Revisiting Qian Zhongshu's *Huajing* and Its English Translations/Interpretations

Chung-An Chang

This paper revisits Qian Zhongshu's translation concept of *huajing* and its English translations and interpretations. Under the impact of Western-centered approaches to translation studies, the rich and organic resources coming out of Chinese theorizing on translation have often been ignored or sidelined as being irrelevant to current translation problems. In this environment of neglect, the theoretical potential of Qian's *huajing* concept seems to have been overlooked. The issue becomes even more problematic when this translation-based concept is rendered into a Western language. Given the complexity of this esoteric and philosophical term, *huajing* has been rendered variously into English as "the ultimate of transmutation," "the ideal stage of sublimity," "the realm of transformation" and "the state of total transformation," as well as (via its direct transliteration) "*huajing*." Here we see the difficulty of understanding, interpreting, gaining access to this translation-based term and concept within an English context. The present study accordingly provides an analysis of Qian's account of *huajing* and its English translations and interpretations so as to critique these renditions. A more explicit discussion of these English translations, and of the concept of *huajing*, may therefore not only better enable us to appreciate Qian's conceptualization of translation, but may also pave the way for further research on this crucial and complex conceptual term in an English context. We can also better respond to the call from international academia for the reconceptualization of translation by broadening the scope of its definition via the inspiration provided by this non-Western perspective.

Keywords: *huajing*, transmutation, sublimity, transformation, reconceptualization of translation

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重探錢鍾書的「化境」及其英文翻譯／詮釋

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　　本篇論文重探錢鍾書的「化境」翻譯觀，並探討其英文翻譯及詮釋。受到西方譯論為中心的衝擊，中國翻譯概念中豐富及有機的資源經常被輕忽及漠視，認為其無助於因應當前的翻譯問題。在此學術環境下，錢鍾書的化境翻譯觀所具有的理論潛能，似乎已被忽略。而將此翻譯觀譯成西方語言時，其理論的詮釋更是一個問題。「化境」因其晦澀及哲思上的複雜性，因而被翻譯成諸多英文語詞，例如 the ultimate of transmutation、the ideal stage of sublimity、the realm of transformation、the state of total transformation，以及直接音譯的 *huajing*；多樣的詮釋版本顯示出此翻譯觀在英文語境內有理解與詮釋上的困難。本文將分析錢鍾書自身對化境翻譯觀的論述並探討現有的英文翻譯及詮釋，對各「化境」的英文翻譯做出評論。透過細部的探討，不僅使我們更加了解錢鍾書的翻譯思維，也有利於日後於英語語境中對此重要及複雜的概念詞做更深入的研究，更可呼應國際翻譯學界想藉由非西方的翻譯論述，擴展翻譯概念及定義的想法。

關鍵詞：化境、變形、昇華、轉化、翻譯再概念化

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Introduction

Recent decades have shown rising interest in both the East and the West for the reconceptualization of translation (Cheung, 2005, 2006, 2011; Hermans, 2007; Sakai, 2006; Sallis, 2002; Toury, 1980; Tymoczko, 2007). The underlying assumption is to realign translation theory beyond the West-centric parameters by incorporating approaches from different cultural traditions when addressing current theoretical problems in translation studies. Tymoczko (2007), for instance, argues in *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* that translation is a cluster concept and is not constrained by any prototypical approach. So she encourages translation theorists to challenge the dominant contemporary Western norms of translation, particularly the control of the meaning of translation, and, thereby, enlarge the concept of translation into an internationalizing vision. This paper takes up Tymoczko's call to contribute to a planetized discursive space on translation by revisiting Qian Zhongshu's ideas on translation with an ear toward the theoretical diversity that should characterize the field as a whole.

Indeed, from a descriptive sense, translation studies still remains largely a West-centric affair. Most of the influential scholarship, e.g., Venuti's foreignization approach, Bassnett's concept of a cultural turn, and Hermans's idea of thick translation, come almost exclusively from theorists in the Western tradition. Their theoretical insights to translation studies have effectively responded with profound explanatory vigor to certain issues and phenomena occurring in the

field of translation studies. Therefore, it is not a problem for us to adopt Western translation theories in analyzing Chinese texts or works as long as they can appropriately respond to current translation problems. Simply put, the specific cultural origin of a theory is not at issue here. Equally speaking, the application of Chinese theoretical approaches to the translation of any text is also appropriate since what matters here is the scholarship and the insight of a theory rather than its national identity or character.

