

# Mao Zedong's Poetry Translated by Eugene Eoyang in *Sunflower Splendor*: A Textual and Cultural Interpretation

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**Abstract**—Translating Mao Zedong's poetry into English has been a significant cause since the founding of New China and aroused great academic attention in China and other countries. In 1975, Eugene Eoyang, a Chinese American scholar, translated eight poems of Mao and published them later in the remarkable poetry anthology *Sunflower Splendor*, which has made a considerable contribution to the promotion and canonization of Mao's poetry as well as traditional Chinese poetry in the English world. Eoyang is a scholar translator who knows well about both cultures, the identity, cultural concepts, translation strategies, and other aspects that he demonstrated in his translation are of great reference value compared with other versions home and abroad. By analyzing the textual and cultural features and specific cases in his translation, the translator's valuable first-hand experience, along with the profound literary and cultural attainments reflected in the translation process, can be learned to guide future translation and promotion of Mao's poetry in foreign cultures.

**Indexing Terms**—Mao Zedong's poems, translation, *Sunflower Splendor*, Eugene Eoyang

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, translating Mao Zedong's poetry into English has been one of the most important achievements in the field of cultural exchange. It has gained unprecedented influence among scholars and readers at home and abroad. In the 1970s, at least eight known versions of English translation of Mao's poetry were published in China and other foreign countries. Translators include professionals from domestic translation agencies, scholars, overseas Chinese translators, Sinologists and artists. In 1975, the poetry anthology *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry* was published by Doubleday, Anchor Books and Indiana University Press, with Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo, two renowned Chinese Sinologists, as the chief compilers. In this anthology, eight of Mao's poems, namely, *Snow*, *On the Plum Tree*, *after a poem by Lu Yu*, *A Reply to Kuo Mo-jo*, *Double-ninth Festival*, *Ch'ang-sha*, *Ta-po-ti*, *Loushan Pass*, and *Kunlun Mountains*, are translated by Eugene Chen Eoyang (欧阳桢), with an introduction and comments on Mao's life and poetry. Eugene Chen Eoyang (1939-2021) was born in Hong Kong. After he was graduated from Taiwan University, he migrated to the US for further study. In 1959, he graduated from Harvard University and acquired his doctorate degree of comparative literature in Indiana University in 1971. As a Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature and of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Indiana University (Bloomington), he stayed and taught there until he passed away. In the early days of his teaching, he was commissioned by his mentor Irving Lo to participate in the compilation of *Sunflower Splendor*, and one of his tasks was to translate Mao's poetry.

Currently, most studies on the translation of Mao's poems published in China have failed to pay sufficient attention to this version, at least far less attention than it should deserve considering the significance of *Sunflower Splendor*. Those mention this version list it among all the versions collected as a literature review, merely pointing out that there are eight pieces of translation in *Sunflower Splendor* without any in-depth analysis. According to those published studies, the researchers were neither scrupulous nor conscientious: they cannot even write the translator's Chinese name correctly, or identify the real translator accurately. Ridiculous mistakes are made, printed, and spread. In the book *毛泽东诗传*, the translator's name Eugene Eoyang (欧阳桢) is transliterated as 欧根 欧阳 by Hu (2014, p. 476), and later it is miswritten as 欧阳桢 in the book of Li (2015, p. 170). In a form of collected translators and versions given by Li and Chen (2018, p. 13), Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo, the chief compilers of *Sunflower Splendor*, are also mistakenly regarded as the translators of Mao's poems.

## II. WHY TRANSLATING MAO'S POEMS: THE TRANSLATOR'S VIEW

The author fortunately had the chance to communicate with Eugene Eoyang, the translator himself, via e-mail in 2020 to discuss issues concerned when he was translating Mao's poems back in the 1970s. Professor Eoyang kindly answered the questions about things he can remember, revealing his first-hand experience and important considerations during the translation process. Both the chief compilers and the translator emphasized the great value of Mao's poems. According to Eoyang, when they were translating for the anthology, team members called it 两毛的诗选 (an

anthology of two Maos). Liu and Lo (1975, p. 621) explained it in the book: “This three-thousand-year-old tradition of Chinese poetry that started with the Mao (Mao Heng and Mao Ch’ang of the early Han Dynasty) version of the *Shih Ching* will aptly conclude with the works of another Mao, the Marxian revolutionary poet.” Although only eight poems are selected, Mao’s poetry plays an important role in the last chapter of this classic works of Sinology, and its research value is self-evident.

