

# A Chinese Diasporic Translator: Chi-Chen Wang and his Translation of Chinese Literature<sup>1</sup>

Huang Saisai

School of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang University of Finance & Economics Dongfang College, Haining, 314408 PRC China

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## *Abstract*

*The diasporic translator Chi-Chen Wang did much to disseminate modern Chinese literature in the West. This article draws attention to Chinese diasporic translators in the West in the 1940s through the neglected figure of Chi-Chen Wang (1899-2001). This paper of Chi-Chen Wang is an integrated study of two perspectives, an overview of present studies on Wang's translation and a detailed analysis on Wang's translation principles by examining his translation revisions. The research finds out that Wang's translations in the 1940s years centered on socially conscious types of writing, which bear a close relationship to his sympathy and expectation for China. Wang was guided by the principles of both capturing the original flavor and enhancing the readability of the target text.*

**Keywords**—*translator, Chi-Chen Wang, translation principles, Chinese Literature.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The notion that translation is the mere linguistic transcoding between the source and target languages has now become outdated. Scholars begin to explore the implications of translation within a broader cultural and historical frame. Since translation never takes place in a vacuum, the context within which translation occurs and the role translators play in the translating process have won their attention. The works of Susan Bassnett (1980), Andre Lefevere (1992) and Gideon Toury (1995) have blazed a trail in translation studies. Particularly, the poly-system approach put forward by Even-Zohar (2000) has filled the gap between linguistics and literary studies by shifting the focus of attention from endless debates about faithfulness and equivalence to an examination of the role of the translated text in its new context. And at the same time, this opens the way for further researches into a reassessment of the role of the translator both as a cultural transmitter and a manipulator between two

cultures. In actual translation practice, translators' motivation, value, and cultural orientation may make a great difference on the strategies and methods they choose to fulfill their tasks, thus influencing the function and the reception of a translation product in the target culture. And central to this view is the stress upon the translator's visible presence in a translation.

From the 1990s onwards, the figure of a subservient translator has been replaced with a visibly manipulative translator, a creative artist who mediates between cultures and languages. Derrida's re-reading of Walter Benjamin's "The task of the translator" has initiated a re-evaluation of the importance of translation not only as a form of communication but also as continuity that ensures the survival of a text. It stands to reason that the translator is seen as a liberator, someone who frees the text from its original shape and bridges the gap between the source author and the target readers. The translator's subjectivity

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runs through the whole process of translation, from the selection and understanding of the source text to the rewriting in the target culture. Significantly, translators' own justification of their translation strategies throughout the whole process should be taken into consideration while evaluating translated products. Many researches have been done on the effects of translator's subjectivity on literary translation. How and to what degree the translator's cultural orientations and aesthetic tendencies have influenced his translation has become a new dimension in translation research.

Chinese scholars did not launch a systematic study on translators until the 1980s. To date, many biographies of famous translators such as Yan Fu, Zhu Shenghao, Fu Lei, and Zhou Zuoren have been compiled. In addition, dictionaries of translators were also published in the late 1980s. But most of these researches were mere summaries of the translators' life experiences or their translation practice with little theoretical guidance. In 1990, Yuan Jinxiang made a systematic study on a group of translators and their works in *A Study and Appreciation on Works of Famous Translators*, which proves to be a significant progress in translator studies. Later, many other scholars like Guo Zhuzhang and Xu Jun have also made great contribution to translator studies. Xu Jun interviewed many renowned translators and the interviews were published in a special column in the magazine *Yilin*. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in famous modern Chinese author-translators such as Zhou Zuoren, Mao Dun, Guo Moruo, and Lin Yutang. These researches are mostly conducted from the perspective of comparative literature, highlighting the relation between the writer's literary ideas and their translation views. Besides, the collection of *Ba Bie Ta Weng Cong* (Xu Jun & Tang Jin: 2002), which consists of the works and writings of twelve translators, expounds on each translator's translating experience and their reflections on the role of translation in connecting the source and target cultures.

Despite these achievements, the question of to what extent the translators' visions and their choice of translation strategies and methods have influenced their translation is yet to be answered. On one hand, while putting the translators in a rich cultural content, researchers can catch a glimpse of the constraints under which the translators

have to work and the strategies they develop to overcome those constraints at a certain time and in a certain place. On the other hand, a considerable number of translators worthy of investigation have long been ignored, and a study of them can certainly enrich researches of translators.

## II. AN OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES ON CHI-CHEN WANG

It is around the mid-20th century that translated Chinese literature began to enjoy a larger Western readership. Chi-Chen Wang (1899-2001), an academically active translator, produced a considerable amount of excellent translations. He made his translation debut in the U.S. with his translation of *Dream of the Red Chamber* in 1929 and was thereafter known as the first Chinese who translated *Hong Lou Meng* into English. Prefaced and praised by Arthur Waley (2009: vii-ix), the translation turned out to be a great success. He also translated many short stories of Lu Xun, such as "My Native Heath", "The Divorce", and "Our Story of Ah Q", which were published in *The Far East* in New York and *T'ien Hsia Monthly* in Shanghai. In 1941, these translations were made into a book titled *Ah Q and Others--- Selected Stories of Lusin*, published by the Columbia University Press. In addition, he translated works of other contemporary Chinese writers like Lao She, Ba Jin, Shen Congwen, Zhang Tianyi, Mao Dun, Ye Shaojun and so on, which was published in the name of *Contemporary Chinese Stories* (1944). Besides, his *Traditional Chinese Tales*, also published in 1944, was a collection of the translation of such ancient Chinese novels as *The dragon's daughter*, *The story of Ying Ying*, and *Predestined Marriage*.