However, given the predominantly unequal relationship between Western and Chinese theoretical scholarships, Western concepts of translation are often regarded as the standard and benchmark by which to compare Chinese ones. Chinese scholars often content themselves with the application of Western theories to analyses of Chinese texts and ignore the rich and organic Chinese theoretical resources available to them. For example, in a recently-published handbook that specifically discusses the translation phenomena in the Chinese speaking regions, Shei and Gao (2018), the two editors of the volume, argue that translation theory in traditional China "did not evolve into a well-established discipline" and "no serious bodies of translation theory had been formed as a Chinese heritage" (p. xviii). Having construed the Chinese tradition as such, they completely jettison the theoretical resources of it and advocate a full reliance on Western theory in the study of Chinese translations, arguing in a rather candid fashion that most essays in this volume "take the shortcut and largely 'borrow' translation theory from the West to examine contemporary practice of

Chinese translation" (Shei & Gao, 2018, p. xviii). This explains why it has become a predominant phenomenon in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan to have Chinese translation theorists borrow frequently from Western approaches and apply their concepts to Chinese translation studies. They often ignore their traditional translation scholarship in favor of the Western ones. As Susam-Sarajeva (2002) argues, by such a time as when the translation scholars from the non-Western regions have widely adopted and internalized Western theory, "they start regarding traditional ('old') concepts of and thinking about translation and translating found in their own cultures as 'inferior,' 'useless,' 'simplistic' or 'irrelevant,' and put them aside in favor of translation theory in its 'modern' and 'Western' sense" (p. 199). Under this circumstance, Chinese texts are merely objects to be analyzed through the application of Western theories, and viewed as being susceptible to further interpretation under Western translational frameworks. While it may be easy to say there is no well-constructed translation theory in the Chinese tradition, nonetheless, the insufficient attention given to Chinese theoretical concepts on translation cannot go on unexamined and requires further analysis. After all, when undertaking a research project, each of us has our own focus and emphasis, our own perspective and vision, and our own ways of upholding the standards of scholarship by which credible results are obtained through strenuous academic commitment. To truly reach the culturally balanced approach to translation, we need a broader range of conceptual frameworks from "all languages and all cultures" and a "move beyond our enclosed

mental worlds to look beyond the boundaries of our own cultures, to see what we can learn conceptually and practically about translation from the world at large" (Tymoczko, 2009, pp. 403-404). It is against the backdrop of this trend that we see the necessity of introducing the non-Western concepts of translation to the world arena, particularly ideas on translation from Chinese speaking regions.

When it comes to the Chinese translation tradition, Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 is an influential cultural historian. Luo (1984) describes his concept of translation as a step forward from and an improvement on Fu Lei's 傅雷 theory of "spiritual resemblance" in translation. It is also recognized by Liu (1996) that Chinese translation theory has been developing along the same direction over the past 80 years—from the spiritual resemblance to reach the *huajing* 化境 in translation (pp. 19-20). Luo (2015) not only clarifies some misconceptions about Qian's translation concept but also perceives it as an important and integral facet of the entire Chinese translation tradition. Though Qian has received high regard for his ideas on translation, his *huajing* concept has encountered severe criticism, especially under the impact of the aforementioned dominant West-centric conceptualizations of translation. It is argued by Chan (2004) that contrary to their counterparts in the West who are more analytical and philosophical in their approaches to translation, "Chinese translation theorists are prone to vague, impressionistic assertions" (p. 3) and Qian's translation concept "is marked by even greater imprecision" (p. 8). Chan's remarks not only call into question fundamental ground supporting Qian's

conceptualization of translation but also raise concerns about the entire tradition of Chinese translation (Chang, 2019, p. 10).

It is true that Qian Zhongshu has never made an overt attempt to construct a systematic translation theory. In this respect, we might regard him more as a literary scholar than translation theorist. Asserting such a position does not deny Qian's contribution to translation studies but rather admits the evaluative and descriptive nature surrounding his remarks on translation. If we examine his works on translation and synthesize his ideas of translation into effective arguments, however, we will come to realize just how much Qian's remarks on translation coalesce into a coherent, unified and logically developed set of statements on translation (Chang, 2019, p. 13). Doing just this, i.e., properly analyzing the body of Qian's writings on translation, especially his notes and commentaries, has provided the present writer a better understanding of the multifaceted phenomena of translation addressed by Qian. It is also important to note that Qian's theorizing of translation, which is seen by Chan (2004) as vague and experiential, actually anticipates Hermans's (1999) assertion that "the term 'translation' has no fixed, inherent, immanent meaning" (p. 144) and that "translation cannot be defined a priori, once and for all" (p. 159). This broader view of translation that has led to its reconceptualization and re-exploration from a global perspective has become of increasing concern among scholars of this discipline, and Qian's concept of translation offers an opportune set of concepts by which to consider translation using a Chinese episteme that is different, but not totally

incompatible, to that of the West, and is, thus, very much worthy of our investigation.