Eoyang believes that the highest standard of translation is being transparent, that is, a good translation should perfectly present the traits of the original poem and the poet. In his eyes, Mao is an earnest student of literature who kept on pursuing better study and creation throughout his lifetime, and a dedicate poet who was able to master traditional Chinese poetic imagery with his profound literary knowledge. In addition, Mao’s identity was more complicated than many other poets. He says in the interview: “The hardest part was to capture the oral and rhetorical aspect of Mao’s poetry, which I saw as the product of a general. I knew that the general-poet was quite common in Chinese history.” Mao, as the author of his renowned poetry, served also as the political and military leader in China. The US Monthly Review once commented that the poetry of Mao along with the translations are political documents and should also be regarded as literature (Raskin, 2009). In particular, Eoyang says in the interview that he likes most the poems that captured Mao’s martial spirit, showing his affection to the particularity of Mao’s multiple identity. Gu Zhengkun, another significant Chinese scholar who translated Mao’s poetry in the 1990s, says that “what particularly marks him out as a celebrated poet is, as many believe, his enormous breadth of mind, unbounded aspiration and his dauntless daring, which often go beyond the commonly conceived poetic universe”(Gu, 1993, p. 2). As for the translation motive, Eoyang says that the true nature of introducing Mao’s poems in *Sunflower Splendor* is to humanize someone who was being elevated to godlike status. Gu (1993, p. 14) proposed the similar idea that in the eyes of Western critics and scholars at the time, Mao was seen as a messianic being, dedicated to saving humanity and devoid of human emotion. By translating his poems through a humanistic approach, Western readers can understand that Mao’s image is more like a human being, instead of deifying him for his great political and military achievements.

### III. POWER AND CAPITALS IN TRANSLATION

Eugene Eoyang is a Chinese American translator and a typical scholar translator. He has been educated in traditional Chinese culture since he was a child, and has profound cultivation in traditional Chinese culture and Chinese language. At the same time, he laid a solid English foundation in his teenage years and is familiar with Western literary traditions. Later, he received systematic training in Western language and literature in American universities, and gained a deep understanding of European and American literature and culture. Therefore, as a scholar translator with a Chinese root, he has sufficient conditions to conduct comparative research on Chinese and Western literature, and also has the conditions to introduce the translation of Chinese poetry and other literary works to the United States and the West. He has a lot of practical experience in the field of Chinese poetry translation to English. During his academic career, he has translated Chinese poetry extensively and published in a variety of literary anthologies in the United States and English books and periodicals. As one of the important representatives of the contemporary American deconstructionist school of translation theory, he put forward very influential translation concepts, published many academic works on translation and comparative culture studies, and gave full play to his advantages as a scholar and a translator. Personally, Eoyang (1993) also believes that as a scholar translator, he can fully explore and make use of the advantages of comparative research on different translations, analyze their ability to interpret the original works, and make innovations in his own translation behavior.

As a scholar, Eoyang has accumulated a lot of cultural, economic and social capital, which facilitates his acquisition of symbolic capital and his right to speak in the academic circle. When he took on the task of translating Mao’s poetry assigned directly by his mentor Irving Lo, he was already a professor of comparative literature at Indiana University and on the rise in his academic career. Because of the professional nature of college professors with stable income, it is relatively easy to obtain the economic capital to survive and pursue life development, and it is more conditional to create a comfortable and ideal translation environment. He has mastered excellent academic research and translation practice ability, a large number of academic and interpersonal resources, and occupied a relatively advantageous position in the field. His identity as a translator also created convenient conditions. In terms of introducing works and interpreting texts, Eoyang’s identity established a high degree of credibility in the academic circles with the help of his previous capital accumulation, so as to achieve more ideal translation effects.