Great as his contributions to Chinese-English translation, Chi-Chen Wang as a translator has long been neglected in translation studies in China. Having lived in the US for most of his life, he was known and researched by very few Chinese and Chinese scholars. Therefore, this paper attempts to provide a panoramic view of Wang's translation thought and the characteristics of his translation, through an elaboration on his life and translation practice. The present research is significant for two reasons: First, in consideration of Wang's achievements in translation, it is necessary to launch a systematic research on Wang as a translator and his translations. As one of the earliest scholars

who made modern Chinese writers known to Americans, Wang is one of the founding fathers of ancient and modern Chinese literature researches in America. His translations, including his translation of modern Chinese literature during China's anti-Japanese war and his translation of some traditional Chinese tales, contribute to transmitting Chinese culture to the West, which has helped Westerners appreciate the true value of Chinese culture. Second, in view of the political and cultural settings against which Wang did most of his translation and his own cultural identity, it is of value to explore Wang's choice of translation strategies. Wang's translations were tailored to American readers in the 20th century. His choice of translation strategies, the factors influencing his selection of materials to translate and his translation style and principles are worth investigation and will enrich translation studies in China.

It is interesting that almost no research in Wang's translation had been done in China before 2006. And it is only in recent years, particularly after 2010, that scholars began to pay attention to his translation, against the background of an increasing trend of applying Western translation theories to translation analysis. Researches on Wang's translations are of two types. The first type, the largest amount of research, centers on his translation of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. There are all together six MA theses in this aspect. Niu Yan (2010), Qu Chun (2010), Wang Huanyue (2011), Li Xingying (2013) all approach Chi-Chen Wang's translation from the manipulation theory. They analyze the factors manipulating the process of Chi-Chen Wang's translation, including political and cultural ideology, poetics and patronage. Lv Haiou (2012) launches a detailed case study on Wang's *Dream of the Red Chamber* based on Vermeer's skopostheorie with a view to proving that Chi-Chen Wang's translation is influenced by his intention of creating a common reading material for English readers. Liu Shimin (2011) discusses name translation in Wang's *Dream of the Red Chamber* based on Venuti's deconstructive translation theory. It can be concluded that these researches center on the social-cultural constraints in Wang's selection of translation strategies and mainly focus on the manipulation imposed by the patron's ideology. Besides, Wang's retranslation of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, with the first edition published in 1929 and second in 1958, is also the focus of discussion. Wang Pengfei & Qu Chun

(2010) give a detailed comparison between the two versions and conclude that the retranslation further displays the charm of the original text, though not without shortcomings. Xiao Zhu (2010), on the other hand, analyzes the differences of adaptation of contents and cultural elements in the two versions based on Lefevere's rewriting theory.

The second type taps into Wang's other translations, focusing exclusively on his translation of a writer. For example, Gu Jun (2012: 179) notices Wang's endeavor in promoting Lu Xun's work in the West through translation. While examining Wang's unique contribution to introducing and translating Lu Xun, the author also analyzes Wang's translation techniques by looking into Wang's own revisions of his translation. However, his analysis is still sketchy and needs further development. Li Yue (2012: 180) explores Wang's translation strategies with respect to Lao She's works in light of deconstructionism as well as the Optimality Theory. A major part of his discussion is an observation of how textual and non-textual constraining factors influence the translator's selection of translation strategies. Similarly, Li Xinting and Zhuan Qunying (2011: 113-115) emphasize the unique role of Wang's translation of "San Yan" by Feng Menglong in promoting Chinese classical literature in foreign countries. They elaborate on the adequacy of Wang's five translations, i.e. "The Jade Kuanyin", "The Judicial", "Murder of Tsui Ning", "The Flower Lover and the Fairies", "The Oil Peddler and the Queen of Flower" and "The Three Brothers". However, instead of providing a comprehensive evaluation on Wang's translation, the authors mainly concentrate on handling culture-loaded words.

Most researches on Wang's translation abroad is in the form of book reviews. Similarly, a considerable amount of it is concerned with Wang's translation of *Hong Lou Meng*, which has received critical acclaim in the West. In 1958, another English translation of *Hong Lou Meng* appeared, Florence and Isabel Mchugh's translation from the German version by Dr. Franz Kuhn, *Der Traum der roten Kammer*. Since then, most attention has been directed on the comparative study of the two versions. Typically, Birch (1959: 386) favors Wang's version by pointing out the inadequacies in Kuhn's version such as his confusing translation of culture-loaded words, and he considers that Wang's translation delivers a more precise picture. Most

importantly, he recognizes Wang's contribution to providing relative research on the author Cao Xueqin, acknowledging that Wang's introduction "succinctly explains *Hung-lou-meng's* distinctive position in Chinese fiction", and that Kuhn's introduction is "out-of-date and not very helpful" (ibid).

