to see the sky. I come to bring you to the other bank, into the eternal shades, into fire and frost [...]’ (John D. Sinclair, trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 51).

gu ke shi ru gao mu, er xin gu ke shi ru si hui hu 形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎？” “What is this? Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes?”¹¹⁰ Because of Hawkes’s ingenuity, not only is the allusion (that “the body [is] like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes,” a metaphorical way of saying “physically and emotionally dead”) conveyed to the reader, the antithetical structure in the opposition between the two names is also brought out on the semantic level as well as in the rhymes “Numb” and “Dumb.”

III. The Difference between Chinese and English in the Use of the Second Person Singular Pronoun in Direct Speech

Equally relevant to the discussion of names is the difference between Chinese and English in the use of the second person singular pronoun in direct speech. In ancient China—and, to a great extent, in modern Chinese society—the second person singular *ni* 你 is not often used in polite conversation. When a young person speaks to his senior, he usually avoids addressing him directly with *ni*, which is used only among peers, close friends, or people in a position to address each other on familiar terms.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ The gloss is Burton Watson’s. See Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 36. The Chinese title of Zhuang Zi’s essay is translated as “Discussion on Making All Things Equal” by Watson (36). Herbert Giles’s translation of the sentence is longer: “What are you thinking about that your body should become thus like dry wood, your mind like dead ashes?” See Herbert A. Giles, trans., *Chuang Tzū: Taoist Philosopher and Chinese Mystic*, originally published 1889 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 2nd revised ed. 1926), 34. The title is translated as “The Identity of Contraries” (34). David Hinton’s translation is as follows: “How is it possible? How can you make your body withered wood and your heart dead ash?” See David Hinton, trans., *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2014), 20. His translation of the title is more colloquial than both Burton’s and Giles’s: “A Little Talk: About Evening Things Out” (19).

¹¹¹ This practice dates back to as early as the Tang Dynasty 唐朝. Thus in one of his famous poems, the great poet Du Fu 杜甫 wrote: “*Wangxing dao er ru, tong yin yi wu shi* 忘形到爾汝，痛飲亦吾師” (“When we forgot ourselves, thouing and theeing each other, / Even deep drinking could be my teacher”). A similar use of the second person singular by Pepys is recorded in *The Oxford English Dictionary* under the entry “thou” (verb): “She [a Quakeress] thou’d him [the king] all along.” See J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English*

Before the polite form *nin* 您 (equivalent to *vous* in French, *lei* in Italian, *Sie* in German, and *usted* in Spanish) became popular in modern standard Chinese, the Chinese would use an honorific term when they wanted to refer to the addressee in direct speech. For example, in the *Hong lou meng*, when Dai-yu first meets Bao-yu, she asks Lady Wang, “*Jiumu suo shuo, ke shi xian yu er sheng de* 舅母所說,可是銜玉而生的?”¹¹² In this sentence, “*Jiumu* 舅母” is simply equivalent to ‘you’ in English; any archaic version like “Does Aunt mean / Did Aunt mean...?” modelled on “Majesty” in “Does Your Majesty...” would be off-key; yet a straightforward version like “Do you mean the boy born with the jade?” would be somewhat presumptuous for Dai-yu’s position. Skilfully bypassing this dilemma, Hawkes translates it as “Do you mean the boy born with the jade, Aunt?”¹¹³ which, without sounding unduly formal, has taken into account the Chinese custom of avoiding addressing seniors with the second person singular pronoun, that is, by toning down the English “you” with the vocative “Aunt.” Again, when Jia Zhen 賈珍 sees Lady Xing and Lady Wang, he addresses them without using the second person plural pronoun, “*Er wei shenzi mingri hai guolai guangguang* 二位孀子明日還過來逛逛。”¹¹⁴ This is translated as “You must come again tomorrow, ladies.”¹¹⁵ In the translation, the second person plural pronoun is used to conform to English idiom, while the respect signified by “*Er wei shenzi*” is taken care of by “ladies.”

In the example just discussed, one can see the process of naturalization or modification at work. In the original, “*shenzi* 孀子” describes a family or clan relationship, but, by naturalizing it, Hawkes has rendered it as “ladies,” which is what a native speaker of English would say in the same situation. In Hawkes’s version of the *Hong lou meng*, this technique is used throughout, especially in the translation of vocatives that refer to family or clan relations.

Of all the major languages in the world, Chinese probably has the richest stock of words describing family or clan relations. In Chinese, what

Dictionary, first ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley, and W. A. Craigie, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989), Vol. 17, 982. The dictionary is hereafter referred to as *OED*. The square brackets are part of the quotation.

¹¹² C., 2, 32.

¹¹³ H., 1, 98.

¹¹⁴ C., 11, 133.

¹¹⁵ H., 1, 239.

the English call “cousin” can be any one of the following: “*tangxiong* 堂兄,” “*tangdi* 堂弟,” “*tangjie* 堂姐,” “*tangmei* 堂妹,” “*biaoge* 表哥,” “*biaodi* 表弟,” “*biaojie* 表姐,” “*biaomei* 表妹.” Similarly, when translated into Chinese, “aunt” can be “*yimu* 姨母,” “*gumu* 姑母,” “*bomu* 伯母,” “*shenmu* 孀母,” or “*jiumu* 舅母.” In most contexts, these Chinese terms are simply untranslatable unless one is prepared to go so far as to produce such monstrosities as “one’s mother’s sister’s or brother’s daughter who is younger than oneself” (“*biaomei* 表妹”) or “one’s mother’s sister’s or brother’s daughter who is older than oneself” (“*biaojie* 表姐”).¹¹⁶

On top of this host of minutely differentiated family or clan relations, there is the Chinese habit of addressing each other with these terms, that is, using them as vocatives. In comparison with the Chinese, the English not only pale in their stock of terms related to family and clan relations, but appear to “grudge” the use of vocatives that readily label the relationship between addresser and addressee. A browse through the original *Hong lou meng* and Hawkes’s English version will suffice to convince the reader of this difference:

1. 嚇得寶玉連忙央告：『好姐姐，我再不敢說這些話了。』¹¹⁷

Terrified by her vehemence, Bao-yu implored forgiveness.
‘Please, Feng, don’t tell her! I promise never to say those words again.’¹¹⁸

2. 寶釵道：『你別聽他的話，沒有甚麼字。』寶玉央及道：『好姐姐，你怎麼瞧我的呢！』¹¹⁹

‘Don’t take any notice of her!’ said Bao-chai. ‘There is no inscription.’

‘Cousin, cousin,’ said Bao-yu entreatingly, ‘you’ve had a look at

¹¹⁶ See Yuen Ren Chao’s discussion on this point in his article entitled “Dimensions of Fidelity in Translation, with Special Reference to Chinese,” in *Aspects of Sociolinguistics: Essays by Yuen Ren Chao*, selected and introduced by Anwar S. Dil (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1976), 148-69.

¹¹⁷ C., 7, 92.

¹¹⁸ H., 1, 183. In quotations that stand out as independent paragraphs, I have retained Hawkes’s single quotation marks for dialogue.

¹¹⁹ C., 8, 96.

mine. Be fair!’¹²⁰

3. 寶玉忙笑道：『你說，那幾件？我都依你。好姐姐，好親姐姐！別說兩三件，就是兩三百件我也依你。〔……〕』¹²¹

‘Tell me what they are!’ he said impetuously. ‘I promise to obey you. Dearest Aroma! Sweetest Aroma! Never mind two or three: I would promise if it were two or three *hundred!* [...]’¹²²

4. 寶玉〔……〕忙上來推他道：『好妹妹，才吃了飯，又睡覺！』¹²³

Bao-yu [...] hurried over to rouse her:
‘Sleeping after you’ve just eaten, coz? [...]’¹²⁴

5. 寶玉又不解何故，在窗外只是低聲叫：『好妹妹，好妹妹！』¹²⁵

Totally at a loss to understand her behaviour, he called to her softly through the window:
‘Dai, dear! Dai!’¹²⁶

6. 鳳姐哄他道：『好兄弟，這才是呢。〔……〕』¹²⁷

Xi-feng’s manner at once became soothing and indulgent.
‘That’s my good little cuzzy! [...]’¹²⁸

7. 薛蟠忙道：『好兄弟，我原為求你快些出來，就忘了忌諱這句話，改日你要哄我，也說我父親，就完了。』¹²⁹

‘Now look here, old chap,’ said Xue Pan, getting agitated, ‘it was only because I wanted to fetch you out a bit quicker. I admit it was very wrong of me to make free with your Parent, but after all, you’ve only got to mention *my* father next time you want to fool *me* and we’ll be

¹²⁰ H., 1, 190.

¹²¹ C., 19, 221.

¹²² H., 1, 390.

¹²³ C., 19, 222.

¹²⁴ H., 1, 393.

¹²⁵ C., 22, 253.

¹²⁶ H., 1, 438.

¹²⁷ C., 7, 92.

¹²⁸ H., 1, 183-84.

¹²⁹ C., 26, 307.

quits!¹³⁰

8. 探春便笑道：『寶哥哥，身上好？』¹³¹

Tan-chun greeted him with sisterly concern:
‘How have you been keeping, Bao?’¹³²

9. 黛玉忙笑道：『好哥哥，我可不敢了。』¹³³

Dai-yu again began to shriek.
‘No! Bao-yu! *Please!* I promise!’¹³⁴

In the first two examples, “*Hao jiejie* 好姐姐” is translated respectively as “Please, Feng” and “Cousin, cousin”; in the third example, “*Hao jiejie, hao qin jiejie* 好姐姐, 好親姐姐” is translated as “Dearest Aroma! Sweetest Aroma!” As the literal translation of “*jiejie* 姐姐” (“elder sister”) is rarely, if ever, used as a vocative in English, Hawkes has translated the originals in such a way as to conform to the speech habits of the target language. Equally rare as a vocative is the literal translation of “*Hao meimei* 好妹妹” ‘Good younger sister’ in example 4 or of “*Hao meimei, hao meimei* 好妹妹, 好妹妹” ‘Good younger sister, good younger sister’ in example 5, which Hawkes has rendered respectively as “coz” and “Dai, dear! Dai!” In examples 6 and 7, “*Hao xiongdi* 好兄弟” is first translated together with “*zhe cai shi ne* 這才是呢” as “That’s my good little cuzzy” and then independently as “old chap,” which not only describe the relationship accurately in similar situations in English-speaking societies, but also convey the emotive value of the originals with precision. In example 8, the difference between Chinese and English speech habits is most unequivocally illustrated. Whereas the use of “*gege* 哥哥” as a vocative is the norm in Chinese, its literal equivalent “elder brother” is rarely used as a vocative in English. Thus, instead of addressing Bao-yu with a term that indicates the family relation between them, Tan-chun in the English version simply addresses her brother by the first character (“*Bao* 寶”) of his given name. In translating “*gege* 哥哥” as “Bao” instead of “Bao-yu,” Hawkes is modifying a Chinese name for

¹³⁰ H., 1, 519.

¹³¹ C., 27, 320.

¹³² H., 2, 34-35.

¹³³ C., 19, 224.

¹³⁴ H., 1, 395.

use in an English context. In the last example, Dai-yu addresses Bao-yu as “*Hao gege* 好哥哥.” Since any literal translation (like “Good elder brother”) of this vocative would be unidiomatic in the dialogue, Hawkes has rendered it as “Bao-yu.” This is in keeping with the speech habits of the target language; in the same situation, English-speaking cousins would certainly address each other by name.

Hawkes’s flexibility and sensitivity in translating the Chinese vocatives mentioned above are certainly impressive. To appreciate fully his ingenuity and the pains he has taken in dealing with names and forms of address, we have to go beyond the more common family and clan relations. In so doing, we will be able to see that Hawkes is totally at home in the translation of almost all forms of address, whether direct or indirect, encompassing the entire spectrum of relationships in human society. To illustrate my point, let us compare a larger variety of source-language texts with Hawkes’s English translations:

1. 那些人只嚷：『快請出甄爺來！』¹³⁵
‘Tell Mr Zhen to step outside,’ they were shouting. ‘Hurry!’¹³⁶
2. 『小人姓封，並不姓甄〔……〕』¹³⁷
‘My name is Feng, not Zhen.’¹³⁸
3. 『心肝兒肉』叫着大哭起來〔……〕¹³⁹
〔……〕 with cries of ‘My pet’ and ‘My lamb!’ burst into loud sobs.¹⁴⁰
4. 『——只可憐我這妹妹這麼命苦〔……〕』¹⁴¹
‘— but poor little thing!’¹⁴²

¹³⁵ C., 2, 14.

¹³⁶ H., 1, 67.

¹³⁷ C., 2, 14.

¹³⁸ H., 1, 67.

¹³⁹ C., 3, 26.

¹⁴⁰ H., 1, 88-89.

¹⁴¹ C., 3, 28.

¹⁴² H., 1, 92.

5. 『太太說：請林姑娘到那邊坐罷。』¹⁴³

‘The Mistress says will Miss Lin come over to the other side, please.’¹⁴⁴

6. 『這是你鳳姐姐的屋子〔……〕』¹⁴⁵

‘That [...] is where your Cousin Lian’s wife, Wang Xi-feng, lives [...]’¹⁴⁶

7. 賈母笑道：『你舅母和嫂子們是不在這裏吃飯的。〔……〕』¹⁴⁷

[...] her grandmother explained that her aunt and her elder cousins’ wives would not be eating with them [...]’¹⁴⁸

8. 寶玉道：『好祖宗！〔……〕』¹⁴⁹

‘Dearest Grannie,’ said Bao-yu pleadingly [...]’¹⁵⁰

9. 王嬈嬈¹⁵¹

Nannie Wang¹⁵²

10. 李嬈嬈¹⁵³

Nannie Li¹⁵⁴

11. 鶚哥笑道：『林姑娘在這裏傷心，自己淌眼抹淚的，說：「今兒才來了，就惹出你們哥兒的病來。」』¹⁵⁵

¹⁴³ C., 3, 32.

¹⁴⁴ H., 1, 97.

¹⁴⁵ C., 3, 33.

¹⁴⁶ C., 1, 98.

¹⁴⁷ C., 3, 34.

¹⁴⁸ H., 1, 99.

¹⁴⁹ C., 3, 38.

¹⁵⁰ H., 1, 105.

¹⁵¹ C., 3, 38.

¹⁵² H., 1, 105.

¹⁵³ C., 3, 38.

¹⁵⁴ H., 1, 105.

¹⁵⁵ C., 3, 38.

Nightingale proceeded to tell her what was troubling her new mistress.

'Miss Lin is all upset. She has just been crying her eyes out because she says she only just arrived here today, and yet already she has started young hopeful off on one of his turns.'¹⁵⁶

12. 劉氏接口道：『你老說的好。〔……〕』¹⁵⁷

'That's all very well, Mother,' put in Gou-er's wife [...]¹⁵⁸

13. 才要稱『姑奶奶』¹⁵⁹

was on the point of greeting her as 'Gou-er's aunt'¹⁶⁰

14. 周大娘¹⁶¹

Mrs. Zhou¹⁶²

15. 鳳姐忙說：『周姐姐，攙着不拜罷。〔……〕』¹⁶³

'Stop her, Zhou dear!' said Xi-feng in alarm.¹⁶⁴

16. 老舅太太¹⁶⁵

Uncle Wang's wife¹⁶⁶

17. 鳳姐〔……〕因問周瑞家的道：『這姥姥不知用了早飯沒有呢？』¹⁶⁷

She turned to Zhou Rui's wife. 'I wonder if Grannie has eaten yet

¹⁵⁶ H., 1, 106.

¹⁵⁷ C., 6, 69-70.

¹⁵⁸ H., 1, 153.

¹⁵⁹ C., 5, 73.

¹⁶⁰ H., 1, 158.

¹⁶¹ C., 6, 73.

¹⁶² H., 1, 158.

¹⁶³ C., 6, 75.

¹⁶⁴ H., 1, 160.

¹⁶⁵ C., 6, 76.

¹⁶⁶ H., 1, 162.

¹⁶⁷ C., 6, 77.

today?’¹⁶⁸

18. 周瑞家的道：『我的娘！〔……〕』¹⁶⁹

‘My dear good woman,’ said the latter [...]¹⁷⁰

19. 『只怕是你寶兄弟衝撞了你不成？』¹⁷¹

‘Has Master Bao been upsetting you?’¹⁷²

20. 小蓉奶奶¹⁷³

Master Rong’s wife¹⁷⁴

21. 『蓉哥兒，你別在焦大跟前使主子性兒！〔……〕』¹⁷⁵

‘Oh ho! Little Rong, is it? Don’t you come the Big Master stuff with me, sonny boy!’¹⁷⁶

22. 『我的菩薩哥兒！』¹⁷⁷

‘Angelic boy!’¹⁷⁸

23. 薛姨媽〔……〕笑說：『〔……〕我的兒！難為你想着來。〔……〕』¹⁷⁹

‘What a nice, kind boy to think of us [...]¹⁸⁰

24. 李媽道：『〔……〕有一天老太太高興，又儘着他喝〔……〕』¹⁸¹

¹⁶⁸ H., 1, 164.

¹⁶⁹ C., 6, 78.

¹⁷⁰ H., 1, 166.

¹⁷¹ C., 7, 80.

¹⁷² H., 1, 167.

¹⁷³ C., 7, 82.

¹⁷⁴ H., 1, 171.

¹⁷⁵ C., 7, 91.

¹⁷⁶ H., 1, 182.

¹⁷⁷ C., 8, 93.

¹⁷⁸ H., 1, 186.

¹⁷⁹ C., 8, 94.

¹⁸⁰ H., 1, 187.

¹⁸¹ C., 8, 98.

[...] she [Nannie Li] continued. ‘[...] With Her Old Ladyship you can never tell. One day when she’s feeling high-spirited she’ll let him drink as much as he likes [...]’¹⁸²

25. 『老世翁何必如此。今日世兄一去，二三年就可顯身成名的〔……〕』¹⁸³

‘Come, come, Sir Zheng! You are too hard on him! Two or three years from now our young friend will be carrying all before him!’¹⁸⁴

26. 『〔……〕那薛老大也是「吃着碗裏瞧着鍋裏」的〔……〕』¹⁸⁵

‘You know what Cousin Xue is like: always “one eye on the dish and the other on the saucepan”.’¹⁸⁶

27. 『鯨哥！寶玉來了。』¹⁸⁷

‘Jing-qing, old fellow! It’s me! It’s Bao-yu!’¹⁸⁸

28. 秦鐘〔……〕便忙又央求道：『列位神差略慈悲慈悲，讓我回去〔……〕』¹⁸⁹

At once he renewed his entreaties:

‘Good gentlemen, be merciful! Give me just a moment [...]’¹⁹⁰

29. 賈政聽了，沉思一會，說道：『這匾對倒是一件難事：論禮該請貴妃賜題才是。〔……〕』¹⁹¹

‘These inscriptions are going to be difficult,’ he said eventually. ‘By rights, of course, Her Grace should have the privilege of doing them

¹⁸² H., 1, 192.

¹⁸³ C., 9, 107.

¹⁸⁴ H., 1, 203.

¹⁸⁵ C., 16, 176.

¹⁸⁶ H., 1, 309.

¹⁸⁷ C., 16, 183.

¹⁸⁸ H., 1, 321.

¹⁸⁹ C., 16, 184.

¹⁹⁰ H., 1, 322.

¹⁹¹ C., 17, 185.

herself [...]’¹⁹²

30. 那僧笑道：『長官不消多話，因知府上人口欠安，特來醫治的。』¹⁹³

‘There is no need for Your Worship to waste time on formalities. Suffice it to say that I heard you had sickness in this house and have come to cure it.’¹⁹⁴

31. 王夫人〔……〕叫了一聲：『〔……〕比如先時你珠大爺在〔……〕』¹⁹⁵

[...] said Lady Wang [...], ‘[...] anyone who saw how strict I used to be with Mr. Zhu [...]’¹⁹⁶

32. 襲人打點齊備東西，叫過本處的一個老宋媽媽來〔……〕¹⁹⁷

[...] Aroma made ready the things that were to go to Xiang-yun, and called in old Mamma Song – one of the nannies attached to Green Delights [...]’¹⁹⁸

33. 李貴勸道：『哥兒不要性急〔……〕』¹⁹⁹

Li Gui tried to calm him.
‘Don’t be hasty, young master!’²⁰⁰

The forms of address quoted above range from those connected with high status (“Her Grace,” “Your Worship”) to those connected with low status (“Nannie Wang,” “Nannie Li,” “Mamma Song”); from those designating human beings to those related to spirits (“Good gentlemen”); from those used as vocatives (“Dearest Grannie,” “My dear good woman,” “kind boy”)²⁰¹ to those used as non-vocatives (“Miss Lin,” “your Cousin

¹⁹² H., 1, 324.

¹⁹³ C., 25, 298.

¹⁹⁴ H., 1, 504.

¹⁹⁵ C., 34, 406.

¹⁹⁶ H., 2, 163.

¹⁹⁷ C., 37, 450.

¹⁹⁸ H., 2, 229-30.

¹⁹⁹ C., 9, 113.

²⁰⁰ H., 1, 213.

²⁰¹ It should be noted that the source-language text “我的兒，難為你” is

Lian's wife," "Uncle Wang's wife"); from those describing family relations ("elder cousins' wives") to those used by people speaking to their friends ("Jing-qing"); and from the respectful ("Your Worship") to the disrespectful ("Little Rong"). All of them accurately convey the meaning and emotive shades of the originals as well as the tone of the speakers. When Nannie Li says, "With Her Old Ladyship you can never tell [...]," the status of the speaker as well as her respect for Grandmother Jia is faithfully conveyed. Similarly, "young hopeful" in Nightingale's speech, made after Bao-yu has tried to smash his jade, reflects the speaker's attitude towards him. Like the original ("nimen ger 你們哥兒"), it smacks of sarcasm, and is meant to be a dig at Bao-yu. At the same time, it suggests the speaker's loyalty to her mistress and provides the reader with a glimpse of her character just as "nimen ger 你們哥兒" does in the original.

