

Historic Classic as Global Interculture: Literary Heart Carving Dragon and its Translations

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Abstract

One: on the classic is distinct and unique on at least three counts. One, this book is China's first major literary criticism, out about 501AD, centuries before medieval era. Two, as poetics is on poetry, so this literary criticism is careful scrutiny of literary writings, and all China's writings are literary. Three, dares to be comprehensive, packed tight in poetic rhythm. Literary Heart Carving Dragon is a dragonish pivot in China, epitomizing Chinese writing and thinking. Born here now, the "dragon" soars far beyond here now in life's throbbing heartbeat of poetry; poetry is defined as packed rhythm jumping alive, humming tuneless tune, alias dragon self-carving in today's literary heart. The invisible dragon-beat is carved out into the "literary heart" of China millennia young. Liu Xie cannot help but write out such lifeact, intimate infinite, into Literary Heart Carving Dragon in 50 gem-chapters, orderly sparkling, compactly poetic, solid soaring. Thus Liu gives us poetic literature on Chinese literature; his Literary Heart Carving Dragon is itself the carved dragon soaring-crisscrossing into the literary heart of the dragon-cosmos, vast all over in history, to stun us to stabilize us, in joy breathless, by hitting the heart of literary beauty dragon soaring. The book covers China's cultural horizons from its cosmic principles (chapters 1-4), spreading poetically (chs.5-9) in various genres (chs.10-25), elucidating inner-outer structure (chs.26-35) and patterns of progress of writing (chs.36-44), to concluding in historical trends of the times (chs.45-50). The whole book is a sparkling gem shining throughout China worldwide. II.Two: on two English Translations Now we are readied to consider translations by Shih and Yang. We first a. specify the ideal of translation, in whose light to scrutinize b. Shih, then

Index terms—

Ignoring this exigency of tight style-match, to arbitrarily add translator's explanations, adds alien legs to Liu-snake, Liu Xie is alive, critical and sophisticated, weaving rhythmically various senses and authors—he is punchy poetic. Therefore, he must be rendered poetic alive in English as he is in Chinese. Liu-translation is an English "dragon carved" by a poet in Liu's Chinese poetry, "literary heart" (English) to "literary heart" (Chinese).

1 Rainer Schute and John Biguenet in Theories of Translation, University of Chicago Press, 1992, say, translation lets the author talk in the target language as if the author knows the language. For more nuances and minute complexities, see Umberto Eco, Experiences in Translation, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001, and William Radice and Barbara Reynolds, eds., The Translator's Art, NY: Penguin Books, 1987. Here, the sole sine-qua-non is hit hard: China's dragonrhythm vigorous must translucently soar throbbing in other tonguestranslated. 2 The ridiculous image of "drawing snake, adding legs" in Warring States Stratagems ("Qi Stratagems") (117/57/15-17 in 1993), is justly applied to botched translation here, for "state stratagems" amount to shrewd tactics of translating the situation of present danger into targeted prosperity. The whole Stratagems volume collects many gripping stories of how the situational translations astutely transpired, during the two and a half cutthroat centuries of Warring States.

to botch up this translation that now turns ridiculously leg-disfigured, immobilizing the Liu-snake alive dragonish. Sadly, such fatality is baldly shown in Shih and Yang. Now, let me unpack all this.

Liu's book is woven by the how of poetic rhythm into a what-said tapestry of each idea into others; what's said is part and parcel of how-saying. Any Chinese prose is poetic, a carved dragon soaring, a philosophical poetry; missing the how of literary rhythm misses what is said. This how-what unity is the normative principle of translating all Chinese writings historical, argumentative, literary, and fictive. The translator must be a poet embodying China's literary heart to carve out a comparable dragon-poetry in English, to write what is said in how it is said, as the Chinese original writes poetic beautiful.

The translator must exhibit poetry in English, translucently seeing the Chinese dragon alive. Explanation must be separated from translation. Let us begin with Shih's translation. Reading Shih's translation tastes some thin soup of de-zinged Chinese spirits thick vibrant. Shih is barely reminiscent of distant skeletal Liu Xie, as Shih even confuses prosaic explanation with strictly lyrical translation. Flatly wordy, Shih has lost echoes of rhythmic punches of the terse original, killing Liu gutsy.

