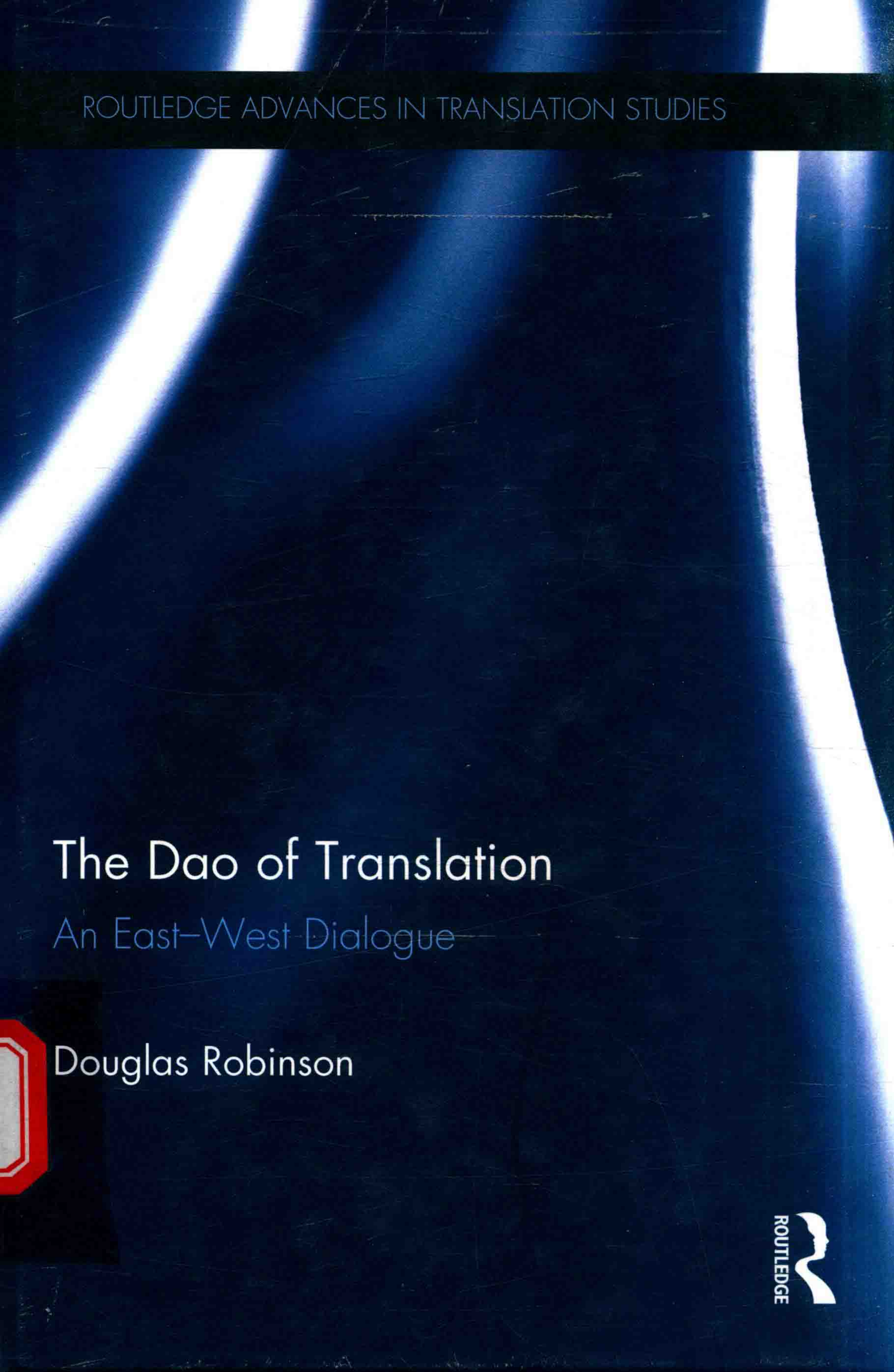

ROUTLEDGE ADVANCES IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

The Dao of Translation

An East–West Dialogue

Douglas Robinson

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An East–West Dialogue

Douglas Robinson

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The Dao of Translation

The Dao of Translation sets up an East–West dialogue on the nature of language and translation and specifically on the "unknown forces" that shape the act of translation. To that end, it mobilizes two radically different readings of the *Daodejing* (formerly romanized as the *Tao Te Ching*): the traditional "mystical" reading according to which the Dao is a mysterious force that cannot be known and a more recent reading put forward by Sinologists Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, to the effect that the Dao is simply the way things happen. Key to Ames and Hall's reading is that what makes the Dao seem both powerful and mysterious is that it channels habit into action—or what the author calls social ecologies, or icoses. The author puts Daoism (and ancient Confucianism) into dialogue with nineteenth-century Western theorists of the sign, Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure (and their followers), to develop an "icotic" understanding of the tensions between habit and surprise in the activity of translating.

The Dao of Translation will interest linguists and translation scholars. This book will also engage researchers of ancient Chinese philosophy and provide Western scholars with a thought-provoking cross-examination of Eastern and Western perspectives.

Douglas Robinson is dean of the faculty of arts and chair professor of English at Hong Kong Baptist University. He has been a freelance translator of technical and literary texts from Finnish to English since 1975. He is also one of the world's leading translation scholars and the author of *The Translator's Turn* (John Hopkins University Press, 1991); *Translation and Taboo* (Illinois University Press, 1996); *What Is Translation?* (Kent State University Press, 1997); *Translation and Empire* (St. Jerome, 1997); *Western Translation Theory From Herodotus to Nietzsche* (St. Jerome, 1997); *Who Translates?* (SUNY Press, 2001); *Translation and the Problem of Sway* (John Benjamins, 2011); and *Schleiermacher's Icoses* (Zeta Books, 2013).