Eoyang said that the translation content was completed by himself, and there was no substantive discussion with others about the translation content and techniques. This is quite different from the mode of cooperative translation that other Chinese and foreign translators were willing to adopt when translating Mao’s poetry at that time. Actually, it was not until the end of Cultural Revolution that a batch of translations independently completed by Chinese scholars emerged successively. However, although the translator expressed that he was not restricted or affected by any specific translation policy or institutional power when he was engaged in the translation of Mao’s poetry in the 1970s, the chief compilers exercised the potential power to manipulate the translator and translation in an imperceptible way. Irving Lo was holding more cultural capital in the whole field of translation activities and has the dominant power. Eoyang’s translation needs to serve the preference of him and the publication of the entire anthology. No matter in the selection of original texts or the translation drafts, the chief compilers occupied the commanding height of discourse power in the

field of translation activities through the large amount of cultural capital possessed by their cultural identity and the economic capital obtained by direct contact with sponsors and publishers.

For instance, when asked about the number of translations, Eoyang remembered quite clear that he had personally translated more than eight Mao's poems, but only these eight were selected by Irving Lo to be published in *Sunflower Splendor*. In another case, according to the compilers' explanations, Chinese words and names in *Sunflower Splendor* are given in the Wade-Giles system according to Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary with several modifications, and geographic names given in the form most commonly used or spelled out with a hyphen in Wade-Giles system (Liu & Lo, 1975, p. 25). It is quite common that the traditional works of Sinology are familiar to generations of Sinologists in Wade-Giles transliteration, and Mao's poetry in this anthology is no exception. However, Eoyang pointed out that many Chinese-English transliteration systems and rules were produced in previous American Sinology studies, but there were great defects in the uniformity and strictness. Many terms (especially the names of people and places) were wrong, which could easily lead to misunderstanding and confusion among Western readers. "Adding phonetic confusion to orthographic irregularity" (Eoyang, 1993, p. 2), as he states in *The Transparent Eye*. On the contrary, he apparently preferred to use the *pinyin* system formally adopted by the Chinese People's Congress in 1958. He says: "The *pinyin* system is employed in the People's Republic of China and cannot be ignored by anyone who addresses a Chinese audience" (Eoyang, 1993, p. 1), and used *pinyin* in most of his lifetime of academic works. The reality is that he undoubtedly gave up his own translation strategies and made necessary concessions and compromises in the face of compilers and mainstream researchers with more accumulated cultural capital, greater discourse power and higher status in related fields.

On the other hand, as a group of translators with the characteristics of Westernized Chinese after World War II, both the editor Irving Lo and the translator Eugene Eoyang needed to meet the increasingly complicated group of readers, that is, Western readers who can't speak Chinese, Western readers who can speak Chinese and Chinese readers who can speak English. Before the translation is actually published, it needs to be tested by three types of readers and be responsible for three or more types of readers with different cultural and educational backgrounds. Each translation of Mao's poem by Eoyang was reviewed by at least three different readers in a Chinese-English version. As he recalls, "Irving's students (also the translators participated in the compilation of the anthology) met once a month to test out their translations on a live, and presumably knowledgeable audience." They tested its acceptance, gathered face-to-face feedback and revised the translation accordingly. It is rare that readers are empowered to occupy a place in the production chain of translation, exercise the voice granted to them by the editor group, put forward their opinions and demands as recipients, and thus influence the translator to adopt corresponding strategies to meet the needs of readers.

