

From Theory to Practice: The Translation of Chang Hen-Shui's *Liang Shan-Po and Chu Ying-Tai**

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Everyone in the field of translation knows the meaning of the word *translation*. It is a word that we hear from the time of our first exposure to a second language. Recently I took a minute to look up the dictionary definition. Amongst the other non-relevant definitions, it read: "change into another language; to change into other words." It then went on to say that synonyms for translate are: "paraphrase" and "render."¹ I checked other dictionaries as well, and to all extents and purposes, they all read the same. Thus it is only the translators themselves and the field of translation that have attempted to give added meaning to the word, and thus we come up with a gamut of descriptions from Yu Kwan-chung's facetious statement that translation is "that sorry trade of linguistic match-making"² to very carefully thought out statements such as James J. Y. Liu's description of the *Kulturwelt* and *Lebenswelt* that the translator must project himself into in order to be able to "reincarnate the world of the original work in a new linguistic structure."³ The point here is to indicate that the arguments about "literal and free," about "flowing and stilted," and about "reality principles and pleasure principles" are merely descriptions about the way translations are carried out and have nothing to do with the inherent notion of what translation really is. A translator's task, then, is simply to rephrase something in print from one language to another. Anything beyond that describes what we consider to be the *quality* of the translation.

* All Chinese quotations are taken from *Liang Shao-po yü Chu Ying-t'ai* by Chang Hen-shui, published by Pao Wen Tang Bookstore, Peking, 1954.

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What Is the Translator's Mission?

As Y. R. Chao and George Kao and many others have stated over history, "There is translation, and there is translation,"⁴ and depending on context, that statement can be interpreted in many different ways. During the course of this paper, I will use that statement to mean different things, but at this point I simply want to point out that characteristics of good and bad translations must also consider the material which is being translated. It may go without saying, but in a comprehensive statement about translation it is important to remind ourselves that there is a vast difference between translating a scientific, an historical, an agricultural, or even a linguistic article on the one hand and a piece of literature on the other hand . . . any piece, good or bad. Perhaps that is part of the reason why, in North America at least, translators of literature do not yet enjoy the same academic esteem as their bretheren who publish "research" articles. People who are not in the field tend to think of all translation as a single lump.

The distinction between literary and non-literary translation has never been made forceful enough. It is no wonder that if we are unable to convince our colleagues in Faculties and Colleges of Arts around the world that the translation of literature is a creative art form no less meaningful than the original works, we will never convince granting agencies that these endeavors are as valuable as scientific experiments or library and statistical research done in the traditional areas. Thus translators will not enjoy the same fruits of paid research time, fellowships, grants and the like.

All of us in the field, therefore, have a mission. A mission to make the field of literary translation understood, accredited and esteemed for what it is: a creative art as well as a research form — not a simple technical skill — probably more closely related to the *beaux arts* than to the *belles lettres*. The potential result of this mission is not to be misunderstood. The gains achieved will not be for those of us who are in the field at present. For the most part, all of us are rather senior and have little to lose by working in an unappreciated area. It is only at this stage of a scholar's career that he or she has the courage to go into translation. Our mission is to make the field more attractive and more accepted for the generations of young scholars who will follow in our footsteps. Certainly the presence of *Renditions* and the growth of quality translation in the last few decades has made some inroads, but by and large there is great lament over the fact that there are so few translations of Chinese works in English, and an even greater

lament that the "authors" of those works are so ill-recognized. The disease, however, can never be cured unless the symptoms are attacked. Translators should not be afraid to promote their work. They do it for posterity!

What Is the Material to Be Translated?

Assuming, however, that readers of this article are interested in literary translation, this discussion shall be confined to that area. In choosing the material, several considerations must be addressed. Some of those considerations are related to the material itself and some to the translator. With respect to the material, translators must ask themselves the following questions:

1. Is the material inherently interesting?
2. Has the work been previously untranslated?
3. Will the finished piece attract an audience, both readers and publishers?

The answers to the above questions do not necessarily have to be answered in the positive, but they do have to be considered. Surely many works which have been translated are not interesting. They may, however, have other redeeming qualities such as filling in knowledge gaps about certain authors or periods of history, introducing certain aspects of the original culture to the target culture, or revealing a new literary genre to an unfamiliar audience. In any case, the work must be interesting to the translator, otherwise he would never be able to make the piece interesting to *his* readers.

Certainly it seems as though many of the translations which exist are, in fact, new translations of work which had been previously translated. Therefore, it would be presumptuous to the point of being sacrilegious to inveigh against re-translating. Certainly many early and even recent translations have gross errors in vocabulary, phrases and idioms or even in style, flavor or tone which are badly in need of correction so as not to vilify the original author and not to allow foreign readers an incorrect, stereotyped view of the original literature. And while it may be very useful to re-translate those works which might have been classified as true abortions, there is virtually no value to reproducing an earlier work only to change a few p's and q's. My personal feeling is that in the latter case, the only occasion in which the undertaking is academically sound is when the main purpose is to put a valuable, outdated work back into print.

On the other hand, many interesting works remain untranslated. Thus, casting a new eye on someone's old work may be less productive than allowing more readers to become more familiar with more material.

Anyone who chooses to translate a piece of literature certainly hopes that it will be valuable to the field as a whole, but all of us are subjective, and our ideas of merit are probably as varied as our ideas about life and death. Even if the work is not intrinsically valuable in and of itself, new translations may have value beyond their literary merit in terms of general theme or period.