In translating names and forms of address at the informal level, Hawkes is also a master. His versions, like their counterparts in the original *Hong lou meng*, are racy and lively, adding to the piquancy of the dialogue and, at times, turning the use of abusive language into an effective pointer to the character traits and inner self of the speaker. To illustrate my point, let us examine the following translations together with the originals:

1. 李貴道：『小祖宗，誰敢望「請」，只求聽一兩句話就有了。』²⁰²

'Little Ancestor,' Li Gui replied, 'nobody's looking for treats. All we ask is that once in a while – just once in a while – you should do what you are told.'²⁰³

2. 『賴爺爺說：』²⁰⁴

'Gaffer Lai says [...]'²⁰⁵

translated *en bloc* as "What a nice, kind boy." For this reason, it is not possible to say, without being challenged, which lexical items in the target-language text are the neat and clear-cut equivalents of corresponding lexical items in the source-language text.

²⁰² C., 9, 108.

²⁰³ H., 1, 205.

²⁰⁴ C., 16, 181.

²⁰⁵ H., 1, 316.

3. 賈政聽了道：『咳，無知的蠢物，你只知朱樓畫棟〔……〕那裏知道這清幽氣象呢？〔……〕』²⁰⁶

‘Ignoramus! You have eyes only for painted halls and gaudy pavilions [...] What can *you* know of the beauty that lies in quietness and natural simplicity?’²⁰⁷

4. 『無知的畜生！』²⁰⁸

‘Ignorant young puppy!’²⁰⁹

5. 急的茗煙在後叫：『祖宗，這是分明告訴人了！』²¹⁰

Tealeaf, running out behind him, was frantic:

‘My dear little grandfather, that’s exactly what you *are* doing!’²¹¹

6. 黛玉點頭笑嘆道：『蠢才，蠢才！你有玉，人家就有金來配你〔……〕』²¹²

Dai-yu shook her head pityingly.

‘Don’t be so dense! You have your jade. *Somebody* has a gold thing to match.’²¹³

7. 鳳姐笑道：『傻丫頭！他就有這些東西，肯叫咱們搜着？』²¹⁴

‘Silly girl!’ said Xi-feng. ‘Do you imagine that if there were really anything there he would *let* us look?’²¹⁵

8. 賈母只得安慰他道：『好寶貝，你只管去，有我呢。〔……〕』²¹⁶

‘There, there, my lamb! You’d better go and see him. Grannie will see

²⁰⁶ C., 17, 191.

²⁰⁷ H., 1, 336.

²⁰⁸ C., 17, 191.

²⁰⁹ H., 1, 335.

²¹⁰ C., 19, 213.

²¹¹ H., 1, 378.

²¹² C., 19, 224.

²¹³ H., 1, 395.

²¹⁴ C., 21, 246.

²¹⁵ H., 1, 428.

²¹⁶ C., 23, 264.

to it that he doesn't hurt you.²¹⁷

9. 馬道婆〔……〕又向賈母道：『老祖宗，老菩薩〔……〕』²¹⁸

She turned to Grandmother Jia:

'Bless you, my lucky lady! Bless you dearie!'²¹⁹

10. 『壞透了的小蹄子！』²²⁰

'Lazy little beast!'²²¹

In these forms of address, not only is the status of the person being addressed revealed and the speaker vividly characterized, even the degree of familiarity between addresser and addressee is finely gauged and accurately reflected. In Jia Zheng's words to Bao-yu (example 3), for example, the reader can feel his love for his son behind the veil of sternness. Grandmother Jia's affection for Bao-yu, on the other hand, is fully conveyed in "There, there, my lamb" (example 8). Whether in good-humoured chiding (the form of address used by Xi-feng in speaking to Patience in example 7), or in words that veil a trace of jealousy (Dai-yu's laughing at Bao-yu in example 6), or in the helplessness of a page pleading with his master (Ming-yan expressing in example 5 his despair at Bao-yu's loud promise of not letting others know about his affair with You-shi's maid), human emotions are all minutely presented. Indeed, in translating forms of address, Hawkes can, with singular felicity, descend from the most formal to the most informal, from the most dignified to the most demotic, matching the original shade for shade, portraying, or, to be more precise, re-creating the characters without sacrificing semantic fidelity.

IV. Place Names

Like personal names, place names are usually romanized by translators, and this is also generally true of Hawkes's version of the *Hong lou meng*. However, as many of the names in the original have symbolic significance and subtle nuances, evoking rich associations and combining with

²¹⁷ H., 1, 456.

²¹⁸ C., 25, 291.

²¹⁹ H., 1, 493.

²²⁰ C., 26, 302.

²²¹ H., 1, 510.

personal names to form organic patterns, Hawkes also uses other devices when necessary.

Place names on which Cao Xueqin seems to have concentrated most of his attention are those related to the Daguan Yuan 大觀園. They reflect his imaginativeness, craftsmanship, ingenuity, and keen sensitivity to the vast resources of the Chinese language. In translating these names, Hawkes is almost always able to match the novelist nuance for nuance:

絳雲軒: ²²²	Red Rue Study ²²³
疊翠: ²²⁴	Emerald Heights ²²⁵
翼然: ²²⁶	Poised Pavilion ²²⁷
蓼汀花濑: ²²⁸	Smartweed Bank and Flowery Harbour ²²⁹
紅香綠玉: ²³⁰	Fragrant Red and Lucent Green ²³¹
翠煙橋: ²³²	Green Haze Bridge ²³³

In these translations, the colour (“Red Rue Pavilion,” “Green Haze Bridge,” “Emerald Heights”) and ethereality (“Poised Pavilion,” “Green Haze Bridge”) of the originals are all preserved. In “Fragrant Red” and “Lucent Green,” the reader is invited to share the experience which a reader of the original is sure to grasp: his sense of smell (“Fragrant”), his sense of sight (“Red,” “Lucent,” “Jade”), and even his sense of touch (“Jade”) are gratified. With the olfactory, the visual, and / or the tactile all condensed with precision and economy, the translations are as rich as the

²²² C., 8, 102.

²²³ H., 1, 197.

²²⁴ C., 17, 187.

²²⁵ H., 1, 328.

²²⁶ C., 17, 187.

²²⁷ H., 1, 329.

²²⁸ C., 17, 192.

²²⁹ H., 1, 338.

²³⁰ C., 17, 196.

²³¹ H., 1, 346.

²³² C., 25, 288.

²³³ H., 1, 489.

originals in terms of sensuousness.

In translating place names related to Chinese mythology and legend, Hawkes is also a master-hand. Let us look at the following examples:

大荒山無稽崖: ²³⁴	the Incredible Crags of the Great Fable Mountains ²³⁵
大虛幻境: ²³⁶	The Land of Illusion ²³⁷
放春山: ²³⁸	Mountain of Spring Awakening ²³⁹
遣香洞: ²⁴⁰	the Paradise of the Full-blown Flower ²⁴¹
孽海情天: ²⁴²	Seas of Pain and Skies of Passion ²⁴³
癡情司: ²⁴⁴	Department of Fond Infatuation ²⁴⁵
結怨司: ²⁴⁶	Department of Cruel Rejection ²⁴⁷
朝啼司: ²⁴⁸	Department of Early Morning Weeping ²⁴⁹
暮哭司: ²⁵⁰	Department of Late Night Sobbing ²⁵¹
春感司: ²⁵²	Department of Spring Fever ²⁵³

²³⁴ C., 1, 1.

²³⁵ H., 1, 55.

²³⁶ C., 1, 6.

²³⁷ H., 1, 55.

²³⁸ C., 5, 54.

²³⁹ H., 1, 129.

²⁴⁰ C., 5, 54.

²⁴¹ H., 1, 129-30.

²⁴² C., 5, 55.

²⁴³ H., 1, 130.

²⁴⁴ C., 5, 55.

²⁴⁵ H., 1, 131.

²⁴⁶ C., 5, 55.

²⁴⁷ H., 1, 131.

²⁴⁸ C., 5, 55.

²⁴⁹ H., 1, 131.

²⁵⁰ C., 5, 55.

²⁵¹ H., 1, 131.

秋悲司:²⁵⁴Department of Autumn Grief²⁵⁵迷津:²⁵⁶Ford of Error²⁵⁷

The original names all have auras and associations peculiar to Chinese mythology; many of them are those that the Chinese reader has grown up with; the mere mention of them will evoke memories and feelings related to traditional Buddhist or Taoist stories. In dealing with these names, Hawkes has taken pains to make the translations read like idiomatic names in English; at the same time, he has preserved the exotic flavour of Chinese mythology. In the English versions of “*Yaochi* 瑤池”²⁵⁸ (“the Jasper Pool”),²⁵⁹ “*Zifu* 紫府”²⁶⁰ (“starry halls”),²⁶¹ and “*Tianxian Baojing* 天仙寶境”²⁶² (“Precinct of the Celestial Visitant”),²⁶³ the reader can experience the otherworldly and the splendid in the same way as a Chinese reader does.

Whenever possible, Hawkes always leaves nothing untranslated. Thus, a commonplace name like “*Rongxi Tang* 榮禧堂” is rendered with a high degree of fidelity: “The Hall of Exalted Felicity.” Every semantic unit is matched with an equivalent in the translation, and the level of usage is stylistically appropriate. “*Rong* 榮” and “*xi* 禧” in the original are formal words; so are their English equivalents (“Exalted” for “*Rong* 榮” and “Felicity” for “*xi* 禧”); being polysyllabic, they have effectively brought over the aura of pomp suggested by the originals.²⁶⁴

²⁵² C., 5, 55.

²⁵³ H., 1, 131.

²⁵⁴ C., 5, 55.

²⁵⁵ H., 1, 131.

²⁵⁶ C., 5, 65.

²⁵⁷ H., 1, 147.

²⁵⁸ C., 5, 54.

²⁵⁹ H., 1, 129.

²⁶⁰ C., 5, 54.

²⁶¹ H., 1, 129.

²⁶² C., 18, 204.

²⁶³ H., 1, 359.

²⁶⁴ The Chinese words “*rong* 榮” and “*xi* 禧” are, of course, monosyllabic; their formality is not suggested by polysyllables or otherwise; rather, long associated with Chinese values and aspirations in ancient society, the two words, especially when closely collocated, have an antique flavour, which gives them a certain

Nevertheless, as Chinese is largely monosyllabic, with each character (syllable) almost always carrying a sense-unit,²⁶⁵ lending itself to the coining of highly condensed place names, English is often hard put to convey to the English reader an equal amount of semantic content without sounding wordy or “long-winded.” A good example is the name “*Lihentian* 離恨天,”²⁶⁶ in which each character has a meaning. In translating it as “the Realm of Separation,”²⁶⁷ Hawkes has brought out only the meaning of “*li* 離” ‘Separation’ and “*tian* 天” ‘Heaven,’ leaving the meaning of “*hen* 恨” ‘regret’ or ‘sorrow’ unaccounted for.²⁶⁸

In the following examples, one can see the same problem:

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 1. | 梨香院: ²⁶⁹ | Pear Tree Court ²⁷⁰ |
| 2. | 逗蜂軒: ²⁷¹ | the Honey Bee Court ²⁷² |
| 3. | 含芳閣: ²⁷³ | The Fragrance Gallery ²⁷⁴ |
| 4. | 藕香謝: ²⁷⁵ | The Lotus Pavilion ²⁷⁶ |
| 5. | 桐剪秋風: ²⁷⁷ | Paulownia leaves in autumn wind ²⁷⁸ |
| 6. | 茜香國: ²⁷⁹ | the Madder Islands ²⁸⁰ |

degree of formality.

²⁶⁵ I say “almost always” because some Chinese characters, such as “*hu* 蝴” in “*hudie* 蝴蝶,” have no independent sense-units.

²⁶⁶ C., 5, 54.

²⁶⁷ H., 1, 129.

²⁶⁸ One could argue that “Separation” already implies “*hen*.” However, as “*hen*” in “*Lihentian*” has an emphatic and foregrounding effect, by conveying its meaning through implication, the translator has provided the English reader only with a partial equivalent of the original.

²⁶⁹ C., 4, 49.

²⁷⁰ H., 1, 121.

²⁷¹ C., 13, 147.

²⁷² H., 1, 262.

²⁷³ C., 18, 206.

²⁷⁴ H., 1, 364.

²⁷⁵ C., 18, 206.

²⁷⁶ H., 1, 365.

²⁷⁷ C., 18, 206.

²⁷⁸ H., 1, 365.

7. 枕霞閣:²⁸¹ Above the Clouds²⁸²

The English translations, “Pear Tree Court” (example 1), “Lotus Pavilion” (example 4), and “the Madder Islands” (example 6), are all concise, readable names, but the semantic content of the olfactory “*xiang* 香,” which stands out prominently in the originals, evoking rich poetic associations, is left out. A similar kind of omission can be seen in “Honey Bee Gallery” (example 2), “Fragrance Gallery” (example 3), “Paulownia leaves in autumn wind” (example 5), and “Above the Clouds” (example 7): each of the verbs (“*dou* 逗,” “*han* 含,” “*jian* 剪,” “*zhen* 枕”) in Chinese functions as an important focus, the point on which the whole name hinges; its role is like that of a “*shiyān* 詩眼” (literally “poem’s eye”) in classical Chinese poetry, the all-important unit that enlivens the whole poem. The collocation “*paita* 排闥” ‘thrusting open the door’ in the following lines from Wang Anshi’s 王安石 well-known poem, “*Shu Huyin Xiansheng bi* 書湖陰先先壁” ‘An Inscription on Mr. Huyin’s Wall,’ is a classic example of this kind of stylistic device:

一水護田將綠遶；
兩山排闥送青來。

‘Cuddling the paddy fields, the stream meanders round their verdant hue;
Pushing open the wooden door, the two mountains bring in their sylvan green.’²⁸³

Enlivened by the collocation “*paita*,” the poem immediately comes to life and rises to a breath-taking climax. The verbal elements “*dou* 逗,” “*han* 含,” “*jian* 剪,” “*zhen* 枕” in the Chinese names discussed above are certainly not as striking as Wang Anshi’s “*paita*”; yet, having a highly picturesque quality, they are as essential to the names as the collocation “*paita*” is to Wang’s poem; to leave out such dynamic units is like taking away the soul of the originals, depriving them of the centre around which the entire action revolves. A master in translating names and meticulous

²⁷⁹ C., 28, 337.

²⁸⁰ H., 2, 62.

²⁸¹ C., 38, 458.

²⁸² H., 2, 242.

²⁸³ My translation.

throughout his version, Hawkes must have been aware of the limitations of his approach; unrivalled by his peers in his command of English, he could certainly have brought over all the semantic units (“*dou* 逗,” “*han* 含,” “*jian* 剪,” “*zhen* 枕”) if he had chosen to; in translating the Chinese names the way he did, he was choosing the lesser of two evils—that of sacrificing the most vivid element in a Chinese name and that of producing a cumbersome, perhaps even barbarous, translation. Faced with a difficulty which Catford would have called “linguistic untranslatability,”²⁸⁴ Hawkes has already made the best of a bad job.

At times, because of considerations of a more complex nature, considerations related to the difference in associations between Chinese and English and, to a great extent, between Chinese and English culture, Hawkes may take away the most prominent semantic feature of the original and substitute for it something entirely different. The most outstanding—and controversial—example of such a bold strategy is his translation of “*Yihong Yuan* 怡紅院”²⁸⁵ as “The House of Green Delights,”²⁸⁶ which contrasts with his translation of “*yi hong kuai lu* 怡紅快綠”²⁸⁷ as “Crimson Joys and Green Delights.”²⁸⁸

What stands out most conspicuously in the translation is the substitution of “green” for “red.” The reason for the substitution or, in the eyes of many scholars, deviation is given in great detail in the Introduction to the first volume of Hawkes’s English version, where he also expresses reservations about the use of “*Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢” ‘A Dream of Red Mansions’ as the title of Cao Xueqin’s novel:

These translated titles are somewhat misleading. The image they conjure up – that of a sleeper in a crimson-coloured room – is a highly evocative one, full of charm and mystery; but unfortunately it is not what the Chinese implies. In old China storeyed buildings with red-plastered outer walls – this is the literal meaning of ‘*hong lou*’ – were a sign of opulence and grandeur. (In Peking it is the former palaces, temples and yamens that have

²⁸⁴ J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Strevens (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 94.

²⁸⁵ C., 18, 206.

²⁸⁶ H., 1, 364.

²⁸⁷ C., 18, 206.

²⁸⁸ H., 1, 364. In his translation of “*yi hong kuai lu* 怡紅快綠,” “*hong* 紅” remains as “crimson”; in his translation of “*Yihong Yuan* 怡紅院,” “*hong* 紅” has become “Green,” which is a totally different colour.

red walls; the habitations of commoners are for the most part grey.) But ‘*hong lou*’ early acquired another, more specialized meaning. It came to be used specifically of the dwellings of rich men’s daughters, or, by extension, of the daughters themselves. It follows from this that the fourth and fifth titles (‘A Dream of Red Mansions’ and ‘Twelve Young Ladies of Jinling’) represent somewhat different formulations of the same idea, just as the first and second titles (‘The Story of the Stone’ and ‘The Passionate Monk’s Tale’) both refer to the fiction that the text of the novel started off as an immensely long inscription on a miraculous stone which was copied out by a visiting holy man and taken down into the world for publication.²⁸⁹

Anticipating possible objections from his readers, Hawkes goes on to say:

One bit of imagery which *Stone*-enthusiasts will miss in my translation is the prevailing *redness* of the Chinese novel. One of its Chinese titles is red, to begin with, and red as a symbol – sometimes of spring, sometimes of youth, sometimes of good fortune and prosperity – recurs again and again throughout it. Unfortunately – apart from the rosy cheeks and vermeil lips of youth – redness has no such connotations in English and I have found that the Chinese reds have tended to turn into English golds or greens (‘spring the green spring’ and ‘golden girls and boys’ and so forth). I am aware that there is some sort of loss here, but have lacked the ingenuity to avert it.²⁹⁰

In commenting on Hawkes’s substitution of “green” for “red,” Stephen C. Soong 宋淇, a “Redologist,” called “*Hongxuejia* 紅學家” in Chinese, that is, a scholar of *Hong lou meng* studies, points out that the substitution of “green” or “golden” for “red” is not only “some sort of loss,” but “a great loss which is beyond recompense” (“無可補償的大損失”). According to Soong, who cites a variety of sources, including such Redologists as Zhou Ruchang 周汝昌, “the word “*hong* 紅” ‘red’ has an inseverable relationship with the *Hong lou meng*, with Jia Baoyu, and even with Cao Xueqin (“紅字與紅樓夢，賈寶玉，甚至曹雪芹，有不可分割的關係”). The idea of Yihong Yuan 怡紅院 comes from the idea of “*yi hong kuai lü* 怡紅快綠,” a reference to red crab apple blossoms and green plantains. The red colour in the original is one of the primary colour motifs and is contrasted with the green of Daiyu’s Xiaoxiang Guan 瀟湘館, which is associated with its green bamboo grove. In setting up this

²⁸⁹ H., 19.

²⁹⁰ H., 1, 45.

opposition, Cao Xueqin has succeeded in ingeniously alluding to the Chinese phrase “*hong nan lü nü* 紅男綠女.” In Hawkes’s version, not only is the green associated with Xiaoxiang Guan omitted, but the red motif, which is essential to the overall mood and pattern of the novel, is also left out.²⁹¹ Thus in trying to adapt a novel to the English cultural background, Hawkes has sacrificed a highly significant quality of the original, a sacrifice which he has been compelled to make, again, by the limits of translatability. As to whether the sacrifice is outweighed by the gain, scholars will continue, perhaps indefinitely, to be at odds with one another.

V. The Limitations of Romanized Names

Readers of Hawkes’s version of the *Hong lou meng* must have been aware that, apart from the names of certain characters, particularly those of the maids, and with the exception of certain place names, names in the original are generally romanized. Since it is neither practicable nor stylistically desirable to translate every Chinese name according to its meaning,²⁹² it is just natural that romanization should be the norm in the translation of Chinese names. However, romanization has its limitations, from which Hawkes’s English version of the *Hong lou meng* is not free.

In Cao Xueqin’s novel, many personal and place names have highly evocative or significant meanings and connotations. When romanized, they become meaningless sounds. Take the translations of “*Shouchang Gongzhu* 壽昌公主” (“Princess Shouyang [*sic*]”²⁹³) and “*Tongchang Gongzhu* 同昌公主”²⁹⁴ (“Princess Tong-chang”²⁹⁵), for example. In these two renderings, the meanings denoted by “*shou* 壽” ‘longevity,’ “*chang* 昌” ‘prosperous’ or ‘prosperity,’ and “*tong* 同” ‘together,’ all of which lend augustness, dignity, and solemnity to the titles, are unaccounted for.

²⁹¹ See Lin Yiliang 林以亮 (Stephen C. Soong 宋淇), *Hong lou meng xi you ji: Xi ping Hong lou meng xin Ying yi* 紅樓夢西遊記——細評紅樓夢新英譯 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi 聯經出版事業公司, 1976), 9-20.

²⁹² With every semantic unit of a Chinese name translated, the English version may sometimes be too cumbersome or outlandish to sound like names to native speakers of English.

²⁹³ H., 1, 127. “壽昌” should be romanized as “Shouchang.” If not a misprint, Hawke’s “Shouyang” may have been based on a variant reading.

²⁹⁴ C., 5, 53.

²⁹⁵ H., 1, 127.

Similarly, the translations of “*Nan’an Junwang* 南安郡王,” “*Dongping Junwang* 東平郡王,” “*Xining Junwang* 西寧郡王,” and “*Beijing Junwang* 北靜郡王”²⁹⁶ (“the Prince of An-nan” [sic], “the Prince of Dong-ping,” “the Prince of Xi-ning,” “the Prince of Bei-jing”)²⁹⁷ fail to bring out the military might in the south, the east, the west, and the north (of the empire) denoted by the originals. In the translations of “*Ningguo Fu* 寧國府” (“Ningguo House”), “*Rongguo Fu* 榮國府” (“Rongguo House”), and “*Yingtian Fu* 應天府” (“Ying-tian-fu yamen”), the reader can see similar limitations.

Like Dickens, Cao Xueqin is a master in coining names that are highly suggestive.²⁹⁸ Li Wan’s 李紈 father, for example, is called “Li Shouzhong 李守中.” The name suggests a square and honest character, for “*shouzhong* 守中” reminds one of a famous phrase in the *Shang shu* 尚書 ‘The Book of History’: “*yun zhi jue zhong* 允執厥中” ‘to persist faithfully in the golden mean,’ and has unmistakable Confucian overtones. Once romanized, the name (“Li Shou-zhong”) is no longer able to carry the same amount of suggested meaning.