With regard to the introduction and discussion of a Chinese translation concept in the English context, especially the culturally and conceptually complex *huajing* concept that Qian proposes, the first and foremost challenge a translator faces is the translatability of the term into English. Indeed, Chinese and English are, linguistically and culturally, very different. *Huajing* as a complex term with its specific cultural and historical intricacy is difficult to understand even within the Chinese context, let alone when rendered into a non-Chinese language. So it is hard to find a totally commensurate term for *huajing* in English. Differences between distant cultures, such as China and West, pose legitimate questions for the validity of cross-cultural translation. *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, an encyclopedic project of more than 350 philosophical terms compiled from the works of 150 philosophers by philosopher Barbara Cassin and her contributors, however, offers hope on how this difficult task might be accomplished (Cassin et al., 2004/2014). The term "*Dasein*," for instance, is considered the paradigmatic example of linguistic untranslatability (Cassin et al., 2004/2014, p. 195). However, these so-called untranslatables paradoxically continue to be translated and retranslated, so the idea of "untranslatability" does not mean that translation is not possible but the "sign of the way in which, from one language to another, neither the words nor the conceptual networks can simply be superimposed" (Cassin et al., 2004/2014, p. xvii). In short, untranslatability is a misnomer as it is constantly

challenged by translators inspired by it to translate and retranslate. In fact, to translate and adapt the originally French-written *Vocabulaire Européen des Philosophies: Dictionnaire des Intraduisibles*, published in 2004, into the English version in 2014 already means that even these densely esoteric and philosophical terms are still translatable. So untranslatability is a paradoxical endeavor that always calls for further translation. Cassin's book, by means of numerous examples, provides strong support for this counterintuitive maxim, namely, the paradox that the more a term resists translation the more it also calls out to be translated. It can be evidenced by the many diverse ways in which the hard-to-translate concept of *huajing* has been rendered into English, such as "the ultimate of transmutation," "the ideal stage of sublimity," "the realm of transformation," "the state of total transformation," and the direct transliteration of it into *huajing*. As translation is a language experiment whereby a term is rendered from its original cultural framework to another, it is by nature very comparative. Different translations of Qian's *huajing* demonstrate different understandings and interpretations of the term in the English context. Translation, in this sense, is a knowledge-constructing process. The following discussion accordingly attempts to provide a detailed analysis and interpretation of Qian's concept of *huajing* and its potential renditions in English as groundwork paving the way for further analysis of this well-known Chinese translation concept in the increasingly internationalized context of translation studies today. It also offers a response to the call from international academia for the reconceptualization of translation by broadening the scope of the definition of translation to include

perspectives outside those of a Western context.

The Idea of *Huajing* and Its Theoretical Implication

Qian (1990b) wrote an essay in 1963 to discuss the translations done by the remarkable contemporary Chinese translator Lin Shu 林 紓, titled "Lin Shu's Translations." [1] In this essay he proposed *hua* 化 or "to transform" as being the highest ideal for literary translation. In Qian's (1985/2014) own words:

> A translation which manages to change a work in the language of one nation into the language of another whilst not evincing any of the forced or inflexible usages that derive from differences between language habits, and which at the same time preserves intact the flavor of the original work, may be considered to have entered this "realm of transformation" (*huajing* 化境). (p. 139)

This concept in the body of translation criticism has been highly valued for its profundity in illuminating the complex phenomena of translation and is widely regarded as the ideal goal for the practice of translation in China. To reach such a demanding state of translation, a translator should artistically render a text into another language and make the translation both meaningfully and stylistically consistent to the original; moreover, the aura or the spirit of the original is still

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[1] Please see Qian (1990b, pp. 83-122), *Linshu De Fanyi* 林紓的翻譯, collected in *Qizhui Ji* 七綴集. The present writer has used the published English translation from Qian (1985/2014, pp. 139-188) translated by Duncan M. Campbell.

retained in the translation. As George Savile says, a translation can be compared to "the transmigration of souls" by which "although the external form of the original is completely replaced, the inner soul remains exactly the same" (as cited in Qian, 1985/2014, pp. 139-140). It is indeed a daunting task, so an Italian poet, Giacomo Leopardi, as Qian (1985/2014) tells us, reflects that:

> the desiderata for a good translation were mutually incompatible, even contradictory (*paiono discordanti e incompatibili e contraddittorie*); in attempting to replicate the unaffectedness, naturalness and spontaneity (*inaffettato, naturale o spontaneo*) of the style of the author of the original the translator was, by necessity, prone to affectation (*ora il trauttore necessariamente affetta*) as he followed the original at its every step. (p. 140)

On the one hand, a translator is asked to be as faithful as he can to the style and rhetoric of the source text; on the other hand, he is also required to render the spirit or soul of the original into a translation that is free from the linguistic constraints of the source text. This inevitably suggests an antinomy or a mutual incompatibility regarding the task of a translator (Chang, 2019, pp. 115-116). Being highly aware of the dilemma of this condition, Qian (1985/2014) says that "all translations therefore are, in part, untrue to their originals and serve to distort them" (p. 141). However, Qian always expects that a translator has sufficient malleability so as to be able to render a text into a refined translation that, thereby, enters the state of *hua*, though it is a goal that eludes

complete attainability. Qian's (1985/2014) analysis on the etymology of the word *yi* 譯 (meaning in English: "to translate"), which reveals its synonymy with "to inveigle" (*you* 誘), "to decoy" (*mei* 媒), "to misrepresent" (*e* 訛), and "to transform" (*hua* 化), is perhaps the best justification for how a translatory act can put the original text through an ever-going process of transformation and representation that may just end up in the most ideal realm of translation, the attainment of *hua* (p. 139).