If the work is interesting to the translator and has value to the field, then it is likely that it will attract some sort of audience — either professional or layman — and if the work has been previously untranslated, there is at least the likelihood that ultimately some sort of publisher will be found. Unfortunately for the field, though, even as the reading public continues to read more and to have increasingly varied tastes, publishing costs continue to escalate, thus making the majority of publishers much more dollar conscious than they appear to have been a generation ago. The consequence is, of course, that the translator must now more than ever before give thought to the eventual “marketability” of the work.

Who Can Be A Translator?

Francis Pan characterizes the usual notions of scholars in the field regarding who can translate and how it should be done when he summarizes his conception of the steps necessary in the training of conceptual skills for Chinese-English translation as follows:

1. Basic skill in the comprehension and handling of Chinese in general application.
2. Acquaintance with the subject coverage.
3. Mastery in the application of English.
4. Orientation of the translated text to needed linguistic, semantic and cultural controls.
5. Development of style and elegance.⁵

I think, however, that it is now time to expand and refine these ideas.

While literacy in two languages is a first condition to be able to do translation work, few people would agree that it is the sole requisite. Most translators would likely agree, though, that there are a number of other

factors which might be classified as *professional requisites* and *personal requisites*.

Professional Requisites:

In order to do satisfactory translation work, obviously certain professional requisites have to be satisfied. Aside from literacy in the languages involved, the *level* of literacy in both languages is obviously important. While errors in converting the lexicon from one language to another can generally be picked up by proofreaders and collaborators, mistakes in speech levels, style, flow and tone are not so easily noticed, or at least corrected, by colleagues and associates. Therefore I would agree with that contingent of translators who say that translation is best accomplished when translating into one's language of habitual use. Our colleague, Howard Goldblatt, would take that requirement one step further and say that translation should *only* be done when translating into one's native language. The difference here is a fine one, but the former requirement does allow for the exceptional cases in which a second language *truly* becomes native in fluency.

This reminds us, of course, that a translator must understand rhythm, have an extraordinary command of idiom and possess a sound structural foundation in his or her own native language. Without those skills, their products will have no life, and without life, they would not be art.

At this point, we would do well to reflect on James Liu's statement about the role of a translator for what it is: "The translator thus plays a double role, first as reader and then as writer."⁶ What, I believe, Liu is saying is that while we often think about the excellent writing skills required to create sentences eloquent enough to match the original, we tend to forget the requirement for the translator to possess superb reading skills. Without those skills, the translator might not correctly interpret the author's intention and thus miss what may be lurking below the "surface structure." Matters of tone, color and other abstract considerations might also escape his notice. Obviously, then, without keen reading skills, all the writing skills in the world would be of little use.

Anyone who proposes to translate a work should have, at least, an acquaintanceship with the material to be translated. This acquaintanceship could either be first hand experience with the topic in question or via an external reading program that would enable the translator to "get into" the author's world. On occasion, the pre-reading phase might, in fact, turn

out to be a full-blown research project in itself. A thorough knowledge will facilitate the flow of the translation. Aside from the usual topical considerations, questions of dialect and the "times" surrounding the original story are vital. In addition, the translator must be able to rise up to the challenges posed by the specific media involved in the text — those of poetry, the classical language, newspaper style, and the like.

Personal Requisites:

While a pre-reading or research program will provide the key for a translator to "get into" the author's world, what is then needed is enough personal sensitivity to *feel* what the author was writing about in order that it might be better expressed. When a story of passion loses its heat; when a story of the unknown loses its mystique; when a war story loses its feeling of heroism; when an epic loses its grandeur . . . these are all potential examples of stories that might have been translated correctly as far as vocabulary, grammar and idiom are concerned, but which, nevertheless, miss the mark due to the translator's inability to vicariously project himself into the author's psyche and consequently into the intended spirit of the story.

A successful translator needs to be the possessor of all manner of experiences. These experiences would hopefully come from life as well as from books. Experience from books is, of course, necessary, since they help provide the vocabulary and idiom that a translator needs. Experience with life, however, provides the translator with a more understanding soul, obviously one better prepared to be transmigrated into the spirit of the author. Not only must the translator have experienced the world, he must have the innate ability to be able to perceive what he has experienced, since experience without perception is not experience at all, but is akin to the proverbial two ships passing by each other in the dark.

In addition, a translator should best be unselfish, because with almost perfect certainty, he will get little credit for his work.

Finally, a translator should be humble and be able to recognize his own limitations in order that he will not feel ashamed to seek whatever help he needs to accomplish the task and that he will not be traumatized by the necessity to do so.

How Is Translation Accomplished?

In attempting to answer this question, one must assume that translation

is possible. Before going any further, it would be beneficial to examine this assumption, since the literature clearly indicates some opinions which tend to, at least, partially disagree with it.

Some translation scholars such as Yen Yuan-shu believe that,

the problem of translation is complicated by . . . the untranslatable properties of the language that is being translated.⁷

I assume that this is not merely an ethnocentric statement extolling the virtues of some brief, concise and perfect language, and I do grant that technical features such as tone, alliteration and rhyme can not be readily transferred from one language to another. When we discuss thoughts and feelings, however, I submit that whatever can be expressed in one language can be expressed in another, and that is where the freedom that T. C. Lai speaks about (see below) enters the picture. The translator must have the freedom to remold the metaphors, to reshape the idioms, and to restructure the sentences and paragraphs if necessary. What is important is the mental picture and sensations that the translator creates. If his product stirs up the same images and evokes the same feelings as the original, then he has done the job that the original author set out to do. To take away that freedom is to rob a carpenter of his tools or a singer of his voice. Without that freedom, translation should not be attempted, because judged by a yardstick of the senses, it will fail.