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Preface

I realize, of course, that "The Dao/Tao of X" is a popular gimmick for the titling of books and movies: *The Tao of Pooh* (Benjamin Hoff, 1982); *The Tao of Programming* (Geoffrey James, 1986); *The Tao of Steve* (Jenniphr Goodman, 2000); *The Dao of Rhetoric* (Steven C. Combs, 2005); *The Tao of the Dude* (Oliver Benjamin, 2014); and so on. In that sense, titling this book *The Dao of Translation* situates it in a well-established tradition. What makes that tradition gimmicky is that it tends to mobilize a fairly superficial reading of the *Daodejing/Tao Te Ching* to cast a cute but faux-deep light on some popular subject.

But perhaps we can discriminate a bit more carefully than that.

Benjamin Hoff's *Tao of Pooh*, along with his 1992 follow-up book, *The Te of Piglet*, is perhaps the pioneer for the gimmicky approach: the light, popular touch; the appropriation of A. A. Milne's stories of Winnie-the-Pooh; and the focus on "deep" thoughts that don't require very deep thinking. Geoffrey James' *The Tao of Programming* follows Hoff's lead but targets the narrower audience of computer programmers. Jenniphr Goodman's 2000 movie, *The Tao of Steve*, effectively pokes fun at this gimmicky approach to Daoism by creating an antihero, Dex, who uses "Daoist" principles to seduce women; the female director (who also co-wrote) gives him a female love interest who teaches him the true meaning of love (and perhaps even of Daoism). *The Tao of the Dude* is a book based on a movie, *The Big Lebowski*, reading key lines spoken by the Dude (Jeff Bridges) as Daoist aphorisms: "The Dude abides," "Keep my mind limber," "Just take it easy," "That's just, like, uh, your opinion, man," and so on. *The Tao of the Dude* is Oliver Benjamin's third self-published sally into these "deep" waters: It was preceded by *Dude de Ching* (2010) and *Lebowski 101: Limber-Minded Investigations into the Greatest Story Ever Blathered* (2013).