#### IV. CASE STUDIES: TEXTUAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS

##### A. *The Beauty of Prosody*

Xu Yuanchong, another Chinese translator who made great contribution to translating Mao's poetry, says that to convey the sound beauty of poetry, translators can borrow the meter that British and American poets like to see and use (Xu, 1993, p. 10). Eoyang's translation of the eight poems fully reflects his ability to perceive and understand the Chinese prosody of the original poems and his extraordinary linguistic ability to use the English prosody, which makes them very beautiful in rhyme of English poems. Eoyang often pays great attention to the details of Chinese poetic temperament. He followed the prose-style strategy adopted by many previous Chinese American translators in translating Mao's poetry, and did not deliberately pursue the end rhyme that also exists in the original. Instead, he used a variety of common metrical techniques in English poetry in his lines as the creative compensation and fidelity for not being able to strictly present the rhyming technique of Chinese language.

Personally, Eoyang is very fond of and good at using alliteration in the translation. Alliteration of two or more words in a single sentence translation is ubiquitous in his translation. In the translation of *On the Plum Tree, after a poem by Lu Yu*, the fourth line 尤有花枝俏 is translated as "Yet there's still the beauty of blossoms on the branch", and the seventh line 待到山花烂漫时 is translated as "Wait till the mountain flowers blaze out and bloom", both with consecutive alliterations started with "b". In *Kunlun Mountains*, the line 搅得周天寒彻 is translated as "Stirring the heaven with your snowcapped scales", containing three words of the alliteration started with "s". In *Ch'ang-sha*, the sentence 恰同学少年, 风华正茂; 书生意气, cut into three consecutive lines in English, is translated as "We are schoolboys, and still young,/ With an air of strength and of life./ The spirit of scholars". Five among a total of 18 words compose the alliteration started with "s", creating a sense of smoothness and consistency for readers.

Assonance is also a common usage of rhyme in this version, sometimes cooperating with other forms of rhyme. In *Ch'ang-sha*, the translation of the line 漫江碧透 is "Wide river blue right through", with two couples of assonance in five words. "Wide" and "right" have the assonance of [i:], and "blue" and "through" have [u:], making the sentence more poetic in sound. In *A Reply to Kuo Mo-jo*, 几声凄厉, 几声抽泣 is translated as "Sometimes screeching,/ Sometimes weeping". Four words compose not only the alliteration of "s" and the end rhyme of "ing", but also the assonance of [i:], combining all three types in one single line. It makes a perfect manifestation of the translator's literary capability. Such techniques also appear in the form of other rhymes, such as eye rhyme. Examples can be found in the translation of 雨后复斜阳 in *Ta-po-ti*: "After the rain, sunlight slants down again"; and in the translation of 已是悬崖

百丈冰 in *On the Plum Tree, after a poem by Lu Yu*: “Already, on the high precipice, a hundred yards of ice”.

It is also worth exploring where the translator uses phonology and its special meaning. For the notional words with special meanings in the original, the translator chose to use alliteration, which is like “labeling” some expressions in the translation, so that they are more closely bonded in both sound and meaning in English. In *Loushan Pass*, the line 马蹄声碎 is separated into 马蹄 and 声碎 based on their Chinese meanings, which are translated as “horses’ hooves” and “shattering sounds”, respectively, with two couples of alliteration to enhance the bond within the Chinese words. Also, he preferred to use alliteration when translating original words into English partial phrases or verse-object phrases. “West wind” for 西风 is quite common in translation. Other typical examples include “sacred sword” for 宝剑 in *Kunlun Mountains*, “bloody battle” for 鏖战 in *Ta-po-ti*, “morning moon” for 晨月 in *Loushan Pass*, and “silver serpent” for 银蛇 in *Snow*. The verb-object phrase 弯弓 is translated as “bend the bow” along with “bringing down” for the verb 射 in the same line, consisting of three words with alliteration.

Eoyang translated Mao’s poems based on thorough understanding of Chinese language, and tended to set rhymes when the original line has certain Chinese prosody features. In *Kunlun Mountains*, 安得倚天抽宝剑 is translated as “If I could only, leaning against the sky, draw the sacred sword”. 天 and 剑 in Chinese make an internal rhyme, so the translator also deliberately set their English counterparts “sky” and “sacred sword” as alliteration, showing faithfulness to the original. In the line 待到山花烂漫时, 烂 and 漫 make a vowel rhyme. Again the translator used alliteration and translated it as “blaze out and bloom”. The word “blaze” means to burn brightly and strongly and renders the beautiful scene of mountain flowers in bright colors “blazing out” in the mountains, which is far more poetic and picturesque than a single word “bloom” in most other versions. On the basis of retaining the beauty of sound, Eoyang also achieved the equivalence of meaning.