Shih's Introduction begins with general description of poetry and music in ancient China, to wander into "Chinese philosophy" of poetry as of moral utility, as Confucius appreciates music. Mencius' subjectivity is then added, with "fostering the vital spirit or breath" moral, continued with Hsüntzu repeating Confucius' moralistic socialism. Then Chuangtzu appears to criticize conventional morality and language, to stress shen (the spirit or divine) and mystical transcendence-all in vague if not deviated description. Thus it goes on for 30 pages.

Un-clarified platitudes are thrown about, and general terms today are used to explain ancient text, as profuse words fill pages. Bulky fluffy generality results, trite stale. We keep asking, "So, what else is new and not trivial?" In the last page but one, some later praises of the book are thrown in, and the last page closes with the difficulty of understanding terms of Chinese writers, to be resolved by understanding them in context, (surprisingly) citing I. A. In vague verbosity, all Shih's translations are of content only, cut and dried, omitting all the original colors and throbs as dispensable frills, to bring a set of skeleton-pieces out of the closet of the past. The whole Introduction and translations lay flat, scattered, bare and loose. I am sorry to have been harsh on Shih; still the magnificence of the original shows through his translation thinly mostly accurate, shorn of original rhythmic echoes (even in sense) as it is, so many points left to desire in each phrase, as it does.

The problem is that a word has a core-sense with halo-nuances, and Chinese word's core-sense constantly shifts with usage-contexts alive as Greek Proteus elusive allusive, and Liu Xie is the worst Chinese Proteus. To capture these subtle nuances requires poetic sensitivity to persistently trail the original poetic vigor. To transfer word for word kills the sense alive, and no explanation may clutter translation, as explanation is no translation. It is sheer joy to hit the Chinese just right in English, but it is quite a difficult art to hit it.

1 b) Yang

Let us now go to Yang's translation. Two bulky Yang volumes are due to cramming in the pages Chinese and its English equivalent (not quite), such as original Liu Xie's text, its Chinese translation ??, and its English translation. Yang's volume in English alone may be about Shih's size. Yang's General Preface is a rough historical survey, not on what China is, what the West is, and poorly translated into English, though its major stress on global intercultural is correct. Yang's Introduction did touch on Liu's book's importance, but mostly on what it says, no why or how it is important, much less its signature characteristic of tight rhythm, and is again vaguely translated into English, often even surprisingly different from its Chinese equivalent.

Yang's long Introduction ?? on what ??? said (pp. 17-83, the Chinese version followed by its slightly different English version) is lucid, coherent, informative, and even ingenious, rather a delight to read, though it tends to be vague due to lack of definition of key terms, "genre," "imagination," etc., and Yang's whole setup deviates from Liu's. I must resolutely resist the temptation to present my summaries of it, "adding legs to Yang's snake." I should only mention one critical point: All Yang's introduction and translations are a "snake" drawn ingeniously prosaic and dead-set, not Liu Xie jumping alive exquisite.

Here are my miscellaneous comments. Yang's footnotes at the back are well researched, but his citations are hard to locate. Yang in p. 19 is good, but I would put it the other way: Dao is root of human, human is root of literary pattern, and so the literary exhibits humanity and heaven and earth.

2 c) Yang and Shih

Curiously (for I don't know why), Yang's Introduction is more appropriate (not precise) than Shih's, while Shih's translations are more accurate (not appropriate) than Yang's. Yang's simplified syllabary ?ä½??" illicitly lumps ? with ?, ä¼?" with ?, and so on.

More, Shih's odd "Glossary" replaces Yang's careful "Bibliography," while Shih's footnotes under each translation page are helpful, lacking in Yang. Shih's title-translations of chapters are more in rhyme with the original than Yang's illicitly explanatory. Translations by Shih and Yang missed "how-expression intrinsic to what-expressed" that turns Liu sparkling coherent and alive; both translations are flat flabby, not the original poetry lush and tight.