When speaking of the relative importance of the structural and functional aspects of the language and literature, James Liu says that it:

varies from work to work, and, together with the degree to which its functions depend on its structure, constitutes the main determinant factor of the degree of translatability of that work. Generally speaking, structural features are most important in poetry, and also often least translatable. An obviously untranslatable structural feature is the "tone pattern" of a Chinese poem. Even when certain structural features can be more or less reproduced, it is questionable whether they fulfil the same poetic functions. For example, do rhyme, alliteration, reduplication, and parallelism produce the same effects in English as in Chinese? If not, what other structural features in English would?⁸

What Liu is saying, then, is that not only can structure be changed to suit need, it *must* be changed to suit need. This is obviously true for poetry; I believe it is also true for prose. Stephen Soong said in his "Notes on Translating Poetry":

Translation, in the strict sense of the term is impossible. Recent studies of semantics and linguistics have brought out the truth that there can be no completely exact translation. This reduces the question of literal versus idiomatic translation to a meaningless argument.⁹

I would certainly agree with Professor Soong, but his statement does raise the question in another light, and perhaps we have been arguing about the wrong thing for generations. Is translation the transfer of words and sentences from one language to another, or is it the transfer of thoughts and feelings through words from one language/culture to another? If translation does the former, then Soong's statement about an exact translation being impossible is absolutely correct. If, however, the purpose of translation is the latter, then I, for one, believe that exact translation in fiction and non-fiction is achievable, at least in most cases.

To return now to the original question of how translation is accomplished, there is obviously no single answer to this question. In fact, there are as many answers as there are translators in the field. Each feels that his method suits the task at hand, otherwise he would not attempt it. It will not be my purpose to try to add to the cacophony of opinions. Instead, I would like to present a collection of views so that a good understanding of the range of opinions might make some sort of synthesis possible.

To set the stage, James J. Y. Liu informs us that:

every total linguistic (or literary, or "translational") situation necessarily involves four factors: the world, the speaker (or writer, or translator), language (or the literary work, or the translation), and the hearer (or reader, or reader of the translation). The interrelations among these constitute what I call the tetradic framework. . . . [the parentheses are Liu's]¹⁰

Nowadays that should probably be changed to a "pentadic framework" since any translation done without keeping a publisher in mind is likely

to gather dust on a back shelf!

Using that pentadic framework as a backdrop, a number of views can be examined:

In their summary of the Asia Foundation Conference on Chinese-English Translation which took place in Hong Kong in August 1975, Steven Van Zoeren and Dennis Mair nicely summarize the chief differences between the two main schools of thought presented at the conference which are usually characterized as literal and free, but here as "pleasure principle" and "translation as education":

Moving along the continuum between theory and practical considerations we come to suggestions about the way translations should be done. The "pleasure principle" is subscribed to by several participants. This means that the translator should take pains to make sure that the reader of the translation can get the same pleasure as does the reader of the original. We will not do violence to this idea if we extend it and say that a translation should give the reader the same feeling of tragedy, comedy, or anything else that is felt by the reader of the original. To do this the translator must give up his hope of doing a perfectly "exact" translation. He may have to change metaphors or images to their rough equivalents in the target language. Proponents of the "translation as education" ideal, on the other hand, promote a "reality principle" of translation. They too wish to give the reader the aesthetic pleasure of the original work, but they feel that the more closely the translation resembles the original in all of its referential glory, the more closely will the reader's aesthetic pleasure approximate that of a native reader. To accomplish this end, the translator must lead the reader, nudging him along with footnotes and paraphrases, in order that he might build up a vocabulary of Chinese images, concepts, and literary conventions which will enable him to experience the original poem or story in as direct a manner as possible.¹¹

As one of the consumers of translated Chinese literature, however, I can assure you that constant reference to footnotes and other formal referential devices not only does not give me the same appreciation as reading the material in the original, it often kills whatever interest I might have had in the work!

In spite of the fact that Van Zoeren and Mair start the previous quotation by mentioning a "continuum between theory and practical considerations," their summary tends to lump translations and translational theory into two opposing stands. Rather than conceiving all translations as falling into one or the other of those two camps, my reading of those conference proceedings as well as other publications regarding translation convince me that there is a gradual gradation from one end of the spectrum to the other. One of the most traditional and conservative points of view is epitomized by Huang Shuan-fan who says, "we are justified to make the assertion that a good translation must, among other things, capture the syntax of the original."¹²

Huang Shuan-fan further expounds on the notion that all languages are different *by nature*, which he expresses in the following statement:

the 'genius of language' refers essentially to its syntactic structure — some languages are characteristically involuted, complete with inflections and redundant markings and extreme grammatization; other languages are simple and straightforward, doing away with much of anaphoric processes and semantically empty morphemes.¹³

Even if this is true, I cannot see how he expects a translator to capture the syntax of the original. My feeling is that by trying to force the phraseology of one language into that of another, what we are actually doing is twisting and turning the fetus to such a degree that we will create an abortion.