In the 1940s, years of war made it urgent for Americans to better understand China. And for Americans, the best way to understand China is to study the Chinese way of living. Wang's translations like *Contemporary Chinese Stories* and *Traditional Chinese Tales* presented the Americans with a true image of China. Reviews of these books were published in magazines like *The Spectator*, *Far Eastern Survey*, *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, *Pacific Affairs*, and so on. While acknowledging the contribution of these translations in making Chinese literature available in English, critics praise much Chi-Chen Wang's translation techniques and his admirable translation style. Cameron (1944: 386) speaks highly of Wang's good command of both Chinese and English, saying that "in these volumes Mr. Wang confirms his reputation as a very able translator and interpreter of Chinese literature". Frauchiger (1945: 81) admires both Wang's keen understanding of the original text and his excellent English writing. There are also many comments on Wang's other translations such as *Ah Q and Others*, *Stories of China at War*, with the majority praising Wang's efforts in promoting Chinese literature in the West. However, overall, these book reviews reveal no more than Wang's contribution as a competent and painstaking translator to introduce Chinese literature, though Hsiao Chi'en, after a voluminous introduction of Chinese literature, does touch on some points of Wang's translation methods. He believes that "the translator should be thanked for avoiding the exploitation of the ideographical nature of the Chinese language," but he also points out that some transliterations appear unnecessarily exotic, such as shao nai nai (young mistress), tsai chien (good-bye) and lai (come) (Hsiao, 1941: 560).

From the analysis above, studies on Chi-Chen Wang's translation are still at its initial stage. His translation of *Hong Lou Meng* receives the widest attention, but most of these researches are conducted from a similar perspective. Researches of Wang's other translation are all inadequate and need further elaboration. What's worse, these

researches share the vulnerability of not paying enough attention to Chi-Chen Wang as a translator. By creating such works as *Dream of the red chamber* and *Ah Q and Others*--each with its unique Chinese flavor—not only accessible but understandable to the English-reading world, he is an excellent interpreter and introducer of Chinese literature. As a renowned writer and literary critic in the West, Chi-Chen Wang also held a unique perspective on Chinese literature, which has a great influence on his choice of translation strategies. In addition, researches on Wang's translation styles and his attitude towards translation remain to be improved. Therefore, considering the current situations of the study on Wang's translation both at home and abroad, together with the research gaps of Wang as a translator, I will endeavor to undertake a systematic research on Wang's translation and what impact his literary thoughts and the social-cultural situation have on his translation.

### III. CHI-CHEN WANG AND HIS TRANSLATION ACTIVITIES

Chi-Chen Wang (1899-2001) was born into a literary family in Hengtai County, Shangdong Province. His father was a Jinshi during the reign of Emperor Guangxu (1875-1908) in the Qing Dynasty. Wang was well versed in traditional Chinese literature and art since his childhood. And when he was 11 years old, he was enrolled into Tsinghua University Affiliated Middle School. Later he passed the entrance examination of Tsinghua Preparatory School for America (the pre-Hsing-hua University) in 1918 and had witnessed the May Fourth Movement and several influential student strikes before he graduated in 1922. In the same year he went to study in America and obtained a bachelor's degree in journalism and politics in Wisconsin University, and from 1924 to 1927, he also studied liberal arts in Columbia University.

Wang had an interesting experience when he first came to Columbia University. Having a keen interest in journalism, Wang had long expected to attend the School of Journalism of Columbia University where no Asian students had been enrolled before. He came to the dean's office to express his desire to go into journalism. And when asked if his English was good enough to study journalism, Wang wrote a passage right away, which turned out to be typical "Chinese English". However, after several years' hard work

his writing was even complimented by his contemporary writers. After finishing his education, Wang was delayed in the U.S. due to political upheavals back in China and was reduced into poverty without government financial support. Therefore, he had to make a living by writing for magazines and newspapers. During this period, he wrote articles introducing Chinese classical literature and arts to American readers. Because of his talent, Wang was employed as a research assistant by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1928. And his introduction of *Hong Lou Meng* presented the Americans with a gorgeous Oriental world full of dreams and fantasies, which was different from the depiction of Marco Polo or the imaginary land penned by early missionaries. This whetted American readers' appetite for a full reading of the original novel. Therefore, Chi-Chen Wang began to translate *Hong Lou Meng* at the timely request of a publisher. Although the hastily published required an adaptation focusing on the love story between Baoyu and Daiyu instead of reproducing the whole image of the splendid and luxurious aristocratic life, Wang tried his best to retain the original flavor and style of this great novel. The abridged translation *Dream of the Red Chamber* was published both in New York and London in 1929. The book was a massive hit with a preface written by the well-known sinologist Arthur Waley who highly praised this translation as "singularly accurate" and "skillfully performed" (Waley, 1929: xiii).

Thanks to this huge achievement, from 1929 on, Wang started his career teaching the Chinese language and literature in Columbia University at the invitation of Carrington Goodrich, the then dean of the East Asia Department of Columbia University. And in 1935, Wang also held a concurrent post as the curator of Columbia University Chinese Library, making a great contribution to its collection of Chinese literature, Chinese history and Chinese philosophy. Wang proved to be a devoted teacher. "His forte was as a translator of modern literature, and though allergic to all talk of grammar, he would spend long hours in virtually tutorial sessions with those determined enough to benefit from his fine command of both Chinese and English." (Bary, 2002) It was during this period that Chi-Chen Wang devoted most of his leisure time to translating Chinese literature. As a liberal student of the May 4th Movement, Wang advocated the new-vernacular