A simple example is here. Liu Xie concludes every chapter with a short sharp poem he calls "tsan ?" a chanting sum-up. Shih sensibly leaves it untranslated, just explaining it with Chapter Nine ?? (12, n, 26), while Yang brutally puts it as "summary," to kill the chanting poetic aura at the core of tsan, a glorious finale of each chapter, as chorusing to round up Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. This instance exemplifies all Yang's barely correct, brutal

insensitivity in all tsan that, overinterpreted, turn into partial translations. Actually both translators' tsan are disasters.

It is easier to pursue Liu's skeletal "meanings" than re-presence-ing, in the novel world of English, Liu's Chinese vigor, his full-blooded "sense" punchy, luscious, and complexly fresh. Worse, even such skeletal pursuit is elusive as trailing a tiny boy jumping alive, as we vainly try to "download" his primordial bonemovements into our adult "chart" decently systematic, as he shouts to fight his favorite "monster." Downloading Liu spanking alive, Shih thinks he captured one aspect of Liu's "meanings" as Yang thinks he did another.

All this while, a third party beside both scratches his head, "Is this a real Liu?" Somehow their tones are off; their tunes are felt alien to Liu. Such bewilderingly elusive but clear mis-renderings are embarrassingly displayed as "translations," as we read them with Liu's original text beside. Still, remaining inaccurate, explanatory, and out of Liu-rhythm as both are, Shih's translation seems less so than Yang's.

And the list of my comparative complaints goes on. I said, e.g., that Yang is better in Introduction, while Shih is better in translation. My criteria (detailed in TWO, a. above) are poetic thrust as Liu's original, noexplanation as translation, and appropriateness, etc. But such comments have no end, as anyone can see. Still, the point has been made by just this much amount of comments. I had better cut off such a list at this point.

3 d) Failing ideal

In sum, Shih and Yang are literalistic unliterary, not literary poetic as Liu, missing this "as." To re-present ??? alive, we need its comparable 5 poetic rendition in English, attending to the translation closely matching up to how its Chinese original is written in vivid rhythmic vigor ever fresh. For example, "?? divine musings" is flattened by Yang as "imagination." ??? says it is "big-scaled heart-travel ??????" to form a "trinity" with "hidden reverie ???" and "depth thought ??." 6 Even my entire meta-comments here are more literary-careful than literal-analytical, less Aristotelian than reminiscent of the literary and tight Warring States Stratagems ???; all this while, my comments are logical critical and involved passionate. Interestingly, a comparable view is expressed even more forcefully by Lattimore, That is translation in close match with the original literary vigor. The reason is obvious. As Liu insists and executes in ???, literary presentation portrays typical features of living; literary Liu hits essentials of life homo-cosmic. Translation must be as literary alive as Liu. Trying for literal accuracy to the original Chinese, literalistic translation ironically turns unliterary to Liu. 7 'Ancient and modern, at home and abroad'" in ????? Chu Tzuch'ing: Complete Works, ?????, 1995, p. 212. 7 Richmond Lattimore, The Poetry of Greek Tragedy, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1958; Harper Torchbook, 1966. The last chapter is punchy revealing.

4 Three: on Intercultural Prospect

It is time to take stock. Our grand finale is made of a. reviewing the translation-ideal and its actual failures so far, b. precisely via which we envisage our positive prospect today in global interculture.

5 a) Ideal and failures

Liu Xie delightfully crisscrosses writings to cross-refer sages ancient and contemporary into a network subtle rich, poetic peculiarly Chinese; he thereby alludes to the ubiquitous human living homocosmic. Liu Xie nods to a Greek sea-god Proteus shepherding seals, changing his self liquid as sea, to dodge capture until hung on to, to reveal future truths vast as sea. His oceanic elusiveness alludes to oceanic truths. 8 In sum, Chinese writings sing sense in tunes situational, as detailed by ???. Liu Xie's poetic web is Chinese Proteus fleeing our capture, too ancient allusive for us today. Still, Liu is not beyond our grasp. Let me explain.