Tao, by the way, for those of you who don't read Chinese, is the older (late-nineteenth-century) Wade-Giles romanization of the character 道, replaced in Mainland China in 1958 by the pinyin romanization Dao, which in fact much more accurately represents the actual Chinese pronunciation. Sinologists—Western scholars of China and things Chinese—clung to Wade-Giles for decades after pinyin was adopted, some of them even until the early

2000s, but by now, almost everyone has gone over to pinyin, and nowadays in the West, Sinologists write not *Tao Te Ching* but *Daodejing*. I note that Oliver Benjamin uses the D's for *Dude de Ching* but the T's for *The Tao of the Dude*, even though "The Dao of the Dude" would be more alliterative, presumably because everyone now recognizes the *Tao of Pooh* formula. (I assume something like the same is true of the *Tao Jones Averages: A Guide to Whole-Brain Investing*, by Bennett W. Goodspeed [1986]: Tao in the title is clearly to be pronounced Dao/Dow but is written "Tao" to conform to the Sinological tradition.) *The Tao of Translation* would also be more alliterative than my actual title—but I follow pinyin.

The Dao of Rhetoric, by contrast with the other entries in that foregoing list, is a serious scholarly book—closer to what I seek to do here. But I want to take a smidgen of distance from Combs's book, which after all also, like the gimmicky books, mobilizes a reading of Daoism to shed a new and deeper light on its main topic, rhetoric:

[1] Combs devotes his first four chapters to a close reading of Daoist texts and contexts, seeking to establish the "true" philosophy and rhetoric of Daoism.
[2] His fifth chapter, "Daoist Rhetorical Criticism," consolidates his findings in the first four chapters into a unified rhetorical theory.
[3] Chapters 6 to 8 use the model developed in Chapter 5 to read the rhetoric of four popular movies: *The Tao of Steve, Antz, A Bug's Life,* and *Shrek.*
[4] Chapter 9 explores the striking parallels between Daoism and certain influential Western trends of the last half century or so, especially Kenneth Burke and postmodernism/poststructuralism, but expressly to show how Burke and Derrida and the others are, despite some superficial similarities, *not* Daoist and, therefore. not nearly as interesting as a Daoist approach.

There is nothing in *The Dao of Translation* that structurally resembles 2 or 3: I am not interested in developing a unified Daoist theory of translation that I might then apply analytically to a series of actual translations to "illustrate" the theory. The closest I come to "applying" Daoist thought comes in my reading of Ritva Hartama-Heinonen (2008) in Chapter 2; but Hartama-Heinonen is a translation theorist, and my "application" of the 老子 *Laozi* to her work is aimed not at illustrating some theory of mine but rather at bringing her into the theoretical conversation, inviting her to contribute to the emergence of a broader theory of translation that draws in significant ways from the *Laozi*.

In 1 and 4, Combs is at considerable pains to demarcate Daoism from everything else, especially (1) ancient Confucianism (儒道 *rudao* "Ruism" or "the Confucian Way") and (4) contemporary Western critical theory. One of the things I do instead is to blur the lines between Daoism and Ruism on the one hand and Western thinkers on the other. In particular, I seek (in §3.3) to blur the lines first between 老子 Laozi and 孟子 Mengzi (or Mencius), then (in §4.3) between Laozi and the Ruist classic 中庸 *Zhongyong* by drawing on the work of Roger T. Ames and David C. Hall (2001, 2003), the Sinologists on whose explanation and translation of Daoism Combs, too, most heavily relies; then (in Chapters 4–7), I explore parallels and convergences between ancient Chinese thought and recent Western thought, especially the semiotic tradition of Charles Sanders Peirce and the semiological tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure. Unlike Combs, however, I have no interest in showing how the Western thinkers fail to rise to the philosophical heights of the ancient Chinese thinkers. What attracts me instead is the extent to which Western thinkers over the last century and a half—without necessarily knowing anything about Daoism or Ruism but often drawing heavily on the German Romantics/Idealists and American Transcendentalists, who were avid readers of ancient Chinese philosophy—actually *develop* some of the key ideas offered in the *Laozi*, the *Mengzi*, and the *Zhongyong*. In other words, rather than showing how the Western thinkers deviate to their detriment from Daoist thought, I want to set up an East–West dialogue: to show how Laozi, 子思子 Zisizi, Mengzi, Peirce, Saussure, and Pierre Bourdieu all help us flesh out a complex understanding of how linguistic and cultural habits and surprises function across the gaps between individuals, groups, languages, cultures; to show not only how ancient Chinese thought can help us understand translation more ecologically but how ecological approaches to the study of translation can help us understand ancient Chinese thought more clearly.