### B. The Beauty of Form

The translator tries to follow the format of the original work to ensure that the number of lines is consistent and the length of the lines is as close as possible to the original text. Only a few of the eight translations have increased or decreased in the number of lines, unlike previous overseas translations, which prefer to completely follow the style of the prose translation and unnaturally divide the original line structure. Xu (1993, p. 10) also believed the beauty of form of poetry mainly refers to the length and symmetry, which should be similar in shape, or at least “generally close”.

The translator pays great attention to the strict correspondence of the translated language, and the phonetic correspondence between the original verses is preserved in English. He adopted some exquisite language skills to build the phonetic correspondence in grammatical structure and emotion. The first example is from *Double-ninth Festival*, which containing the precise correspondence in terms of number of syllables and words, word choices and artistic techniques.

The original text:

岁岁重阳。  
今又重阳，

Eoyang’s translation:

Year after year, the Double Nine;  
Now, once again, the Double Nine,

The two lines in original text have the same number of words and the ending is repeated. The number of syllables in the two translations is the same, and the two sentences are both composed of six words and seven syllables. 重阳 are both translated as “the Double Nine”, and The reduplicated word 年年 has even been translated into the English reduplicated form of “year after year”, forming a rigorous phonetic equivalence. Similar technique can be found also in *Loushan Pass*. In the line 关山阵阵苍, the reduplicated word is translated as “range after range”. We can infer that even if the reduplication technique in Chinese has no perfect counterpart in English, the translator is very used to using the English expression of “A after A” to maintain and reproduce the formal characteristics of repeated words in the original text as some sort of compensation.

In order to ensure that the grammatical structure of the translated poem is highly corresponding to that of the original, another technique commonly used by Eoyang is the use of parenthetical elements, especially the flexible adjustment of the position of adverbials of place. The examples are selected from *On the Plum Tree, after a poem by Lu Yu*.

The original text: 已是悬崖百丈冰，

Eoyang’s translation: Already, on the high precipice, a hundred yards of ice,

“Already” in the sentence corresponds to 已是, and the parenthetical element “on the high precipice” is placed in the sentence as an adverbial of place, corresponding to 悬崖 in the middle of the original, and “a hundred yards of ice” strictly corresponds to 百丈冰. The whole translation, whether divided by components or interpreted by single character, has achieved a very neat correspondence.

In *Loushan Pass*, the translator’s exquisite arrangement of the presentation format of the translation makes it beautiful in the visual form of rhythm, and at the same time provides readers with an immersive experience of the poetic conception.

The original text:

长空雁叫霜晨月。霜晨月， .....

Eoyang's translation:

Geese call in the open air, there's frost under the morning moon,  
Frost under the morning moon

The original text:

而今迈步从头越。从头越， .....

Eoyang's translation:

For today we have marched right up to the summit,  
Right up to the summit,

The translator deliberately indents the repetition, and makes it “hang” at the end of the previous line. It was endowed with the form like the echo with aesthetic feeling. Due to the failure of the strategic plan in reality, the poem should sound tragic and bleak, and the voice and emotion should be agitated, reflecting the poet's solemn mood. Under the echoing arrangement of the translator, the depressive feeling in the original work hangs on the reader's sight, and the emotional atmosphere and the poet's melancholy also linger in the reader's mind and are reluctant to dissipate.

### C. The Interpretation of Imagery

The translation of images in Mao's poetry is directly related to the interpretation of its aesthetic features. Eoyang praised that Mao has profound literary skills and rich images in his poems, which are mostly inherited from traditional Chinese poems. Attributing human emotions to natural and living objects, such as natural scenery and climate phenomena, is the recovery and compensation of emotional sources and the return of semantic capital to meaningful resources. Therefore, the translation of images directly determines whether the poet's emotional expression in the translation can be understood and resonated by readers.

