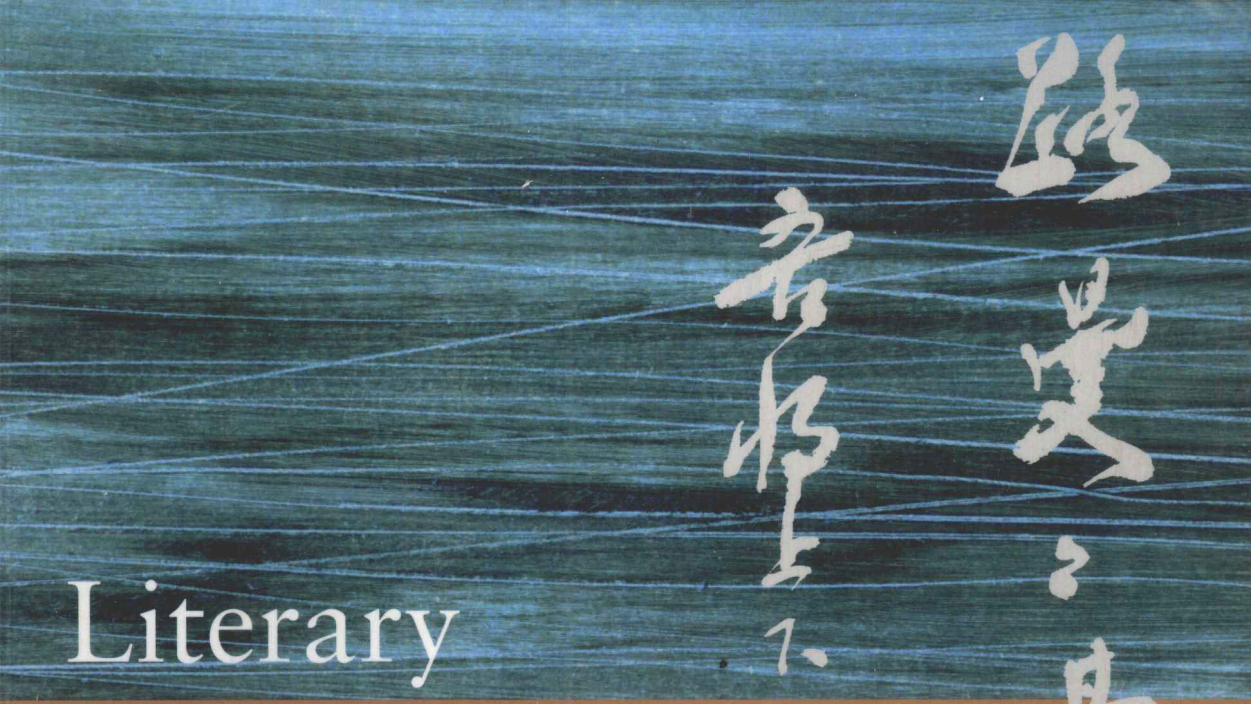

Literary Translation

Quest for Artistic Integrity

JIN, Di

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Literary Translation

Quest for Artistic Integrity

JIN Di

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Lines from Qu Yuan（屈原c. *340-278 B. C.*）

路曼曼其脩遠兮
吾將上下而求索

[My goal so remote and the journey, O so challenging,
Yet up and down I'll search and find my way there.]*

---

* Chinese calligraphy by Professor Vincent Ma; English translation by JIN, Di. Thanks are due to Professor Kai Ching Ho for providing accurate wording of the original lines and existent English translations for reference.

Literary Translation

Quest for Artistic Integrity

By JIN Di

Edited and introduced by William McNaughton

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Preface
Confluence of Ideals

The perfect translation may be nothing short of a utopian dream, yet it is a very realistic aim for most earnest translators, particularly those who are devoted to literary translation. They strive to get as close to it as possible, more or less like a *limit* in the mathematical sense. Even though that limit is never completely attainable, they know it makes a fundamental difference whether one aims at it or not. This book is one of them attempting to delineate, through a systematic analysis of practical examples of failures and relative successes, an approach that he believes moves in the right direction of the common aspiration.

Although the theory of the "four-fold motion" which forms the backbone of this approach did not take the form it assumes now in this book until the last five years when the chapters were actually written, the earnest quest for artistic integrity in literary translation out of which it grew had been in force for decades. It had long been my firm conviction that the only loyalty worth the name in literary translation is to be found by following such a course of penetration and adjustments and re-creations, throughout the complicated process of linguistic transition, with the artistic integrity of the text as its lodestar. And its underlying principle of "equivalent effect" and the various principles behind its working strategies had been expostulated in my writings and executed (though often with more or less regrettable imperfections to be corrected and improved later) in my translations throughout those decades. It was only in the late 1980s, however, that I began to be encouraged to think that I was not isolated in my quest. That it was shared by lovers of literature in the world.