Following an equally narrow path, but perhaps somewhat less conservative, Francis Pan says: "Let not style compromise the substance. Unless controlled, personal preferences and prejudices may infiltrate in the course of rendition and are traceable by the style. . . . He (the translator) takes no liberty at invention or generalization."¹⁴

No less a statesman for translation than Yen Fu, as translated into English by C. Y. Hsu, expresses the other end of the spectrum when he says,

Translation involves three requirements difficult to fulfill: faithfulness, comprehensibility and elegance. Faithfulness is difficult enough to attain but a translation that is faithful but not comprehensible is no translation at all. Comprehensibility

is therefore of prime importance. . . . My translation attempts to present . . . profound thought. It does not follow the exact order of words and sentences of the original text but reorganizes and elaborates. However, it does not deviate from the original ideas. It is more an exposition than a translation as it seeks to elaborate — an unorthodox way of transmission.¹⁵

In the same article by Pan mentioned earlier, Pan mentions a more neutral, middle ground when he lists his criteria for translation:

1. to be a faithful rendition as close to the source language as possible.
2. the translated text to be comprehensible to the readers.
3. the use of vocabulary to agree with the purview of the subject.¹⁶

While this statement clearly presents the “bare bones” structure of how translation is accomplished, I would now look toward some other translators for additional opinions so that the bones may be fleshed out.

In Wang Fang-yu's article on the “Levels of Difficulty in Translation,” he outlines five tasks for translators. For our purposes here, his first two points are not relevant, but the next three give us an insight into his perception of how translation should be carried out:

3. He must re-evaluate the meaning which was arrived at from the structural analysis in terms of the cultural background of the source language.
4. The translator then needs to express the meaning of the source language as fully as possible in the target language.
5. He must finally carry over the aesthetic feelings of the source language into the target language.¹⁷

Clearly, then, Wang recognizes the need to use the structural analysis as a starting point from which to fully express meaning. In addition he makes the ever so important point that the feelings must be carried across language boundaries.

James J. Y. Liu carries Wang's notion another step further, suggesting that:

In his role as writer, the translator's task is to reincarnate the world of the original work in a new linguistic structure. How far this is possible, and how far the new linguistic structure should resemble the original one, depend on the nature of the work as well as the translator's skill. Moreover, he has to consider his reader's probability to enter the imaginary world of the work (assuming that this is present in the translation), in view of the differences between the reader's cultural world and *lebenswelt* and those of the original writer's. The translator has to leave his own *lebenswelt* and bring the world of the work as closely as possible to his reader, by any means he may consider useful.¹⁸

If we accept Liu's view that a translator's task is the reincarnation of the writer's world into a new linguistic system, then what is needed are some tools and guidelines that can be applied to an unborn translation in order to bring it closer to the world of the reader. A number of techniques have been proposed in the past.

Although speaking about the translation of puns, Hwang Mei-shu offers a suggestion that likely has much wider application:

To sum up, the possibility of pun translation lies greatly in invention. Strictly speaking . . . what is turned into the target language is to use Leonard Foster's expression, 'the fact of the pun; not the pun itself, which is probably untranslatable . . .' However, so far as the original intended function of a pun is fulfilled, indeed, invention is preferable to neglect. . . .¹⁹

Closely related to the above notion of invention, Professor T. C. Lai indicates that translators have a certain right to freedom in translation when he says:

By "liberty-taking" I do not mean delinquency due to misinterpretation or lack of understanding of the original. I mean a deliberate departure from the original's way of presentation or even its use of imagery — in order to achieve certain results.

I suggest the amount of liberty one may take depends on (1) for whom the translation is done, (2) the nature of the work to be translated and (3) the ultimate aim.²⁰

Later in the same article, Lai goes on to say that in the case of works which need to be translated for a purpose, but which are nonetheless poorly written in the first place, an even freer hand may be applied. In speaking of a specific example, he said that it "was poorly organized and full of unnecessary repetitions. To make it more readable, I had to weed out a considerable number of words and sentences. This method, I submit, may be applied to many other works in Chinese."²¹ While many of Professor Lai's colleagues in the field might say that translation of that sort is not really translation at all, but paraphrasing, the field can be sure that publishers who are interested in finding a market appreciate that sort of conscientious housekeeping.

Lai's sentiment above is concisely captured by Eugene Eoyang when he states: "Those who take as sacred their roles as high priests at the altar of literature often forget to attract a congregation!"²²

Collaboration is always a good idea since, even if one is a native speaker of the target language, suggestions as to style and tone should always be graciously listened to, even though they might not be acted upon. There must be conscious discussion either with oneself or with others concerning the specific problems which come up so that the best possible solution can be found with respect to each difficulty. At the same time, the solutions have to be accomplished in such a way that the final copy has no remnants of the mental anguish that might have been necessary in order to achieve it.

To summarize then, it would appear that translators are gradually moving away from strict adherence to a word by word, structure by structure form of translation. Increasingly, the field seems to be moving from the notion of "translation as education" toward the "pleasure principle." The basic question still remains as to whether "faithfulness" is a structural concept or one of the senses. In any case, the cultural worlds of both the original and target languages must be taken into consideration; aesthetics are considered to be increasingly important; and finally invention, liberty-taking, collaboration and trouble-shooting are all devices which probably need to be used in order to prepare a finished copy.

What Constitutes Good Translation?

Having established, then, that translation *is* possible, it becomes necessary to volunteer an opinion about what constitutes *good* translation. Again we must remind ourselves of our parameters in this discussion: first

and foremost, this article is concerned only with the translation of literature. Secondly, this paper is directed at translation from Chinese to English and from English to Chinese. While many of the same principles may apply, it would be foolhardy to expect that the same degree of "required inventiveness" is necessary when translating to and from languages which are linguistically, semantically and culturally closely related. The third and final parameter is this translator's philosophy which is that thoughts and feelings reign supreme; words and structures are only engineering principles to carry those thoughts and feelings. Bridges can be structurally different while still crossing the same river!