By giving his characters names that suggest their traits or temperament, Cao Xueqin is using the rhetorical device of antonomasia,²⁹⁹ just as

²⁹⁶ C., 11, 128.

²⁹⁷ H., 1, 232. Hawkes’s translation of “*Nan’an Junwang* 南安郡王” as “the Prince of An-nan” is either a misprint or a rendering based on a variant reading. If it is a rendering based on a variant reading (probably “*安南郡王*”), the variant reading is a stylistic blemish, since it breaks the pattern set up by the other three names, each of which begins with a direction on the compass. From the point of view of creative writing, Cao Xueqin must choose one of the following patterns: (“*南安*,” “*東平*,” “*西寧*,” “*北靜*” or “*安南*,” “*平東*,” “*寧西*,” “*靜北*”), even though “*靜北*,” in which “*靜*” functions as a verb, may still be somewhat too modern to be acceptable in Cao Xueqin’s time. But breaking the pattern is certainly something such a great novelist as Cao Xueqin would have known better to avoid. Given the many problems with the novel’s manuscripts, the reason for the variant reading, if there is a variant reading at all, is hard to determine.

²⁹⁸ In Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, for example, such names as “Mr. Wopsle,” “Mr. Hubble,” and “Uncle Pumblechook” have a kind of onomatopoeic effect, conjuring up images that are in keeping with the characters delineated by the author. See *Great Expectations*, Chapter 4.

²⁹⁹ “Antonomasia” is defined by *A Handbook to Literature*, 6th ed., eds. C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, based on the original edition by William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company; Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada; New York / Oxford / Singapore / Sydney: Maxwell

Dickens does with his characters in *Great Expectations*. In the example quoted above, the loss resulting from romanization is not too great, for Li Shouzhong is not even a minor character. As he is mentioned in passing, his name only serves to suggest that Li Wan, a character playing only a secondary role in the novel in comparison with Baoyu, Daiyu, and Baochai, has a square and honest father who must have played a part in bringing her up as a quiet, amiable, and unassuming girl. Yet, as the character is only mentioned in passing as someone in the background, any loss resulting from the romanization of his name can only be minimal.

Macmillan International; 1992), 30-31 as follows: “A figure of speech in which a proper name is substituted for a general idea that it represents, as in ‘Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,’ where ‘Milton’ is used for ‘poet’. ‘Watergate’ now means a large and complex series of events covering a long period from 1972 on. *Antonomasia* also is used to describe the substitution of an EPITHET for a proper name, as in using ‘The Iron Duke’ for Wellington or ‘The Prince of Peace’ for Christ. It is a form of PERIPHHRASIS.” However, in *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, Publishers, 1995), 59, “*antonomasia*” has a wider application: “[Greek *antonomasia*, a derivative of *antonomázein* to call by a new name, from *anti-* against, in place of + *onomázein* to name] A figure of speech in which some defining word or phrase is substituted for a person’s proper name (for example, “the Bard of Avon” for William Shakespeare). In fiction, the practice of giving to a character a proper name that defines or suggests a leading quality of that character (such as Squire *Allworthy*, Doctor *Sawbones*) is also called *antonomasia*.” (The square brackets are part of the dictionary entry.) The *OED* definition, though giving etymological information in the Greek alphabet, is less comprehensive: “[L., a. Gr. ἀντονομασία, f. ἀντονομάζειν to name instead, f. ἀντί instead + ὀνομάζειν to name, from ὄνομα name.] The substitution of an epithet or appellative, or the name of an office or dignity, for a person’s proper name, as *the Iron Duke* for Wellington, *his Grace* for an archbishop. Also, conversely, the use of a proper name to express a general idea, as in calling an orator *a Cicero*, a wise judge *a Daniel*.” See *OED*, Vol. 1, 537. (The square brackets are part of the dictionary entry.) The definition in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is more or less the same: “[L. f. Gk, f. *antonomazein* name instead f. as ANTI- + *onoma* name: see -IA¹.] The substitution of an epithet etc. or the name of an office or dignity, for a proper name (e.g. *the Iron Duke* for Wellington). Also, conversely, the use of a proper name to express a general idea (e.g. *a Solomon* for a wise man’).” (The square brackets are part of the dictionary entry.) See Lesley Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), Vol. 1, 91. In my discussion, I have followed the definition of *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature*.

With characters that play more important roles or characters that appear on stage, as it were, romanization is a different matter. The two characters with whom the novel begins, namely, Zhen Shiyin 甄士隱 and Jia Yucun 賈雨村, are a case in point. The two characters are created as a pair, who move about not only in the real world, but also in the world of symbolism. Their names, put in antithesis to each other in the heading of Chapter 1 (“*Zhen Shiyin menghuan shi tongling; Jia Yucun fengchen huai guixiu* 甄士隱夢幻識通靈; 賈雨村風塵懷閨秀” ‘Zhen Shi-yin makes the Stone’s acquaintance in a dream And Jia Yu-cun finds that poverty is not incompatible with romantic feelings’³⁰⁰), are homophones of “*zhen shi yin* 真事隱” ‘true facts disappear’ and “*jia yu cun* 假語存” ‘false words remain’ respectively.³⁰¹ This antithetical structure, or, in structuralist terminology, binary opposition, is of the utmost importance to the novel: it is the pattern on which the entire story is modelled, the motif that dominates the whole “Dream” symphony. Thus, in opposition to the Jia 賈 (homophone of “*jia* 假,” which means “false” or “fake”) family in the north, there is the Zhen 甄 (homophone of “*zhen* 真,” which means “true,” “real,” or “authentic”) family in the south. Once romanized, the names can no longer retain the original opposition and symmetry.

Other puns embedded in the novel, though less important, are equally functional. For example, “*Jia Hua* 賈化” is the homophone of “*jiahua* 假話” ‘false words’ or ‘lies’; “*Feng Yuan* 馮淵” the homophone of “*feng yuan* 逢冤” ‘encountering grievance’; “*Zhan Guang* 詹光” the homophone of “*zhan guang* 沾光” ‘borrowing somebody else’s shine,’³⁰² “*Shan Pinren* 單聘仁” the partial homophone of “*shan pian ren* 善騙人” ‘expert at swindling people,’³⁰³ and “*Bu Guxiu* 卜固修” the homophone

³⁰⁰ Hawkes’s translation (H., 1, 47).

³⁰¹ “Jia Yucun 賈雨村” is also a pun on “*jia yu cun yan* 假語村言” ‘false words and vulgar speech.’ While the name “*Jiǎ Yǔcūn* 賈雨村” and the expression “*jiǎ yǔ cūn* 假語存” are homophones (that is, with the tones not taken into consideration), the name “*Zhēn Shiyīn* 甄士隱” and the expression “*zhēn shì yīn* 真事隱” are partly homophonous and partly homonymic, since the two characters “隱” and “隱” in the two collocations are homonyms, that is, if we substitute “= characters” for Delabastita’s “= spelling.” See footnote 303.

³⁰² Since “光” in “詹光” and “光” in “沾光” are homonyms, the pun is also partly homonymic.

³⁰³ The Chinese character “單,” when used as a surname, is pronounced “*Shan*” (“*Shàn*” if the tone is indicated), not “*Dan*” (“*Dān*” if the tone is indicated), as in Hawkes’s translation; the character “聘” is pronounced “*pin*” (“*pìn*” if the tone is indicated), not “*ping*,” as in Hawkes’s romanization. It should also be pointed out

of “*bu gu xiu* 不顧羞” ‘shameless.’³⁰⁴ Feng Yuan 馮淵 is the young man beaten to death by Xue Pan; the homophone of his name “*feng yuan* 逢冤,” which means “encountering a gross injustice unaddressed” is, therefore, a fitting summary of his fate. On the other hand, “*zhan guang* 沾光” ‘borrowing somebody else’s shine,’ “*shan pian ren* 善騙人,” ‘expert at swindling people,’ and “*bu gu xiu* 不顧羞” ‘shameless’ suggest respectively the traits of the three characters as a kind of literary shorthand, contributing directly to their portrayal.

In Chapter 16, Nannie Zhao wants to secure a job for her two sons through Wang Xifeng. When the latter asks her the names of her sons, the scene is described as follows in the original:

因問名字。鳳姐便問趙嬈嬈。彼時趙嬈嬈已聽呆了，平兒笑着推他，才醒悟過來，忙說：『一個叫趙天樑，一個叫趙天棟。』³⁰⁵

The passage is meant to be ironic, even though Cao Xueqin is only introducing two personae that never actually appear on the novel’s stage, that is, they are only mentioned by another character. The last two characters of the two names, “*liang* 樑” ‘beam’ and “*dong* 棟” ‘ridgepole,’ are often put together to form the collocation “*dongliang* 棟樑,” which, in figurative language, means “pillars of the state or of society” When the two Chinese characters combine respectively with the august-sounding “*tian* 天” ‘heaven’ or ‘sky,’ we have “*Tianliang* 天樑” ‘heaven-supporting beam’ and “*Tiandong* 天棟” ‘heaven-supporting ridgepole,’ which have all the pomp and grandiloquence that Chinese

that the two characters “聘” (“*pìn*”) and “騙” (“*piàn*”), having different pronunciations, are only paronymic, not homophonic. In classifying Chinese puns, I have followed Delabastita’s “Eightfold Classification of Puns.” See Dirk Delabastita, *There’s a Double Tongue: An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare’s Wordplay, with Special Reference to Hamlet*, Approaches to Translation Studies, eds. Raymond van den Broeck and Kitty M. van Leuven-Zwart, Vol. 11 (Amsterdam—Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993), 80-81. But as “spelling” is not applicable to Chinese characters (except when they are romanized in the *pinyin* 拼音 ‘phonetic’ system), which are made up of strokes, I have substituted “character(s)” for Delabastita’s “spelling.”

³⁰⁴ Strictly speaking, the homophonic effect is also partial, because in Chinese pronunciation, “Bu 卜” is in the third tone, and “*bu* 不” in the fourth; with tone marks added, the two words in Chinese *pinyin* ‘phonetic spelling’ are respectively “Bǔ” and “bù.”

³⁰⁵ C., 16, 181.

names could have. Given to two young men who are not even able to look for a job and take care of themselves, the two names immediately focus the reader's attention on the incongruity between signifier and signified; mentioned by Nannie Zhao, whose status in the novel is by no means impressive, they take on an added shade of irony, "culminating" not in a climax, but in an anticlimax, affording the reader considerable amusement.³⁰⁶

The technique of giving type characters names that suggest their traits has, as has been pointed out earlier, its counterpart in Dickens's novels, and is highly effective in providing the reader with comic relief.³⁰⁷ In romanizing them in his English version, Hawkes is no longer able to bring over the drama, bathos, and surprise created in the original novel.³⁰⁸ It is

³⁰⁶ That the author can make even such a minor scene, or, to be more precise, such an apparently casual bit of dialogue artistically functional is cogent testimony to his genius as a great artist. In Cao Xueqin's masterpiece, just as in Michelangelo's frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, every single stroke is functional. Jane Turner has pointed out that Michelangelo's "three monumental fresco cycles in the Vatican (the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel [...] its altar wall (the *Last Judgement* [...]) and the two lateral walls of the Pauline Chapel [...]) are among his greatest achievements" and that "[i]t is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel." Quoted from Jane Turner, ed., *The Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited; New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc.; 1996), Vol. 21, 442, 444.

³⁰⁷ The same technique is found in the *Rulin waishi* 儒林外史, in which the author Wu Jingzi 吳敬梓 gives his characters such names as "*Guo Tiebi* 郭鐵筆," "*Quan Wuyong* 權勿用," "*Zhang Tiebi* 張鐵臂," "*Shen Dajiao* 沈大脚," "*Chi Hengshan* 遲衡山," and "*Yu Huaxuan* 虞華軒." In his novel *Weicheng* 圍城, Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 is following in the footsteps of Wu Jingzi and Cao Xueqin, giving his characters such names as "*Fang Dunweng* 方遯翁," "*Han Xueyu* 韓學愈," "*Li Meiting* 李梅亭," "*Gao Songnian* 高松年," "*Dong Xiechuan* 董斜川," and "*Wang Chuhou* 汪處厚." Also writing about scholars, Qian Zhongshu, in coining his characters' names, has apparently been deeply influenced by Wu Jingzi.

³⁰⁸ In some rare cases, though, the loss resulting from romanization may not be so serious. Take Hawkes's romanization of the three principal characters' names. "*Baoyu* 寶玉" is made up of "*Bao* 寶" (meaning "jewel" or "precious"), which is also the first character of the name "*Baochai* 寶釵," and "*Yu* 玉" (meaning "jade"), which is also the second character of "*Daiyu* 黛玉." With the splitting of the most important character's name into two parts, shared equally by two girls, the symbolism is unmistakable: Baoyu is torn between Baochai and Daiyu, so that part of him is possessed by one and part of him by another; to put it in a different

clear then, that, despite his brilliance in translating names, there are, as always, obstacles that even a translator of Hawkes's stature cannot surmount.

way, Baoyu possesses, in one person, part of Baochai and part of Daiyu. With great ingenuity, then, Cao Xueqin has neatly woven the theme of the eternal triangle into three names. In romanization, the symmetry of the triangle formed by Baoyu, Baochai, and Daiyu, is still audible, even though the meanings of the syllables “*Bao*” and “*yu*” are lost; in other words, sensitive readers who have read Hawkes's English version of the novel carefully can still see the theme of the eternal triangle encapsulated in “*Baoyu*,” “*Daiyu*,” and “*Baochai*.”

IS MARTIAL ARTS FICTION
IN ENGLISH POSSIBLE?
WITH REFERENCE TO JOHN MINFORD'S
ENGLISH VERSION OF THE FIRST TWO
CHAPTERS OF LOUIS CHA'S *LUDING JI*

[ABSTRACT]

John Minford's English translation of the first two chapters of Louis Cha's *Luding ji*, a work of martial arts fiction, is one of the first of its kind. In translating a work of this genre, the translator has to tackle at least three problems, all of them highly intractable. This paper shows how Minford goes about his challenging task, looks especially closely at the way he deals with culture-specific items, and, with reference to reader-response theories, determines to what extent he has succeeded in getting Louis Cha's message across.

**I. John Minford and David Hawkes as Translators
of Martial Arts Fiction**

When I heard from John Minford last year that he and David Hawkes were translating into English the *Luding ji* 鹿鼎記 by Louis Cha (better known as Jin Yong 金庸 to Chinese readers), I was taken by pleasant surprise. On the one hand, I felt that Louis Cha had found the right people to translate his work, for, as far as the translation of Cha's novels into English is concerned, I could not think of a better qualified team than Hawkes and Minford, who had obtained enviable credentials for the job through their brilliant re-creation of Baoyu 寶玉, Daiyu 黛玉, and Baochai 寶釵 in their English version of the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢. On the other hand, I was not sure whether it was wise to tackle Cha's work, which falls under the uniquely Chinese genre *wuxia xiaoshuo* 武俠小說 'martial arts fiction.' I had such mixed feelings because martial arts fiction had always seemed to me untranslatable.

II. Problems Facing Translators of Martial Arts Fiction

I could envisage at least three problems at the time. First, translators of martial arts fiction in general would have to tame the hydra whose heads manifest themselves in such unmanageable terms as *xuedao* 穴道, *dianxue* 點穴, *wugong* 武功, *qinggong* 輕功, *neigong* 內功, *anqi* 暗器, and *zhaoshu* 招數, which can tax the resourcefulness of the most ingenious translator with *Houzi Tou Tao* 猴子偷桃, *Shuanglong Chu Hai* 雙龍出海, *Jinji Duli* 金雞獨立,¹ and a host of other highly imaginative images. With Louis Cha's novels, the problem can be much more intractable. In going through a book by Cha, the translator will find himself not only waylaid by conventional terms related to martial arts, but, very often, also swept into realms to which the average imagination can never soar, realms which he has to re-create in the target language. To put it in plainer English, he will be faced with many terms which defy translation. With regard to *wugong*, he will have to deal with “*Tanzhi Shentong* 彈指神通” (*Shediao yingxiong zhuan* 射鵬英雄傳), “*Xianglong Shibazhang* 降龍十八掌” (*Shediao yingxiong zhuan*), “*Yihun Dafa* 移魂大法” (*Shendiao xialü* 神鵬俠侶), “*Anran Xiaohunzhang* 黯然銷魂掌” (*Shendiao xialü*), “*Qiankun Danuoyi* 乾坤大挪移” (*Yitian tulong ji* 倚天屠龍記), “*Xixing Dafa* 吸星大法” (*Xiao'ao jianghu* 笑傲江湖), and “*Shangqing Kuaijian* 上清快劍” (*Xiake xing* 俠客行). In respect of *zhaoshu*, his task will be no less onerous: he will have to get to grips with “*Dian Zhao Changkong* 電照長空” (*Shediao yingxiong zhuan*), “*Kanglong You Hui* 亢龍有悔” (*Shediao yingxiong zhuan*), “*Wuzhong Shengyou* 無中生有” (*Shendiao xialü*), “*Qixing Juhui* 七星聚會” (*Tianlong babu* 天龍八部), and “*Douzhuan Xingyi* 斗轉星移” (*Tianlong babu*).² When translated into English words, which are mostly polysyllabic, these terms could sound rather wordy and clumsy, failing to

¹ As my thesis at this point is that, in semantic and cultural terms, many of these expressions cannot be adequately rendered, I shall leave all of them untranslated / un glossed.

² See the following martial arts novel by Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha), *Shediao yingxiong zhuan* 射鵬英雄傳, 4 vols., 19th ed. (Hong Kong: Mingheshe 明河社, 1995); *Shendiao xialü* 神鵬俠侶, 4 vols., 16th ed. (Hong Kong: Mingheshe 明河社, 1992); *Yitian tulong ji* 倚天屠龍記, 4 vols., rev. ed. (Hong Kong: Mingheshe 明河社, 1977); *Xiao'ao jianghu* 笑傲江湖, 4 vols., 15th ed. (Hong Kong: Mingheshe 明河社, 1995); *Xiake xing* 俠客行, 2 vols., 12th ed. (Hong Kong: Mingheshe 明河社, 1994); *Tianlong babu* 天龍八部, 5 vols. (Hong Kong: Mingheshe 明河社, 1995).

harmonize with the rest of the target-language text.

On top of the myriad terms and collocations that constantly baffle the translator, there is what I would call the essence of all martial arts fiction: fight scenes. Fight scenes, as the term denotes, must describe fights, very often for their own sake. To Western readers who are unfamiliar with the genre, the term “fight scenes” may belie the difficulty involved. They would be wrong if they equated a fight scene in a work of martial arts fiction with a scuffle between police and pickets, a drunken brawl in a bar, or even a death-and-life struggle between gangs in New York’s Chinatown; a fight scene in a well-written work of martial arts fiction is much more complicated. In the best works of Louis Cha, a fight scene can run to many pages, a case in point being Chapter 26 of the *Shendiao xialü*. To Chinese readers, it is vividly imagined fight scenes together with an intriguing, well-knit plot that make a work of martial arts fiction appealing. A work with no such scenes would cease to be a martial arts novel. As my paper is about reception and reader-response, which has to be based on subjective experience, I hope I may be excused for sounding personal in the following explanation of what fight scenes mean to readers of martial arts fiction.

When I was in junior secondary school, I was a voracious reader of martial arts fiction, poring over works published in Hong Kong and Taiwan with far greater enthusiasm than when I studied textbooks, so that when I grew up and began to write poetry, I often drew on this genre, especially with respect to image-making. Looking back today on my experience as a reader of martial arts fiction, I notice that the most irresistible spell was cast on me by writers who were most successful in creating fight scenes. The ability to coin names for various kinds of *zhaoshu* and *wulin miji* 武林秘笈, to provide the story with exotic settings, and to portray characters that are true to life is certainly very important; but to me the ability to create gripping fight scenes is more important than anything else. A novel that contains no fight scenes can certainly become a masterpiece by virtue of other qualities, but it should not be called a work of martial arts fiction in the true sense of the term. Of all the qualities that distinguish Louis Cha’s novels from those by his fellow writers practising the genre, the ability to describe breathtaking fight scenes should stand out as one of the most impressive. Take the following passage from the *Shendiao xialü*, for example:

莫瞧她小小一柄拂塵，這一拂下去既快又勁，只帶得武三通頭上亂髮獵獵飛舞。她知武三通是一燈大師門下的高弟，雖然癡癡呆呆，武

功卻確有不凡造詣，是以一上來就下殺手。武三通左手挺舉，樹幹猛地伸出，狂掃過去。李莫愁見來勢厲害，身子隨風飄出，不等他樹幹之勢使足，隨即飛躍而前，攻向他的面門。武三通見她攻入內圈，右手倏起，伸指向她額上點去，這招一陽指點穴去勢雖不甚快，卻是變幻莫測，難閃難擋。李莫愁一招「倒打金鐘」，身子驟然間已躍出丈許之外。

武三通見他忽來忽往，瞬息之間進退數次，心下暗暗驚佩，當下奮力舞動樹幹，將她逼在丈餘之外。但只要稍有空隙，李莫愁即便如閃電般欺近身來，若非他一陽指厲害，早已不敵，饒是如此，那樹幹畢竟沉重，舞到後來漸感吃力，李莫愁卻越欺越近。突然間黃影幌動，她竟躍上武三通手中所握栗樹的樹梢，揮動拂塵，凌空下擊。武三通大驚，倒轉樹梢往地下撞去。李莫愁格格嬌笑，踏著樹幹直奔過來。武三通側身長臂，一指點出。她纖腰微擺，已退回樹梢。此後數十招中，不論武三通如何震撞掃打，她始終猶如黏附在栗樹上一般，順著樹幹抖動之勢，尋隙進攻。

{.....}

李莫愁若是腳踏平地，雙鵬原也奈何她不得，此時她身在半空，無所借力，如何能與飛禽抵敵？情急之下，揮動拂塵護住頭臉，長袖揮處，三枚冰魄銀針先後急射而出。兩枚分射雙鵬，一枚卻指向武三通胸口。雙鵬急忙振翅高飛，但銀針去得快極，嗤嗤作聲，從雄鵬腳爪之旁擦過，劃破了爪皮。³

Although by no means the most outstanding in the novel, the passage serves to show how cinematic a fight scene from Cha's work can be. In presenting a fight scene, Cha almost always succeeds in projecting the action onto the screen of the reader's mind in the most concrete and visual terms, so that the reader can readily respond to and follow the description in the minutest detail. In addition to this effect, which can keep its hold on the reader's attention page after page, there is the ability to capture the speed of different moves. In going through the above quotation and countless passages by Louis Cha which are equally breathtaking, I often got immersed in the action as a young reader, deriving thrill and vicarious pleasure from it, and kinaesthetically participating in the fight myself. In reading a novel by Louis Cha during my schooldays, I found myself tantalized when, after finishing one instalment, I had to wait for another, especially if the instalment I had just finished stopped in the middle of an exciting fight. During the intervening day, I would lose interest in everything else. Because of this quality, enhanced by intriguing storylines, by countless surprises, and by the *deus ex machina*, the best novels by

³ Jin Yong 金庸, *Shendiao xialu* 神鵬俠侶, Vol. 1, 45-47.