For that is how I took the completely unexpected standing ovation, my first ever, with which the learned audience at the Philadelphia Joyce conference in June 1989 overwhelmed me, a total nonentity to Western academia. I was presenting a paper on the translation of *Ulysses,*[1] and the couple of hundred Joyce scholars (a species known to be rather fastidious in their artistic taste) and lovers of superior literature in the audience were obviously showing their enthusiastic support for the translation principles this old stranger had applied in rendering Joyce's challenging maestria as fully as possible. And so did I, half a year later, take the heart-warming applause from the professional translators, all pursuers of the best in translation, who crowded the large room where I was presenting a paper on translation procedures[2] at the November 1989 Iowa City annual conference of the American Literary Translators Association. An exact opposite of the Philadelphia paper, this was an article of all bones, i.e. expostulation of the driest principles and strategies with hardly any examples except a very few of the simplest words and phrases.

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[1] Subsequently published as two essays: "The Odyssey of *Ulysses* into China" (*JJQ* Spring 1990, now part of *Shamrock* Chapter I) and "Translating *Ulysses,* East and West" (*Joyce in Context,* ed. Cheng and Martin, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992, now *Shamrock* Ch. 4).

[2] "Contra-Bly Stages of Translation" (*Translation Review,* Univ. of Texas at Dallas, No. 36-7, 1991).

Not a hint of Joyce's brilliant wordplay that had been giving me aesthetic delight and translator's torment in my daily tête-à-tête with him. Not a single case of the sort of perplexing Joycean locutions that were going to dominate my weekly luncheon discussions with my eight-year standing advisor Bob Kellogg, the translator-Joycean-professor in Charlottesville. Yet in a sense the Iowa City paper represented the skeleton of the body of which the Philadelphia paper was the flesh and blood. In retrospect it was the embryo that in a dozen years was to grow into the artistic integrity approach of this book, and the unreserved enthusiasm of the professional participants of the translators' conference was as important to its growing process as the spontaneous appreciation of the literary scholars at the Joyce conference.

There is of course a huge difference between impromptu approval in a conference environment and a considered opinion formed after careful deliberation. I am well aware that both my theory and my practice are far from being faultless, and I expect criticisms of every kind after the publication of this book. But the heartening effect of those two conferences and the more than a hundred subsequent occasions, in the dozen years since, on which I gave talks, lectures, presentations and keynote addresses at conferences and forums on four continents, did continually sustain and strengthen my urge to further work out the theory that I hoped would enable all of us who share the ideal to get closer and closer to the limit.

Talking about the common ideal of translation professionals and professionals-to-be, i. e. students and other people who devote themselves to acquiring this difficult art, however, tends to blur our view of a much larger group of people who, in a sense, are even more fundamental than the professionals. That is the huge number of readers, whose sensitive minds the works of art are meant to communicate with. In fact, the professionals' ideal would be entirely meaningless if the needs of those minds were ignored, as I was reminded by a surprising little incident in June 1996.

It was during one of the social gatherings called "Irish evening in the James Joyce Pub" in the programme of the XV International James Joyce Symposium in Zurich. The location was a large tavern, reputed to have been moved from Ireland, probably spacious enough to seat a couple of hundred thirsty lovers of the Irish national drink, but that night, with all symposium participants eager to follow in Joyce's wake, it was standing room only all over the place. "Music, Guinness, beer and snacks" were the items listed in the programme for the occasion, but not a single person was able to hear any of the first item, for everybody was talking and each had to shout to hear one's own voice. It was just the most condensed and incessant din you can imagine for a merry party.

Exciting enjoyment was tiring. At about nine o'clock I decided to tear myself away. I don't remember how I had managed to nestle into one of those privileged wall seats, but as soon as I struggled onto my feet from it, the man sitting to my right stood up, too. A stranger in his middle forties, he had introduced himself as a computer scientist with a calling card bearing the name of Michael Thiele. "Not a Joycean", he had explained amicably, "but very much interested". I had not been able to give him much of my attention, which had been dominated by two beautiful young Joyceans, one of whom had innumerable questions for me because she was writing a dissertation on the Chinese translation of *Ulysses*. But now the stranger followed close behind me as I squeezed my way out of the dense crowd.