literature and also had a passion for ancient Chinese novels. From the 1930s to 1940s, he had translated many short stories of Lu Xun, such as "My Native Heath" (《故乡》), "The Cake of Soap" (《肥皂》), "The Divorce" (《离婚》), "Reunion in a Restaurant" (《在酒楼上》), "The Story of Hair" (《头发的故事》), "Cloud over Luchen" (《风波》), "Our Story of Ah Q" (《阿 Q 正传》), "A Hermit at Large" (《孤独者》), "Remorse" (《伤逝》), "The Widow" (《祝福》), "The Diary of a Madman" (《狂人日记》), and "Professor Kao" (《高老夫子》). These translations were consecutively published in *The Far East* of New York and *T'ien Hsia Monthly* of Shanghai. In 1941, some of these translations were collected in *Ah Q and Others- Selected Stories of Lusin*, published by Columbia University Press, which turned out to be the first book exclusively introducing Lu Xun's work in America. He also translated works of other contemporary Chinese writers like Lao She, Ba Jin, Shen Congwen, Zhang Tianyi, Mao Dun, Ye Shaojun and so on in his *Contemporary Chinese Stories* (1944). Wang also paid attention to Chinese literature during war times. *Stories of China at War* (1947) is a collection of 16 pieces of translation of Chinese short stories written during the anti-Japanese War, nine of which are Wang's contribution.

Apart from modern Chinese literature, Wang also spared no effort to introduce traditional Chinese literature to the West. He translated two chapters from *Ru Lin Wai Shi* (《儒林外史》), the first seven chapters of *Xi You Ji* (《西游记》), and worked together with Ethel Andrews to translate *A Voyage to Strange Lands* (《镜花缘》), all these collected in *Chinese Wit and Humor* (1946) edited by George Kao, with an introduction by Lin Yutang. "Wang's translation is very fascinating and well received among Western readers." (Ma Zuyi, 2003: 385, ) Besides, his *Traditional Chinese Tales*, published in 1944, is a collection of ancient Chinese stories including *The Dragon's Daughter* (《柳毅传》), *The Story of Yingying* (《西厢记》), *The Magic Pillow* (《枕中记》) and so on. In 1958, he finished the revised version of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which included 60 chapters this time with a preface by Mark Van Doren. Wang retired in 1965, and from then on, he did not publish any new books, but he continued his translation career, producing translation works of Taiwanese writer Chen Ruoxi *Ting Yun* (《天云》) and *The Tunnel* (《地道》), the 17<sup>th</sup> century Chinese novel *Marriage as Retribution-*

*Awakening the world* (《醒世姻缘传》) and *The Book of Lü Buwei: excerpts* (《吕氏春秋》). These translations were published in *Renditions*, the leading international journal of Chinese literature in English translation.

As one of the earliest scholars who made some modern Chinese writers such as Lu Xun, Shen Congwen, Guo Moruo known to Americans, Wang was in many ways the founding father of modern Chinese literature researches in America. He passed away in Sept. 2001 in New York, and the *Columbia University Record* put on an obituary reviewing Wang's academic achievement as well as his teaching career in Columbia University. It gives Wang his due credit by referring him as "a leading translator of both traditional and modern works", and recognizes Wang's major effort in introducing Chinese literature to the West (Devitt, 2001). Wang is a trailblazer in introducing Chinese literature to the West. In the 1930s, Western scholars had a truly limited knowledge of both Chinese culture and literature. Just as Hsia (2001: 38) recalled when he finished his work *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* that the Yale University Publisher could not even find a peer reviewer for this work. "Except Chi-Chen Wang in Columbia, there is no other professor who has ever translated Chinese literature." (ibid: 38, ) Wang reached great heights in his work of promoting Chinese literature in foreign countries and what he has done blazed a trail in this area.

His abridged translation *Dream of the Red Chamber* was the most popular version before the appearance of the complete versions due to his fluent and idiomatic writing as well as his well-grounded knowledge of Chinese literature. It was reprinted many times and furthered the spread of *Hong Lou Meng* in the West. According to Zhang Hui (2011: 295), Wang's version was critical to the development of the study of *Hong Lou Meng* in America, with many ensuing researches based on Wang's translation. What calls for special attention is that Wang's translation took place when the new Redology represented by Hu Shi began in earnest, and Wang's understanding of the original text was influenced by Hu Shi's research to a large extent. Compared with other previous versions, Wang had done a great deal as to the research on the main characters and settings of the story, which provided the Western readers with a more profound understanding of this great novel.

#### IV. WANG'S LITERARY VIEW AND HIS COMMENT ON CHINESE LITERATURE

In the first half of the 20th century, only a few scattered fragments of the Chinese writing of the revolutionary period had appeared in English. And modern Chinese literature was practically ignored abroad. Most Western scholars thought that the modern bai-hua, or vernacular literature was of no value. Chi-Chen Wang was among a few eager Chinese writers who wanted to introduce modern Chinese literature to the West. "As a generation of May 4th intellectuals, Wang deemed Lu Xun as a hero and he advocated new-vernacular literature." (Hsia, 2011: 97) One of Wang's significant contributions lies in his introduction of Lu Xun to the West. He was the first person in the world to write a chronicle of Lu Xun's life, *Lusin: a Chronological Record* which was published in the bulletin of China Institute in America in 1939. More importantly, Wang identified himself with Lu Xun's spirit of revolt that had been long lost in the Chinese nation and thus devoted himself to translating many reputable works of Lu Xun. His *Ah Q and Others*, the collection of translation of Lu Xun's works, presents an innovative and more revealing aspect of Chinese literature. "Until the appearance of this book there had been only two or three anthologies of contemporary Chinese writing in English." (Hsiao, 1941: 560) Chan (1975: 271) also mentioned that it was precisely Wang's translations of Lu Xun that made Lu Xun's fictional works well known in the West.