Combs (ibid.: 11) also distances his Daoist approach from Aristotelian rhetoric:

> The classical Western tendency to emphasize the uniqueness and stability of the elements of reality conditions views of rhetoric. Rhetorical action involves three different elements: rhetor, message, and audience. The message (text) responds to a preexisting situation—the mind of the rhetor, the historical circumstances, and the predispositions of the audience—or context. The text is thus a product of the context, and it, in turn, affects the attitudes and beliefs of the audience. Artful rhetoric, as Aristotle suggests, is the faculty of observing the available means of persuasion in a given case. Rhetoric becomes a quasi-scientific enterprise, as rhetors apply reason to divine the underlying aspects of the context and then fashion texts that produce desired audience responses. This approach clearly identifies component parts of the rhetorical process and specifies, in a linear way, the movement from preexisting situation to text to audience effect. It also makes it encumbent on rhetors and critics to account for contextual factors in crafting and/or critiquing a text.

I will not be critiquing *this* text here, though it is quite problematic. I have engaged similar stereotypes of Western rhetoric elsewhere, especially in *First-Year Writing and the Somatic Exchange* (Robinson, 2012), where I study the "affective turn" in rhetoric and composition, especially Phase 2 of that turn, beginning in the early 1990s, when writing theorists began to explore social ecologies of affect and their shaping influence on both spoken and written rhetoric, and in *The Deep Ecology of Rhetoric in Mencius and Aristotle* (Robinson 2015b), where I find that, contrary to Combs's stereotype above, Aristotle's rhetoric is actually very close to Mengzi's in its attention to the ecological flow of persuasion through societies. One of my main Aristotelian texts, in fact, is the passage from *Rhetoric* 1.2.1 (*estō dē hē rhētorikē dunamis peri hekaston tou theōrēsai to endekhomenon pithanon,* 1357b26) that Combs paraphrases above as "Artful rhetoric, as Aristotle suggests, is the faculty of observing the available means of persuasion in a given case." "The available means of persuasion" there is the standard English translation of *to endekhomenon pithanon*, but it is an extremely misleading translation, because "means of persuasion" is also the standard English translation of *pistis*: "argument, case." If the art of rhetoric is both the ability to marshal *pisteis* and the ability to observe *to endekhomenon pithanon*, and both *pisteis* and *to pithanon* are translated "means of persuasion—and "means of persuasion" are understood as formal rhetorical regimes like syllogisms—it is practically a foregone conclusion that for Aristotle, "Rhetoric becomes a quasi-scientific enterprise, as rhetors apply reason to divine the underlying aspects of the context and then fashion texts that produce desired audience responses." A close reading of the *Rhetoric*, however, shows that *to pithanon* is actually something vaguer, less susceptible to "scientific" reduction than Aristotle's readers from Cicero and Quintilian on have believed. In fact *to pithanon*, which I translate as "persuasivity," is a vague capacity for being-persuaded-becoming-believing that is circulated ecologically through groups as affect (*pathos*) and social value (*timē*).

One important point to note about *to endekhomenon pithanon*, "the available persuasivity," in fact, is that it is *visible* as body language, or what Aristotle calls *hupokrisis* "acting" (the source of the English word "hypocrisy": actors only pretend to feel what they seem to be feeling). In rhetorical theory, *hupokrisis* is often translated as "delivery," but as Walker (2008) points out it also encompasses Perelman's (1982: 36–40) notion of "presencing": signalling to onlookers what one is feeling about a thing so that they feel it too, so that it is present not only *for* them but *in* them as well. Rhetoric as the *dunamis peri hekaston tou theōrēsai to endekhomenon pithanon*—"ability to *see* the available persuasivity in any given situation"—means a responsive sensitivity to that persuasivity as it is presenced on the bodies of those present: an ability not only to see or observe that persuasivity-as-body-language but to read and understand it—Aristotle's verb here is *theorein* "to see, to understand, to study, to theorize"—and, I would argue, to participate in it. In Robinson (2015b), I also draw heavily on Kenneth Burke's (1950/1969) theory of rhetoric as and through identification; I will not be bringing Burke into the conversation here.