It is true that no one can easily attain a refined state of translation or reach *huajing* as the words in a text always resist translation and interpretation. Among all the types of texts, Qian (1997) says, "literature is the one that is the most enclosed and resistant to be understood, as well as reluctant to reveal its secrets to the readers" (p. 530). "The literature of a language," as Qian (1997) continues to say, "is constrained and confined by its language" (p. 530). In addition, poetry is the literary genre that Qian pays particular attention to and is the most distilled and refined form of literature, thus making any attempt of translation even more frustrating. Qian (1997) describes poetry as "a forbidden book for the foreign readers" (p. 530). On the translation of poetry, especially the translation of Chinese poetry, Qian (1985/2014) argues that Westerners will come to realize that "to have arrived at such an appreciation of Chinese poetry through the medium of translation was certainly no easy task" (p. 54). The reason for this is that, as Qian (1985/2014) continues to argue:

> [I]t testifies perhaps to the consummate art and vitality of
> Chinese poetry itself, for it is almost as if it had acquired an

"auto-immunity system" analogous to that of the human body, giving it a powerful immunity from or resistance to the process of translation and which allows it to survive all attempts at translation, both good and bad. (p. 54)

Indeed, the rhythmic features, figurative expressions, and acoustic elements of poetry make it almost impossible to replicate in another language. Even when one tries to translate and unveil the sense of a poem, what he or she would find is only the further hiddenness of the meaning of the poem, deeply withdrawn and concealed. This aptly describes the nature of translation in which there always exists a tension between the revelation of the meaning of words and the inevitable loss and intractability of the meaning of the original in the translation. Words of a language are deceitful for they conceal latent meanings at the same time they manifest them. Perhaps revelation lies in this tension between what has been veiled by words and what can be unveiled through words, a place where we can envision Qian's *huajing* as a space or realm of translation where the translator can overcome the concealment of words and make the meaning of words manifested in the state of transformation. The issue of "concealment and revelation" constitutes the major thematic concern of Qian Zhongshu's idea of the art of translation. Qian's view of seeing a good translation as entering an unconcealed state of transformation strikes a similar note not only in Chinese art theory but also art theory from the West.

In the article "On the Non-Veiledness" (*Lun Buge* 論不隔) published in 1934, Qian gives a philosophical account of the art of translation, poetically stating that an excellent translation is the one

determined by the condition that "there exists no mist between the original text and its translation" (Qian, 1997, p. 496). Qian derives this idea from his reading of Matthew Arnold's comments on translation. In the essay "On Translating Homer," Arnold (2002) quotes Samuel Taylor Coleridge's remarks on the union of the human soul with the divine essence, which takes place in the circumstance "[w]hene'er the mist, which stands 'twixt God and thee, [d]efecates to a pure transparency" (p. 253). The analogy, to clear the mist between the human soul and God in order to make the two sides unified, is one that Arnold (2002) employs to describe the "union of the translator with his original," thus producing "a good translation" (p. 253). That is to say, a good translation, as Arnold (2002) argues, "takes place when the mist which stands between them—the mist of alien modes of thinking, speaking, and feeling on the translator's part—'defecates to a pure transparency,' and disappears" (p. 253). Qian (1997) concurs with Arnold's remarks on translation and says with an air of raillery that "Arnold is lucky to have such a metaphor on translation that he adopts from Coleridge because they quite appropriately describe the standard of a good translation!" (p. 497). Therefore, the defecation of the mist between the source and target texts indicates a clearing of the concealment of words and an attainment of revelation from the essence of meaning in the unveiled state of translation, or in Qian's word— *buge* 不隔, an expression he borrows from the famous late-Qing literary theorist Wang Guowei 王國維. By contrast, a bad translation is the one that fails to clear the mist between the source and target texts and thereby leaves word meanings concealed or veiled (*ge* 隔) in that

mist. "A good translation is the one," as Qian (1997) stipulates, "that reads like the original text; while a good literary work, if evaluated by the principle of the non-veiledness, is the one that gives readers immediate feelings as if they can experience what it shows to them personally" (p. 500). The state of non-veiledness (*buge*), as Qian (1997) continues to argue, is "a state of transparency—'a pure emptiness' in the daytime" (p. 500). In a state as such, each image contained in the words is "unveiled to the eyes of readers" (Qian, 1997, p. 500) and the text remains what it was as when experienced originally. We can see by this that the idea of *buge* is the prelude to Qian's later *huajing* premise, and both of the two concepts are complementary to each other in the explication of the refined state of translation.

What makes Qian's *buge* concept special is his description of the refined state of translation as being a clearing away of all obstacles from a text and a lifting of a text out from the concealing morass of words, and, indeed, it does sound very Heideggerian. In fact, Qian has mentioned and quoted Heidegger's ideas on several occasions in his *Guanzhui Bian* 管錐編, with special attention reserved for Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit/Being and Time*.[2] Qian also references Heidegger's later essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" in the expanded version of *Guanzhui Bian* to expound on the art skill of "concealment yet revelation" used in painting and poetry, taking the view that the essence of art or truth will come out on top in the strife encountered between concealment and revelation in an artistic work (Qian,

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[2] Please see Qian's (1990a) references to Heidegger's ideas in *Sein und Zeit* in *Guanzhui Bian*, Vol. 1, pp. 145-146; Vol. 2, pp. 408, 591; Vol. 3, p. 1065; Vol. 4, p. 1424.