Louis Cha are like Chinese versions of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*,⁴ spellbinding the reader from beginning to end, increasing his attention span in direct proportion to the length of the stories. With these novels, which should include the *Shediao yingxiong zhuan*, the *Shendiao xialü*, and the *Yitian tulong ji*, the reader never feels bored, so much so that one is readily reminded of a famous anecdote about Samuel Johnson.

According to Hesther Piozzi, the great eighteenth-century writer, tired of reading his friends' manuscripts out of politeness, once said:

I looked at nothing but the dramatis...A man can tell but what he knows, and I never got any further than the first page. Alas, Madam!...how few books are there of which one ever can possibly arrive at the last page! Was there ever yet any thing written by mere man that was wished longer by its readers, excepting Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress?⁵

Had Johnson been Chinese, got on a time machine, whooshed into the twentieth century, and read Louis Cha's novels, he would certainly have included some of them in his list of exceptions.

In the English-speaking world, novels that are packed with action are also common. One such example is the work of Ian Fleming.⁶ To refer to my personal response as a reader again, it was Fleming's fight scenes that constituted his books' greatest fascination for me as a young student. Put alongside Cha's fight scenes, however, those created by Fleming would pale somewhat. Fleming's description of James Bond fighting the secret agent in *From Russia with Love*, for example, is exciting, but its appeal for me as a boy was not comparable to that of the many fight scenes in Cha's novels.

In using martial arts fiction as a yardstick to measure spy fiction, I may have been unfair to Fleming, the creator of James Bond, who was my school-day idol, since a writer of spy fiction, working under more constraints imposed by the need to describe the real world, does not enjoy

⁴ *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, dir. James Cameron, Carolco Home Video, 1991, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Robert Patrick, and Edward Furlong. *Terminator 2* is described by *Wikipedia* (19 March 2015) as an "American science fiction action thriller film."

⁵ Hesther Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 152.

⁶ See Ian Fleming, *From Russia with Love*, Heron Books Series (Geneva: Edito-Service, c. 1957).

the same degree of freedom as a writer of martial arts fiction does. With the latter, almost anything is possible. A girl, for example, can be made in the passage quoted above to “dance” on the weapon of her enemy and stick to it like a leech, hurling poisonous needles from her sleeve at a giant eagle. With spy fiction, no such freedom is allowed. Because of this difference, it may be necessary to compare martial arts fiction in Chinese with fantastic fiction in English,⁷ one of the most outstanding examples of which that can serve my purpose is Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, a book that has attracted as much attention in the English-speaking world as Louis Cha’s work has done in the Chinese-speaking world. Just as Louis Cha has given rise to *Jinxue* 金學 ‘Jin Yong Studies or Jinology,’ so Tolkien has given rise to volume after volume of Tolkien studies. Perhaps because works of fantasy can enjoy as much “willing suspension of disbelief”⁸ as works of martial arts fiction do, *The Lord of the Rings* is also full of vividly imagined fight scenes unshackled by the constraints of physical or physiological laws, or by the need to achieve the kind of verisimilitude expected of conventional novels. Exercising his prerogative as a writer of fantasy by giving free rein to his imagination, Tolkien has succeeded in impressing his readers with the extraordinary feats of Gandalf and Frodo, and proved himself a remarkable writer of fantasy. In the following passage and many others from the same book, the reader is presented with a lot of gripping action:

Suddenly the great beast beat its hideous wings, and the wind of them was foul. Again it leaped into the air, and then swiftly fell down upon Éowyn, shrieking, striking with beak and claw.

Still she did not blench: maiden of the Rohirrim, child of kings, slender but as a steel-blade, fair but terrible. A swift stroke she dealt, skilled and deadly. The outstretched neck she clove asunder, and the hewn head fell like a stone. Backward she sprang as the huge shape crashed to ruin, vast wings outspread, crumpled on the earth; and with its fall the shadow passed away. A light fell about her, and her hair shone in the sunrise.

Out of the wreck rose the Black Rider, tall and threatening, towering above her. With a cry of hatred that stung the very ears like venom he let fall his mace. Her shield was shattered in many pieces, and her arm was broken; she stumbled to her knees. He bent over her like a cloud, and his eyes glittered; he raised his mace to kill.

But suddenly he too stumbled forward with a cry of bitter pain, and his

⁷ Fantastic fiction is also called fantasy fiction or, simply, fantasy.

⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Shawcross, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), Vol. 2, 6.

stroke went wide, driving into the ground. Merry's sword had stabbed him from behind, shearing through the black mantle, and passing up beneath the hauberk had pierced the sinew behind his mighty knee.⁹

Quoted at random from the book, the passage gives the reader a glimpse, albeit a brief glimpse, of the writer's ability to create breathtaking fight scenes. Written in clean, vigorous English, in which every verb is chosen with precision, the cinematic description relentlessly grips the reader's attention, reminding him, as descriptions in Louis Cha's novels often do, of similar scenes in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, scenes in which limbs and torsos are stabbed, pierced, transfixed, slashed through, or ripped asunder. In some respects, especially in the creation of epic grandeur, the quotation may be more impressive than similar passages in Cha's novels; in terms of the ability to capture speed, however, Cha should be judged to have won on points. In Cha's fight scenes, the reader is thrilled not only by breathtaking life-and-death struggles between combatants in general, but, in particular, also by the author's vivid descriptive details of the combatants' lunging and parrying as well as by the incredible swiftness of movement conveyed by Cha's highly malleable prose.

This merit of Cha's may be better explained with reference to American action films adapted from science fiction. Those who have seen *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, two of the *Star Wars* series (Episode V and Episode VI), must have been impressed by the fight between the Jedis.¹⁰ To me, the scenes in which the two fighters hack at each other were certainly fascinating. Even now, I can remember riveting my eyes on the screen with bated breath, agog at the Jedis' flashing swords. Yet, despite my admiration for Irvin Kershner and Richard Marquand, directors of the two films, I think that, in comparison with fight scenes in Louis Cha's novels or in the films adapted from them, those in *Star Wars* appear somewhat ponderous, failing to tickle my fancy as much as Cha's fight scenes do. To me, watching a fight scene in *Star Wars* is like watching a boxing match between Ali and Tyson, whereas "watching" a

⁹ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, Part 1: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Part 2: *The Two Towers*, Part 3: *The Return of the King*, first published in one volume 1968 (London: Grafton, An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 875.

¹⁰ See *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, dir. Irvin Kershner (CBS / Fox, c. 1994) and *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, dir. Richard Marquand (CBS / Fox, c. 1994).

fight scene in Cha's novels is like watching Li Lianjie 李連杰 or Jackie Chan 成龍 taking on Bruce Lee 李小龍; Cha's fight scene is superior to the boxing match by virtue of the swiftness and agility of movement characteristic of Chinese *kungfu* 功夫. For this reason, a translator wishing to convey the spirit of martial arts fiction to Western readers should try to bring out this quality, otherwise readers of the translation will be presented with a boxing match instead of Chinese martial arts. But, as has been shown above, the representation in English of a fight scene from a work of martial arts fiction requires the rare abilities of someone whose command of language can measure up to that of the writer.

In referring to Ali, Tyson, Li Lianjie, Jackie Chan, and Bruce Lee, I was already shifting the focus of my paper to the third problem that translators of Louis Cha's novels have to tackle: the problem arising from cultural differences. To be sure, cultural differences can pose a problem in all kinds of translation, but with respect to the translation of martial arts fiction, they are especially formidable. Take the names of China's mountains, such as Huashan 華山, Songshan 嵩山, Emei 峨眉, Qingcheng 青城, Hengshan 衡山, Kunlun 崑崙, Tianshan 天山, Kongtong 崆峒, and so forth, translate them into English, show them to Western readers with no knowledge of martial arts fiction, and try as you may to explain to them the significance of these names with detailed notes, and the reader-response you get will be nothing more than that of someone who has just learnt a few place names. Mention the same names to Chinese readers brought up in traditional Chinese society, and the reader-response you get will be widely different. With Chinese readers, the names, apart from denoting certain mountains in China, will trigger a chain of associations, which, lying dormant in their consciousness, are always ready to be kindled by the slightest spark from a writer of martial arts fiction. Because of cultural conditioning, these readers may, at the very mention of the names, see in their mind's eye hermits meditating upon the highest form of *wugong* 武功, *wuxia* 武俠 disappearing into clouds like falcons, or sworn enemies locked in mortal combat on a dizzy ledge rising a thousand feet from the bottom of a deep valley. To refer to my personal experience again, this was exactly how the stream of my consciousness flowed when I climbed the famous Qingchengshan 青城山 in 1979.¹¹ My consciousness worked in this manner involuntarily because

¹¹ For a detailed description of my trip, see my essay "Qingchengshan 青城山" in Huang Guobin 黃國彬 (Laurence K. P. Wong), *Sanxia, Shudao, Emei* 三峽·蜀道·峨眉 'The Three Gorges, the Shu Route, and Emei Mountain' (Hong Kong:

the name “Qingchengshan” had, in the terminology of linguistics and translation theory, both “referential and emotive meanings”¹² for me. By the same token, the mention of Kunlun may conjure up in many Chinese readers’ minds associations related to the well-known Kunlun Nu 崑崙奴 ‘Servant from Kunlun’ story. Because of the influence of Chinese martial arts fiction, each of these names has, for those who have been steeped in Chinese culture, a cluster of associations that can be traced to ancient Chinese legend or mythology, to such figures as Qiuran 虬髯客 ‘Man with the Curly Beard,’ Nie Yinniang 聶隱娘 ‘Nie the Invisible Lady,’ and so forth. With *wugong* 武功, *neigong* 內功, *qinggong* 輕功, *jianghu* 江湖, *miji* 秘笈,¹³ and a host of other terms, one can see the same principle

Xuejin shudian 學津書店, 1982), 100-110.

¹² For a detailed discussion of “referential and emotive meanings,” see Chapter 5 of Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 70-119.

¹³ These Chinese terms, being culture-bound, are untranslatable. I have, therefore, given up any attempt to translate or gloss them. Take the term “*jianghu* 江湖,” for example. According to the authoritative *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 ‘*A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Chinese Language*,’ the term has three relevant definitions: “[1] 江河湖海。[‘rivers, lakes, and the sea’] [...] [2] 泛指四方各地 [‘generally referring to various regions and places’] [3] 舊時指隱士的居處 [‘referring, in olden times, to places where hermits lived’] [...] See Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風 et al., eds., *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 ‘*A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Chinese Language*,’ Haiwaiiban 海外版 ‘Overseas Edition,’ 12 vols. (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudain Xianggang fendian 三聯書店香港分店 (Joint Publishing (H. K.) Co., Ltd.) / *Hanyu da cidian* bianzuanchu 漢語大詞典編纂處, January 1987-August 1994), Vol. 5, 923. The relevant English translations of “*jianghu* 江湖” given by an authoritative Chinese-English dictionary are as follows: “[1] rivers and lakes [2] all corners of the country [...]” See Wu Jingrong et al., eds., *The Pinyin Chinese-English Dictionary* (Peking / Hong Kong: The Commercial Press; New York / Chichester / Brisbane / Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; 1983), 334. The Chinese definitions and the English translations are certainly acceptable and generally accurate in other contexts, but not acceptable or accurate when used in relation to martial arts fiction. In the context of martial arts fiction, the term has approximately—but only approximately, since it is, strictly speaking, untranslatable—the sense of “the world of the martial arts people, in which there are conventions, moral codes, unwritten norms of behaviour peculiar to this world.” The fact that the term has to be explained—not translated—almost in a circumlocutory manner has already highlighted its intractability as a source-language text. Again, take the term “*wuxia xiaoshuo* 武俠小說.” Today,

whether in translation studies or in sinology, the “standard” translation of the term is “martial arts fiction,” which is adopted by the title of this paper. However, for readers of *wuxia xiaoshuo*, the word “martial” does not exactly denote or connote what is denoted or connoted by “*wu*” in “*wuxia xiaoshuo*.” Derived ultimately from *Mars*, “martial arts” has more to do with what is taught at West Point, with military strategies, and so on. In the Chinese context, it reminds one of Sun Zi 孫子 rather than the heroes in *wuxia xiaoshuo*. The same can be said of the term *wuxia* used in isolation. In the past decades, the term “*wuxia*” has been translated as “knight-errant” or “swordsmen.” For lack of better versions, scholars have been compelled to settle for these “second bests.” If we look at these terms closely, however, we will see that they differ considerably from “*wuxia*” even in terms of denotations, to say nothing of connotations. A knight-errant reminds one readily of those heroes depicted by Sir Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe*, not those in Chinese *wuxia xiaoshuo*. Similarly, a swordsman would describe a Japanese samurai better than it does a Chinese *wuxia*, for many heroes, particularly superheroes, in Chinese *wuxia xiaoshuo* do not use swords when they fight. Thus the supermaster Huang Yaoshi 黃藥師 in *Shediao yingxiong zhuan* is most famous for his *Tan Zhi Shentong* 彈指神通, in which he uses only his fingers. The other supermaster Hong Qigong 洪七公, also an important character in the novel, is famous for his *Xianglong Shiba Zhang* 降龍十八掌, in which he uses only his hands or, more literally, his palms. If he cares to use a weapon, he would use a stick, called *Dagoubang* 打狗棒 ‘Stick for Beating Dogs.’ Surely, these two great heroes are no swordsmen in the conventional sense of the word, even though Huang Yaoshi 黃藥師 is also a master of *Luoying Jianfa* 落英劍法 ‘Falling-Petal Swordsmanship.’ Again, *neigong* 內功 in *wuxia xiaoshuo* is not quite the same thing as “exercises to benefit the internal organs” (Wu Jingrong et al., 492), nor is *waigong* 外功 “exercises to benefit the muscles and bones” (Wu Jingrong et al., 705). In very approximate—hence imprecise—terms, *neigong* in *wuxia xiaoshuo* is the power acquired following long periods of internal cultivation, deep meditation, and so on, involving blood circulation, *qi* 氣, and so on, so that when it is displayed by a master who is sitting, with his eyes closed, one can see, for example, three haze-like flowers gathering over the master’s head (called “*Sanhua Juding* 三花聚頂” ‘Three Flowers Gathering over the Head’); when used for offensive purposes, as when a master slowly pushes his open palms forward, it is as powerful as a hurricane or explosives, uprooting trees and smashing walls and huge rocks; when the palms press against the barks of trees or granite, deep marks or grooves are left behind. On the other hand, *waigong* is external, associated with ferocity and usually of a lower order. It should be noted that, in Chinese, the collocation “*jiānghú*” is different from the collocation “*jiāng·hú*,” though both are written as “江湖.” The first one, with the second character pronounced in the second tone (“*di’er sheng* 第二聲”), which is also called the rising tone (“*yangping* 陽平”), has the sense discussed above in relation to the question of translatability or

at work. Unique and indigenous to Chinese martial arts fiction, these terms may lose their magic when transplanted into English soil. For the uninitiated Western reader, who is not “informed” in Fish’s sense of the word, that is, not “sufficiently experienced as a reader to have internalized the properties of literary discourses, including everything from the most local of devices [...] to whole genres,”¹⁴ all the above terms may just be dry and sapless signifiers.

To get back to Louis Cha, when an “initiated” Chinese reader reads the *Luding ji*, the *Shediao yingxiang zhuan*, the *Shendiao xialü*, and so on, he will be able to respond to them in ways an “uninitiated” Western reader cannot, bringing to bear on the reading activity a vast pool of knowledge and information accumulated through his cultural background and reading experience, giving meaning to the text which his “uninitiated” counterpart in the West cannot give. In view of this, what Cuddon says of a text in general is also true of martial arts fiction in particular:

Fundamentally, a text, whatever it be (poem, short story, essay, scientific exposition), has no real existence until it is read. Its meaning is *in potentia*, so to speak. A reader completes its meaning by reading it. The reading is complementary; it *actualizes potential meaning*. Thus, the reader does not have, as has been traditionally thought and accepted, a passive role; on the contrary, the reader is an active agent in the creation of meaning. By applying codes and strategies the reader decodes the text.¹⁵

This, roughly, is what Eco means when he says that “[t]he [...] existence of texts” can be “cooperatively generated by the addressee.”¹⁶ It also accords with what Iser has said about the reading process: “as we read, we react to what we ourselves have produced, and it is this mode of reaction that, in fact, enables us to experience the text as an actual event.”¹⁷ With

otherwise. The second, with the second character pronounced in the light tone (“*qingsheng* 輕聲”), means something else: “① itinerant entertainers, quacks, etc. ② trade of such people” (Wu Jingrong et al., 334-35). In the Chinese expression “走江湖” (as used in traditional society), however, the two collocations appear to overlap.

¹⁴ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), 48.

¹⁵ J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 3rd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992), 770-71.

¹⁶ Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 3.

¹⁷ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore:

regard to martial arts fiction, a Western reader, unprimed by Chinese culture, may have difficulty actualizing the “*potential meaning*” and cooperating with the author to generate fully “[t]he [...] existence of texts.”

III. Hawkes and Minford’s English Translation of the First Two Chapters of the *Luding ji*

The above were, in brief, my major reservations about the possibility of conveying the experience of martial arts fiction to English readers. However, after I had read *The Deer and the Cauldron: The Adventures of a Chinese Trickster*, Hawkes and Minford’s English translation of the first two chapters of Louis Cha’s *Luding ji*,¹⁸ my reservations began to give way to a more optimistic view.

In going through the translation, I still missed some of the associations and part of the emotive meaning triggered by the original. For example, the translation of “*wugong* 武功”¹⁹ as “fighting skills,”²⁰ of “*zhao* 招”²¹ as “move,”²² and of “*jianghu* 江湖”²³ as “Brotherhood,”²⁴ though cogent

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 128-29.

¹⁸ Though John Minford told his audience in a lecture given in March 1995 at Lingnan College, Hong Kong that *The Deer and the Cauldron* was translated by himself and Hawkes, I learned later that, as the project proceeded, Hawkes began to play a less active role as co-translator. In the subtitle and footnotes of my paper, therefore, I have followed the information given on the title page of the book, and recorded “John Minford” as the sole translator.

¹⁹ Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha), *Luding ji* 鹿鼎記, 16th ed., 5 vols. (Hong Kong: Mingheshe 明河社, 1995), Vol. 1, 63.

²⁰ John Minford, *The Deer and the Cauldron: The Adventures of a Chinese Trickster*, reprinted from *East Asian History* 5 (Canberra: Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University, 1994), 71. This was the only edition available at the time I was writing my paper. In 1997, the First Book of the translation was published by Oxford University Press. See John Minford, trans. and ed., *The Deer and the Cauldron: A Martial Arts Novel by Louis Cha*, the First Book (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). The Second and the Third Book were published in 1999 and 2002 respectively. In this paper, all quotations from the English translation are based on the Australian National University edition of 1994.

²¹ Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha), *Luding ji* 鹿鼎記, Vol. 1, 69.

²² Minford, *The Deer and the Cauldron*, 76.

²³ Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha), *Luding ji* 鹿鼎記, Vol. 1, 96.

testimony to the translators' sensitivity and resourcefulness, is unlikely to elicit from English readers the same response as that elicited from Chinese readers by the original expressions. Unlike "zhao" and "wugong," "fighting skills" and "move" contain no Chinese flavour, and have the effect of bringing the reader from the realms of imagination to the level of everyday life. Whereas the original expressions suggest something that only the ancients were good at, something beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, the translations denote something that every man jack can acquire and practise, even though "fighting skills" may be defensible in its context: "keshi Wei Xiaobao quan wu wugong" 可是韋小寶全無武功。²⁵ This is because the kind of *wugong* being referred to is *wugong* at the most basic level, and, as such, it may be considered to have been adequately rendered by "fighting skills." With "Brotherhood," there is a similar problem. By definition, "brotherhood" is "an association, society, or community of people linked by a common interest, religion, trade, etc."²⁶ In this sense, it cannot cover all the referential and emotive meanings of *jianghu*, which immediately reminds one of Chinese legend and martial arts fiction.

Nevertheless, except for minor infelicities like those mentioned above, Hawkes and Minford's version is, by and large, highly adequate, surmounting with admirable skill some of the problems which have seemed to be insurmountable. Consider the translators' handling of the following fight scene, for example:

船艙門呼的一聲，向兩旁飛開，一個三十來歲的書生現身艙口，負手背後，臉露微笑。

瓜管帶喝道：「官老爺們在這裏辦案，你是誰？」那書生微笑不答，邁步踏進船艙。刀光閃動，兩柄單刀分從左右劈落。那書生閃身避過，隨即欺向瓜管帶，揮掌拍向他頭頂。瓜管帶忙伸左臂擋格，右手成拳，猛力擊出。那書生左腳反踢，踹中了一名親兵胸口，那親兵大叫一聲，登時鮮血狂噴。另外三名親兵舉刀或削或剝。船艙中地形狹窄，那書生施展擒拿功夫，劈擊勾打，喀的一聲響，一名親兵給他掌緣劈斷了頸骨。瓜管帶右掌拍出，擊向那書生後腦。那書生反過左掌，砰的一聲，雙掌相交，瓜管帶背心重重撞上的船艙，船艙登時塌了一片。那書生連出兩掌，拍在餘下兩名親兵的胸口，喀喀聲響，二人肋骨齊斷。

²⁴ Minford, *The Deer and the Cauldron*, 100.

²⁵ Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha), *Luding ji* 鹿鼎記, Vol. 1, 63.

²⁶ Della Thompson, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, first edited by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler 1911 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th ed. 1995), 166.