In simplest terms, one could say that a *good* translation is one which applies all the principles mentioned in the previous sections of this paper and applies them well. These principles include understanding the pentadic relationship, broad application of the pleasure principle, re-creating the author's world, invention, liberty-taking, collaboration and trouble shooting.

Summary

I am grateful to Professor Frederick C. Tsai for locating a wonderful definition of translation which was originally written by Hilaire Belloc. He describes translation as "the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body."²³

Must translators only be "dedicated to accuracy and be subdued in personal feelings" as some writers have put it? Must they also "cling steadfastly to the source text with no attempts to embellish or to deprecate?" I doubt it; at least not if we are talking about literary translation.

James Liu tells us, "In brief, literature may be conceived as the overlapping or intersecting of artistic function and linguistic structure."²⁴ Translation must also be conceived as having that same role.

F. C. Tsai said the same thing in a different way, "the translator's job is to re-create the author's intention in another language, and to do so with the same effects."²⁵

In discussing that re-creation, Liu said, "The writer creates a literary work, which affects the reader, who, by responding to it, comes into contact with the writer's mind and recaptures the latter's interaction with the world."²⁶ The translator's job is to reproduce that interaction even though the reader and writer are culturally distant.

Views on translation have obviously been swaying back and forth for

as long as translation has been taking place, but it would appear as though at this point in time, the majority of people in the field are back to a point where we were in 1791 when Alexander Fraser Tytler said in his "Essay on the Principles of Translation":

I would describe a good translation to be, that, in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be as 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.
- II. That the style and manner of writing would be of the same character with that of the original.
- III. That the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.²⁷

Tytler's principles cover nearly everything that is said today with the exception of the "pleasure principle" or "enjoyment factor." Depending on the work, that enjoyment is certainly more frequently caused by the translator's style and wit rather than by his form and meaning. At the same time it must be understood that translation does not have to be "enjoyable" by itself. What it should do, however, is to evoke the *same* degree of enjoyment among the translator's readers as it did among the original author's readers.

An excellent translation must be able to convey the author's feelings. Without feeling there can be no literature. A good analogy would compare these feelings to that of para-linguistic behavior which is defined by the anthropologists and linguists as: that aspect of communication which is not conveyed by words.

Translators' sensitivities to authors' feelings might well be enhanced by a rich array of life-experiences. If they have tasted as many of life's beverages as possible, drunk from every well and eaten from every plate, they may well have gained the sensitivity necessary to express whatever

thoughts are needed to interpret and convey the authors' meanings. Translators must understand that translation is a series of compromises between syntax and feelings, but whenever one chooses syntax over feeling, this writer believes that the quality, measured in his own terms, decreases, and every time the quality decreases, then there is less chance the work will be accepted, either by reading audiences or by academic or commercial publishers.

From Theory To Practice

Even though the development of a personal framework may take years, once a translator has established his place within the total fabric of translation theory and developed his personal philosophy of translation, he is then ready to attempt to apply his beliefs to the actual work at hand. In the next section, this writer will pose a broad range of the problems he faced (and is still facing) in the translation of Chang Hen-shui's story: *Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-t'ai*. Then, using the theoretical perspective indicated in the previous pages, he will propose some solutions to those problems. The listing below is neither a complete list of the type of problems that one might face in doing such a translation, nor does it contain a complete inventory of the listed types.

In broadest terms the problems might be sorted into three major groupings: lexical, structural and cultural. The fact is, however, that the degree of overlap between these areas is so great, that a more meaningful inventory would move directly to a topical listing:

Titles:

The first problem that greets the translator is the title of the book itself: 梁山伯與祝英台 *Liang Shan-po yu Chu Ying-t'ai*. If that were translated into English as: *Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-t'ai*, non-Chinese readers would be totally in the dark about what the book might be. The fact is that potential readers might not even know that Liang and Chu are surnames. My suggestion is to expand the title a bit to help readers: *Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-t'ai: The Eternal Lovers*. The point is that Chinese readers of the text in Chinese would already have that additional piece of information because of their cultural heritage. Is it incorrect to supply that information to non-Chinese readers by means of a by-line? This writer thinks not.

Chapter titles pose a range of problems. Some related to the problem of the title above, and others related to other sources of difficulty. The first chapter title in the original, 1954 Peking version reads: 周朝開國有太妣. The recent abridged version from Hong Kong retitles it as 女子也讀書. While the abridged version may be simpler to handle, the translator does not really have a choice here, since he is translating the original version. Next should 太妣 be simply transliterated as T'ai Ssu or should the translator use Queen Wen because it (a) can be recognized as a name, and (b) is the name by which she is usually known? Finally, "there is," "there are," "exists" or "has" simply does not capture the meaning of the simple 有. I have attempted to solve these problems by translating the chapter title as: "Queen Wen and the Establishment of the Chou Dynasty."

Another chapter title with which I had difficulty in coming to grips is chapter 12's: 了不起的女公子. 公子, of course, generally refers to a male. Adding the word for female in front of it in Chinese is easy to do, but not in English. At present I think that this chapter title is best underplayed and translated as: "An Extraordinary Young Lady." That title is obviously preferable to something like "The Extraordinary Daughter of a Distinguished Family."