The surprise came as soon as we emerged into the quiet night outside the pub. "May I invite you to have some dinner in my house?" said the hardly acquainted Mr. Thiele. Then, to my quizzical look, he explained that he had read an article of mine in the local newspaper.[3] "I am convinced", he said, "that you have got the highest standard of translation". He told me that, having a strong wish to meet me, he had studied the Symposium programme and decided that this particularly convivial evening would be his best chance.

The sincerity in his eyes and words was so touching that declining was out of the question, though I was not hungry at all. His house was in the southernmost outskirts of Zurich, and he did most of the talking during the long walk, dwelling on his family and on the books that he loved, particularly Joyce's. And at the door of his house, he called out as soon as he opened it: "Here comes the Chinese translator"! His wife and daughter came out, and he introduced me to them with an air of triumph.

Seeing that I had no appetite, he made me sit down comfortably in his living room with a glass of wine. But more than anything he showed me the book shelves which lined the lengths of his spacious room ("and the other rooms too", he added). He wanted me to look at the titles. "All literary books!" he affirmed with great satisfaction.

"This is what gives meaning to my life", he said softly. And he confided in me that he did his job as a computer scientist only because it enabled him to enjoy literature in his own time. But even more emphatically he linked his love of literature to his appreciation of my theory of translation, citing some of the examples I had discussed in my essay to show how he agreed that Joyce's art is kept intact that way through the linguistic changes of translation. "Your theory is so important because this is the only way to give life to good literature in another language. I do hope you will keep it up".

This earnest wish spoken by this man whom I hardly knew has remained as powerful for me as the heart-warming applause I have received in conference and lecture halls. Perhaps it was the unusual effort that he had made to give it to me which lent it its unusual weight.

"Please believe me", he assured me when I declined his offer of shelter for the night and made ready for my departure, "your visit has made this a day of a lifetime".

Please believe me, Mr. Michael Thiele, I will now reply to that friend in the distant land, so dear though I have never met him again. I thank you from my heart and I regard your wish as a clarion call affirming the communal demand of all literary readers in the world. Please take this book as an answer to it.

My heartfelt thanks, indeed, are due to all those professionals and non-professionals named or unnamed above and, for the final phase of the last five years during which the manuscript for the book was written, to the City University of Hong Kong (Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics), under whose auspices Professor William McNaughton

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[3] "Die künstelerische Integrität des Textes", published in a special edition of "Literatur und Kunst", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, for the opening of the symposium on Bloomsday, being a German translation of a paper I had presented at the previous Joyce symposium in Seville, Spain, entitled "The Artistic Integrity of Joyce's Text in Translation" (now revised as *Shamrock* Chapter 5).

and Professor King Kui Sin organized my two series of lectures in two separate years, and to the University of Washington (Simpson Center for the Humanities and Department of Comparative Literature) for sponsoring the lectures which enabled me to test my pre-publication chapters. In particular I am indebted to Bill for his introduction and his invaluable contribution to my manuscript by the pains he took in finding faults in it and suggesting improvements. There is, of course, a limit to what an adviser can do, and whatever defects and flaws remain are solely mine, which all readers are welcome to point out and criticize.

* * *

Thanks to the enthusiastic support of St. Jerome, in particular Editor-in-chief Professor Mona Baker and publisher Mr. Ken Baker, this book will soon be published in one of the world's major centres of translation studies. The overall revision I have given its text in accordance with their guidelines, to my own surprise, has turned out to be a delightful experience, not a bit like the boring laborious task that I had anticipated. I believe I have now a text better than before in many ways. There are, however, a few format matters on which I have been obliged to deviate somewhat from the St. Jerome guidelines, and I think the following explanations are in order:

1. All references are listed under author's last name plus year of publication in accordance with the St Jerome guidelines, but there are two exceptions:
   a) Joyce's *Ulysses* is listed under its abbreviation *U*, followed not by its publication year, but by episode and line numbers;
   b) Translations cited as examples are listed under translator's name, followed by (tr).
2. Most contemporary translations quoted for critical analysis, except those of my own, are presented with their sources suppressed. This is a practice I have established in my theoretical publications for the purpose of keeping discussions focused on the art of translation itself without the interference of personal feelings. However, it is important for the realistic value of our studies to know that those translations are actually found in print. Any hypothetical cases discussed are specified as such.
3. All underlining for emphasis (in distinction from occasional italics from the sources themselves) is mine in source-language texts and translations exemplified.
4. All back-translations are mine, unless otherwise specified. English transliterations and explanatory translations (mostly literal) are inserted in square brackets after Chinese expressions in the text.