瓜管帶縱身從船艙缺口中跳將出去。那書生喝道：「那裏走？」左掌急拍而出，眼見便將擊到他背心，不料瓜管帶正在此時左腳反踢，這一掌恰好擊在他的足底，一股掌力反而推著他向前飛出。瓜管帶急躍竄出，見岸邊有一株垂柳掛向河中，當即抓住柳枝，一個倒翻筋斗，飛過了柳樹。

那書生奔到船頭，提起竹篙，揮手擲出。

月光之下，竹篙猶似飛蛇，急射而前。但聽得瓜管帶「啊」的一聲長叫，竹篙已插入他後心，將他釘在地下，篙身兀自不住幌動。²⁷

The double doors of the cabin flew open and a thirty-year-old man in scholar's dress appeared standing in the doorway. He held his hands clasped behind his back and his face wore a faintly ironic smile.

"This is state business we're carrying on here," Major Gua shouted at him, "and we are Government officers. Who are you?"

The scholar made no reply but continued to smile as he stepped inside the cabin. Immediately, to left and right of him, two cutlasses flashed out and would have cut him down; but already he had dodged and was lunging towards Major Gua with arm upraised to slice down on his head. The Major parried the blow with his left hand, simultaneously striking out with his right fist. Ducking the blow, the scholar kicked backwards with his left foot at the nearest of the guardsmen, catching him in the pit of the stomach. The man let out a great cry and began vomiting blood. The other three guardsmen had their cutlasses up and were cutting and slashing at the scholar, who, because of the lack of space in the cabin, was now bringing into play his advanced 'grappling' skills. One blow, made with the edge of the hand, landed with a cracking sound on one of the guardsmen, breaking his neck. Major Gua swung a blow with his right palm towards the back of

²⁷ Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha), *Luding ji* 鹿鼎記, 39-40. It must be pointed out that the fight scenes in the original *Luding ji* is a disappointing falling off from those found in the *Shediao yingxiang zhuan*, the *Shendiao xialü*, and the *Yitian tulong ji*. In terms of creative intensity, of imaginativeness, and of plot-weaving, it is one of Jin Yong's weakest works of martial arts fiction, even though there are readers and scholars who enjoy talking about *Luding ji*'s picaresque hero Wei Xiaobao 韋小寶 and his adventures. Indeed, after reading the first few pages of the novel, I began to doubt whether it was really written by the author of the *Shediao yingxiang zhuan*, the *Shendiao xialü*, and the *Yitian tulong ji*. Unlike the three masterpieces, it failed to grip me as I read on. It is a work that does not bear the hallmark of a master of martial arts fiction at his best, as do the three masterpieces, so much so that I have asked John Minford, not with a little puzzlement, why *Luding ji*, not one of the three masterpieces, was chosen as his source-language text, for I feel that the *Luding ji*, as a work of martial arts fiction, is not worthy of the effort of the Hawkes-Minford team, while the *Shediao yingxiang zhuan*, the *Shendiao xialü*, or the *Yitian tulong ji* is.

the scholar's head, but the scholar had already whirled about, bringing his own left palm round to catch the blow. He did this with such force that the two palms met in a mighty clap, throwing the Major off his balance, so that he fell against the cabin wall, hitting it heavily with his back and causing the whole structure to lean towards one side. In quick succession the scholar now aimed two chopping blows at the midriffs of the two remaining guardsmen. There were sickening thumps as they landed and both men collapsed with broken ribs.

Major Gua now tried to slip out through the gap that had opened in the matting wall of the cabin when his collision with it had pushed the framework out of kilter.

"Where are *you* off to?" cried the scholar, striking out at him with the palm of his left hand. The blow was aimed at the upper part of his back, but just at that moment the Major kicked out backwards with his left foot and the forward-swinging palm of the scholar, chancing to catch the backward-kicking foot of the Major, so accelerated the latter's retreat that he went flying out over the canal. There was a weeping willow tree leaning out over the canal at that point, however, and the Major was able, with a great effort, to catch hold of its branches, then, with a mighty flip, to somersault right over the tree and on to the ground.

The scholar ran to the bow of the boat, picked up a boat-pole and hurled it, javelin-like, towards the Major. In the bright moonlight the bamboo pole gleamed like a flying snake. They heard the Major let out a long, terrifying cry—"Aaaah!"—and there he lay, face downward, pinned to the ground by the pole, which continued to quiver in his back.²⁸

To show that Louis Cha is capable of descriptions in which the excitement of the action is sustained, and that Hawkes and Minford can measure up to what is required of them as translators, I have quoted both the original and the translation at great length. With respect to the intensity of imagination which is brought to bear on the description of *wugong*, the *Luding ji* may not be comparable to the *Shediao yingxiong zhuan*, the *Shendiao xialü*, and the *Yitian tulong ji*, which are works of martial arts fiction *par excellence*. However, in many of its chapters, one can still find well-written passages like the above, which can hold the reader's attention. In going through the original, the reader is able to follow the fight step by step, even though more than two characters are involved in the action.²⁹ In the translation, Hawkes and Minford are able to present the action in equally vivid terms, which is made possible by their supple language,

²⁸ Minford, *The Deer and the Cauldron*, 53-54.

²⁹ In the hands of a second-rate writer, a fight scene involving so many characters would most probably have resulted in confusion, so that the reader would no longer be able to visualize what is being described.

especially by their highly precise choice of action-verbs. Words and phrases like “flew open,” “flashed out,” “dodged,” “lunging,” “slice down,” “parried,” “striking out,” “Ducking the blow,” “kicked backwards,” “cutting and slashing,” “swung,” “whirled about,” “chopping,” “went flying out,” “hurled,” and “gleamed” all contribute effectively to the swiftness and suspense of the action as well as to the visual impact of the scene. If one is to find fault with the translation, one could perhaps point out that its tempo could have been accelerated using shorter sentence structures. By comparing the two passages, we will notice that the syntactic units of the original are generally shorter than those of the translation, and that, as a result, they are more suitable for capturing swiftness of movement. At the risk of a sweeping generalization, I would say that, in describing swift movements, shorter sentence units are preferable to longer ones. To illustrate my point with reference to American literature, when a writer wishes to create a gripping fight scene, he would find Hemingway’s syntax more effective than James’s, which is normally slow-moving and involved, suitable for suggesting his characters’ intricate thinking processes, but not appropriate for depicting swift movement. In going through Hawkes and Minford’s translation, one feels that the syntax is sometimes more complex than necessary, allowing conjunctions, participial phrases, and relative clauses to impede the action. To preserve the speed of the original, the translators could have used a faster-moving syntax.

In rendering the names of *zhaoshi* 招式 described in Louis Cha’s fight scenes, Hawkes and Minford have left little to be desired, as can be seen in their translation of the following passage:

這邊王潭以一敵三，卻漸漸落了下風，左腿上被鋸齒刀拉了一條口子，鮮血急噴。他一跛一拐，浴血苦鬥。和吳大鵬急鬥的三人武功均頗不弱，雙刀一劍，在他身邊轉來轉去，吳大鵬的摩雲掌力一時擊不到他們身上。

史松的軟鞭越使越快，始終奈何不了茅十八，突然間一招「白蛇吐信」，鞭梢向茅十八右肩點去。茅十八舉刀豎擋，不料史松這一招乃是虛招，手腕抖動，先變「聲東擊西」，再變「玉帶圍腰」，黑龍鞭條地揮向左方，隨即圈轉，自左至右，遠遠向茅十八腰間圍來。³⁰

Baldy was holding off three men, and slowly getting the worst of it. He had a nasty gash on his right leg from a sword with a saw-blade edge to it, and was losing blood fast and hobbling badly. Goatee was also up against

³⁰ Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha), *Luding ji* 鹿鼎記, 68-69.

three opponents, and not bad swordsmen either—two wielding short-swords, one a double-edged long-sword. They harried him persistently, and even his Cloud Scraper acrobatics were of no avail. He failed to land a punch anywhere near them.

The Black Dragon cracked faster and faster, but could not outdo Whiskers Mao. Then suddenly the Captain tried a new move known as the ‘Spitting Snake’. The tip of the whip grazed Whiskers’ right shoulder. He countered with a vertical parry, but his opponent was already one step ahead. The first move had only been a feint. The Captain flicked his wrist once, then twice, and the whip changed direction and began to form a great whirling loop, coiling itself around Whiskers’ waist: this was known as ‘Jade Sash Wraps the Waist’.³¹

If we examine the translation closely against the original, we will see that all the *zhaoshi* (“*Moyun Zhang* 摩雲掌,” “*Baishe Tuxin* 白蛇吐信,” “*Shengdong Jixi* 聲東擊西,” “*Yudai Weiyao* 玉帶圍腰”) have been rendered with fidelity. As to whether these terms are acceptable to English-speaking readers, one has to see how difficulties arising from cultural differences are overcome.

Apparently, cultural differences are gaps that can never be bridged, but if we look at the problem in greater depth, we shall see that cultural differences are less intimidating than they appear. While we have to admit that it is not possible to translate a martial arts novel into English in such a way that an English reader can respond to the English version in exactly the same way as a Chinese reader responds to the original, with translations by highly competent hands, a certain degree of what Nida and Taber call “dynamic equivalence”³² is achievable if the reader is willing to go through some acclimatization. By “acclimatization,” I mean getting steeped in the culture of the source language. If, for example, a reader of martial arts fiction in English actively tries to acquire as much knowledge as possible of the subject and its cultural background, he will be gradually sensitized to the text, so that sooner or later, he will be able to bring his knowledge or experience into play in the reading process, generating, to use Eco’s terminology, the existence of the text.³³ When this state is reached, “the receptors of the message in the receptor language,” in this case the English translation of a work of martial arts fiction, will “respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source

³¹ Minford, *The Deer and the Cauldron*, 76.

³² Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 24.

³³ See Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, 3.

language”³⁴ respond to the original.

How acclimatization on the part of the reader may help to solve problems arising from cultural differences can be illustrated with translations in other directions. When Greek literature was first translated into English, for example, English readers may, because of cultural differences, have had difficulty responding adequately to Greek mythology and a whole range of associations related to it. The fact that English readers today can easily respond to Greek literature “in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language” respond to the original must have been due to their acclimatization to Greek culture over hundreds of years, which must have begun with their ancestors. As for the degree of “dynamic equivalence” achieved, it depends on how large the cultural gap is, how long the readers have been acclimatized to the new culture, and how competent the translators are. In respect of martial arts fiction, the time an English-speaking person takes to be “tuned in” may be longer, and the degree of dynamic equivalence achieved in the end may be smaller, since the gap between Chinese and English culture is larger than that between Greek and English culture. Nevertheless, the possibility of achieving some dynamic equivalence is there.

Apart from acclimatization, there is yet another favourable factor: the existence of corresponding treatment of similar subject-matter in Chinese and Western literature, which can facilitate the reception of Chinese martial arts fiction in the West. In European literature, there are many stories—for instance the Arthurian legend and the *chansons de geste*—that tell of the deeds of heroes who appear to have some affinity with the Chinese *wuxia*. In their descriptions of weapons, too, we can see approaches and attitudes which are not too different from those found in Chinese martial arts fiction. Consequently, after reading about King Arthur’s Excalibur in Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur*,³⁵ about Siegfried’s Balmung in the *Nibelungenlied*,³⁶ or about Charlemagne’s Joyeuse, Roland’s Durendal, and Oliver’s Hauteclaire³⁷ in *The Song of Roland*, a European reader will be ready to tune in to the wave band of

³⁴ Nida and Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 24.

³⁵ See Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D’Arthur*, 2 vols., ed. Janet Cowen, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969).

³⁶ See A. T. Hatto, trans., *The Nibelungenlied*, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965).

³⁷ Dorothy L. Sayers, trans., *The Song of Roland*, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957), 38.

Yitian Jian 倚天劍 (“Heaven Sword”) and *Tulong Dao* 屠龍刀 (“Dragon Sabre”).³⁸

In their English translation of the *Hong lou meng*, Hawkes and Minford have proved highly competent and resourceful. Many of the problems that appeared formidable before their version came out have been solved to the surprise and satisfaction of the most demanding readers. In working on the *Luding ji*, this highly competent team has drawn successfully on the experience they acquired in translating Cao Xueqin’s masterpiece. They have, for example, turned to good account the technique they used in translating personal names in the *Hong lou meng*. Thus, in one of the passages quoted above, “Wang Tan 王潭” is translated by “Baldy,” “Wu Dapeng 吳大鵬” by “Goatee,” and “Mao Shiba 茅十八” by “Whiskers Mao,” which was probably prompted by the translators’ wish to avoid burdening English readers with too many clumsy names in *pinyin*.

IV. Conclusion

In *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Catford has succinctly summed up the nature of translation in the following words: “SL [source language] texts and items are *more or less* translatable rather than absolutely *translatable or untranslatable*.”³⁹ While we may have to admit that works of martial arts fiction, especially those by Louis Cha, are less translatable than other types of fiction, we can take comfort from Catford’s pronouncement, as well as from the fine specimen of martial arts fiction in English which Hawkes and Minford have produced. With this specimen before us, we can answer the question posed by the title of this paper, saying, “Martial arts fiction in English is possible,” taking “possible” to mean “that may be managed, achieved, etc.” and, above all, “acceptable.”⁴⁰

³⁸ The English translations of the weapons’ names are Minford’s. See Minford, *The Deer and the Cauldron*, 6. It is interesting to note, though, that the English word “Sabre” and the Chinese word “Dao 刀” in “*Tulong Dao* 屠龍刀” evoke slightly different associations in my mind.

³⁹ J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Stevans (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 93.

⁴⁰ See the entry “possible” in Della Thompson, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th edition 1995), 930.

LIN SHU'S STORY-RETELLING AS SHOWN IN HIS CHINESE TRANSLATION OF *LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS*¹

[ABSTRACT]

Lin Shu (1852-1924), one of the most important forerunners in China's history of modern literary translation, rendered more than 180 works of European and American literature into Chinese during the late-Qing and early-Republican period from 1890 to 1919. In so doing, he not only heralded the advent of Western literature in China, but also introduced Chinese writers and readers to many new

¹ Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924), a native of Min 閩 County (present-day Fuzhou 福州), Fujian 福建 Province, China, was a successful candidate in the provincial imperial examinations of the Qing Dynasty and a teacher at the University of the Capital, later renamed Peking University. Although he was not able to read a single foreign language, he succeeded, during the late-Qing and early-Republican period, in rendering more than 180 works of European and American literature into Chinese with the help of collaborators, who orally relayed, directly from the originals or indirectly from translations of the originals, the stories to him. His translations include the works of English, American, French, Russian, German, Greek, Japanese, Spanish, Norwegian, Belgian, and Swiss writers. His *Bali Chahuanü yishi* 巴黎茶花女遺事, Chinese translation of *La Dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils, was the first Chinese translation published in China of a Western work. The translation project, which lasted from 1897 to 1899, began a long history of division of labour between Lin and his collaborators, encouraged, no doubt, by the instant success of his first translation with the Chinese readership. In the case of *La Dame aux camélias*, the story was relayed orally by Wang Shouchang 王壽昌 to Lin, who recorded, abridged, and amplified the story in writing. By modern standards, all his translations, including *Bali Chahuanü yishi* 巴黎茶花女遺事, should be regarded as products of story-retelling rather than translations in the strict sense of the word. However, in view of their influence and the role they played in introducing Chinese writers and readers to Western literature and to new literary techniques, Lin's place in China's history of translation is indisputable. For this reason, he has attracted a lot of attention, whether favourable or unfavourable, from scholars. Apart from translations, Lin's publications also include novels and plays.

literary techniques. However, important as they are, Lin's translations are not translations in the true sense of the word, because, unable to read a single foreign language himself, he had, to be able to "translate," to depend on his collaborators, who orally relayed the original message to him. During the process of translation, he freely used such techniques as addition, omission, abridging, and so on, giving his work a highly personal stamp. By closely examining his version of *La Dame aux camélias*, the first Chinese translation of a work of Western literature, against the French original, this paper discusses Lin's method of translation and evaluates his role and stature as a translator.

I. Background

The late-Qing and early-Republican period from 1890 to 1919 has been described by Shi Zhecun 施蛰存 as "the second high tide in China's history of translation" ("*di er ci fanyi gaochao* 第二次翻譯高潮").² During this period, Lin Shu 林紓, with more than 180 titles to his credit, was the most important translator in terms of output. Of all the translations completed by him, *Bali Chahuanü yishi* 巴黎茶花女遺事 '*History of La Dame aux camélias*,' a Chinese version of *La Dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils, should be considered the one to have the greatest historical significance. Not only was it the first Chinese translation of a work of Western literature, it was also the translation that cast the most profound influence on the literary scene of the late-Qing and early-Republican period.³ Upon its publication in 1899, it immediately caused a sensation among the Chinese reading public and won the acclaim of writers and readers alike. Together with his later translations, it introduced Chinese novelists and readers to many new literary techniques as well as to a new reading experience. As a result of the advent of Western literature in China through translation, heralded, in particular, by *Bali Chahuanü yishi* '*History of La Dame aux camélias*,' the traditional Chinese romance, or the *caizi jiaren* 才子佳人 'gifted-scholar-and-beautiful-lady' type of novel, began to lose its appeal.

As has been common knowledge, Lin Shu, prolific as he was, could not read any foreign language; in translating works of European or American literature, he had to collaborate with people like Wang

² Shi Zhecun 施蛰存 et al., eds., *Fanyi wenxue* 翻譯文學 1 [of 3] '*Translated Literature* 1 [of 3],' Vol. 26 of *Zhongguo jindai wenxue daxi* 中國近代文學大系 1840-1919 '*A Treasury of Modern Chinese Literature 1840-1919*,' 30 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店, October 1990), Vol. 26, iv.

³ Ibid.

Shouchang 王壽昌, Wei Yi 魏易, Zeng Zonggong 曾宗鞏, Wang Qingji 王慶驥, Wang Qingtong 王慶通, Chen Jialin 陳家麟, and Li Shizhong 李世中, who, often with their first-hand knowledge of the source languages concerned,⁴ relayed the originals to him. During the translation process, Lin adopted an approach of his own, which is widely different from what is expected of translators today. Whereas translators today make a point of following the original closely, consciously or unconsciously abiding by a host of rules which chime in with such concepts as “translation equivalence,”⁵ “dynamic equivalence,”⁶ and “communicative and semantic translation”⁷ advocated by translation theorists,⁸ Lin seems to have been more concerned with spinning what he considered to be a good yarn than acting as a faithful and responsible intermediary between the Western writers and his Chinese readers.⁹ Retelling the stories in his own way, he often took liberties with the originals, making changes and adaptations as he saw fit.

While one has to allow for the possibility that some changes, adaptations, and mistakes were made by Lin’s collaborators, as has been pointed out by Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸,¹⁰ Lin, as the one responsible for the final draft of the translation, must also be held “culpable.” Indeed, as Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 has shown in his article “*Lin Shu de fanyi* 林紓的翻譯” ‘Lin Shu’s Translations,’¹¹ the inaccuracies found in Lin’s

⁴ The oral relaying of these collaborators itself was sometimes based on translations, not on the languages in which the originals were written.

⁵ J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, Language and Language Learning 8, General Editors, Ronald Mackin and Peter Stevns (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 27-31.

⁶ Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Helps for Translators (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 22-28.

⁷ Peter Newmark, *Approaches to Translation*, English Language Teaching (New York: Prentice Hall, 1988), 38-56, 62-69.

⁸ Here I have excluded theorists or scholars like André Lefevere and Lawrence Venuti, whose “theories” could be invoked to give full sanction to Lin’s approach.

⁹ The word “faithful” may be frowned upon by some translation theorists, but as has been explained and argued in detail in many articles collected in this volume, I do not subscribe to the views of these theorists. At the same time, these theorists’ understanding of “a responsible translator” is different from mine.

¹⁰ Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, *Zheng Zhenduo wenji* 鄭振鐸文集 ‘*The Collected Works of Zheng Zhenduo*,’ 7 vols. (Peking: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1988), Vol. 6, 356-57.

¹¹ Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇 ‘*Four Old Essays*’

translations are not always his collaborators'. For all practical purposes, therefore, one may safely discuss the Chinese version of *La Dame aux camélias* largely as Lin's effort.

In view of its peculiar approach, of its influence on Chinese writers, of its role in shaping the taste of a whole generation of readers, and, above all, of its possible contribution to a deeper understanding of literary translation in the late-Qing and early-Republican period in general and of Lin Shu's later translations in particular, it will be worth while examining some of the major features of *Bali Chahuanü yishi* 'History of *La Dame aux camélias*' alongside *La Dame aux camélias*.

II. Addition of Material

The first—perhaps also the most striking—feature that one sees in *Bali Chahuanü yishi* is the addition of material, including ideas and emphases, not found in the French original. Judging by the contexts in which additions occur, one may conclude that they were put there either to make the prose sound more idiomatic, more readily in tune with classical Chinese, or to retell the story in a way considered to be more effective by the story-reteller. Take the following sentence and its Chinese version:

Sur une grande table, adossée au mur, table de trois pieds de large sur six de long, brillèrent tous les trésors d'Aucoc et d'Odio.¹²

中設長几一，徑三尺，長六尺，依壁東隅。几上陳設均首飾，黃白爛然無他物。¹³

'In the room was a long table standing against the east wall. It was three feet long and six feet wide. Laid out on it was all jewellery; apart from the dazzling gold and silver, there was nothing else.'¹⁴

(Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1979), 68.

¹² Alexandre Dumas fils, *La Dame aux camélias*, first published in 1848 (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1951), 25.

¹³ Lin Shu 林紓, trans., *Ba li Chahuanü yishi* 巴黎茶花女遺事 'History of *La Dame aux Camélias*,' by Alexandre Dumas fils, in Shi Zhecun 施蟄存 et al., eds., *Fanyi wenxue* 翻譯文學 1 [Vol. 1 of 3 vols.] 'Translated Literature 1 [Vol. 1 of 3 vols.],' being Vol. 26 [of 30 vols.] of *Zhongguo jindai wenxue daxi* 中國近代文學大系 1840-1919 'A Treasury of Modern Chinese Literature 1840-1919' (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian 上海書店, 1990), 141. For the entire translation, see 139-213.

¹⁴ In glossing Lin's translation, I have tried to be as literal as possible, so that readers who do not read Chinese can have a rough idea of what Lin's version

In the original, “mur” ‘wall’ is singular; the author has not specified which of the walls the “table” ‘table’ is placed against. However, under the influence of the classical Chinese idiom “*shi zhi dong yu, shou zhi sang yu* 失之東隅，收之桑榆” ‘lose by the east wall and gain by the mulberry and the elm’ (meaning, in idiomatic English, “what you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts”), Lin has rendered “*adossée au mur*” as “*yi bi dong yu* 依壁東隅” ‘standing against the east wall.’