Wang worked hard at making Chinese language and literature available to English readers. While teaching in East-Asia Department of Columbia University, Wang also edited two Chinese anthologies for the use of advanced Western students learning Chinese, *Readings in Traditional Chinese* (1944) and *Readings in Modern Chinese* (1944). The two companion volumes included selections from Confucius, Mencius and other ancient philosophers, essays by famous writers of the Tang and Song dynasties, and also vernacular essays by twentieth-century authors. "The selections in these two volumes show not only careful work but also fine scholarship on the part of the editor. Most of the material included is interesting and important, representing a great variety of Chinese style and thought." (Teng, 1945: 296-297) Wang did an excellent job in presenting outstanding examples of Chinese literature

including classics such as Liu Zongyuan's "Essay on Snake Catchers" and Hu Shi's modern articles on the literary renaissance. Besides, in translation Wang published a collection of *Traditional Chinese Tales* (1944), *Contemporary Chinese Stories* (1944) and *Stories of China at War* (1947). From the romantic and supernatural stories which were the favorite themes of Chinese story tellers of the old days to modern writings resulting from Chinese cultural and literary revolution written during the 1930s to 1940s, Wang provided Western readers with extraordinary changes taking place in Chinese literature, as Cameron (1944: 386) pointed out that "in these volumes Mr. Wang confirms his reputation as a very able translator and interpreter of Chinese literature."

Although Wang spent most of his time in America, he kept in touch with the then active cultural celebrities such as Hu Shi, Xu Zhimo, Shen Congwen, etc. Wang was an intimate friend of Shen Congwen, and they had been in correspondence for many years. We can infer from the letters Shen Congwen wrote to Wang that Wang had been engaged in translation for a long time and received suggestions on translation from his friends in China (Shen, 2002: 38). Given the cultural and political settings under which he was doing most of his translation, Wang filled a large gap on cultural communication between China and the West. To conclude, although his work may not be so inclusive as to offer a panoramic view of Chinese literature, Wang was a studious and prolific translator who worked hard to build bridges linking the West and the East. Born into a traditional scholarly family, Wang knew firsthand the limitations and weakness of traditional Chinese literature. Whereas he spoke highly of prominent writers such as Sima Qian, Tao Yuan-ming, Li Bai and Du Fu, Wang also saw the downside in traditional Chinese literature.

To begin with, he pointed out that literature was long considered not an art which had its own reason for being, but stereotypes chiefly concerning art of government or social intercourse throughout Chinese history. Wang (1946: 391) quoted the example of the staple of post-Han literature, functional compositions as obituaries, biographies, prefaces and even letters, essays, and descriptions of places, as saying that these writings are "generally more stereotyped than expressive of genuine feeling". Despite few exceptions such as Ji Kang, Bai Juyi, Li Bai, etc, the collected works of

traditional Chinese writers are "no more truly literature than are the collected speeches, letters and resolutions of the average politician" (ibid: 392).

Besides, Wang attributed much of the creative elements in traditional Chinese literature to the stimulus of popular literature such as score lyrics and ballads. He held that the emergence of great modern literature stemmed from the convergence of literary and popular traditions (ibid: 394). Thus, he laid great stress on the appearance of novels like *Ru Lin Wai Shi* by Wu Jingzi, *Hong Lou Meng* by Cao Xueqin which marked a great achievement in Chinese history of literature. These works, as he pointed out, reached a high level of novel writing by gradually reconciling popular literature with the mainstream literature, though the tendency of the two traditions to merge was never fully realized (ibid). Therefore, Wang was inclined to hold that compared with Western literature, Chinese literature including fiction and drama was reduced to inferiority.

What's more, Wang advocated the Western influence on modern Chinese literature since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The lack of essential spiritual quality of revolt as seen in the Western civilization was what he believed caused the stagnation of Chinese civilization. Hence, he appreciated the efforts of the leaders of the literary revolution who succeeded in introducing Western notions of what the ideals of literature should be. In his essay "Western tides in Chinese literature" published in *Pacific Affairs*, Wang (1934: 127) gave a detailed account on the development of contemporary Chinese literature and held that contemporary

Chinese literature was a "direct outcome of the impact of the West". Particularly, he elaborated on the influence of the translation of foreign literature on Chinese literature. Wang praised the translations following the inauguration of the Literary Revolution launched by Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu. "Translations were stressed, for the purpose of introducing new ideas and values, and of serving as models for the new literature... the criterion was now fidelity to the original, in style and matter, rather than readability and elegance." (ibid: 133) With respect to the prevailing trend of Europeanized style existing not only in translation but also in original writing of authors who did not even know any foreign languages, Wang believed that the change of writing style taking place among Chinese literary circles

was significant, which contributed to the expression of new ideas, as “the Europeanized style was necessary for the expression of the new thoughts and images of the West and for the release of the Chinese mind from its traditional grooves”(ibid).

It can be concluded that Wang proposed to internalize the values of the “modern” countries of the West so that Chinese literature could be redefined and figure prominently in the world literature. And he wrote that “if it were not for the impact of the West, China would still be waddling indolently in the placid waters of its traditional civilization.” (ibid) Although the productions in the early stage of Literary Revolution were not all that satisfactory, he truly appreciated the short stories and essays of Lu Xun, the fiction of Mao Dun and Ye Shaojun and thought these works “compare favorably with most of what is being done in Europe and America” (ibid).