Personal names and place names are a traditional problem for translators who always must ask if it is better to transliterate or to translate. Some translators insist that whichever system is chosen, it must be followed throughout the work. I prefer to take a more liberal point of view and believe that they can be mixed. Generally speaking, I prefer to use transliteration for the major characters in the story. For the minor characters and places I normally prefer to translate the name, and thus 小菊兒 becomes Chrysanthemum and 三家村 becomes "a little village of three or four families" in the context: 決不是三家村裡私塾了 where it may or may not be an actual place name in any case. The above are not hard and fast rules, however, and I suspect that my own overriding rule is based on euphony and my subjective opinion about which name I think the readers will best remember.

One final concession I make to readers with regards to names concerns the use of married/maiden names of the women in the plot. Unless the author has a special motive in introducing a woman's maiden name, I prefer to use only her married name. Experience has shown me that non-Chinese readers simply cannot follow the relationship between Madam T'eng 滕氏 and her husband, 祝公遠 Chu Gong-yuan, or between 何氏 Madam Ho

(or 師母 Teacher's Wife) and her husband 周士章 Chou Shih-chang. In these cases I prefer to consistently refer to those ladies as Mrs. Chu and Mrs. Chou. At the same time I translated 劉氏 as Madam Liu rather than Mrs. Li, since as a famous matchmaker in the district she would likely have been frequently referred to by her maiden name rather than by her husband's name, 李有成 Li You-ch'eng.

Words:

A number of difficulties can be roughly grouped under this category. The first of these might be the question of the incorrect choice of a word by the original author, or what is more likely the case, a misreading of the author's handwriting by the publisher leading to a misprint of one sort or another. I shall provide two examples of this sort: The first of these relates to the word 又 'you' in the expression: 兩個人在學校裡念讀, 又是兩年八九個月 . . . In this grammatical context, 'you' should mean 'again,' or 'another' and thus the translation should read: "The two of them studied at school for another two years and eight or nine months." The chronology of the story does not permit that to be the case, however, since the circumstances indicate that the story line should read, "One day, after the two of them had been studying at the school for two years and eight or nine months. . . ." In order to arrive at the above chronologically correct translation, it must be assumed that the more accurate word would have been 已 'yi' rather than 又 'you.'

A second example is the use of 幌 rather than 晃 or 愧 in the expression "幌了一幌 . . ." Since the former means 'a curtain' or 'a shop sign' and the latter 'rocking,' 'kicking' or 'shaking,' clearly the latter expression has to be the intended one.

This latter example poses a particular problem for non-native translators of Chinese, since native speakers will simply read the homophonous form without seriously worrying about meaning. The foreign translator, however, assumes that there is no error and spends a great deal of time trying to figure out what special meaning it was that the author was trying to say before finally realizing that the word itself was incorrect.

The next example concerns a problem related to providing an accurate rendering of lexical items that normally have other meanings. I was able to find one sentence with two such items: 祝英台怎好說出所以要說的話, 因道: The usual translation of 怎好 as 'how can,' or 'how good' or 'excellent' and 所以 as 'therefore' obviously do not fit the needs of

this context. Flexibility, however, allows the translator to come up with a translation which matches the tone of the original: "Ying-t'ai was having a tough time trying to express what was on her mind."

While double negatives are common in Chinese, they are considered to be grammatically incorrect in English. Since that is a given fact, however, translating the form into an emphatic positive in English takes care of the general case.

Repetitious use of vocabulary cannot be so generally treated. Repeated vocabulary does not indicate a lack of imagination and does not seem to raise eyebrows in Chinese, but it most certainly has those consequences in English, and it is considered that only amateurish writers would be guilty of such a sin. If the translator, then, follows the repetition of the author, then he will be put in the position of causing his readers to make an ethno-cultural judgement about the writing which may, in fact, be very incorrect. While there are many examples of this type, I have chosen only one to represent the class here, since the author has used it nearly as a formula-type. That is the case of the word 'said' as it occurs prior to every quotation in the formula XX. There are two problems connected with this: First, Chang, with nearly no exceptions, uses this verb to initiate conversation. Secondly, it always, with no exceptions, precedes the quotation. Neither of these can continuously occur in English, that is to say if an author or translator is interested in finding a reading audience. I have therefore taken the liberty on this point both with regards to location of the verb and its translation, i.e., *said, mentioned, declared, whispered, laughed, joked, pleaded, cried, continued, went on, replied, responded, answered, asked, exclaimed*, and a number of others as well as sometimes deleting the expression altogether. The choice, of course, varies as the circumstances change.

The question of idioms and *ch'eng yü* have been discussed enough in other literature, and nowadays a number of dictionaries aimed at solving problems caused by these expressions are on the market. Since most of these are standard formula translations in any case, I shall not spend time discussing the subject here.

In the translation of a great deal of fiction, slang is generally a major problem to be dealt with. The problem is particularly acute since slang is subject to dialect, or even regional, restrictions as well as being subject to severe time constraints with respect to when a particular expression is or was in vogue. Chang Hen-shui, however, writes in an educated, neutral

style, and slang constitutes no problem for the translation of the Liang-Chu story.

There are certain other expressions which are not classified as slang, idioms or *ch'eng yü* that do cause problems in the translation. A couple of examples should make the point. The first of these occurs when Chang is describing the shape of a doorway and calls it 八字門. Some translators might be generous with their verbiage and say, "... a door in the shape of the Chinese character for the number 8 ..." I submit that in this case readers would scarcely be any further ahead than if it had been translated word for word as "... an 8 character door ..." Chang had no intention of confusing *his* reading public. Why should the translator confuse *his*? In order to preserve a similar level of cultural understanding, I would suggest: "... a door somewhat in the shape of an inverted V ..."