If the addition of material in the above sentence can be forgiven on the grounds that it has not distorted the original too seriously, the addition of the attributive adjective “*ju* 巨” ‘huge’ and the use of the highly visual and dynamic verb “*she* 射” ‘shooting’ in the following translation certainly cannot; apart from being an unwarranted specification, it unnecessarily highlights a descriptive detail, making it too obtrusive to match the original:

Le jour nous trouva éveillés tous deux.

Marguerite était livide. Elle ne disait pas une parole. De grosses larmes coulaient de temps en temps de ses yeux et s’arrêtaient sur sa joue, brillantes comme des diamants.¹⁵

明日馬克仍不言，雙淚迸落如雨，淚注頰上，晶瑩如巨鑽射光。¹⁶

‘The next day, Marguerite still remained silent. Tears burst from her eyes like rain, coursing down her cheeks and sparkling like huge diamonds shooting forth dazzling rays.’

One may argue that this is only a transposition, not an addition, since the Chinese word “*ju* 巨” ‘huge’ has its counterpart “*grosses*” ‘large’ in French even though the latter qualifies only “*larmes*” ‘tears,’ not “*diamants*” ‘diamonds’ as the former does “*zuan* 鑽” ‘diamonds.’ Whether it is an addition or a transposition, in qualifying “*zuan* 鑽” ‘diamonds’ instead of “*lei* 淚” ‘tears’ (“*larmes*”) as “*grosses*” in the original does, “*ju* 巨” ‘huge,’ together with the very violent phrase “*she guang* 射光” ‘shooting forth dazzling rays,’ strikes a highly discordant note, which fails to harmonize with the context. This is because in the original, the heroine is sick and on the brink of death; the clause “*ju zuan she guang* 巨鑽射光” ‘huge diamonds shooting forth dazzling rays’ has

sounds like.

¹⁵ Dumas, 253.

¹⁶ Lin, 201.

the effect of attributing to the tears of a woman on her deathbed an unwarranted grandeur, a grandeur of almost epic proportions that diminishes the pathos so successfully created by Dumas.

III. Reworking the Original

The above example, apart from illustrating the addition of material, also shows the translator's tendency to rework the original to suit his purpose, to create artistic effects in emulation of the author he was translating. In so doing, he did achieve impressive results as a story-reteller, causing Qian Zhongshu to declare that he "would rather read Lin's translations of Henry Rider Haggard's works than the originals" ("ningke du Lin Shu de yiwen, bu leyi du Hagede de yuanwen 寧可讀林紓的譯文，不樂意讀哈葛德的原文，"¹⁷ although Lin's translations are far from faithful. In translating Dickens, Qian humorously adds, Lin even took it upon himself to "chip in 'jests' of his own" ("juanzhu ziji de 'xiexue' 捐助自己的'諧謔'").¹⁸ To be sure, there is little evidence of this kind of "generosity" in *Bali Chahuanü yishi* 'History of *La Dame aux camélias*,' since *La Dame aux camélias* is meant to be tragic. Nevertheless, Lin's reworking of the original, which includes substitution, adaptation, and a lot of other techniques, can be seen everywhere. Right from the beginning, he shows the reader in what direction he is moving:

Mon avis est qu'on ne peut créer des personnages que lorsque l'on a beaucoup étudié les hommes, comme on ne peut parler une langue qu'à la condition de l'avoir sérieusement apprise.¹⁹

小仲馬曰：凡成一書，必詳審本人性情，描畫始肖，猶之欲成一國之書，必先習其國語也。²⁰

'Alexandre Dumas fils says: whenever one wishes to write a book, one must first closely study the temperaments of its characters; only then will the portrayal of characters be lifelike. This is like one wishing to produce books [in the language] of a country: one must first learn the country's language.'

¹⁷ Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 88.

¹⁸ Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 69.

¹⁹ Dumas, 23.

²⁰ Lin, 140.

In the translation, the original clause, “comme on ne peut parler une langue qu’à la condition de l’avoir sérieusement apprise” ‘just as one can speak a language only when one has seriously studied it,’ has become “*you zhi yu cheng yi guo zhi shu, bi xian xi qi guoyu ye* 猶之欲成一國之書, 必先習其國語也” ‘This is like one wishing to produce books [in the language] of a country: one must first learn the country’s language.’ Judged as translation, the Chinese version has departed widely from the original; in terms of semantic fidelity, it is inferior to almost any version that is readily available today, for example, to the following version published in Taiwan in 1990, which has managed to keep close to the original, even though its Chinese is much less concise and, in terms of rhythm, much less pleasing than Lin’s:

我認為唯有在徹底研究了人性之後，我們才有辦法動筆創造出人物來；這就好像只有在認真學習了一種語言以後，我們才能夠運用這種語言一樣。²¹

‘I am of the opinion that only when one has thoroughly studied human nature will one be able to create characters. This is like one learning languages: only when one has seriously studied a language will one be able to use it.’

The same can be said of the following version by Liu Ziqiang 劉自強 and Yan Shengnan 嚴勝男:

我認為只有在仔細研究了人之後才能創造人物，如同只有在認真學習了一門語言之後才能說這門語言一樣。²²

‘I am of the opinion that only when one has closely studied human nature will one be able to create characters. This is the same as learning languages: only when one has seriously studied a language will one be able to speak it.’

²¹ [Translator’s name not given] *Chahuanü* 茶花女, ‘*La Dame aux Camélias*,’ by Alexandre Dumas fils (Tainan: Hanfeng chubanshe 漢風出版社, March 1990), 1. It should be pointed out, of course, that the translation is what I would call centripetal translation, unable to free itself from the grammatical and syntactic shackles of the source-language text. For a detailed discussion of this type of translation, see “Centripetality and Centrifugality in Translation: With Reference to European Languages and Chinese” in this collection.

²² Liu Ziqiang 劉自強 and Yan Shengnan 嚴勝男, trans., *Chahuanü* 茶花女, ‘*La Dame aux Camélias*,’ by Alexandre Dumas fils (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe 湖南文藝出版社, December 1993), 1.

Trammelled by French grammar and syntax and unable to go far beyond formal correspondence,²³ it is, with reference to idiomatic Chinese, certainly inferior to Lin's version in terms of fluency and readability. Nevertheless, it is semantically closer to the original than Lin's version.

IV. Making Adaptations

In making adaptations, Lin could go as far as to “usurp” the original author's role, or, in Qian's words, “to snatch the pen from the author and write the story for him” (“*qiang guo zuozhe de bi dai ta qu xie* 搶過作者的筆代他去寫”):²⁴

- [...] Monsieur l'a-t-il connue?
- Oui.
- Comme l'autre, me dit le jardinier avec un sourire malin.
- Non, je ne lui ai jamais parlé.
- Et vous venez la voir ici; c'est bien gentil de votre part, car ceux qui viennent voir la pauvre fille n'encombrent pas le cimetière.²⁵

“〔……〕君識之乎？”余曰：“識之。”侍者曰：“君識是人，亦如彼少年之摯耶！”余曰：“吾聞名而已。”侍者曰：“然則君亦有心。巴黎人咸若君之重馬克，吾恐步屨所及，園中草木且弗生矣。”²⁶

“Did you know her?” I said, “Yes, I did.” The attendant said, “Was your relationship with her as intimate as that between her and the young man?” I said, “I just heard about her.” The attendant said, “Then you still care for her. If all Parisians cared for Marguerite as much as you do, I am afraid all the plants in the cemetery within the reach of their footsteps would die.”²⁷

In the original conversation, the clause “car ceux qui viennent voir la pauvre fille n'encombrent pas le cimetière” ‘because those who come to see the poor girl do not crowd the cemetery’ only indicates that not many

²³ The version is also what I would call centripetal translation.

²⁴ Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 70.

²⁵ Dumas, 60.

²⁶ Lin, 147.

²⁷ In English dialogue-writing, the phrase “[subject] said” is often put after what is said. In glossing the Chinese translation, however, I have invariably put “[subject] said” at the beginning of the sentence. Thus, “余曰：‘識之。’” is translated as “I said, ‘Yes, I did.’” Instead of “‘Yes, I did,’ I said.”

people come to see the poor girl; in Lin's translation, it has been changed to something different, something with a totally different emphasis: "*Baliren xian ruo jun zhi zhong Make, wu kong buxie suo ji, yuan zhong caomu qie fu sheng yi* 巴黎人咸若君之重馬克, 吾恐步履所及, 園中草木且弗生矣" 'If all the Parisians cared for Marguerite as much as you do, I am afraid the plants in the cemetery within the reach of their footsteps would die.' This is a case of the translator reading meaning into the original and thereby expanding it. If the two quotations were to be evaluated in terms of only dramatic immediacy, Lin's version should be considered to have outdone even Dumas's original; as a translation, however, it only serves to show that the translator hardly bothers to relay Dumas's message accurately.

V. Bridging the Gap between Western and Chinese Culture

If changes like the above were motivated by the translator's wish to paint a vivid picture of the scene, other instances of deviation from the original must have been brought about by his eagerness to bridge the gap between Western and Chinese culture. A case in point is Lin's handling of the practice of a Western woman holding out her hand for a man to kiss when the two first meet. With modern readers, whether Western or Chinese, such a practice needs no explanation; but to many late-Qing Chinese people who were not familiar with Western etiquette, this practice would appear rather odd. To reduce the culture shock which the Chinese reader is likely to experience, Lin makes a point of adding a brief explanatory note when this practice is described in the novel:

Et elle me tendit sa main que je baisai.²⁸

言次，舉皓腕，余即而親之（此西俗男女相見之禮也）。²⁹

'Having said this, she raised her white wrist. I moved forward and kissed it (this is social etiquette in the West, observed when a man and a woman meet).'

With this note, the reader should be in a better position to tune in, as it were, to Lin's retelling of Dumas's story.

²⁸ Dumas, 96.

²⁹ Lin, 156.

At other times, when a more subtle method can do the job, no such explanation is added. This can be seen in Lin's substitution of the word "xian 仙" 'fairy maiden'³⁰ for the French word "ange."³¹ Reading *Bali Chahuanü yishi* 'History of *La Dame aux camélias*' today, one may ask why Lin did not use "tianshi 天使" 'celestial messenger' or "anqi'er 安琪兒" 'angel,' the common transliteration for "angel," since both of them were widely used by writers and translators after the May 4th Movement. To many modern readers, these two words may appear semantically closer to "ange," for, unlike "xian 仙" 'fairy maiden,' they do not carry any associations related to ancient Chinese mythology, and can, therefore, convey the essentially Christian concept of "ange" more effectively. However, at the time Lin was translating *La Dame aux camélias*, "tianshi 天使" 'celestial messenger' and "anqi'er 安琪兒" 'angel' were not yet in common use. Thus, either because he considered these words too outlandish to be accepted by his readers or because he thought them too new-fangled to blend with classical Chinese, he chose "xian 仙" instead of "tianshi" or "anqi'er." Although less effective as a vehicle for conveying the Western concept of "ange," this word has the advantage of sounding more natural to the general reader, which must have been the primary stylistic concern of people translating in the late-Qing and early-Republican period.

VI. Omitting Material as a Story-Reteller

In using the technique of substitution, Lin is still working largely as a translator; it is in omitting words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs that he is fully exercising his "prerogative" as a story-reteller. To see how Lin freely leaves out material found in the original, one has only to look at Chapter 3 (Dumas, 38-45). After the first sentence ("Le 16, à une heure, je me rendis rue d'Antin"), Lin begins to assume the role of an abridger, leaving out or summarizing many paragraphs, particularly those that are devoted to dialogue.

Lin's omissions may have been motivated by considerations of various kinds. He may, for example, have regarded certain details as irrelevant to the story he wanted to tell, details that he thought his Chinese readers might not be interested in, or he may have thought it necessary to condense the original in order to heighten the dramatic effect. Apart from

³⁰ Lin, 145.

³¹ Dumas, 51.

these possible reasons, there is yet another: moral censorship on the part of the translator. Take the following passage, in which the hero and the heroine are engaged in an intimate act:

Et ôtant son manteau et son chapeau, elle les jeta sur le canapé et se mit à dégrafer brusquement le corsage de sa robe, car, par une de ces réactions si fréquentes de sa maladie, le sang lui montait du cœur à la tête et l'étouffait.

Une toux sèche et rauque s'ensuivit.

- Faites dire à mon cocher, reprit-elle, de reconduire ma voiture.

Je descendis moi-même congédier cet homme.

Quand je rentrai, Marguerite était étendue devant le feu, et ses dents claquaient de froid.

Je la pris dans mes bras, je la déshabillai sans qu'elle fit un mouvement, et je la portai toute glacée dans mon lit.

Alors je m'assis auprès d'elle et j'essayai de la réchauffer sous mes caresses.

Elle ne me disait pas une parole, mais elle me souriait.

Oh! ce fut une nuit étrange.³²

言已，去其肩衣，脫冠置几上，並去其帶，舉動之勞，乾咳不復可止。謂余曰：“告御者歸其車，以明日來。”余乃麾御者去。回見馬克齒相擊作聲，余乃展衾侍之臥，余以身溫之。馬克無言。是夜情景甚冰冷，不可意測。³³

'Having said this, she took off her cape³⁴ and hat, putting the latter on the table. Then she unfastened her belt. As a result of the exertion, she was caught in a fit of dry coughing which went on in spite of herself.³⁵ She said to me, "Tell the coachman to drive his coach home and come back tomorrow." On coming back after sending the coachman away, I saw Marguerite shivering, her teeth audibly chattering, so I spread out the quilt, helped her lie down, and warmed her with my body. Marguerite was silent.

³² Dumas, 252.

³³ Lin, 201.

³⁴ The original in Dumas's novel is "manteau" 'coat'; Lin's Chinese translation "jianyi 肩衣" would be "cape" rather than "coat" in English.

³⁵ The original only says "Une toux sèche et rauque s'ensuivit" 'A dry, hoarse cough followed.' Lin has made his version more emphatic by adding "bu ke fu zhi 不復可止" '(which) could no longer be stopped.' In other words, in Lin's version, the heroine is having "a fit of coughing" or "a coughing fit," which is "une quinte de toux" in French. Given the context and the French expression "s'ensuivit," which does not necessarily rule out a "coughing fit," Lin's version, being dramatic and vivid, is defensible.

The night was extremely cold; the experience is hard to imagine.'

If one compares the translation with the original, one will notice that, in the translation, a lot of details have been left out. Given Lin's overall strategy, which is not aimed at reproducing everything in the original, the omissions are not unexpected. However, the leaving out or deliberate alteration of some of the keywords or key phrases that describe or suggest intimacy in the original indicates that Lin had tried to sanitize what he must have considered risqué. In the eyes of modern readers, Dumas's description is certainly innocuous, unlikely to raise an eyebrow. To those who are acquainted with D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, John Cleland, or Milan Kundera,³⁶ Dumas's description is fit for a prude. But with Lin, the scene may have offended against his sense of propriety. Thus, the relatively bold description of Marguerite suddenly undoing "the bodice of her dress" ("se mit à dégrafer brusquement le corsage de sa robe" 'began suddenly to undo the bodice of her dress'), of her being "laid down in front of the fire" ("était étendue devant le feu" 'was lying before the fire'), and of Armand taking off her clothes while she was remaining motionless ("je la deshabilai sans qu'elle fit un mouvement" 'I took off her clothes, herself making not a movement') is euphemistically simplified as "bing qu qi dai 並去其帶" 'Then she unfastened her belt,' with "était étendue devant le feu" and "je la deshabilai sans qu'elle fit un mouvement" omitted. The sentence that points most unequivocally to the characters' intimacy—"je la portai toute glacée dans mon lit" 'I carried her, freezing all over, to my bed'—is toned down to a harmless statement: "yu nai zhan qin shi zhi wo 余乃展衾侍之臥" 'so I spread out the quilt, helped her lie down.'

To see why Lin Shu had to produce this expurgated version of an innocuous scene, one has first to look at his view on language. According to Shi Zhecun 施蟄存,³⁷ Lin "was opposed to the language of

³⁶ Compared with D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, and Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, or with Chinese novels like the *Rou putuan* 肉蒲團 'The Flesh Prayer Mattress' and the *Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅 'Golden Lotus,' all of which depict or discuss sex in great detail, *La Dame aux camélias* could rank among the most decent of Western novels.

³⁷ Shi Zhecun 施蟄存 et al., eds., Vol. 26, *Fanyi wenxue* 翻譯文學 1 'Translated Literature 1,' of *Zhongguo jindai wenxue daxi* 中國近代文學大系 'A Treasury of Modern Chinese Literature,' 21.

'hearse-pullers and beverage-hawkers' ("fandui 'yin che mai jiang zhi tu' de yuyan 反對'引車賣漿之徒'的語言"),³⁸ a view which led him to direct confrontation with those who championed the use of "baihua 白話" 'vernacular Chinese.' If he could not even tolerate language that deviated from the canons of classical Chinese, one should have little difficulty imagining how much less he would have tolerated language that offended against what he considered to be the norms of decency.

On top of this conservative attitude to language coupled with a strong sense of propriety, there was yet another factor that encouraged Lin's unrestrained story-retelling: a relatively undemanding reading public which knew little about French culture, a reading public which would not mind being offered only abridged versions of French novels. Against this background, then, it was just natural for Lin to consider it in order to omit phrases, sentences, or paragraphs which, in his view, did not constitute an essential part of the storyline. Consequently, in handling the following paragraphs, which describe Marguerite's outing to the Champs-Élysées, he had no qualms about condensing them into a few sentences that describe the outing in the most general terms or about indulging in some rewriting when he thought fit to do so:

Il n'en était pas ainsi pour Marguerite. Elle arrivait aux Champs-Élysées toujours seule, dans sa voiture, où elle s'effaçait le plus possible, l'hiver enveloppée d'un cachemire, l'été vêtue de robes fort simples; et quoiqu'il y eût sur sa promenade favorite bien des gens qu'elle connût, quand par hasard elle leur souriait, le sourire était visible pour eux seuls, et une duchesse eût pu sourire ainsi.

Elle ne se promenait pas du rond-point à l'entrée des Champs-Élysées, comme le font et le faisaient toutes ses collègues. Ses deux chevaux l'emportaient rapidement au Bois. Là, elle descendait de voiture, marchait pendant une heure, remontait dans son coupé et rentrait chez elle au grand trot de son attelage.³⁹

³⁸ Also see Lin's letter to Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, "Zhi Cai Yuanpei shu 致蔡元培書" 'Letter to Cai Yuanpei': "If all ancient writings were to be abolished and dialectal language were to become the written norm, then even the language spoken by hearse-pullers and beverage-hawkers in the capital would be found to have a grammar of its own. [...] If this were the case, all the petty hawkers in Beijing and Tianjin could be hired as professors." Quoted in Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風 et al., *Hanyu da cidian 漢語大詞典 'A Comprehensive Dictionary of the Chinese Language,'* 12 vols. (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店, 1987-94), Vol. 4, 92. My translation.

³⁹ Dumas, 31.

馬克常好為園遊，油壁車駕二騾，華妝照眼，遇所歡於道，雖目送之而容甚莊，行客不知其為夜度娘也。既至園，偶涉即返，不為妖態以惑遊子。⁴⁰

'Marguerite often liked to go on outings to the gardens in a coupé drawn by two mules. Her gorgeous dress was dazzling. Though she greeted with her eyes those with whom she had once been intimate when she saw them on the road, her deportment⁴¹ was extremely dignified, so that passers-by did not know that she was a woman of the streets.⁴² Once she got to the gardens, she would return after staying there briefly, not using coquettish charm to seduce men that were hanging around.'

In the original, the narrator tells the reader that Marguerite always arrived at the Champs-Élysées alone ("arrivait aux Champs-Élysées toujours seule"), that she adopted as low a profile as possible ("s'effaçait le plus possible"), that she was wrapped in a large cashmere dress in winter ("l'hiver enveloppée d'un grand cachemire"), that, in summer, she was in very simple dress ("l'été vêtue de robes fort simples"), that she smiled at the men she knew as a duchess would have smiled ("une duchesse eût pu sourire ainsi"), that she did not take her walk from the roundabout to the entrance to the Champs-Élysées as all her colleagues currently did or used to do ("Elle ne se promenait pas du rond-point à l'entrée des Champs-Élysées, comme le font et le faisaient toutes ses collègues"), and that she would walk for an hour ("marchait pendant une heure"). In the translation, all this information has been left out. At the same time, the "two horses" ("deux chevaux") that drew Marguerite's coach have been metamorphosed into "two mules" ("*er luo* 二騾"); the two place names ("Champs-Élysées" and "Bois") have been either

⁴⁰ Lin, 142.

⁴¹ Lin's version "*rong shen zhuang* 容甚莊" literally means "(the heroine's) facial expression was very dignified," that is, Marguerite looked very dignified when she smiled at "those whom she knew" ("des gens qu'elle connût"). The original does not exactly say the same thing; it only says that when Marguerite saw "those whom she knew," that is, her clients, "she smiled at them" ("elle leur souriait"), that "her smile was only visible to her clients themselves" ("le sourire était visible pour eux seuls"), and that "a duchess would have smiled in the same way" ("une duchesse eût pu sourire ainsi"). In other words, Lin has summarized the original by passing judgement on Marguerite's behaviour.

⁴² The phrase "a woman of the streets" means "a prostitute"; as a dated euphemism, it stylistically matches Lin's "*yeduniang* 夜度娘."

replaced with a general term (“*yuan* 園” ‘gardens’) or simply omitted,⁴³ and the clause “le sourire était visible pour eux seuls” ‘the smile was visible only to them’ has been paraphrased as “*xingke bu zhi qi wei yeduniang ye* 行客不知其為夜度娘也” ‘passers-by did not know that she was a woman of the streets,’ in which information not contained in the original has been added. Whereas the original gives the reader quite a detailed account of Marguerite’s movements (“Là, elle descendait de voiture, marchait pendant une heure, remontait dans son coupé et rentrait chez elle au grand trot de son attelage” ‘There, she descended from the coach, walked for an hour, got onto her coupé again, and returned home at a brisk trot of her carriage and horses’), which is vivid and memorable, Lin’s version contains only a brief, generalized statement: “*Ji zhi yuan, ou she ji fan* 既至園, 偶涉即返” ‘Once she got to the gardens, she would return after staying there briefly.’ Finally, as if the reader might fail to appreciate the loftiness of Marguerite’s character, Lin goes out of his way to treat his readers to an edifying lesson: “*bu wei yao tai yi huo youzi* 不為妖態以惑遊子” ‘not using coquettish charm to seduce men that were hanging around.’