In my opinion, Liu's ??? is poetic crisscrossing, so inter-involved in sense, in rhythm, and in allusions as to be well-nigh untranslatable, but it does not mean we cannot understand it. for example, the Bible is a mixed bag of literary beauty in many ancient languages; it has been variously translated, and reading many of them with sensitive care surprisingly enables us to approach it more than we can expect, as we hear great sermons based on translated Bible passages. Similarly, reading many imperfect translations of ??? awesomely unapproachable enables us to appreciate its cultural magnificence beyond we initially suspected; thus it excitingly nourish our souls everywhere. 9 "Tune is mood groping for its logic" (Robert Frost); mood is attunement (Heidegger) 10 8 Ocean-elusive, ocean-truthful, Proteus the sea-god of the future is interestingly portrayed in The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, ed. M. C. Howatson, 1991, p. 470. 9 See "???? On 'poems express intentions,'" in -, ?, ?????, 772, pp. 775-355. with things around. So, in order to mean 7962, indexes on pp. 518 (stimmen, Stimmung), 526 (attunement), and 551 (mood). Heidegger is so poetic as to inspire another translation of his Being and Time by Joan Stambaugh, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. Heidegger can claim to be today's Liu Xie. Both translations agree that mood is attunement for Heidegger.

See Stambaugh's comparable indexes on p. 424 (attunement) and 453 (mood). We have quoted US Frost and German Heidegger to show how Liu Xie's dragon-poetic principle is supported just right, felt logic must be in the writer's mood in tune with the mood of things. Our mood means; it must sound good to mean good sense. How-said means what -said, and meaning must be in things' mood. All this makes for dragon-poetry pulsating sensible sense, good sense just right, and in things.

To capture such mood-sense is to translate into today, to sing to understand, poet for poet, mood to mood to feel that way together. This is how "literary heart" of mood "carves dragon" soaring rhythmicvigorous in matters homo-cosmic. Explaining all this kills the poetry of translation felt together in the right mood, never analytically explained in the general field. It is thus that literalistic-explained translations of ??? fail, fail in mood in tune and in sense. It is so serious, so sad.

6 b) Positive global prospect

Still, Shih and Yang are not exceptions. Being an avid collector of translations, I closely observe how literary renderings of ??, ??, and even the poems of I hardly need to mention stellar elucidators Waley, Legge, Giles, Creel, Watson, Chan, Lau, Dobson, Wilhelm, Spence, Snyder, Graham, Watts, etc., all so close to the Chinese originals and so helpful, and so far from the originals. The reason is simple, and alarming. None has captured China's tight poetic dragon-thrust intrinsic to the literary heart of what is said, as performances shape musical compositions, though Waley and Graham vaguely approached the saying-said unity unawares.

I am happy that ??? says Chinese sentences are rhythmic ??, tightly packed ??, I am sad as he says translation caters to the taste of audience, not faithfully conveying the translated work, as all authors and translators I know say. 11 He criticized Tagore, English translation of Li Po's poems, and translated Arnold's "Rugby Chapel," 12 even abroad; the dragon-principle is basic to humanity, intercultural, global. 11 See Eco dictating various modes of translating his volumes, and Emil Brunner thanking his translator for consulting with him. Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001 ?? Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1949, pp. 11, 17. And the list goes on. and his own sentences are 12 ?????, ?, ??????, ?89, ?161, 162, 164-165, ?203-221, 275-279 and ?????, ?????????, 1993, 2:228-330. His Chinese translations read like his usual writing. Does it show his good translations? I omit comments on his critiques of English ??? knew English well, summing up English books, translating English translations.

On Chu, see many pages in ?????, ?????????, 1996. passages, wrote on English influences, and wrote vivid travelogues of the West. 13 Poetry sings sense-music; China is the culture of poetic music. It behooves us to spread globally China's poetic-musical thinking embodied in ???, as Chinese musical depths are heard throbbing in German Schumann. China is as musical as Schumann is poetic, as his tuneless tuneful "Abendlied" But neither paid special attention to translation as such.

Noteworthy is Roger Ames's skillful incorporation of China's "idea-system" (J. Huxley) in his various translations of ????", ??, é ????"", and many others. Ames' "translations" are actually an excuse for unobtrusive initiation of global intercultural. We are grateful. Of course, nothing is easier than to quibble over the adequacies of his translations, and his explanations of Chinese idea-system, but we must remember, he has just initiated global intercultural; he is the world's only translator firmly and tacitly to commence intercultural. For his pioneering initiation we are grateful deeply, rightly.