天空 (tian kong) is a very commonly used static image in Mao's poetry. In a precious study of Zhang (2008), 天 was the key image to conduct a comparative analysis on translation techniques in 12 other versions. In the eight pieces of Eoyang's translation, it also occurs quite frequently, which can be used as a typical example to analyze his preference and subjective strategies. The table below lists all the translations of 天 and 空 in Eoyang's version:

Poem	Line	Word choice
<i>Snow</i>	欲与天公试比高	heaven
	一代天骄	heaven
<i>A Reply to Kuo Mo-jo</i>	天地转	heaven
<i>Kunlun Mountains</i>	横空出世	atmosphere
	搅得周天寒彻	heaven
	安得倚天抽宝剑	sky
<i>Double-ninth Festival</i>	人生易老天难老	heavens
	寥廓江天万里霜	skies
<i>Ch'ang-sha</i>	鹰击长空	sky
	万类霜天竞自由	air
<i>Ta-po-ti</i>	谁持彩练当空舞	sky
<i>Loushan Pass</i>	长空雁叫霜晨月	air

According to the statistics, in the total 12 scenes, the translator chose “heaven” five times, and “sky” or its deformation four times. Also, the image was dissolved into “air” twice, and “atmosphere” once. In two of the four “sky” sentences, the original word used was 空 rather than the 天, and the probability of 空 triggering other understandings was generally much lower than that of 天. Therefore, it can be concluded that Eoyang preferred to use the word “heaven” for 天 in most cases.

In everyday English expressions and interpretations of the concept 天, “sky” is arguably the most common and direct counterpart. The frequency of its use is high, and most of it will not cause misreading in the interpretation of images, so it is a normal translation phenomenon here. By contrast, the word “heaven” is more poetic and can better reflect the classical elegance of Mao's poetry.

When the translator criticized the translation by James Legge, he once elaborated on the understanding and translation of the cultural concept of 天, and frankly opposed the translation of 天 as “Heaven”, a quite common rendering used by most Sinologists and scholars in their translation of Mao's poetry as well as many other Chinese classics. According to Eoyang's study, “Heaven” in the Christian world is inextricably bound up in concepts of the hereafter, the dwelling place of God the Father (Eoyang, 1988, p. 63). Mao is a Marxist and an atheist, so translating 天 in his poetry into “Heaven” is like translating 天 mentioned by Confucius, who is also an atheist and not influenced by western Christian culture, into “Heaven”, which obviously goes against the author's intention and faith, and is seriously inconsistent with the context and ideology of the text. When interpreting this image, we should not directly and spontaneously resort to Western theology, and readers and translators should not infer a Western theological universe

behind the poem text according to this interpretation. Instead, Eoyang used the word “heaven” with the initial letter not being capitalized. 天 in many Chinese contexts, including in Mao’s poetry, sometimes “refers not to a divine and otherworldly empyrean, nor even to the sky above, but generically to the natural order of things” (Eoyang, 1988, p. 63). He further elaborated this decision over forty years later in his email: “On 天, I was merely pointing out that, to Westerners, ‘Heaven’ has a religious connotation, ‘heaven’ doesn’t. While I am careful not to mistakenly Westernize Chinese poems, I refuse to allow Western practice to eliminate the possibility of certain words, which are natural in the Chinese context.” In fact, even the official translation of Foreign Languages Press in 1976 used “Heaven” and failed to make a distinction between the concepts (Mao, 1976).