JIN Di
University of Washington, Seattle
August 2002

Introduction

by

William McNaughton

Professor Jin's translation of *Ulysses* into Chinese, as Professor Wang Yougui says, belongs "on the must-read lists for undergraduates and graduates . . . in programmes in translation studies" (Wang 1999:278). With the present book on *Literary Translation: Quest for Artistic Integrity*, Professor Jin adds another item to those must-read lists, and the two works – Jin's Chinese *Ulysses* and the present *Literary Translation* – are bound to shed light on one another and to enhance each other's value to translators and translation educators. And in *Literary Translation* there is such a clear and thorough exposition of the theory behind Professor Jin's monumental achievement in producing a worthy Chinese *Ulysses* and such a profusion of enlightening and instructive examples that *Literary Translation* will be valuable to translators of literature between almost any pair of languages, not just Chinese and English.

Literary Translation should be of interest and should be useful also to teachers and critics of twentieth-century literature in English, to students of Modernism, to researchers in comparative literature and in comparative culture, and to teachers of language. In this introduction, I will try to touch on some of the ways in which the lectures can be useful to each of these kinds of reader. But much of what I will say comes, naturally enough, from my shared interests with Professor Jin in translation studies and in twentieth-century literature in English, especially James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

In my career as a translator and translation educator, I have been very lucky. I started my studies in the field with three years of tutelage from Ezra Pound (1953-56), and I ended them (at least the formal, public part of them) by listening to the six lectures by JIN Di that grew into the present book. After that early tutelage, much of what I read and heard on the subject of translation over the next forty years seemed anti-climactic. JIN Di's six lectures, however, did not seem like anti-climax at all. They seemed to be at the same level. Naturally, then, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to a wider audience the insights, deductions, and illuminations about translation practice and theory which JIN Di has put into this book.

The Development of Translation Theory

In the development of translation theory – in the appearance of those rare works in which the theorist says something (to borrow Steiner's words) "fundamental or new" about the subject – one pattern can be seen time after time: a translator, having finished some large and important job of translation, sits down soon afterwards and reflects on the work, and writes up the fruits of his experience. He writes up what he has learned, what he has seen, about this very complex and mysterious process of taking a message or a mimesis from

one culture and language and bringing it over meaningfully into another language and culture. St. Jerome after doing the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin is one example; Martin Luther after doing the Bible into German is another; and Dryden after doing Ovid and Virgil from Latin into English; Holderlin after doing Sophocles from Greek into German; Stephen MacKenna after doing Plotinus from Greek into English; Franz Rosenzweig after doing parts of the Bible into German; Walter Benjamin after doing Baudelaire from French into German; Paul Valery after doing Virgil from Latin into French; and Pound after doing (among many other things) Cavalcanti from Italian into English. In the Chinese tradition, there is, pre-eminently, Yan Fu.

This is precisely the situation in which Professor Jin found himself after his monumental, sixteen-year labour of translating Joyce's *Ulysses* from English into Chinese. Regarding JIN Di's achievement, we should consider the following (Wang 1999:269):

> The year 1994 witnessed a phenomenal development in the area of Chinese translations and foreign literatures: after a seventy-two-year-long wait, one fortunately not in vain, two complete translations of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the greatest English literary work of the twentieth century, finally came into being in China, like an antiphonal duet of phoenixes. . . . Considering the universally recognized literary value of the original work, the degree of difficulty involved in its translation, and the excellence achieved in the translations produced, it is no exaggeration to say that these two versions of *Ulysses* are the translations of the century.

Professor Wang concludes, "[The] person wishing to enjoy something authentic in colour and form and accurate and faithful to the original should opt for Jin's translation" (*ibid.*: 278).

After the fortunate few who heard Professor Jin's six lectures at the City University of Hong Kong, readers of the present book are the first to have the opportunity to share with him those fruits, that learning, those insights.

Translation and "Close Reading"

In addition to translators and translation educators, students of literature – including, but not limited to, students of comparative literature – may find in the present book many a jewel of insight, criticism, or analysis. The "New Critics" did not, of course, invent the technique of "close reading". Nietzsche (*Morgenroete*, Preface 5) before them had said:

> I haven't been a philologist for nothing. In fact, I may still be a philologist, that is, a master of the art of *reading slow*. Finally, of the art of *writing slow*. And now, write slow, read slow – I do them not just because I have formed the habit, but also because *I like it that way*. A malicious liking? Only to write things that will drive the 'man-in-a-hurry' up the wall? For philology demands of its admirers one thing above all, that they get away from the hurly-burly, give themselves some time, get quiet, get *slow*. The philologist should be a goldsmith, a master of the goldsmith's art as applied to

> *words*, focused deliberately and carefully on the work, doing everything slow. ly. That is why philology, these days, is an art more important than ever, why it seduces us and casts such a spell over us, in this age of "THE JOB," of rushing around, of getting in a sweat, of 'let's get it over with!' even if "it" is a book (ancient or modern). This art isn't in such a hurry to get things done, its practitioners learn to read *well*, that is, to read slow, read deep, looking backward and forward, with second thoughts, with open doors, with sensitive fingers and eyes.