My two theoretical coinages in this book are also derived from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "icosis" and "ecosis," from *eikos*, "plausible," and *oikos*, "household, community," respectively. Those two Greek words were near-homophones, to the point where many Attic thinkers (including Aristotle) punned on them[1]; what interests me about them here is that what Aristotle calls *ta eikota*—"the plausibilities"—are in his *Rhetoric* organized and consolidated by the community, through the socioecological circulation of social value (*timē*) as persuasivity as affect-becoming-conation-becoming-cognition. Icosis and ecosis thus represent two different (but intertwined) social ecologies: one aimed at plausibilization (icosis as the valencing of opinions first as plausible, then as true), the other aimed at communal conformation to collective norms of goodness (ecosis as the valencing of behaviors and attitudes first as honorable, then as good or just).

To the extent that icosis and ecosis are social ecologies of value that organize social behavior in habitualized ways that, because they are preconscious, seem to precede and condition human agency, I will argue that they function like Laozi's mysterious or even "mystical" Dao: the unknown but ever-emerging forces that organize things for us without our having (consciously, deliberately) to *do* anything.

The Structure of the Book

The book's argument is itself a kind of "way-making," as Ames and Hall (2003) translate 道 *dao*: I make my way from traditional "mystical" readings of Laozi's Dao, as not only unknown but unknowable, in Chapters 1 and 2, to Mengzi's Ruist Dao in Chapter 3—a Dao or "Way" that can indeed be taken, and should be, but then if Ames and Hall's Laozian 道 *dao* is a making of one's way, it too can be taken; and in the course of exploring Mengzi, I pause to explore the powerful congruencies between Mengzi and Laozi—though supposedly (according to later Daoists) they represent opposite camps. This approach is not novel with me; as Slingerland (2003: 5) writes of one of the key concepts that I borrow and develop from Laozi, "the attainment of *wu-wei* 無爲—'effortless action' or action that is spontaneous and yet accords in every particular with the normative order of the cosmos," it is not so much a spiritual or mystical discipline exclusive to Daoism but rather "serves as a central spiritual ideal and philosophical problematique of a particular group of pre-Qin Chinese religious thinkers who represent the core of what (following Donald Munro) I shall refer to as 'mainstream' Chinese thought: Confucius, Laozi, Mencius, Zhuangzi, and Xunzi." Thus Chapter 3 reframes Daoism by finding common ground between the Daoist and Ruist traditions, specifically between the *Laozi* and the *Mengzi*, in terms of habit and what Ames and Hall (2003) call the habitualized "*wu*-forms" (prime among them 無爲 *wuwei*) in Daoism—a theoretical orientation that then organizes the discussions of Peirce (Chapter 4), Saussure (Chapter 5), Bourdieu (on habitus in Chapter 6), and Simeoni (again on habitus in Chapter 7) in the remainder of the book. §4.3 reframes Ruism by finding common ground between the Ruist and Daoist traditions—this time between the *Laozi* and the *Zhongyong*—on creativity, which complicates the Peircean discussion of the negotiations of the tensions between habit and surprise.

Chapter 1, "Laozi's Unspeakable Dao," offers a brief introduction to "mystical" readings of Daoism, especially of the *Laozi* or *Daodejing*, but only as a jumping-off point for discussion—I return to complicate (humanize, demystify) those readings in §3.3. What's significant about traditional readings of the *Laozi* for the study of translation is that one fairly focused trend in translation theory over the last two decades, without actually identifying the valorized approach as Daoist, seemingly embraces 無爲 *wuwei* "non-action," or what Slingerland calls "effortless action." The two translation scholars in question, the Dutch theorist Dinda L. Gorlée and the Finnish theorist Ritva Hartama-Heinonen (whose postgraduate work was partly supervised by Gorlée), explicitly swear fealty to Charles Sanders Peirce and only implicitly champion something like a radical "mystical" Daoism in their theoretical orientation; but the alignment of their mysticism of the sign with Daoist *wuwei* is quite striking and difficult to dismiss. Since I have devoted an entire separate book to an examination of Gorlée's theoretical work (Robinson 2015a), I focus here on Hartama-Heinonen, presenting the most radically Daoist aspect of her theory in Chapter 2, "The Dao of Abduction: Hartama-Heinonen on Peirce on Translation," but also more broadly organizing the rest of the book as well—especially Chapter 4 and several paragraphs in Chapter 8—around critical readings of her interesting dissertation.