In consideration of the specific context of the poem, it is also necessary to understand the special intention of the translator in choosing heaven. In the line 天地转 in *A Reply to Kuo Mo-jo*, 天地 is the exclusive concept of the East Asian nation to the universe according to the Xinhua Dictionary. The word “heaven” can also be better used as the opposite of “earth”, highlighting the vastness and vicissitude of the universe. Chinese phrases like 天公, 天骄, and 天难老 all imply the personification of 天, describing something higher than human being. And “heaven” just can give it a lofty and sacred sense, while the more popular “sky” cannot achieve the artistic effect. In the line 飞起玉龙三百万, 搅得周天寒彻 in *Kunlun Mountains*, Mao refers to Kunlun as a giant loong in the first part. It comes from a popular Chinese myth: When Sun Wukong, the monkey king, travelled to the Flame Mountain during his journey to the West, he borrowed a huge Chinese banana fan to put out the scorching fire and Kunlun Mountains was then covered in snow and ice. Translating 周天 into “heaven” is to think it as the mythological paradise of Chinese tales, and remind the readers of the Sun Wukong’s mighty power, subtly echoing the allusion implied in the previous sentence.

Through the analysis of the translation of the high-frequency image 天, it can be seen that the first principle that the translator follows is to be faithful to the original text, including not only the text itself, but also the reality that the text intends to describe, the poet’s personal belief, the Chinese cultural background, and the psychology when using the image. On the other hand, the translator also adheres to the attitude of being responsible to the readers, gives full play to his subjectivity and power in the field of translation activities, breaks the shackle of the old theological concepts in translation, and creates new, more faithful and reasonable translation expressions in order to reduce the misunderstandings caused by cultural differences.

#### V. BLIND ZONES: LIMITATIONS OF EOYANG’S TRANSLATION

Due to the text particularity of Chinese poetry and the differences between Chinese and English poetry languages, it is difficult to achieve perfect translation in many aspects such as rhythm, form, image and rhetoric. Some scholars even put forward the “untranslationability” of poetry. However, if the translator’s subjectivity and creativity can be fully brought into play in English culture to make up for the loss with creation, the compromise in translation will be reduced and the translationability of poetry will be greatly increased. However, sometimes due to different cultural environments, even if translators who have been in the Western cultural environment for a long time have received strict education in traditional Chinese culture, they will more or less ignore some language and emotional characteristics that are easier to grasp by translators and researchers in the Chinese cultural background. In these eight translations, it is not difficult to find examples that prove the existence of “blind zone”.

The translator might lose some of the original meaning for rhymes, which leads to debatable embodiment of the actual situations presented in the original. In the line 原驰蜡象 in *Snow*, the static image 原 is translated as “high headlands”, composing an alliteration of “h”, while “ramble” for the Chinese dynamic image 驰 and “waxen” for the adjective 蜡 compose a couple of internal rhyme. However, headland in English, in its singular or plural form, refers to 陆岬 or 海角 in Chinese, that is, a narrow piece of high land that sticks out from the coast into the sea. This poem was originally written when Mao stayed in the northwest plain of China, and 原 refers to the Qinjin Plateau. Headland in the translation makes no sense when there was even no seas around the poet’s residence. Also, the verb 驰 in Chinese means “run quickly”, while “ramble” in English means to walk for pleasure, especially in the countryside. The original description of the plateau snow scene is magnificent, but the translation seems to be leisurely and loose, and the sense of grandeur is completely lost. Because the translator pursues the internal sound of the poem, there is a serious contradiction between the meaning of the words and the historical and geographical facts, and the atmosphere and personal emotion that the poet wants to create.

Also in this poem, Eoyang translated 唐宗宋祖 as “the founding fathers of T’ang and Sung” when dealing with the Chinese literary quotation, and accidentally or deliberately, composing an alliteration of “f”. By doing so, he approved that 唐宗, or Emperor Taizong of Tang, is the founding emperor of the Tang Dynasty. However, it is now universally acknowledged that Li Shimin’s father Li Yuan, also known as Emperor Gaozu, is the actual founding father of the Tang Dynasty. The translator did not adopt transliteration strategy like most other versions, but made alliteration to cater to Western readers’ taste of sound and rhyme, and at the same time took care of their understanding ability by translating the connotation of the allusions. However, his translation method falls into the false area of expressing authenticity, which is actually against the fidelity of translation and is not conducive to the Western readers to establish a true and reliable understanding of Chinese history.