In handling the original’s descriptions of what the characters wear, including clothing and jewellery, Lin gives himself an equal degree of freedom as a story-reteller, and retains or omits what is in the original with no apparent reference to a consistent principle. When he preserves vivid descriptions like the following, his Chinese version can make a powerful visual impact on the reader:

La première fois que je l’avais vue, c’était place de la Bourse, à la porte de Susse. Une calèche découverte y stationnait, et une femme vêtue de blanc en était descendue. Un murmure d’admiration avait accueilli son entrée dans le magasin. Quant à moi, je restai cloué à rna place, depuis le moment où elle entra jusqu’au moment où elle sortit. [...]

[...] elle portait une robe de mousseline toute entourée de volants, un châle de l’Inde carré aux coins brodés d’or et de fleurs de soie, un chapeau de paille d’Italie et un unique bracelet, grosse chaîne d’or dont la mode

⁴³ The French expression “au Bois” literally means “to the [le] Wood [Bois],” with “le Bois” ‘the Wood’ referring to “le Bois de Boulogne” ‘the Wood of Boulogne,’ which is the “outskirts of Paris.” See J. E. Mansion et al., eds., *Harrap’s New Standard French and English Dictionary*, 4 vols., 1st ed. 1934-1939 (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., completely enlarged and revised ed. September 1972-1980), Part One: French-English, Vol. One, A-I, B: 31.

commençait à cette époque.⁴⁴

余第一次遇馬克於割屬之市，見有通明玻璃車，坐一麗人，翩然下車，適一珠寶之肆，市人紛駭屬目，余則木然弗動如癡人。〔……〕麗人着單縑衣，輕蓑若披雲霧，上覆肩衣，以金縷周其緣，雜花蒙焉。用意大利草織為冠，腕上寶釧缺口，絡以金鏈，光華射目。⁴⁵

‘The first time I met Marguerite was at the Stock Exchange. I saw a glass calash all open in which a beautiful woman was sitting. The woman gracefully descended from the calash and went into a jewellery shop. People in the street were all amazed at her beauty. As for me, I stood there stock-still like a fool. [...] The beautiful woman was wearing a robe of chiffon, which was light and bright, so that she appeared to be wearing clouds and mists. On top of it was a cape embroidered with gold thread and covered with mixed flowers. Her hat was woven from Italian straw. Linked to both ends of the precious bracelet on her wrist was a gold chain with a brilliance that dazzled beholders’ eyes.’

In describing the heroine’s dress and jewellery, Lin’s version, apart from the addition of the Chinese clause “*guanghua she mu* 光華射目” ‘with a brilliance that dazzled beholders’ eyes,’ which has no corresponding sememes in the original, is fairly faithful.

In cases where he omits such descriptions or summarizes them, the translation can lose what is essential to the novel’s characterization:

Toutes ces circonstances, dont j’avais quelquefois été le témoin, repassaient devant moi et je regrettais la mort de cette fille comme on regrette la destruction totale d’une belle œuvre.

Or, il était impossible de voir une plus charmante beauté que celle de Marguerite.

Grande et mince jusqu’à l’exagération, elle possédait au suprême degré l’art de faire disparaître cet oubli de la nature par le simple arrangement des choses qu’elle revêtait. Son cachemire, dont la pointe touchait à terre, laissait échapper de chaque côté les larges volants d’une robe de soie, et l’épais manchon qui cachait ses mains et qu’elle appuyait contre sa poitrine, était entouré de plis si habilement ménagés, que l’œil n’avait rien à redire, si exigeant qu’il fût, au contour des lignes.⁴⁶

余猶能憶之，頗惜其死。馬克身長玉立，御長裙，仙仙然描畫不能肖，

⁴⁴ Dumas, 77.

⁴⁵ Lin, 151.

⁴⁶ Dumas, 32.

雖欲故狀其醜，亦莫知為辭。⁴⁷

‘I can still remember her and rather mourn her death. Marguerite was tall and of beautiful bearing. She wore a long skirt, too ethereally beautiful to be captured in portraits. Even if one wilfully wanted to come up with an ugly description of her, one would not be able to find the words for the purpose.’

The original portrays the heroine in highly visual terms by presenting minute and accurate details of the way she is dressed, so that the narrator’s assertion that “[he] mourned the death of the girl as one would mourn the total destruction of a beautiful work of art” (“je regrettais la mort de cette fille comme on regrette la destruction totale d’une belle œuvre”), and that “it was impossible to see a more charming beauty than Marguerite’s” (“il était impossible de voir une plus charmante beauté que celle de Marguerite”) immediately becomes convincing. In Lin’s version, with the details omitted, the assertion (“*xianxianran miaohua bu neng xiao, sui yu gu zhuang qi chou, yi mo zhi wei ci* 仙仙然描畫不能肖，雖欲故狀其醜，亦莫知為辭” ‘too ethereally beautiful to be captured in portraits. Even if one wilfully wanted to come up with an ugly description of her, one would not be able to find the words for the purpose’) rings hollow. Given only a sketchy summary (“*Make shen chang yu li, yu chang qun* 馬克身長玉立，御長裙” ‘Marguerite was tall and of beautiful bearing. She wore a long skirt’), the Chinese reader is unlikely to be convinced of Marguerite’s ethereal beauty, much less visualize it.

VII. The Problem of Omitting Descriptive Details

Lin’s omission of descriptive details quoted above is unfortunate, for, very often, a character can be vividly delineated through an accurate description of the way he or she is dressed. When skilfully employed, this technique can contribute immensely to the dramatic quality of a novel.

To show what can be gained by retaining details like those omitted by Lin, it will be helpful to look at the approach of David Hawkes, who, translating into English, is a much finer, much more meticulous translator than Lin. In the Introduction to his English translation of the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 ‘*The Story of the Stone*,’⁴⁸ Hawkes writes: “Certainly he

⁴⁷ Lin, 142.

⁴⁸ Literally, “*Hong lou meng*” should be translated as “*Red Chamber Dream*.” The title of Hawkes’s translation, “*The Story of the Stone*,” is the English version of

[Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, author of the novel] was influenced much more by the techniques of drama (which he loved) and painting (which he practised) than by any of the pre-existing works of Chinese prose fiction, which on the whole he rather despised.⁴⁹ Cao's use of the techniques of drama and painting is shown throughout his novel, particularly in the descriptions of his characters' dress and the jewellery they wear, as can be seen in the following passage:

一語未完，只聽後院中有笑語聲，說：『我來遲了，沒得迎接遠客！』黛玉思付道：『這些人個個皆斂聲屏氣如此，這來者是誰，這樣放誕無禮？』心下想時，只見一群媳婦丫鬟擁着一個麗人，從後房進來：這個人打扮與姑娘們不同，彩繡輝煌，恍若神妃仙子，頭上戴着金絲八寶攢珠髻，綰着朝陽五鳳掛珠釵，項上戴着赤金盤螭縷絡圈，身上穿着縷金百蝶穿花大紅雲緞窄袖襖，外罩五彩刻絲石青銀鼠褂，下着翡翠撒花洋縐裙；一雙丹鳳三角眼，兩彎柳葉掉梢眉，身量苗條，體格風騷：粉面含春威不露，丹唇未啟笑先聞。⁵⁰

Upon the magic touch of the minute description of dress and jewellery, Wang Xifeng 王熙鳳, the character being described, immediately comes to life, so that the reader is able to visualize her in the most concrete terms.

Keenly aware of Cao's techniques, and making a point of translating everything in the original, Hawkes never leaves out descriptions like this. Consequently, he is able to present an equally lively character to readers of his English version:

another Chinese title (*Shitou ji* 石頭記) for the novel.

⁴⁹ David Hawkes and John Minford, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin, 5 vols., Vol. 1, 'The Golden Days,' Vol. 2, 'The Crab-Flower Club,' Vol. 3, 'The Warning Voice,' Vol. 4, 'The Debt of Tears,' Vol. 5, 'The Dreamer Wakes,' Vols. 1-3 translated by David Hawkes, Vols. 4-5 translated by John Minford (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973-86), Vol. 1, 43.

⁵⁰ Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 and Gao E 高鶚, *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 'The Story of the Stone,' 4 vols. (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1971), Vol. 1, 28. There are scholars who believe that the *Hong lou meng* is the work of two people, Cao Xueqin and Gao E, a view which I do not subscribe to. However, as I am quoting the Zhonghua shuju edition, I have to include Gao E as the one supposed by some scholars to have written the last forty chapters of the novel. For a detailed discussion of the novel's authorship, see the Introduction to my monograph, entitled *Dreaming across Languages and Cultures: A Study of the Literary Translations of the Hong lou meng* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

She had scarcely finished speaking when someone could be heard talking and laughing in a very loud voice in the inner courtyard behind them.

‘Oh dear! I’m late,’ said the voice. ‘I’ve missed the arrival of our guest.’

‘Everyone else around here seems to go about with bated breath,’ thought Dai-yu. ‘Who can this new arrival be who is so brash and unmannerly?’

Even as she wondered, a beautiful young woman entered from the room behind the one they were sitting in, surrounded by a bevy of serving women and maids. She was dressed quite differently from the others present, gleaming like some fairy princess with sparkling jewels and gay embroideries.

Her chignon was enclosed in a circlet of gold filigree and clustered pearls. It was fastened with a pin embellished with flying phoenixes, from whose beaks pearls were suspended on tiny chains.

Her necklet was of red gold in the form of a coiling dragon.

Her dress had a fitted bodice and was made of dark red silk damask with a pattern of flowers and butterflies in raised gold thread.

Her jacket was lined with ermine. It was of a slate-blue stuff with woven insets in coloured silks.

Her under-skirt was of a turquoise-coloured imported silk crêpe embroidered with flowers.

She had, moreover,

eyes like a painted phoenix,
eyebrows like willow-leaves,
a slender form,
seductive grace;
the ever-smiling summer face
of hidden thunders showed no trace;
the ever-bubbling laughter started
almost before the lips were parted.⁵¹

Similarly, in the novels or short stories by Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 (Eileen Chang) and Bai Xianyong 白先勇, two distinguished modern Chinese writers who were deeply influenced by Cao, and who show many affinities with him, successful characterization also depends very much on details of dress and jewellery. To see how this technique is brought into play in the works of these two writers, one has only to look at the following passages, the first from Zhang’s “*Jin suo ji* 金鎖記” ‘The Gold Cangue,’ the second from Bai’s “*You yuan jing meng* 遊園驚夢”

⁵¹ Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, Vol. 1, 90-91.

‘Wandering in the Garden, Waking from a Dream’:⁵²

眾人低聲說笑着，榴喜打起簾子，報道：『二奶奶來了。』蘭仙雲澤起身讓坐，那曹七巧且不坐下，一隻手撐着門，一隻手撐住腰，窄窄的袖口裏垂下一條雪青洋縐手帕，下身上穿着銀紅衫子，葱白線鑲滾，雪青閃藍如意小脚袴子，瘦骨臉兒，朱口細牙，三角眼，小山眉，四下裏一看，笑道〔……〕⁵³

‘While everybody was talking and laughing in a low voice, Liuxi raised the blind and announced: “Lady Cao has come.” Lanxian and Yunze rose and offered their seat to the new arrival. Cao Qiqiao did not take any of the seats; instead, she propped herself against the door with one hand while putting the other on her waist. From inside the narrow sleeve of the hand on her waist hung a lilac handkerchief of crêpe. She had on a jacket of old rose whose edge was trimmed with thread of a very light blue colour. Her trousers, narrow at the bottom, were lilac and shining blue, decorated with *ruyi* jade pendants. Her face was lean, her lips were vermilion, and her teeth were small. Her eyes were triangular with fine curvy eyebrows. Looking around and laughing, she said [...]

寶夫人穿了一身銀灰灑朱砂的薄紗旗袍，足上也配了一雙銀灰閃光的高跟鞋，右手的無名指上戴了一隻蓮子大的鑽戒，左腕也攏了一副白金鑲碎鑽的手串，髮上却插了一把珊瑚缺月釵，一對寸把長的紫瑛墜子直吊下髮腳外來，襯得他豐白的面龐愈加雍容矜貴起來。⁵⁴

‘Madame Tou was wearing a *ch'i-p'ao* of silver gray chiffon dusted with vermilion spangles and matching silver high heels. The ring finger of her right hand bore a diamond as big as a lotus seed, and a platinum bracelet studded with tiny diamonds twisted around her left wrist. A crescent-shaped coral pin held her hair; a pair of inch-long purple jade earrings hung below, setting off her full, pale face and making it look all the more aristocratic and dignified.’⁵⁵

⁵² The gloss is by Bai Xianyong and Ye Peixia. See Bai Xianyong 白先勇 and Ye Peixia 葉佩霞 (Patia Yasin), trans., *Taipei People (Taipei jen)* 台北人, by Bai Xianyong 白先勇, Chinese-English bilingual edition, edited by George Kao (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000), 328.

⁵³ Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 (Eileen Chang), *Qingcheng zhi lian* 傾城之戀 ‘Love in a Fallen City,’ *Huangguan congshu* 皇冠叢書 ‘Crown Series’ No. 1915 (Hong Kong: Huangguan chubanshe 皇冠出版社, 1994), 145.

⁵⁴ Bai Xiangyong 白先勇, *Taipei ren* 台北人 ‘Taipei People,’ new ed. (Taipei: Erya chubanshe 爾雅出版社, 1994), 209.

⁵⁵ The translation is by Bai Xianyong and Ye Peixia. See Bai Xianyong 白先勇 and Ye Peixia 葉佩霞 (Patia Yasin), trans., *Taipei People (Taipei jen)* 台北人, by

In both passages, there is also what Hawkes, in discussing the *Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢 ‘*Dream of the Red Chamber*,’⁵⁶ calls the “painterly” quality,⁵⁷ a quality which distinguishes Cao Xueqin from many novelists before him, and which plays a highly important role in delineating characters. Take away from the above quotations the minute details about the dress and jewellery worn by the characters, and the “painterly” quality will be all but gone.

By the same token, if such details were omitted by the translator, sharp, vivid portraits of characters in the original would be reduced to vague, uninteresting sketches. In leaving out the descriptions in the French novel discussed above, Lin has denied himself a highly effective means of characterization, which Dumas, Cao, Zhang, and Bai have so successfully made use of.

VIII. Omission of Descriptions That Contribute to the Setting and Atmosphere of a Scene

Along with the omission of descriptions of dress and jewellery, there are other kinds of omission in Lin’s version that diminish its impact. These include the omission of descriptions that contribute to the setting and atmosphere of a scene, as can be illustrated with Lin’s handling of the following passage:

Avril avait reparu, le temps était beau, les tombes ne devaient plus avoir cet aspect douloureux et désolé que leur donne l’hiver; enfin, il faisait déjà assez chaud pour que les vivants se souvinsent des morts et les visitassent. Je me rendis au cimetière, en me disant: A la seule inspection de la tombe de Marguerite, je verrai bien si la douleur d’Armand existe encore, et

Bai Xianyong 白先勇, Chinese-English bilingual edition, edited by George Kao, 332, 334.

⁵⁶ The title “*Dream of the Red Chamber*” is ambiguous: it could refer to someone dreaming of “the Red Chamber” or to “the Red Chamber’s” dream. However, as it is more widely known than “*Red Chamber Dream*,” it is retained here as the gloss of the Chinese title.

⁵⁷ See Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, Vol. 1, 43, footnote 13: “This is not only my opinion. Red Inkstone constantly makes use of the technical vocabulary of Chinese painting in discussing the novel and insists that Xueqin’s technique as a novelist is essentially a painterly one.”

j'apprendrai peut-être ce qu'il est devenu.⁵⁸

In Lin's Chinese version, this description is left out, so that its readers can no longer see or feel the actual scene, in which there is gaiety suggested by the fine weather ("le temps était beau" 'the weather was fine'), by the warmth ("il faisait déjà assez chaud" 'it was already quite warm'), and by the vanishing of the doleful and desolate appearance given to the tombs by winter ("cet aspect douloureux et désolé que leur donne l'hiver" 'the doleful and desolate look given them by the winter'). When one reads the original, one is immersed in the action as well as in the scene, and is filled with a sense of immediacy evoked by the details. When one reads the Chinese translation, in which the details are nowhere to be found, one can only get a dry account presented in the broadest possible outline: "*Yu jing zhi Make mu shang, ji Yameng lai keyi yijian. Mu zai yi ju yuan zhong, liao yuan zhou yan* 余徑至馬克墓上，冀亞猛來可以一見。墓在一巨園中，繚垣周焉" 'I went straight to Marguerite's tomb, in the hope of seeing Armand when he came. The tomb was in a big cemetery, surrounded by a wall on all sides.'⁵⁹

IX. General Coherence in Lin Shu's Story-Retelling

Nevertheless, despite the flaws mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs, Lin should be given credit for having reproduced a generally coherent story for readers whose taste in Western literature in general and in French literature in particular still lacked sophistication, readers who would ask for no more than an intriguing story. This general coherence is due mainly to Lin's competence as an abridger, who, apart from occasional lapses, usually knows what should be retained for the sake of the story's structural integrity. In deleting paragraph upon paragraph, he often succeeds in making sure that the main threads do not get lost in the process, which is no mean achievement considering his huge output as a story-reteller. In this respect, his abilities as a practising novelist must have helped.⁶⁰

X. Lin Shu's Language

If *Bali Chahuanü yishi* 'History of *La Dame aux camélias*' is, in

⁵⁸ Dumas, 59.

⁵⁹ Lin, 147.

⁶⁰ See Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 70.

respect of the structural changes it has undergone in relation to the original, distinctly the product of Lin the story-reteller, it is much more so with regard to the medium of his translation, which is a modified form of *wenyan* 文言 ‘classical Chinese,’ or *guwen* 古文 ‘ancient prose.’ As the term *guwen* 古文 has already been thoroughly discussed by Qian,⁶¹ I shall not repeat what has already been said; instead, I shall try to examine the merits and demerits of this medium.

One very prominent merit which the average reader will notice in Lin’s medium is its unmistakable affinity with fine classical prose. Indeed, if one reads *Bali Chahuanü yishi* ‘*History of La Dame aux camélias*’ without reminding oneself that it was intended to be a Chinese translation of *La Dame aux camélias*, and that, as a translation, it should be evaluated as such, one will have to admit that the felicities of Lin’s language are often delightful, possessing many of the virtues which such masters as Sima Qian 司馬遷, Han Yu 韓愈, Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元, and Su Shi 蘇軾 are famous for, virtues which Lin himself must have been conscious of when he proudly declared, “With the exception of Zhenchuan 震川 [that is, Gui Youguang 歸有光], not a single writer of classical Chinese prose in the past six hundred years dare stand comparison with me” (“*Liubai nian zhong, Zhenchuan wai wu yi ren gan dang wo zhe* 六百年中, 震川外無一人敢當我者”).⁶² The following passages, taken at random from his translation, for example, will suffice to show that Lin’s prose does have such virtues, virtues that must have at least been partly responsible for emboldening him to make such an extravagant claim:

店據小崗，而門下臨蒼碧小畦，中間以穠花。左望長橋橫亘，直出林表；右望則蒼山如屏，葱翠欲滴。山下長河一道，直駛橋外，水平無波，瑩潔作玉色。背望則斜陽反迫，村舍紅瓦，鱗鱗咸閃異光。遠望而巴黎城郭，在半雲半霧中矣。⁶³

‘The shop was perched on a hillock, with its door overlooking small plots of verdant vegetation which were staggered with luxuriant flowers. Looking left, one could see a long bridge spanning a wood and then going

⁶¹ See Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 80-85.

⁶² Cited by Lin Wei 林薇 in her Preface to *Lin Shu xuanji: wen shi ci juan* 林紓選集—文詩詞卷 ‘*Selected Works of Lin Shu: Essays, Shi Poetry, and Ci Poetry*.’ See Lin Wei 林薇, selected and annotated, *Lin Shu xuanji: wen shi ci juan* 林紓選集—文詩詞卷 ‘*Selected Works of Lin Shu: Essays, Shi Poetry, and Ci Poetry*’ (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe 四川人民出版社, 1988), 7.

⁶³ Lin, 178-79.

beyond it. Looking right, one could see a verdant, screen-like hill, which was almost dripping with fresh green. Below the hill was a long river racing past the bridge. Smooth and without a ripple, its waters, of the colour of jade, were clean and crystalline. Looking backwards, one could see the reflected rays of the setting sun and the ochre tiles of the village houses all gleaming like fish-scales with a wonderful light. Looking into the distance, one could see the city walls of Paris half hidden in a veil which was half cloud and half mist.'

是時三人乃沿水而行，至一處，見小樓兩楹，矗然水際，樓陰入水，作幽碧之色，鐵闌一道，闌內細草如氈，樓外雜樹蒙密，老翠交檐，景物閑蒨可玩，蒼藤蔓生，沿階及壁。余知此中幽闌無人，請馬克移家居此，日行林際，倦憩草上，人間之樂當無逾此。⁶⁴

'The three of us were walking along the river when we arrived at a spot where we saw two small buildings rising from the bank. Their reflections in the water were dark green. Within a row of iron railings was fine felt-like grass. Outside the buildings was a dense grove of various trees whose dark green foliage canopied the eaves. The scene was tranquil, exquisite, and delightful. Green vines were growing all over the place, crawling up the steps to the walls. I knew that the buildings were secluded, with nobody living inside, so I asked Marguerite to move her home there. In the daytime, we would take a walk in the woods; tired, we would rest on the grass—there would be no greater happiness in the world.'

With their brisk rhythm, uninvolved syntax, and economy of expression, the quotations remind one very much of the short essays of the late Ming (*wan-Ming xiaopin* 晚明小品), particularly those of the three Yuans 三袁, namely, Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道, Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, and Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道, all famous for their lightness of touch. They are comparable, for example, with the following passage from Yuan Hongdao's 袁宏道 "*Lianhua dong* 蓮花洞" 'The Lotus Flower Cave':

蓮花洞之前，為居然亭，亭軒豁可望，每一登覽，則湖光獻碧，鬚眉形影，如落鏡中，六橋楊柳一絡，牽風引浪，蕭疏可愛，晴雨煙月，風景互異，淨慈之絕勝處也。⁶⁵

'In front of the Lotus Flower Cave is the Pavilion of Delightful Surprise,

⁶⁴ Lin, 179.