1996, pp. 245-246). Based on the Chinese and Western examples cited in his discussion on this literary skill, Qian observes that the essence of poetry or a piece of art is not directly present and easily comprehensible; instead, if borrowing Heidegger's reasoning, the truth of it can only be revealed through a clearing of concealment. That is, both concealment and revelation are the necessary elements for the creation of the necessary strife in a work of art or poetry. In the vying to be victorious in this strife we see truth happen in the work (Qian, 1990a, pp. 1358-1361, 1996, pp. 245-246).

We can see from this Qian's interest in Heidegger's idea of truth as disclosure or unconcealment; also, there seems to be an affinity between Heidegger's art theory and Qian's remarks on *buge* as about being the unveiled state of translation, though specific evidence of a direct connection in thinking between the two literati has yet to be uncovered.[3] Proof that other prominent figures may have had an influence on Qian's ideas about translation, however, matters less than the inner logic behind his thoughts on translation revealed here in this present research project that coherently reconstructs his conceptualization of translation through the joining together of the variety of views expressed in his large body of notes and writings.

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[3] Interestingly, Ronald Egan is aware of Heidegger's influence on Qian and argues that the idea of concealment in art is one of the non-Chinese thoughts Qian has applied to "break out of the vortex of Qing scholarly discourse" (Egan, 2015, p. 119). In a previously published article by the present writer, Heidegger's idea that truth is gained in a work of art has been briefly discussed and compared with Qian Zhongshu's *huajing* concept in translation (Chang, 2017). Xin-Le Cai 蔡新樂 observes the correspondence between Qian's *buge* concept and Heidegger's idea of truth in *Being and Time*, though not knowing whether Qian read Heidegger's work while writing this essay on translation (Cai, 2005).

Nevertheless, the present writer is very much aware that Qian only brings up Heidegger's art theory for its reference to the discussion on the concept of concealment-yet-revelation but does not analyze it in depth. Actually, this is an approach often taken by Qian in much of his writing. He often begins by discussing a Chinese literary or philosophical example and moves on to cite some Western parallels, though not necessarily with any direct connections between them, as a means to establish commonalities in unexpected ways and bring to light the links between diverse realms of intellectual fields for mutual enrichment. This style of writing, thus, inhibits Qian's provision of detailed elaboration in this short passage about Heidegger's thoughts on art.

However, we should not neglect these notes and phrases for the very reason that writing in the format of fragmented notes and commentaries may be a precursor to the development of individually referenced ideas into systematic theses. Qian (1985/2014) asserts in his essay "On Reading Laokoon" that fragmented thoughts and ideas, since they "are so easily overlooked and forgotten," require us to "garner them up and give them our care and attention" (pp. 79-80). But this does not mean that Qian (1985/2014) would endorse the establishment of a grand or systematic theory, since he argues that "a great many closely argued and comprehensive philosophical and ideological systems have not survived the vicissitudes of time and have already lost their integrity" (p. 80). To him, "those things of value that do remain after collapse of complete theoretical systems are but partial ideas" and "[s]uch partial ideas are, by their nature, fragmentary,

regardless of whether they have previously formed part of larger systems or have remained embryonic" (Qian, 1985/2014, p. 80). Qian (1985/2014) considers these embryonic fragmented ideas and thoughts as the "source of all self-conscious and thoroughgoing theory" (p. 80). Through this dialectic excerpt, Qian reveals his suspicion of any theoretical system while at the same time acknowledging the efficacy of isolated and random ideas for the foundation and construction of a theoretical system. In light of this, the present writer believes Qian would not deny the possibility of generating his own art theory of translation based on reference to Heidegger's philosophical concept of art, though he may not endorse such an endeavor either. Since much of Qian's discussion on art and translation echoes the philosophical views on art by Heidegger, the present writer asserts that Qian's idea of translation could be enriched by the expansion and incorporation of Heidegger's concept of art into the discourse on Qian's concept of translation.