There are some minor deviations in the translator's understanding of the original words and sentences and the interpretation of the translation. 分外 in the line 战地黄花分外香 was supposed to describe the extraordinary beauty and delight of chrysanthemums blooming on the battlefield under fire. It implies the contrast between "battlefield yellow flowers" and "ordinary daily yellow flowers", which is filled with the poet's spirit of revolutionary optimism. However, Eoyang only translated it as "the yellow flowers smell sweet", which eliminated the comparative relationship in the original, and the revolutionary optimism in the poet's inner comparison disappeared. By referring to other 13 translations of this line, it is found that only the translation by Nieh and Engle failed to reflect the true meaning (Nieh & Engle, 1972, p. 41), while as many as 12 translations present the exact spirit by means of comparative level, adverbs of degree and exclamation sentences. For instance, Wong (1966, p. 12) used "wonderfully sweet" to describe the flowers in his translation. Willis Barnstone, another scholar translator at Indiana University in 1972, used "deeply fragrant" three years before Eoyang published his version (Barnstone & Kuo, 1972, p. 41). Both versions are listed in the references of the anthology. However, the spirit and information of the original was obviously lost when Eoyang decided not to reveal the hidden comparison like previous translations.

When translating some terms with traditional Chinese cultural significance, Eoyang mainly adopted the domestication translation strategy, which was closer to the cultural environment of the target language, so as to convey the text information to Western readers who did not understand Chinese culture generally. For example, the traditional Chinese length units 丈 (about 3.33 meters) and 里 (about 0.31 miles) are translated into English length units "yard" and "mile" respectively, and their specific values must be inconsistent with the facts described by the poet.

Ye Junjian, who participated in the translation of the first English version of Mao's poetry in 1958, once pointed out that the traditional Chinese unit of measurement 里 could be translated as li in pinyin. At that time, li had been confirmed as an English word in the Oxford Dictionary (Ye & Wu, 2003). But his opinion did not change the fact that, in the 1976 "official version", 里 was translated as the English unit of measure "league (about three miles)" (Mao, 1976). Even as the official domestic translation, the same strategy as Eoyang's was adopted. Regardless of the specific English unit used in the translation, term domestication can be regarded as a common strategy of official and Chinese American translators. The difference lies in that the official publication shoulders the mission of political and cultural output, so the acceptance of the translation in the Western world should be fully considered. On the other hand, due to the Westernized environment in which Chinese American translators grow up and receive education, their choice of domestication is more about personality and habitus in translation.

## VI. CONCLUSION

More than thirty versions of English translations of Mao's poetry have been published at home and abroad, and many of the translations have become important research objects of scholars. A considerable number of translators and researchers are committed to building multi-perspective reference for the foreign translation and communication of Mao's poetry and Chinese culture in the new era. Eoyang's translation and *Sunflower Splendor* have achieved good dissemination effect and high academic evaluation in the Western world, but they have not yet attracted enough attention in China. Combining Eoyang's personal experience in translation and interpretation practice as a Chinese American scholar translator and the translation concepts and theories summarized by his later studies, we can obtain a perspective that previous studies on English translation of Mao's poetry have not provided. His translation activities reflect the power relations among the various actors and their open but balanced operation process in a relatively successful translation experience, which provides a valuable lesson for us to build a new and effective translation mode. Secondly, his translation highlights the new considerations for the translation and interpretation of Mao's poetry, fully exploring the understanding of Western readers from the cultural perspective, which is conducive to further optimizing the literary and artistic characteristics and value of the translated texts, and improving the acceptance degree of the works at the textual level. Thirdly, the errors and flaws in each version make us have a clearer understanding of the original work: on the one hand, Eoyang revealed the deviations of some other translators in their versions, and on the other hand, through his own blind zones in translation, he provided another fresh perspective of information for later translators and researchers. These lessons and blind zones reflected in multiple cultures fully prove the urgency and necessity for China to have its own theoretical power and discourse system in translation.

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