⁶⁵ Tang Changtai 唐昌泰, selected and annotated, *San Yuan wenxuan* 三袁文選 'Selected Essays of the Three Yuans' (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe 巴蜀書社, 1988), 135.

which is high and spacious, and from which one can look into the distance. Whenever I climb up to it to enjoy the surrounding scenery, the gleaming waters of the lake will unfold their radiant emerald before me, so that my beard, my eyebrows, and my reflection will seem to have fallen into a mirror. Along the Six Bridges, willows weave into a row, tugging the wind and towing the waves, delighting me with the grace of their wispy foliage. The scenery assumes different aspects in fine and rainy weather, in mists and under the moon. The cave is the most beautiful spot of the Temple of Pure Charity.’

Like the Ming essayist, Lin is capable of writing delightfully exquisite classical Chinese prose in its purest form.

However, pure as it is, Lin’s medium is bound to come up against intractable problems when it is used to encode the fictional world created by Dumas, which, being radically different from ancient China, is often beyond the linguistic resources of classical Chinese, particularly in terms of vocabulary and syntactic flexibility. To be sure, the language used by Lin is a modified form of classical Chinese, which is more colloquial, more malleable than its prototype.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, he is still inevitably hampered by its grammar, syntax, and conventions, because, in the final analysis, it is defective, incapable of coping with the modern world or functioning as a medium of expression for the modern sensibility. As a result, he often has to work under self-imposed restrictions.

First, cutting himself off from everyday language, he is sometimes forced to use archaic or obsolete words instead of words in common usage, words that are readily comprehensible to the average Chinese reader. One such example is the use of “*chu* 媼” ‘be pregnant’⁶⁷ for “enceinte,”⁶⁸ which is a very common word in modern French, meaning “pregnant.” As Qian Zhongshu has pointed out,⁶⁹ not satisfied with a less ancient expression like “*youshen* 有身” ‘be with child’ or “*yun* 孕” ‘be pregnant,’ both of which would be more easily comprehensible to the average Chinese reader, Lin has enlisted the service of a word from the *Shang shu* 尚書 ‘The Book of History,’ one of the most ancient Chinese classics, sacrificing readability for mere antiqueness. For the same reason, his version of the following conversation fails to read like natural Chinese:

⁶⁶ See Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 83.

⁶⁷ Lin, 141.

⁶⁸ Dumas, 27.

⁶⁹ See Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 86.

– S'il fallait que j'écoutesse tous ceux qui sont amoureux de moi, je n'aurais seulement pas le temps de dîner. Et elle fit courir ses doigts sur le piano, après quoi se retournant elle nous dit:

– Voulez-vous prendre quelque chose? moi, je boirais bien un peu de punch.⁷⁰

馬克曰：“彼顛倒之詞，吾若傾聽之，盱食尚不遑也。”於是馬克且語且撫琴，顧余曰：“吾渴思漿，君諸人得無飢乎？”⁷¹

'Marguerite said, "If I had to listen to his senseless words, I would not have time to partake of food even by nightfall." With these words, Marguerite, stroking the keys of the piano, looked at me and said, "I am thirsty and would fancy some beverage. Aren't you people hungry?"'⁷²

⁷⁰ Dumas, 99.

⁷¹ Lin, 157.

⁷² Lin, 157. The gloss shows where Lin stands in terms of accuracy. Literally translated into English, Dumas's original reads: "If I had to listen to all those who are in love with me, I would not even have time to eat.' And she ran her fingers over the piano, after which, turning (round) [to us], she said: 'Would you like to have something [to eat or drink]? As for me, I would very much like to have a little punch.'" By going over the English gloss (or back-translation) of Lin's Chinese version, one can see that the original "se retournant" ("turning (round) [to those present, that is, from the narrator's point of view, to us]") has been translated as "gu yu 顧余" 'turning (round) to me,' which is at odds with the plural ("jun zhuren 君諸人" 'you people,' or, more literally, 'you and the others') that follows. As there are five people (Marguerite, Gaston, Prudence, Mme Duvernoy, and Armand Duval, who is the narrator) present after the count ("le comte") left, and as Marguerite is speaking to all those present, using the French "vous" as the second person plural, not as the polite second person singular, Lin's "yu 余" 'me' (first person singular) is clearly wrong. The mistake could have been made when Lin's collaborator Wang Shouchang 王壽昌 was translating the original into Chinese, or when Lin was taking down what Wang was dictating to him. No matter when the mistake was made, the example shows how unsatisfactory collaboration of this kind can be. If, as all theorists and practitioners of translation believe, direct translation from the source-language text by a single translator is already a refraction, Lin's kind of translation (through a collaborator) is a double refraction, making it more difficult for the translator to achieve great precision. It is worth noting, too, that, strictly speaking, "fu qin 撫琴" 'stroking the piano' is not the same thing as "fit courir ses doigts sur le piano" 'ran her fingers over the piano.' In glossing "ganshi 盱食," I have, to bring out its antiqueness, used the highly formal expression "partake of food even by nightfall" instead of "eat at nightfall." For the meaning of "partake" (used with *of*), see J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, first ed. by James A. Murray, Henry Bradley,

Whereas the things and concepts in the original are within the average modern Frenchman's everyday experience, their counterparts in the translation seem to belong to the world of the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 'Zuo Qiuming's 左丘明 *Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*' or of the *Shi ji* 史記 'Records of the Grand Historian.' This is due mainly to the use of antiquated words on the part of the translator, such as the use of "ganshi 盦食" 'to partake of food by nightfall' for "dîner" 'to dine' and "jiang 漿" 'beverage' for "punch." Whereas "dîner" is a word commonly used in everyday spoken French, "ganshi 盦食" 'to partake of food by nightfall' has long ceased to play an active role in the vocabulary of the average modern Chinese person; by using it to translate "dîner," Lin has made a serious stylistic mistake: giving the conversation a tone that fails to match that of the original.⁷³ With "punch," a word of English origin, Lin's difficulty is even more obvious. Unable to find a word in classical Chinese which has identical or very similar "semantic markers" and "distinguishers," two linguistic terms used by Nida in discussing the theory of meaning,⁷⁴ and refusing to coin a new word or make use of new collocations as he has done elsewhere,⁷⁵ he ends up using a very imprecise word with distinguishers widely different from those of "punch."⁷⁶

and W. A. Craigie, 20 vols., combined with A Supplement to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. R. W. Burchfield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd ed. 1989), Vol. 11, 263, "partake," II. *intr.* 4. b.: "To receive, get, or have a share or portion of. Often used without any notion of sharing with others, esp. in reference to eating and drinking, = to take some of, take of, take." The dictionary is hereafter referred to as *OED*.

⁷³ It should also be pointed out that "ganshi 盦食" is often collocated with "xiaoyi 宵衣" 'getting dressed before daybreak' and used to praise emperors in ancient China who were busy with state affairs in the interests of the people, whereas the French "dîner" does not have such connotations.

⁷⁴ See Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: With Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 39.

⁷⁵ Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 83.

⁷⁶ See *OED*'s definition of *punch sb.*³ 1. a: "A beverage now generally composed of wine or spirits mixed with hot water or milk and flavoured with sugar, lemons, and some spice or cordial; but varying greatly in composition with time and place. Usually qualified by the name of a principal constituent, as **arrack**, **brandy**, **claret**, **gin**, **milk**, **rum**, **tea**, **whisky**, **wine punch**" (*OED*, Vol. 12, 834.) See also the following French definition of the word: "n. m. (angl. *punch*, punch, peut-être de

In less serious cases, Lin's choice of words may appear denotatively acceptable. Upon closer stylistic scrutiny, however, they are often found to lack the freshness and vigour of their counterparts in the original. This happens when Lin, either from force of habit or for lack of an appropriate word or phrase in the medium he uses, resorts to clichés: “*yu mao zhu yi* 玉貌珠衣” ‘jade looks and dress ornamented with pearls,’⁷⁷ “*yan ru tao li* 顏如桃李” ‘looks as beautiful as peach and plum,’⁷⁸ “*juedai li shu* 絕代麗姝” ‘peerless beautiful woman.’⁷⁹ Apart from stylistic distortion, as is the case with “*juedai li shu* 絕對麗姝” ‘peerless beautiful woman,’ which is too high-flown an equivalent for the very common French word “*femme*” ‘woman,’⁸⁰ these clichés must have struck Chinese readers as stale and sapless even in Lin's time.

In using a classical language to translate nineteenth-century French, which should still be considered modern in the late-Qing period, Lin was running counter to the practice followed by most translators today. When a modern translator translates a work written in a modern language, he normally takes a language in current use, most preferably his mother tongue, as his target language. When he translates a work written in a classical language, such as the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*, the ideal target language should still be one in current use, again most preferably his

l'hindoustānī *pānch*, cinq [à cause des cinq ingrédients qui entrent dans cette boisson] [...] 1. Boisson que les Anglais buvaient aux Indes, faites de thé, de sucre, de cannelle, de citron et d'eau-de-vie ou de rhum, que l'on pouvait flamber ou non. [...] 2. Liqueur alcoolisée et servie brûlante, de composition analogue [...] 'noun masculine (English *punch*, punch, perhaps from the Hindustani *pānch*, five [because of the five ingredients which make up this beverage] [...]) 1. A beverage that the English drank in the Indies, made of tea, of sugar, of cinnamon, of lemon and of brandy or of rum, which one could flambé or not flambé. [...] 2. An alcoholic liqueur served boiling hot, of similar ingredients [...]' (Louis Guilbert et al., eds., *Grand Larousse de la langue française en sept volumes* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1971-1978), Vol. 6, 4777). Given its wide semantic field as well the absence of a similar drink in traditional society, a translator today not using classical Chinese as his medium would most probably coin a new word to render the source-language text. Denying himself this freedom, Lin could only fall back on the readily available but vague term “*jiang* 漿” ‘beverage,’ missing the mark and failing to introduce his readers to Western culture at the same time.

⁷⁷ Lin, 173.

⁷⁸ Lin, 201.

⁷⁹ Lin, 177.

⁸⁰ Dumas, 170.

mother tongue. Throughout the history of translation, the soundness of this principle has been borne out by countless examples. In the case of the *Iliad*, one can readily cite the two English versions by E. V. Rieu and Martin Hammond respectively. When a translator tries to render a work written in one classical language into another classical language, he will have to tackle two intractable problems. First, he will have to overcome the language barrier between the translation and its readers. Second, using a language which has ceased to develop with the modern sensibility, a language which is no longer able to continue enriching its own linguistic resources to meet the changing needs of the time, he will be severely handicapped when he tries to bring out fully many of the original's nuances. In translating Dumas's work into classical Chinese, Lin was faced with a third problem: he was constantly in danger of turning modern French characters into ancient Chinese figures. The result, as the passages quoted above have shown, was the creation of characters that lack the liveliness and vigour of their counterparts in the original. Thus, no matter how conversant Lin was with classical Chinese, once he had decided to use it as his medium of translation, he would have to fight against overwhelming—most of the time even insurmountable—odds in order to avoid conjuring up spirits of the dead.

In terms of syntax, the use of classical Chinese also detracts from Lin's version, even though the detraction in this respect is not so readily observable. This is especially true of its dialogue, in which the use of too many clipped units tends to give the language a staccato effect, making the characters sound more like figures stepping out of the *Shi ji* 史記 'Records of the Grand Historian,' the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 'Zuo Qiuming's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals,' or even the *Shang shu* 尚書 'The Book of History' than nineteenth-century Frenchmen or Frenchwomen:

馬克曰：“君寓中亦有人候君乎？”余曰：“無之。我例當去。”馬克曰：“聽君。”余曰：“君趣我耶？”馬克曰：“然。”〔……〕

〔……〕余曰：“如約。”〔……〕馬克曰：“請觀後效。”余曰：“何時為後？”⁸¹

'Marguerite said, "Is there also someone waiting for you at home?" I said, "No. I must leave anyway." Marguerite said, "Do as you please." I said, "Are you hurrying me off?" Marguerite said, "Yes."' [...]

⁸¹ Lin, 161-62.

[...] I said, "As agreed." [...] Marguerite said, "See what happens later." I said. "When is 'later'?"⁸²

XI. Lin Shu's Incompetence as a Translator

If the above flaws are due to the use of an inappropriate medium, the occurrence of funny, bizarre, or even unintelligible expressions must have been the result of Lin's incompetence as a translator. Given the title of a piece of music, "*l'Invitation à la valse*,"⁸³ which means "the Invitation to Waltz," he can talk gibberish: "*an wei da shang ya la ping ka* 暗威打賞啞拉坪卡."⁸⁴ Similarly, "Palais-Royal" 'Royal Palace'⁸⁵ is transformed into "*Bali Huawei'an Yuan* 巴黎華味安園"⁸⁶ with unwarranted gustatory overtones in "*wei* 味" 'taste,' and "l'Opéra" 'the Opera,'⁸⁷ inappropriately animated by "*Lu bo xie* 魯伯懈" 'Elder Uncle Lu the Laggard,'⁸⁸ is made to evoke the image of an elderly laggard.⁸⁹ The problems posed by these comical transliterations are made more complicated by the fact that they are all based on Lin's Fuzhou 福州 (or Min 閩) dialect, which is quite different from standard spoken Chinese.

⁸² Because of the grammatical and syntactic differences between Chinese and English, my back-translation is not able to reproduce the staccato effect of the syntactic units in Lin's passage.

⁸³ Dumas, 100.

⁸⁴ Lin, 157. In modern Chinese, the character "卡" has two pronunciations: "kā" (/k'a/ (in the first tone)) or "qiǎ" (/tɕia/ (in the third tone)).

⁸⁵ Dumas, 155.

⁸⁶ Lin, 173.

⁸⁷ Dumas, 156.

⁸⁸ Lin, 173.

⁸⁹ Perhaps one should not be too harsh in criticizing Lin for such comical transliterations, for many other translators / scholars of Lin's time took the same easy way out when they came across foreign words which they had difficulty translating. One famous example is Liang Qichao 梁啟超, who, in 1901, translated the English word "inspiration" as "*yan shi pi li chun* 煙土披里純." The "translation" is only a string of five Chinese characters which sound like the original's vowels and consonants, but which do not make much sense. If one were to gloss it, which is hardly glossable, one would be compelled to talk gibberish or crack a surrealistic joke: "a smoking scholar wearing a league pure," or "a scholar addicted to opium throwing on a league in a spirit of purity." Today, of course, even people with just some basic knowledge of English and Chinese know that, unless one wants to be humorous or facetious, "*linggan* 靈感" is the universally accepted translation of the English word.

As a result, a reader who does not speak Lin's dialect would have to stretch his imagination to the utmost if he wanted to equate "valse" (/vals/) with "ping" (/p'ing/) and "ka" (/k'a/) or "qia" (/teia/).

In translating personal names, Lin's performance is not much better. Many of the names in his version (if they can be recognized as names at all), such as "Shuli Zhuba 舒里著巴"⁹⁰ for "Julie Duprat"⁹¹ and "Jiashitang 家實瞳"⁹² for "Gaston,"⁹³ are just as comical or bizarre as "an wei da shang ya la ping ka 暗威打賞啞拉坪卡" and "Lu bo xie 魯伯懈."

With regard to the names of the heroine (Marguerite) and the hero (Armand), Lin's competence should also be called into question. The heroine of the story, as readers of both the original and the translation are well aware, is a beautiful woman; as such, she deserves a name that has beautiful associations for the reader, not one as unfeminine as "Make 馬克," which is more like the name of a man.⁹⁴ On the other hand, the hero's name "Armand," which echoes the French word "aimant," meaning "loving" or "affectionate," has lost all its suggestiveness in the translation "Yameng 亞猛," the second component of which, meaning "fierce," "ferocious," or "savage," is especially ill-chosen. While "Armand" in the original may remind the reader of the tender, caring, and affectionate nature of the hero, alluding subtly to the French phrase, "être d'une nature aimante" 'to have an affectionate nature,' a phrase that aptly describes the hero, its Chinese translation depicts a macho figure like Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. Because of his carelessness, sloppiness, or insensitivity to the associations which Chinese words may have for the reader, Lin has destroyed at one stroke an artistic effect so ingeniously created by Dumas.

XII. Lin Shu in Comparison with Yan Fu

In discussing translators of the late-Qing period, scholars often group Lin Shu 林紓 and Yan Fu 嚴復 together, although, according to Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書,⁹⁵ Yan never held Lin in high esteem, and felt

⁹⁰ Lin, 209.

⁹¹ Dumas, 273.

⁹² Lin, 151.

⁹³ Dumas, 76.

⁹⁴ "Mark," an English name for a male, is generally translated as "馬克."

⁹⁵ Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 91-92.

offended to be lumped with him, dismissing the possibility of one knowing not a single foreign word becoming a translator. As a translator, Lin is certainly not comparable with Yan. Whether in terms of their understanding of the original, for which Lin had to depend entirely on his collaborators, or in terms of their attention to detail, Yan is far superior to Lin. With Yan, “the coining of a single term could mean a whole month of casting about for the *mot juste*” (“*yi ming zhi li, xun yue chichu* 一名之立, 旬月踟躕”).⁹⁶

Even in his prefaces, Yan shows that he is tackling problems at a level beyond Lin. In the prefaces by Yan, the reasons for choosing a particular expression are often discussed at great length.⁹⁷ In the prefaces by Lin, one can find lengthy discussions of the plot or of the techniques used by the novelist, moving lamentations over China's fate, pertinent comparisons between Chinese and Western culture, and interesting moral lessons drawn from the story, but one can never find discussions of translation problems like those found in Yan Fu's prefaces.⁹⁸ This is due, of course, to Lin's inability to read the original. In this connection, the

⁹⁶ See “*Yiliyan* 譯例言” ‘Preface to the Translation,’ 2, in Yan Fu 嚴復, trans., *Tiyan lun* 天演論 ‘*Evolution and Ethics*,’ by T. H. Huxley (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1930).

⁹⁷ For example, see his “*Yishi liyan* 譯事例言” ‘Introductory Remarks on the Translation’ in Yan Fu 嚴復, trans., *Yuanfu* 原富 ‘*The Origin of Wealth*,’ the original being *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith (Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1981), 7-14; and his “*Yifanli* 譯凡例” ‘Translator's Note’ in Yan Fu 嚴復 *Qunji quanjie lun* 群己權界論 ‘*On the Rights of Society and of the Individual*,’ the original being *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan 台灣商務印書館, 1966), 1-5. In the first preface, Yan explains in great detail why he titled his translation “*Yuanfu* 原富” ‘*The Origin of Wealth*,’ drawing on his knowledge of the etymology of the word “economics” and tracing it to the Greek word “*οἰκονόμος*,” from which the English word derives. In the second preface, by way of explaining the Chinese title of his translation, he discourses on the meaning of “liberty,” comparing it with “freedom,” tracing it to its Latin origin, “*libertas*,” contrasting it with “slavery,” “subjection,” “bondage,” and “necessity,” differentiating it from “justice,” illuminating it with sentences like “To lose his liberty” and “Set the dog at liberty,” and relating it to Lao Zi 老子 and Sakyamuni. The ability to engage in this kind of learned discourse, although not a great achievement in itself, is beyond Lin.

⁹⁸ See the collection of Lin's prefaces and postscripts to his translations in Lin Wei 林薇, selected and annotated, *Lin Shu xuanji: wen shi ci juan* 林紓選集——文詩詞卷 ‘*Selected Works of Lin Shu: Essays, Shi Poetry, and Ci Poetry*,’ 172-250.

following description of his translation process, taken from his preface to *Xiaonü Nai'er zhuan* 孝女耐兒傳 ‘*The Story of Nai'er the Filial Daughter*,’ his Chinese version of Dickens’s *The Old Curiosity Shop*, is sufficient to explain his inadequacy as a translator:

予不審西文，其勉強廁身譯界者，恃二三君子，為余口述其詞，余耳受而手追之，聲已筆止，日區四小時，得文字六千言，其間疵謬百出。乃蒙海內外名公，不鄙穢其徑率而收之，此予之大幸也。⁹⁹

‘I do not know any Western language. The fact that I have become a translator after a fashion was due to the help of two to three gentlemen who orally relayed the message of the originals to me. My hand put down in black and white what my ears heard. As soon as the message was relayed, my pen had already committed it to writing. I worked four hours a day, producing six thousand words which were full of blemishes and mistakes. I was fortunate enough to have them accepted by eminent scholars within the country and overseas, who did not disdain their lack of sophistication. This has been my great fortune.’¹⁰⁰

XIII. Conclusion

In the light of this admission, it is not difficult to see where Lin stands in modern China’s history of translation. Capable of writing exquisite classical Chinese and of displaying admirable skill in condensing Western works of literature into highly readable stories, he should be given credit both as a distinguished stylist and as a competent abridger. He has not only provided people with delightful reading material but also played a catalytic role in introducing Western literature into China, a contribution already noted by such critics as Qian Zhongshu¹⁰¹ and Zheng Zhenduo.¹⁰² However, by present-day standards, despite the admirable trail-blazing

⁹⁹ Lin Wei 林薇, selected and annotated, *Lin Shu xuanji: wen shi ci juan* 林紓選集——文詩詞卷 ‘*Selected Works of Lin Shu: Essays, Shi Poetry, and Ci Poetry*,’ 197.

¹⁰⁰ The Chinese phrase “*liuqian yan* 六千言” in the original means, strictly speaking, “six thousand characters,” even though, with very few exceptions, each of the vast majority of Chinese characters, when taken independently, is also a word. But as the literal translation would sound odd to readers of English, I have loosely rendered “*liuqian yan*” as “six thousand words.”

¹⁰¹ Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 66.

¹⁰² Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, *Zheng Zhenduo wenji* 鄭振鐸文集 ‘*The Collected Works of Zheng Zhenduo*,’ Vol. 6, 345-59.

role he has played, he should, in view of his inability to translate directly from the source language and of the many flaws resulting from this inability and from haste,¹⁰³ be regarded primarily as a story-reteller practising an imperfect art of story-retelling in the late-Qing and early-Republican period.

¹⁰³ As mentioned earlier in this paper, Lin translated more than 180 titles within thirty years. See Qian Zhongshu's article "*Lin Shu de fanyi* 林紓的翻譯" 'Lin Shu's Translations' in Qian, *Jiu wen si pian* 舊文四篇, 72-73 for a description of the speed with which Lin translated these works.