#### V. WANG’S TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES---IN PURSUIT OF FAITHFULNESS AND READABILITY

In this section, Wang’s self-revision of his translation will be analyzed with a view to exploring Wang’s translation

principles. Wang’s translation of Lu Xun’s short story *Shangshi* (《伤逝》) was first published in *T’ien Hsia Monthly*, Vol.11 (Aug-Sep, 1940), and was later collected in the book *Ah Q and Others* in 1941. It should be noted that the latter edition has undergone many revisions and by taking a look at these revisions one can catch a glimpse of certain principles Wang follows in the process of translating. Some revisions involve the correction of translation mistakes due to a misunderstanding of the original text or omissions, others are concerned about the expressiveness of the translation including checks on diction, grammar and punctuation and acceptability of the translation among the target readers on the level of cohesion and coherence. To conclude, Wang makes his revisions with two aims in mind: to capture the original flavor and to enhance the readability of his translation.

On one hand, Wang checks his translation to make sure that he has been faithful to the original writing. And the following table lists Wang’s revisions on mistranslations, omissions and improvements on the first edition, revealing Wang’s endeavor to recreate the original flavor and convey the author’s intention:

Table1: Wang’s revisions on mistranslations, omissions and improvements

From the Chinese original <i>Shangshi</i> by Lu Xun	From <i>Remorse</i> published in <i>T’ien Hsia Monthly</i> (1940)	From <i>Remorse</i> published in <i>Ah Q and Others</i> (1941)
(1)子君不在我这破屋里时，我什么也看不见。 229	When Tzu-chun was not with me in my dingy room, <u>I saw nothing.</u> 82	When Tzu-chun was not with me in my dingy room, <u>I could do nothing.</u> 159
(2)然而常须由她补足，由她纠正，像一个丁等的学生。 231	But I had to be prompted and corrected again and again, like a <u>not very bright student.</u> 84	But I had to be prompted and corrected again and again, like a “ <u>D</u> ” student. 162
(3)揭去许多先前以为了解而现在看来却是隔膜，即所谓真的隔膜了。 232	discovering <u>at the same time many barriers</u> which I thought I had <u>broken through, that is, true barriers between our thoughts.</u> 86	I discovered many things about her which I thought I had <u>understood</u> but <u>which I really did not.</u> <u>These had been the real barriers between us.</u> 164
(4)尤其使我不乐的是她要装作勉强的笑容。 233	especially when she tried to <u>smile</u> 86	especially when she tried to <u>hide it by forced smiles.</u> 165
(5)他的刊物是决不会埋没好稿子的。 236	his publication would never <u>throw good manuscripts into the waste-paper basket.</u> 89	his publication would never <u>turn down a good manuscript.</u> 168
(6)屋子里总是散乱着碗碟，弥漫着煤烟， 236	the room was always cluttered with bowls and dishes and filled with <u>coal smoke.</u> 89	The room was always cluttered with bowls and dishes and filled with <u>smoke from the stove.</u> 169
(7)这是我积久才看出来的，	It took me some time to discover all this	It took me sometime to discover all this and



但同时如赫胥黎的论定“人类在宇宙间的位置”一般，自觉了我在这里的位置：不过是叭儿狗和油鸡之间。 237	<u>and it made me realize what Thomas Huxley said in “Man’s Place in Nature” that my place in the household was somewhere between the lapdog and the chickens.</u> 90	<u>to realize that my place in the household was somewhere between the lapdog and the chickens, just as certain observations made it possible for Huxley to fix “Man’s Place in Nature.”</u> 170
(8)我们已经不能再希望从什么地方会有来信, 237	We had given up hope of receiving <u>letters</u> , 91	We had given up hope of receiving <u>any replies to our letters.</u> 170
(9)然而我的笑貌一上脸,我的话一出口,却即刻变为空虚 239	I <u>tried to smile and to give her some measure of comfort, but my smile and my comforting words sounded hollow and meaningless.</u> 93	But <u>no sooner did the smile appear on my face and the comforting words come out of my mouth than</u> they began to seem hollow and meaningless. 173
(10)而且, 真的, 我豫感得这新生面便要来到了。 241	More than this, I actually was <u>expecting the arrival of this new life.</u> 95	What was more, I actually <u>had a feeling that this new life was about to open up before me.</u> 176
(11)我想, 只要离开这里, 子君便如还在我的身边; 至少, 也如还在城中。 244	If I could only leave this place, I thought, it would be as if Tzu-chun <u>was still with me.</u> 98	If I could only leave this place, I thought, it would be as though Tzu-chun <u>were still here in the city.</u> 179
(12)然而一切请托和书信, 都是一无反响; 244	All my enquiries and letters failed to <u>locate and reach her.</u> 98	all my inquiries and letters failed to <u>get any favorable response.</u> 179
(13)后面是唱歌一般的哭声。 246	in the rear there were <u>mourners.</u> 100	in the rear walked the <u>mourners uttering sing-song cries.</u> 182

The examples listed above consist of Wang’s correction of his mistranslation, as in examples (1), (8), (11), and (12), an indication of Wang’s clarification of the author’s somewhat blurry expression in examples (3), (7), (10), and his remedies for defect translation such as omission and diction as in examples (2), (4), (5), (6), (9), and (13). The improvement in the second edition attests to Wang’s constant exertion to transfer the original meaning as closely as possible but not at the expense of readability. Particularly, he is noted for his acquisition of Lu Xun’s writing with mixed tones of pathos and satire, as in example (3), by precisely transferring “揭去许多先前以为了解” into “I discovered many things about her which I thought I had understood but which I really did not.”, a reflection of his understanding of the subtlety and implication between the lines. And in example (13), the translation of “唱歌一般的哭声” into “sing-song cries” is a vivid recreation of the mourning scene.