Tying Heidegger's art theory with Qian's concealed-yet-revealing idea of *buge* translation concept, we see the possibility of an interdisciplinary connection between art theory and translation studies. We know that poetry is resistant to translation and unyielding to cognition. The words of poetry, as the present writer argues elsewhere, are like Heidegger's "earth" or the "thingness of a thing" in his art theory that remains hidden and resists all attempts of explanation (Chang, 2017, p. 340). In Heidegger's (1950/2002) point of view, every artwork has thingly character, that is: "The stony is in the work of architecture, the wooden in the woodcarving, the colored in the

painting, the vocal in the linguistic work, the sounding in the work of music" (p. 3). In addition, an artwork is different from a piece of equipment which is made by its serviceability. In terms of a tool, its earthy materials will be used up just like "the shoe-equipment, when finished, rests in itself like the mere thing" (Heidegger, 1950/2002, p. 10). By contrast, the earthy elements of artwork will not be exhaustively consumed for they remain noticeable within the work. In a similar vein, the words of poetry will not be used up because "the poet, too, uses words, not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who must use them up, but rather in such a way that only now does the word become and remain truly a word" (Heidegger, 1950/2002, p. 25). As such, "the poet's words," as Michael Inwood (2000) observes, "are, unlike the words of common discourse, conspicuous and resistant to paraphrase" (p. 119). Poetry as a work of art is essentially self-concealing in its earthy materials and words of poetry are resistant to be deciphered. However, it is just this concealedness of words that makes words remain words, undisclosed, and veiled. Words are like the materials of the Greek temple that do not disappear when they set up a world (Chang, 2017, p. 340), and are allowed to speak and arise from their self-concealedness. A work of art sets up the world, the environment in which humans dwell; it also sets forth the earth, the ground on which the world rests and rises. World and earth are two opposing forces and a piece of art, including poetry, "moves the earth into the open of a world and holds it there" (Heidegger, 1950/2002, p. 24). Heidegger (1950/2002) also remarks: "World and earth are essentially different and yet never separated from one another. World

is grounded on earth, and earth rises up through world" (p. 26). World strives for openness and "will tolerate nothing closed" while "earth tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there" (Heidegger, 1950/2002, p. 26). The struggle between world and earth or the tension between disclosure and concealment raises each other beyond their own nature. It is only in this conflict between earth and world where we are able to visualize the happening of truth. As Heidegger (1950/2002) says: "Truth means the essence of what is true" and "the unconcealment of beings" (p. 28). "Setting up a world and setting forth the earth," as Heidegger (1950/2002) says, "the work is the fighting of that fight in which the disclosure of beings as a whole—truth—is won" (p. 32). Following this line of reasoning, "the truth of poetry as a work of art is won only when it enters the sphere where the fighting of the fight between the concealedness and the manifestation of words discloses the beings of poetry" (Chang, 2019, p. 134).

In Qian's approach to translation—*huajing*, we find a possibility for the unveiling of the truth of words through the practice of translation (Chang, 2017). It also signifies the attainment of the state of *buge*. Qian argues that a good translation denotes the idea that the syntactic features of the original are completely changed and yet the inner spirit remains exactly the same. In so doing, the earthy nature of words will not be completely compromised. These words are still visible as "they are now represented in words of another language, and the world the words set up will rise up in the *huajing*, becoming an elevated and refined form of expression" (Chang, 2019, p. 135). This statement aptly alludes to the irreducibility of foreignness in a

translation of a literary text, but does not preclude Qian's stipulation that a text in translation should not read like a translation. It means *huajing* is not a state of complete transparency. Qian would agree that the mission of a translator is not to totally domesticate or eradicate the foreignness of the source text but to allow the text to keep its alterity. The strangeness of the source text should be maintained in the state of *huajing* or *buge* as it is indispensable to the necessary concealdness-and-revelation strived for in translation. "A translator's art of translation was once compared to a matchmaker's craftiness," as Qian (1997) aptly remarks, "because a translator half reveals and half conceals the beauty of an author in a way to stimulate readers' desire to read the original" (p. 529). Accordingly, through the practice of translation, we see the latent unconcealedness of the meaning of words through the transformative power of translation. This process of winning the conflict between the disclosure and unveiled state of a work of art has its "hermeneutical function" and is a "hermeneutical theory of art" (Palmer, 1969, p. 161). Therefore, faced with the paradox of the concealing nature of words that always resist translation and the possible translatability and revealing nature of words, Qian's *huajing* concept anticipates a hermeneutical realm and treats a translator as a hermeneutist who endeavors to negotiate the gap dividing the two confrontational forces between the concealing words and the intended manifestation of the meaning of words in translation, or between the conflict of earth and world. A translator should render the best possible understanding of the foreign text to the readers and help to increase the understanding between the two sides. However, given the

irreducible nature of the foreignness of that text, a translator should also keep the foreignness in the translation because it is this respect and recognition of the alterity of the text that safeguards the earthy nature of the source text and thus stimulates the reader to expend the effort to get to know the author's subject matter intimately. On the contrary, an inappropriate translation is "the translation which, generally under the guise of transmissibility, carries out a systematic negation of the strangeness of the foreign work" (Berman, 1984/1992, p. 5). The complete domesticated mode of translation ignores the point that the source text speaks a different tongue and as such can never be completely assimilated into the receiving cultural community. This element of otherness that exists in the source calls for translation and respect toward the other cultural tradition. So Qian's *huajing* concept anticipates translation as a formidable hermeneutic task accompanied by the incessant impulse of the translator to bridge the chasm between author and reader or the two cultural traditions, and thus *huajing* best defines the task of translation as a wholistic intersubjective communication.