On the whole, imperfect these translations are as I have complained so far, every bit of their elucidations still adds to our stunned appreciation of the Chinese original vast deep, intimate infinite, and rhythmically magnificent beyond even its Chinese explication (as ?? in Yang's volumes show). We are deeply grateful to all translators for their decades of meticulous assiduity. We their beneficiaries owe them this realization: ??? with its translations are not an end but our means to intercultural worldwide, as Ames nudges us to stare at to initiate.

7 14

In sum, dragon-translations of Chinese writings remain in our hand in our literary-hearts as our urgent task of intercultural toward the future worldwide. We have job to carve alive, beginning today, inspired by our great echoes in deep sensibility the faintly rhymed rhythms of ???.

It is thus that the most local is the most cosmopolitan; cultural locals are the pride of the global ubiquitous. Intercultural global advocates the heartfelt echoes of cultural localities, Liu Xie with Proteus, Schumann, the Bible, etc. We carve out various English dragon-translations of the literary heart of ???, to use them as our poetic mood-means to global intercultural, excitingly to nourish our souls everywhere.

13 See Chu's sparkling penetrating travelogue throughout the Western hemisphere in ?????, ?????????, 1996, pp. 269-327. Wen was educated in Chicago, Colorado Spring, and NYC during 1922-1925, ?????, ??: ?????????, 1993, I: 1-9.

14 Listen to channel 9, wonderfully done, in "Meister des Bogens: Georg Kulenkampff: Kleine Stücke für Violine und Klavier oder Orchester," Podium 4. None even played this rare deep piece, much less so deeply movingly-to the best of my knowledge.

predecessors with their mixed accomplishments so vast illustrious. Our daring dragon-translations of China, however imperfect, perfectly dawn our cosmopolitan con-cord-hearts-together-worldwide. Now, let us soberly tighten up the whole bit so far. Someone may demur, "Why bother with moldy China? We are too busy for such silly nonsense." We can gently remind him. Technical knowledge ?? we are so proud of came from primordial life-wisdom ??, to facilitate wisdom. Sadly, as a teenager despises his parents, knowledge tends to disdain of wisdom, to turn inhuman human, a tragic monster worse than useless.

The "moldy" China warmly pats us on the shoulder, pointing to the glorious dragon soaring, carved out by

222 our literary heart of primordial humanity; ???? is the primal sine qua non to our basic humanity, the be-all and
223 end-all of all. Everything, including technical knowledge, begins and ends here.
224 Our busy-ness that mocks this life-basic wisdom mocks our self to death, as shown by our technical knowledge
that brings on ecological disasters to bring down everything, including our proud technical knowledge. 15^{1 2 3}



Figure 1:

Figure 2:

225 4
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¹Why the original Chinese order in the title is reversed in Yang's English translation is not told. 4 I. A. Richards, *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments in Multiple Definitions*, Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1932.
²Historic Classic as Global Interculture: ???? Literary Heart Carving Dragon and its Translations
³Of course, what is comparable can only be felt, discerned, by those at home in both cultures of translation and translated, and agreement among the bicultural is not determinate. Still, what is comparable has a rough parameter and has to exist to tell an apt good translation.⁶ See the fabulous "????????? 'Ocean wide, sky vast' and
⁴We do belatedly begin to use technical knowledge to redress disasters wrought by technical knowledge, but this redress is dictated by life-wisdom, not by knowledge.

227 Disdain of "moldy" life-wisdom, since time immemorial, commits proud suicide so silly so tragic. Now, what
228 is sillier, technical knowledge today or ancient moldy life-wisdom in China's ?????
229 Thus promotion of China's ??? is never silly but indispensable to save the world from the brink of total
230 destruction. Promotion of ancient wisdom, dragon soaring at the core of literary heart of humanity, is global
231 intercultural. So, China-promotion via its translation is the absolute essential of global intercultural to save the
232 world. This conclusion is inescapable, indicating China-translation to be our historic task indispensably urgent
233 worldwide, right here and now today.
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