Wang has won a high acclaim among Western critics for his faithful translation. Kao (1942: 281) speaks

highly of Wang’s excellent job in delivering the spirit of the original writing, saying that Wang’s *Ah Q and Others* keeps “the same sparing and deadly effective prose of the original”, and “becomes more than translation but a collaborative job, itself in part creative,” and he recognizes that Wang is “totally en rapport with the author.” Clyde (1947: 468), in his review of Wang’s *Stories of China at War*, concludes that “Wang has again demonstrated his capacity as a translator. The stories appear in excellent English, yet the flavor of their Chinese origin has been preserved in considerable measure.”

On the other hand, revisions are made to enhance the acceptability of the translation among target readers. This includes checks on grammar, language appropriateness, fluency, and natural writing according to the target linguistic conventions. The following revisions are mainly concerned with the expressiveness of the translation:

Table 2: Wang's revisions enhance the acceptability

From the Chinese original <i>Shangshi</i> by Lu Xun	From <i>Remorse</i> published in <i>T'ien Hsia Monthly</i> (1940)	From <i>Remorse</i> published in <i>Ah Q and Others</i> (1941)
(1)终于消失在别的步声的杂沓中了。229	<u>be lost</u> in the sound of other footsteps. 68	<u>lost themselves</u> in the sound of others. 159
(2)其时是我已经说尽了我的意见, 我的身世, 我的缺点, 很少隐瞒; 她也完全了解的了。230	By that time I had <u>exhausted all the conversation about my</u> opinions, my family, my faults. <u>I concealed little or nothing, and she understood everything about me.</u> 83	By that time I have <u>told her all about myself</u> and my opinions and faults; <u>I held back nothing and she seemed to have understood everything.</u> 160
(3)这彻底的思想就在她的脑里, 比我还透澈, 坚强得多。230	This was the thorough-going thought in her mind, even more thorough-going, more resolute than my own. 83	Her <u>spirit of revolt</u> appeared to be of the thorough-going kind, even more thorough-going, even more resolute than my own. 161
(4)岂但现在, 那时的事后便已模糊, 230	Not only <u>now, but it became blurred almost immediately afterwards.</u> 83	Not only have <u>I forgotten now the details of that episode, but I had difficulty in recalling the, even then.</u> 161
(5)便连这些断片也化作无可追踪的梦影。230	even these fragments became dream bubbles that <u>one can never quite grasp.</u> 83	even these fragments became dream bubbles that <u>eluded my grasp.</u> 161
(6)照见我含泪握着她的手, 一条腿跪了下去.....。231	with tears in my eyes, I held her hands in mine, <u>one leg bent in a kneeling position.</u> 84	<u>I keel on one knee beside her;</u> with tears in my eyes, I hold her hands in mine. 161
(7)然而她并不觉得可笑。即使我自己以为可笑, 甚而至于可鄙的, 她也毫不以为可笑。23`	She did not think it funny, <u>not even the things that I considered funny and shameful.</u> 84	She did not think it funny; <u>she did not even laugh at what I considered funny or shameful.</u> 162
(8)我们先是沉默的相视, 接着是放怀而亲密的交谈, 后来又是沉默。大家低头沉思着, 却并未想着什么事。232	At first we <u>looked at each other without saying anything,</u> then we talked freely and intimately, and then <u>again silence,</u> as we bowed our heads in thought, thinking about nothing. 85-86	We <u>would first gaze upon each other in silence</u> and then talk freely and intimately. We <u>would be silent again</u> as we bowed our heads in thought, thinking about nothing. 164
(9)短发都粘在脑额上; 234	her short hairs <u>sticking to</u> her forehead; 87	the short hairs <u>stuck to</u> her forehead, 165
(10)终于是用包袱蒙着头, 由我带到西郊去放掉了 237	In the end I had to <u>tie a piece of cloth over its head</u> and left it outside the city-wall. 91	In the end I <u>blindfolded</u> Ah Sui, took him outside the city wall and left him there. 170
(11)因为他们是永远围在别的铁炉旁, 或者靠在自家的白炉边的。238	for they sat by <u>other stoves, perhaps stoves of their own.</u> 92	for my <u>more fortunate acquaintances preferred to sit by other iron stoves that they had access to, or by their own earthen stoves.</u> 172
(12)他们的屋子自然是暖和的, 我在骨髓中却觉得寒冽。241	Their rooms were warm, it is true, but <u>there was a bleakness that chilled me to my marrow.</u> 95	Their rooms were warm, it was true, but <u>the way they received me chilled me to the marrow.</u> 176
(13)只是盐和干辣椒, 面粉, 半株白菜, 聚集在一处了,	<u>only some salt and dried pepper, some flour and half a head of cabbage gathered</u>	<u>I found, however, that she had gathered up in one heap the salt and dried peppers,</u>