Given the complex and the philosophical nature of the concept of *huajing*, many scholars and commentators have elected to render it metaphorically and with great variety into English. One possible explanation for this is that Qian himself did not provide an English translation of this term. He only briefly discusses this concept in his article on Lin Shu. The other possible explanation is that Qian's concept of translation contains esoteric and philosophical thoughts that treat translation on a conceptual level, thereby perhaps contributing to

the many interpretations of Qian's translation concept. An analysis of different translations of the term will help us better appreciate Qian's translation concept from a cross-cultural perspective. This discussion is also meaningful in that it raises our awareness of not only the difficulty of interpreting a theoretical concept of translation from Chinese to English but also the transgressive power of translation that may surpass its very origin of birth and reshape people's understanding of it in new communities of reception. A critical investigation of the English translations of the term brings valuable to translation scholars as it not only improves our understanding of Qian's idea of *huajing* but also helps us to locate this concept into the appropriate English context. In so doing, such critical evaluation paves the way for further dialogues and cross-cultural exchanges with Western theories.

The English Renditions of *Huajing*

In this section, I shall discuss the various English renditions of the term *huajing* by examining them against Qian's own remarks and commentaries in either his English or Chinese works that are relevant to this idea of translation. It must be noted that to interpret Qian's concept of *huajing* in his own words does not deny the openness to interpretation for readers. However, given the predominant trend of overly highlighting the reader's creative role in the understanding and interpretation of a text, while in the meantime diminishing the authenticity of the authorial discourse, we see that the ideas such as "the author is dead" (Barthes, 1968/1977) or "reader-response criticism"

(Fish, 1980) encourage readers to actively cocreate the meaning of a text, thus very quickly placing this theory on the precipice of dogma without limits to any amount of interpretation. Against this solipsistic way of interpretation, the primary purpose of the following analysis of Qian's *huajing* translation is to examine it from Qian's own remarks so as to foreground the "intention of the text" or the idea of "*intentio operis*," while being fully aware of the intentional fallacy, in an effort to stress the integrity of text as a means to offset the overly reader-oriented interpretation that has become the leading strand of thought in modern criticism (Eco, 1992).

If *huajing* is rendered into "the ultimate of transmutation," as George Kao suggested in his translation of Qian's article,[4] we may assume the translation that follows the process to no longer be related to the original text. Qian himself argues that he does not consider "transmutation" a good idea in translation when he comments on Yan Fu's 嚴復 translation of Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*. "One would never suppose Huxley," as Qian (2005) observes, "to be the virtuoso of plain style as Mr. Mencken happily calls him, if one reads him in Yan Fu's translation" (pp. 37-38). As we can see in Yan's translation, Huxley has been rendered into "a sweetly reasonable gentleman persuading in mellifluous and jeweled phrases" (Qian, 2005, p. 38). So Qian (2005) comments in a parodic manner that he has never "ceased to marvel at the skill with which Yan Fu 'transmutes' the original author" (p. 37). Though Qian's original idea of translation implies a certain

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[4] Please see George Kao's translation of Qian Zhongshu's *Linshu De Fanyi* in Chan (2004, pp. 104-119) .

degree of freedom in rewriting and reformulating the source text, it endorses neither free interpretation nor the idea that a translation can be completely detached from the meaning of the original text. In fact, "Qian never argues that a translation should be a transmutation of the original in its extreme sense, since a translation is always, in one way or another, relevant to the original" (Chang, 2019, p. 138). To elucidate the inadequacy of this type of rendition, Qian draws another example from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which Bottom has been turned into an ass by the power of a spell. When seeing the transmutation of Bottom's figure, one of his companions exclaims: "Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee! Thou art translated" (Shakespeare, ca. 1595/2005, 3.1.103). In view of this, Qian (1985/2014) says: "One could well make the same comment of Lin Shu's translation!" (p. 161). So accepting *huajing* as a process of transmutation would deny any kinship of this translation with the original, an idea that is not congruent with Qian's own ideas on translation as he argues that a translation always has some connection to the original.

When translating *huajing* into "the ideal stage of sublimity" (Yu, 2007), it would immediately remind us of Longinus's ancient Greek fragment *On the Sublime*. As Doran (2015) observes, Longinus's treatise has the "structuring effect on the modern discourse of sublimity insofar as it sets a basic pattern, which is then revised and developed by later writers, without ever truly escaping the basic Longinian insight (transcendence conceived aesthetically)" (p. 9). This fundamental Longinian insight concerning the sublime experience can be described as "a *dual* structure of being *overwhelmed* or *overawed*" and "coupled

with the idea of being *exalted* or *elevated*" (Doran, 2015, p. 10). Doran (2015) goes on to remark:

> This dual structure of sublimity is also paradoxical: on the one hand, being overwhelmed/dominated by the encounter with the transcendent in art or nature induces a feeling of *inferiority* or *submission*; on the other, it is precisely by being overpowered that a high-minded feeling of *superiority* or *nobility of soul* (mental expansiveness, heroic sensibility) is attained. (p. 10)