As I say, however, Chapter 3 builds a broader understanding of the ancient Chinese thought of both the Daoist and the Ruist traditions, drawing heavily on radical rereadings of both by Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall (2001, 2003). As the chapter's title suggests—"The Dao of Empathy: Mengzi's Social Ecologies of Feeling"—it primarily offers an introduction to the thought of Mengzi/Mencius, the second most influential and revered Ruist philosopher after Kongzi/Confucius himself, but with a rethinking of Laozi inserted into the middle of it (§3.3), as a guide to the ongoing rethinkings of habit and surprise in Chapters 4 to 7. §3.6 also offers an explicitly Mengzian approach to the study of translation in terms of "face-based equivalence." §3.7–8 offer a preparatory launch pad for Chapters 4 to 8 by exploring the possibility that, because ancient Daoist and Ruist thought has influenced Western thought on the esoteric and Romantic margins since the seventeenth century, we might identify a Chinese genesis of socioecological thought in Peirce and Saussure. I come to the conclusion that, suggestive as such a speculative possibility is, our most reasonable course is to leave it as mere speculation and assert only that it is productive to put the Peircean and Saussurean semiotic/semiological traditions into *dialogue* with ancient Chinese thought.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to close readings of the two founders of the theory of signs, Charles Sanders Peirce ("semiotics") in Chapter 4 and Ferdinand de Saussure ("semiology") in Chapter 5. Chapter 4, "The Dao of Habit: Peirce (and Hartama-Heinonen) on the Tensions between Habit and Surprise," also applies this reading of Peirce to a new look at Hartama-

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Heinonen's "Daoist" theory of translation; and Chapter 5, "The Dao of the 'Potential for Rules': Saussure on the Structuring Force in/of Language," is followed in Chapter 6, "The Dao of Habitus 1: Bourdieu (and Damasio) on Body Automatisms," by a close look at what I take to be Saussure's most ecological successor, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus, field, and capital, supplemented with Antonio Damasio's somatic theory. (Joseph Margolis, noting that Bourdieu theorizes habitus as channeled into behavior through body automatisms, accuses him of not providing an account of those automatisms; in §6.6–8, we trace Damasio's account.) Just as a translation application of Peirce follows in Chapter 4, so too does a translation application of Bourdieu follow in Chapter 7, "The Dao of Habitus 2: Simeoni on the Submissive Translator." Chapter 8 is a conclusion.

Acknowledgments

Sometime in the early autumn of 2010, shortly after I moved to Hong Kong, my friend Dr. Zhu Lin of Hengshui University e-mailed me a long paper she was planning to deliver at the First International Symposium on Eco-Translatology that Prof. Hu Gengshen was organizing in Macau in November and hoped to publish in the proceedings.[1] Reading her long and comprehensive paper, my first exposure to ecological approaches to translation in general and eco-translatology in particular, I was struck by how neatly the ecological approach to the study of translation that she outlined in her paper dovetailed with my long-time interest in somaticity and performativity—and abashed to discover just how little I knew about ecological thinking. My book manuscript on *to pithanon* "persuasivity" in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* had just been rejected and, inspired by Dr. Zhu's article, I decided to rework that book into an ecological study of rhetoric and to intertwine my reflections on Aristotle together with a reading of his near-exact contemporary Mengzi, whose philosophy was regarded as quintessentially ecological and thus the *opposite* of the supposedly mechanistic Aristotle. This book may be read as a TS extension of that earlier one (Robinson 2015b).