A second example is one that I wrestled with for some time. It concerns the expression 腳頭 in the sentence: 沒有什麼了，你抱錦被來，就在腳頭睡吧。 At first glance it appears that Liang Shan-po is to sleep head to toe in Ying-t'ai's bed, but Chang uses that expression eight times within five pages, and because of the context, the meaning appears to vary between "... at the foot of the bed ..." and "... head to toe ..." In an earlier section of this paper I mentioned that translators should be humble and seek assistance to remedy confusion, if needed. I have checked with a number of native speakers, and while consensus is in favor of "... head to toe ...," there is no complete agreement. My solution is to go with the majority.

The next example occurs in the following exchange of dialog:

祝英台道：“這真是美不美，故鄉水了。”

那柜公道：“親不親，故鄉人，太巧了。”

A strict translation of this exchange, particularly 美不美 and 親不親, would produce confusion. I again opted for feeling and situation rather than structure and vocabulary by translating it as:

Yingtai said, "That's perfect! The same stream flows through our villages!"

"That makes us neighbors!" the young lord said. "What a coincidence."

A final example of this type should further emphasize the need for flexibility in translation. If 過於本分 is rendered as 'an excessive (regard for) duty' in the sentence: 梁山伯爲人很好，不過過於本分， then the translator himself could be considered to have "an excessive regard for duty." A more natural translation would read something like: "Liang Shan-po is very well mannered, but (for my money) a bit too straight-laced." This not only captures the feeling, but maintains the same speech level as the original.

As the words become phrases, and the phrases become sentences, another type of problem appears, and that is the question of when to break long sentences into two or more, or when to combine two or more sentences into one. Generally speaking, this is not a great problem, and the flow of the language should provide all the answers necessary. There is one case, however, where I felt duty-bound to match a single, long sentence of Chang's, phrase for phrase. That sentence of 58 characters occurs as the very first sentence of the book, and while 58 characters certainly cannot be considered as one of the longest sentences ever written, the fact that it consists of seven clauses and phrases makes its translation extremely difficult. One publishing editor told me to break it up into three or four sentences, but I refuse to do so, and I believe I have now found a way to order the phrases in English so that the inherent structure of the sentence is still clear. I felt that if there were any sentence in the book to which Chang had paid particular attention to developing and would want kept intact, it would be his first sentence. While sentences and paragraphing might be tampered with later in the book, it should not be here. The sentence and my translation follow:

當三月春光明媚的時候，滿眼的樹木，都已經翳翳向榮，那翠綠的柳樹枝條，拖起丈來長的嫩葉穗子，正借著拂人衣袂的柔風，輕輕的在長空扇動。

Once upon a time on an enchanting spring day, for as far as the eye could see, a breeze so light that it would scarcely stir the sleeves of a man's robe gently fanned the profusely blooming, emerald green, willow branches which spread out ten feet or more, each looking like a delicate tassel.

One other area of potential disaster to a translator is the treatment of the poetry Chang has included and which is one of the means of

communication between Liang Shan-po and Chu Ying-t'ai. A great deal has been written about the translation of poetry elsewhere, and it is beyond the scope of this paper which is concerned with the treatment of fiction. Suffice it to say here that this is an area which should not be entered into by the light of heart, and my personal feeling is that considerable advice and/or collaboration is a necessary requirement.

Deletions, Ambiguities and Contradictions:

Whether by design or by accident, these three problem areas form one of the most difficult sets to handle. Furthermore, strict translation of sentences which these problems represent casts the reader into chaos as he tries to figure out who is who, or how one event takes place out of time or place sequence, or how natural events are incorrectly described. Is it the translator's duty to leave the reader mired in confusion when none was intended by the author, or is it his place to leave order in the mind of the reader? My philosophy prefers order.

Pronoun subjects and objects are often left out in Chinese, or just as frequently a 他 'he,' 'she' or 'it' is used with no apparent antecedent. Whenever there is any potential confusion, I feel it is part of the translator's responsibility to clarify who is speaking or who is meant. Examples of this type are numerous in the book and need not be listed here, though a related example may be in order; that is the case when 自己 refers to someone other than 'self':

……至於祝英台當然有這種省悟，不過，梁山伯揆着自己走，決不好意思走開，因道：“梁兄，此地有小船……”

With this section I took even more liberty than with most, trying to get Ying-t'ai's embarrassment across to an audience which would normally reject this situation as being embarrassing:

... it was only Ying-t'ai who was having this sensation. But she felt embarrassed walking shoulder to shoulder with him and on pretext drew apart and said, "Brother Liang, there are some small boats here . . .