242-243	in a heap, and by it twenty or thirty coppers. 96	flour, and half a head of cabbage and <u>had placed</u> by it twenty or thirty coppers. 177
(14)新的生路自然还很多，我约略知道，也间或依稀看见，觉得就在我面前 245	There were, indeed, still many new roads to life of which <u>I knew vaguely</u> , and <u>which</u> I sometimes seemed to have actual glimpses of right in front of my eyes, 99	There were, indeed, many new roads to life of which <u>I had some vague knowledge</u> . Sometimes I seemed to catch actual glimpses of <u>them</u> right in front of my eyes. 181
(15)经过许多回的思量 and 比较，也还只有会馆是还能相容的地方。 245	After many deliberations the Guild appeared to be the most suitable place. 99	After many deliberations and comparisons, the Guild appeared to be the most suitable place <u>as far as lodgings were concerned</u> . <u>So I came here</u> . 181
(16)初春的夜，还是那么长。长久的枯坐 246	The early spring nights were <u>as long as ever</u> . <u>Sitting abstractedly</u> 99	The spring nights <u>grew longer</u> ; <u>night after night</u> , I sat and sat as if lost. 182
(17)而又即刻消失在周围的威严和冷眼里了。 246	This vision vanished and in its place I saw harsh judgment and chilly glances. 100	<u>But bitter as it was</u> , this vision gave way <u>to</u> something even worse—the harsh judgment and chilly glances <u>that followed her</u> . 182
(18)但是，这却更空虚于新的生路；现在所有的只是初春的夜，竟还是那么长。246	But <u>these thoughts</u> were even idler than the new roads to life. <u>All that remains is the early spring night</u> , <u>the long early spring night</u> . 100	But <u>speculations like those</u> were even idler than <u>thoughts of</u> the new roads to life. <u>The only thing I am sure of</u> is that spring nights <u>are long</u> . 183

By comparing the two versions, one can spot Wang's considerable efforts to improve the expressiveness and fluency of his translation. In proofreading his translation, he sticks to the standard of natural writing. In order to discard the rigidity and obscurities caused by literal translation, Wang tries to put himself in Lu Xun's shoes and imagines what he would write if he spoke English. As is Wang's usual practice, he avoids stiffly following the author's way of writing but rephrases the sentences in a way comprehensible to target readers, as in examples (2), (4), (6) (16), and (18). For example, in example (6), Wang's first translation of the proposal scene follows the original sentence order, by rendering “一条腿跪了下去” into “one leg bent in a kneeling position”, which appears somewhat awkward and confusing, while the second edition “I keel on one knee beside her” shows considerable improvement both in literary grace and linguistic appropriateness. As Lu Xun's original writing takes on the coloring of the simplicity of modern vernacular Chinese yet not without implicitness, Wang tries to clarify the author's idea either by adding more description according to the context or

rewrites the original sentence, as in examples (3), (11), (12), (15), and (17). For instance, the addition of “But bitter as it was”, and “something even worse” in example (17) contributes to revealing the hero's mixed feelings of sadness and remorse, which eludes readers' grasp in the first edition. Similarly, by revealing the cause of the hero's chilliness as due to “the way they received me” in example (12), Wang endeavors to reduce ambiguity in his translation. Besides, Wang also takes pains to pursue natural writing and fluency in his translation, which includes better choice of words, a few grammar checks or removal of redundant depictions, as in examples (1), (5), (7), (9), (10), (13), and (14). The replacement of the word “elude” with “one can never quite grasp” in example (5) and the word “blindfold” with “tie a piece of cloth over its head” in example (10) shows Wang's improvement on the choice of words.

Wang's effort in making works loaded with heavy Chinese elements both understandable and readable to Western readers is well acknowledged. George Kao (1942: 280) shows his appreciation by saying that Wang brings Chinese literature to Western readers “as if the

language barrier does not exist.” And Hsiao Chi’en (1941: 562), after reading through *Ah Q and Others*, complements Wang on his translation skills and considers him as a “competent and painstaking translator.” “In comparing his translation with the original, I was amazed at his achievement.” And he also points out that Wang should be thanked for his “avoiding of the exploitation of the ideographical nature of the Chinese language.” By launching a thorough study on Wang’s self-revision of his translation, we can infer Wang’s translation attitude as well as his principles in translation. His continuous efforts to identify with the author and to figure out what he means shows his caution and prudence in translation, and the excellent translation also attests to his good command of both Chinese and English. Wang’s stamina and fortitude displayed in constantly perfecting his translation also justifies his reputation as a talented translator.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Chi-Cheng Wang was remembered for his unique translating of both classical and modern Chinese literature for Western readers in the 1940s when the revolutionary China with its new nationalist forces unknown before attracted American’s attention. Wang translated a lot of modern Chinese writings and retained most of the exotic elements about China to cater to the readers’ expectations. Besides, as a literary critic himself, Wang’s own understanding of Chinese literature has exerted an influence on his translation. He believed the lack of essential quality of revolt in the Western civilization was what caused the stagnation of Chinese civilization, hence the inferiority of most mediocre works of traditional Chinese literature when compared with their Western counterparts. Wang’s translations in his most productive years centered on socially conscious types of writing, which bear a close relationship---both in themes and in technique---to his sympathy and expectation for China. All the original stories were created between the late 1910s and 1930s, spanning a period when China was going through dramatic social and ideological transformation. Wang aimed to reveal an awakening China that was taking a good look at the life around her in his translation. And in the process of translating, Wang was guided by the principles of both

capturing the original flavor and enhancing the readability of the target text. On the one hand, Wang made sure that he had been faithful to the original writing. And on the other hand, revisions are made to enhance the acceptability of the translation. His continuous efforts to identify with the author and his excellent translation justify his reputation as a competent and talented translator.

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