The first weekend in November, 2010 was a long celebration of translation studies in Macau: first, on Friday the 5th, a one-day Cross-Straits (Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan, PRC) conference on translation studies organized by Prof. Mao Sihui at Macau Polytechnic Institute; then, on Saturday and Sunday the 6th and 7th, the FIT Asia conference organized by Prof. Zhang Meifang at the University of Macau; finally, on Monday and Tuesday the 8th and 9th, the First International Symposium on Eco-Translatology organized by Prof. Hu Gengshen at MPI, at which Dr. Zhu was presenting. I was able to attend only the first two, but I met Prof. Hu at dinner during the second, and that meeting led directly to my participation in the Second International Symposium on Eco-Translatology the following November (2011) in Shanghai, where, after my keynote talk on Mengzi's understanding of 禮 *li* as a guide to the ecologies of translation—an earlier version of §3.5 here—a group of postgraduate students came up to me to ask for a concrete example of how the ecology of translation might work along Mengzian lines. It was in response to that request that I thought of the experience I'd had back in the late 1970s of translating the Finnish conference paper that "Professor X" was going to be reading at the physical education conference in Poland, which now forms the backbone of §3.6—and would like to thank those students, whose names I never learned, for that discussion. Those two sections were originally published as part of a longer application of Mengzi to translation in the *East Journal of Translation*, where it was sent by my late friend and colleague, Martha Cheung; my use of her *Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation* (Cheung 2006) in Chapter 1 and §3.1 is an oblique statement of my gratitude to her.

Next to be written was Chapter 5 on Saussure in 2012. Anne Lange at the University of Tallinn invited me to deliver it as the keynote lecture at a working conference organized around it in July, 2013, and the Q&A following the talk helped me rethink and restructure the ersatz Thomistic disputation somewhat. The long conversations I had with Peeter Torop and Luc van Doorslaer and others in Tallinn also helped orient me to a rethinking of Peircean semeiotic as it applies to translation—leading directly to my book on Dinda L. Gorlée's concept of "semiotranslation" (Robinson 2015a). Ritva Hartama-Heinonen was Gorlée's postgraduate student in Kouvola, Finland, in 2001 to 2005 and remains Gorlée's acolyte in her 2008 dissertation, written and defended after Gorlée left Finland; the sections on Hartama-Heinonen (2008) here (Chapter 2, §4.2, paragraphs in Chapter 8) began life as an endnote to that book on semiotranslation and were eventually published in China as Robinson (2014a). Dr. Hartama-Heinonen also sent me her dissertation and an essay collection she had co-edited and commented on my initial response to her work.

Contents

Preface *vi*
Acknowledgments *xiii*

1 Laozi's Unspeakable Dao 1

2 The Dao of Abduction: Hartama-Heinonen on Peirce on Translation 11

3 The Dao of Empathy: Mengzi's Social Ecologies of Feeling 35

4 The Dao of Habit: Peirce (and Hartama-Heinonen) on the Tensions between Habit and Surprise 86

5 The Dao of the "Potential for Rules": Saussure on the Structuring Force in/of Language 115

6 The Dao of Habitus 1: Bourdieu (and Damasio) on Body Automatisms 139

7 The Dao of Habitus 2: Simeoni and the Submissive Translator 173

8 Conclusion: D(a)oing Translation 192

Notes *204*
References *223*
Index *235*

1 Laozi's Unspeakable Dao

Let us begin, then, with an excerpt from Martha Cheung's (2006) *Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation*. Her very first entry contains the famous opening lines of the 老子 *Laozi* (earlier written in English Laocius, Lao-Tzu, or Lao-Tse), the eponymous title of a book that later (and better) came to be known as the 道德經 *Daodejing* "Classic on the Way and Virtue," formerly romanized as the *Tao Te Ching*:

> The Way [*Tao* 道] that can be spelt out [*tao* 道] is not the constant Way [*Tao* 道]. The name that can be named is not the constant name. Nothingness is the name of the beginning of the world. Substance is the name of the mother of all things.
>
> (ibid.: 23; bracketed insertions Martha's)