(There is much in the triumph of Professor Jin's translation of *Ulysses*, and much in the present book, that validates those famous sentences of Nietzsche's.)

But for the English-speaking world in the 20th century, the New Critics did find the term for it: "close reading". And they did a great deal to focus our attention on it. This relates to translation precisely in that the translator – and not only the translator of literature – has to do "close reading" . . . has to do *very* close reading . . . if he or she is to have any hope of bringing over the "source-language text" into the target language. I know *Ulysses* very well, I think – after forty years of pleasurable study (Pound's *Cantos* is the only book I have read more often). Yet one of my major pleasures in listening to JIN Di's lectures and reading them again in the present book was new insights into, new understanding of, new pleasures taken from, *Ulysses*. In his sixteen years of work on *Ulysses*, then, JIN Di became, *pari passu*, not just a modern master of translation, but also one of our best critics and teachers of *Ulysses*. (That proposition will hold true even if the reader does not accept my equation of translation and close reading – holds true by reference to Pound's dictum that translation *in itself* is one of the five kinds of worthwhile criticism.)

Translation and the Language Classroom

Finally, there are some lessons of fundamental importance for language teachers to be learned from the present book. It was discovered ("re-discovered" would be more accurate) not long ago in France, after years of condemnation and neglect (due, at least in part, to the vogue of "the communicative approach" in the study of foreign languages), that translation by the student can be very useful in the foreign-language class (see Lavault 1985). It would take more space than I have here fully to summarize the arguments in support of this proposition and to present the contemporary French qualifications of the proposition; but one point of qualification is especially relevant to JIN Di's book. The translations that the student does should, for the most part, be "real" translations, with a communicative purpose (and not an academic exercise). Such "real" translation, of course, can only be done after careful global preparation, after the student-translator has become quite familiar with the source-language text, after he or she has done an in-depth exegesis of the text. As providing a model and exposition of such "global preparation", I know of nothing to equal the chapters below on JIN Di's translation of *Ulysses*. The language teacher who wants to incorporate the device of "rehabilitated translation" (to use Prof. Lavault's expression) into her or his language classroom will be amply repaid (as

will her or his students) by the study of Professor Jin's book.

"The Novel of Pure Style"

One of the major claims to importance which *Ulysses* has in the canon of twentieth-century literature is that it may well be the first novel fully to realize the vision of Flaubert, that the novel should evolve toward a "novel of pure style". Flaubert (qtd. In Ellmann and Feidelson 1965:126) wrote:

Style as Absolute

> What seems beautiful to me, what I should like to write, is a book about nothing, a book dependent on nothing external, which would be held together by the strength of its style, just as the earth, suspended in the void, depends on nothing external for its support; a book which would have almost no subject, or at least in which the subject would be almost invisible, if such a thing is possible. The finest works are those that contain the least matter: the closer expression comes to thought, the closer language comes to coinciding and merging with it, the finer the result. I believe that the future of Art lies in this direction.
>
> It is for this reason that there are no noble subjects or ignoble subjects: from the standpoint of pure Art[,] one might almost establish the axiom that there is no such thing as subject, style in itself being an absolute manner of seeing things.

It is widely known among translators of literature (I believe) that *style* is the most difficult aspect of a text to bring over into another language and culture.

Ulysses exemplifying, then, this Flaubertian ideal of the modern novel, the translator of *Ulysses* is faced with the surpassingly difficult task of producing a target-language version in which the style (or styles) of the source-language text is meaningfully imitated. This, I believe, JIN Di has done, to a surprising degree. And in it we can see the superiority of Professor Jin's translation to almost any – perhaps to all – other versions. After all, if *Ulysses* is the "novel of pure style" *par excellence*, how can a translation be deemed faithful (how can it be deemed a translation, even) if it does not bring over the style? The reader can learn much if he or she will pay careful attention, as he or she goes through the present book, to JIN Di's concentration on matters of style.

Six Lessons on Translation

Here let me try to summarize what I see as some of the most important lessons about translation to be learned from Professor Jin's work. Let me warn the user of this book at the beginning, however, that my poor paraphrase can in no way be considered a substitute for the lessons so eruditely, painstakingly, brilliantly worked out by Professor Jin in the