The next example poses two different problems. The first concerns the expression 半里路 'half a li.' In the quotation below, one must ask

if it is the actual distance that is important or the feeling implied by the distance. If, in fact, the actual distance is translated as 'half a *li*,' then readers must either ignore its significance or go back to the first footnote to determine exactly how far a *li* actually is and then figure out how far one half of that is. I prefer to consider that Chang was trying to establish the feeling of a point a long way off, but yet within eyesight. The second problem concerns the fact that Chang's vision is such that he is able to spot and describe two small flowers at a distance of half a *li*! That is an incongruity which cannot be repaired. The original and my translation follow:

過去約半哩路，有一彎白色粉牆，圍了一叢竹子，七八株柳樹，白色和綠色相映，格外好看，最妙的還有兩株粉紅花，全有綠葉子配着。那人家牆外有一道淺淺的細流青溪，看去也不過三尺，正向麥壩中流去，那兩株粉紅花兒，正向溪頭開着，向亭子裡微笑。

... Off in the distance was a stretch of whitewashed wall which was surrounded by a stand of bamboo and six or seven willows. The green and white were set off nicely against each other making each look more beautiful. To top it off, there were two pink flowers embraced by emerald leaves. Outside the wall was a small, babbling brook. It looked as though it couldn't have been more than three feet across as it flowed towards the dike around the wheat. The two pink flowers seemed to be smiling at those in the pavilion

Similar problems seem to exist in two other sections where Chang attempts to describe Nature. The first of these occurs in this passage:

順着吳山的山勢，俯望杭州的市景，也覺得千萬幢人家，與繞城的兩面是山湖，兩面是田野，非常的好，尤其是山外面，每叢樹木，映着一座山峰，一座莊屋，由近到遠，綠色大一片小一片，好像圖畫一樣。

As a foreign translator, not only do I find this section difficult to follow from a structural point of view, I also find his use of vocabulary, for example 映着 'to shine,' 'reflect,' or 'glare' as a verb, to be inappropriate. I thus felt compelled to modify the section to:

The (Wu) mountains were lined up overlooking Hangchou and

its enormous population. Mountains and lakes bounded two sides of the city. Fields and farmland enclosed the other two sides. It was a beautiful sight. The clumps of trees adjacent to the mountains stood out against the mountain peaks and the village huts . . . strip after strip of green as far as the eye could see. It was just like a painting.

The second example of problems generated when trying to translate a passage in which the author has failed to describe a scene accurately occurs when Chang describes a bolt of lightening in careful and extensive detail beginning with the expression: 仔細看 'to examine in detail.' The fact of the matter is as Chang himself describes it, ". . . a flash and it was over." Something that is over in a flash cannot be "examined in detail," and obviously this phrase should be deleted.

One final example demonstrates not so much the ambiguous style of the writer as the ambiguous nature of a certain word, in this case 睡 'to sleep.' The sentence: 山伯侍候着病人睡了 might normally be translated as "Shanpo attended the patient until she fell asleep." The problem is that two sentences later we find: 祝英台道: "你去睡罷。" "Ying-t'ai said, 'Go to sleep . . .'" Obviously she was not really asleep in the first sentence. I handled the situation this way: "Shan-po looked after her until she began to doze off . . ." and then by, "From her drowsiness, Ying-t'ai said, 'Go to bed . . .'"

Summary:

In the previous sections and pages I have attempted to review the history and development of the philosophy of Chinese-English translation and to provide insight into how that history has helped mold and formulate this writer's thinking into a philosophy of translation which attempts not simply to convey the words of the author, but to capture his spirit as well and to transplant that spirit to a new culture and new generation. In addition I have included a list of examples to demonstrate how that philosophy has affected my translation over a broad range of difficulties. It is my desire that by so doing, this philosophy will affect, or perhaps infect, other translators of Chinese-English and English-Chinese literature in order that their readers will come to view and enjoy the works of an author in the way in which he originally wrote and intended the work and not to be forced to view them through some regimented, dark-colored glass where

the soul of the author no longer exists.

Notes

1. *The World Book Dictionary*, ed. Clarence L. Barnhart and Robert K. (Barnhart, Doubleday, 1980) 2222.
2. Yu Kwan-chung, "The Translatability of Chinese," in *The Art and Profession of Translation: Proceedings of the Asian Foundation Conference on Chinese-English Translation*, ed. T. C. Lai (Hong Kong Translation Society, 1975) 181.
3. James J. Y. Liu, "Language-Literature-Translation: A Bifocal Approach in a Tetradic Framework," 4.
4. George Kao, "Editing a Chinese-English Translation Magazine," 162.
5. Francis K. Pan, "Towards a Formal Training Program," 42.
6. Liu 5.
7. Yen Yuan-shu, "Plurasignation, Translation, Simplification," 168.
8. Liu 2-3.
9. Stephen C. Soong, "Notes on Translating Poetry," *Renditions*, ed. George Kao, published by the Translation Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Autumn 1973) 1: 36.
10. Liu 4.
11. Stephen Van Zoeren and Dennis Mair, "Summary," 250.
12. Huang Shuan-fan, "Meaning and Translation," 22.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Pan 44.
15. Yen Fu, "General Remarks on Translation," trans. C. Y. Hsu, *Renditions* (Autumn 1973) 1: 4.
16. Pan 43-44.
17. Wang Fang-yu, "Levels of Difficulty in Translation," *Renditions* (Spring 1975) 4:46.
18. Liu 6.
19. Hwang Mei-shu, "Translating Puns for the Stage," *Renditions* (Autumn 1980) 14: 78.
20. T. C. Lai, "How Much Liberty," *The Art and Profession of Translation* 87.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Eugene Eoyang, "Audiences for Translations of Chinese Literature," 127.
23. Frederick C. Tsai, "The Name and Nature of Translation," *Renditions* (Autumn 1978) 10: 115.
24. Liu 2.
25. Tsai.
26. Liu 5.
27. Alexander Fraser Tytler, "Laws of Translation," *Renditions* (Autumn 1973) 1: 6.