In other words, there is something that precedes and undergirds conscious awareness of verbal intentions or expressions. Something gives rise to heaven and earth—we know not what, but we use catch-all words like 道*dao* "way/road/path/direction" or "principle/truth/morality/reason/skill/method" or "step/phase/stage" or "barrier" or "saying/speaking/talking/questioning/commanding" and 名 *ming* "name/noun" to sketch the outlines of the general black box or black hole that we can't describe. Pictographically, the character 道 *dao* consists of a 辶 *chuo* radical, meaning "walk" or "go," with a 首 *shou* "head" sitting on its tail or path; Red Pine (1996/2009: xi) reports that "early Chinese philologists concluded that 'head' must mean the start of something and that the two graphs together show someone starting on a trip but," he adds, "I find the explanation of a modern scholar of comparative religion, Tu Er-wei [杜爾未 Du Erwei], more convincing. Professor Tu says the 'head' in the chara[c]ter *tao* is the face of the moon. And the meaning of 'road' comes from watching this disembodied face as it moves across the sky." Pine reads (and translates) the Dao as the dark side of the moon, the Book of the Dao as a deeply primitive poem about shamanistic/totemistic rites.[1]

The Chinese phrase that Martha translates as "Nothingness is the name of the beginning of the world" is 無名天地之始 *wuming tian di zhi shi*, literally "without name heaven earth's beginning": Martha has read 無名 *wuming* "without name" expansively as "nothingness is the name," implying that "nothingness" *is* a name. Certainly 無 *wu* has often enough been read as an abstract noun in its own right—withoutness, notness, nothingness—and the radical syntactical economy of classical Chinese means that 無名 *wuming*, often read as a single disyllabic word meaning "unnamed" or "nameless" or "obscure," can also be read as an entire sentence with an implicit verb: 無 *wu* "nothingness" (is) 名 *ming* "name." My concern is that explicitly adding the "is" ontologizes the naming, and so stabilizes it more than classical Daoism would like. Ames and Hall (2003: 45) note that 無名 *wuming* "not-naming" is one of the book's signature *wu*-forms along with 無為 *wuwei* "not-acting," 無知 *wuzhi* "not-knowing," 無欲 *wuyu* "not-desiring," 無心 *wuxin* "not-feeling," and others—giving the traditional "not-X-ing" translations to begin with, though Ames and Hall warn against trusting them. We will return to consider them more closely in §3.3.

The Chinese phrase that Martha translates as "Substance is the name of the mother of all things" is 有名萬物之母 *you ming wanwu zhi mu*, literally "have name ten-thousand things' mother/origin/source." Here Martha has read 有 *you* (the existential verb "to have" or "to exist," like Spanish *haber*) as "substance," a Latin scholastic term with quite specific associations in Western intellectual history—associations that, like those precipitated by the ontologizing "is" that reappears here, seem quite misleading for Daoist thought, as they imply not only stable ("substantial") form but, thanks to Thomas Aquinas's theological adaptations of Aristotle, a Platonic Creator who made things that way. If the disyllable for "without name" (無名 *wuming*) has been used to mean "obscure/obscurity," the disyllable for "have name" (有名 *youming*) has also been used to mean "fame/famous"; interestingly, in the West, "fame" is sometimes taken as the opposite of "substance," when fame is thought of as "just talk" or "just people's opinions," and a person's substance is taken to consist of inner qualities such as integrity, honesty, reliability, and so on. Dualisms like substantial versus insubstantial and "real object" versus "just talk" are Western constructs that are utterly alien to Daoist thought, with its strong orientation to undifferentiated experience.

Martha's juxtaposition of "Nothingness is the name of the beginning of the world" with "Substance is the name of the mother of all things" says explicitly that there are two origins, two sources, one called "the beginning of the world," the other called "the mother of all things," and each has a name: the former is called Nothingness, the latter Substance. Implicit in that formulation in the English-speaking target culture is that, even though the former is *called* Nothingness, it *is* something, namely, the beginning of the world. Both origins or sources are positive *somethings*, stable ontologies, even if one is named after nothingness.

As that passage is more commonly read, it has a nominalistic impetus: if we *give* that mystery out of which things issue forth a name, we tend to think of it as a mother, a Cosmic Mother, in the sense of transcendental female reproductive organs, the womb of the 10,000 things, troped as a baby; if we *refrain* from naming that mystery, we tend to think of it as the beginning of heaven and

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