This purely aesthetic as well as psychological effect/affect, in the course of perceiving art or nature, can also be found in Kant (1790/2000) who remarks, "true sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the one who judges, not in the object in nature, the judging of which occasions this disposition in it" (p. 139). In the eyes of Kant, "sublimity only exists in one's subjective judgment and is not directly relevant to the object itself" (Chang, 2019, p. 141). Following this line of argument, it can be assumed that "there are no sublime objects that we can perceive through our sensuous faculties but only sublime states of subjectivity brought about by our encounters with these objects" (Chang, 2019, p. 141). Therefore, it can be stated that translating *huajing* into "the ideal stage of sublimity" not only denies a work of translation its status as a real piece of work but also "overly empowers the translator with a supersensible mind that can transcend the real reading experience as well as the rhetorical purposes of a text" in this translation process, which is not a practical means for evaluating a translation (Chang, 2019, p. 141).

Regarding the transliteration of Qian's term as *huajing*, Li (2017)

has adopted Venuti's foreignizing approach and asserts that this type of rendition "is needed at the time as well as is the prerequisite for the Chinese culture to advance to the world arena" (p. 64). In this essay:

> Li emphasizes the importance of introducing the Chinese culture to the world and having a dialogue with other cultural traditions on equal footing at a time when China has become one of the most influential world powers, either economically or politically. (as cited in Chang, 2019, p. 142)

Although understandably, it has to be noted that Venuti's translation concept is based on "ideological rather than purely aesthetic grounds," as pointed out by Bassnett (2014), and that his main purpose has been to "challenge the hegemony of English" (p. 48). However, "Qian Zhongshu's idea of translation has its origin in Chinese poetics and art theory, and his concern for translation is mostly aesthetic rather than political" (Chang, 2019, pp. 142-143). The employment of transliteration in this translation indicates there exists a significant cultural lacuna in the English discourse so that one fails to locate the term in English aptly and the approach of transliteration can maintain its cultural uniqueness. However, it takes a great deal of time for a term to become a fixed cultural label and what is at issue here in the initial introduction of the term to the English readers is the provision of the most appropriate interpretation possible so that the cross-cultural translatability of this Chinese translation concept and its potential communication to the Western translation discourses can be most effectively enhanced (Chang, 2019, p. 143).

Concerning the translation of *huajing* into "the realm of

transformation,"[5] the present writer has pointed out elsewhere that this rendition contains some phenomenological implications as informed by James Liu (Chang, 2017, p. 333). That is to say, the text entering the realm of transformation would elicit constant responses from the translator who acts as the subjective participant actively interacting with it. What is more, the word *jing* 境 has obvious connections to Buddhist thought and anticipates the activation of five senses while one enters this embodied realm (Chang, 2017, p. 334). In addition to the discussion of the cultural roots of *jing*, the idea of *hua* or transformation can also be traced back to classical thinking in the Chinese tradition. For example, in the story of the butterfly dream, Zhuangzi 莊子 tells us that he did not know whether he had dreamt of becoming a butterfly or a butterfly was dreaming of being him. This means the physical differences between Zhuangzi and the butterfly do not necessarily make the two as being totally different and mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, there must be some distinction between them, so Zhuangzi calls it "the transformation of things" or *wuhua* 物化 in Chinese, indicating that there are differences between things in how they are manifested (Zhuangzi, 2003, p. 23). In another example that Xunzi 荀子 gives us, the concept of *hua* is described as "a kind of transformation where the appearance of a thing is changed but still the same in its essence" (Xunzi, 1977, p. 332). Thus, it is the further explanation of the result of the transformation that the essence of a thing remains unchanged though it has been transformed. Combining

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[5] Please see Duncan Campbell's translation of *huajing* into "the realm of transformation" in Qian (1985/2014), *Patchwork: Seven Essays on Art and Literature*.

hua and *jing* into *huajing* renders "the realm of transformation," which is in line with Qian's idea as he emphasizes the unchanged spirit and flavor of the original in the translation, though it has been through a transformation in its exterior presentation.

It is also important to note that the concept of *huajing* can be rendered as "the state of total transformation," a translation suggested by Cheung (2011). An example may suffice to substantiate the validity of this rendition. In a private conversation with Qian Zhongshu in Beijing in 1981 or 1982, Zhang Longxi 張隆溪 , a renowned theorist of East-West cross-cultural studies, recalled that Qian himself would have liked to see the title of his essay "Poetry as a Vehicle of Grief" (*Shi Keyi Yuan* 詩可以怨) rendered as "Our Sweetest Songs," if it was ever to be translated into English. Zhang (2014) says that this is "a famous quote from P. B. Shelly's 'To a Skylark'—'Our Sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought,' which gives the central idea discussed in this essay a beautiful and brilliant expression" (p. 7). Again, the present writer is not in a position to unequivocally prove that Qian would take this translation as the best exemplar for reaching the state of *huajing*. Nevertheless, and despite not possessing a direct judgment from Qian, we can take this translation as a useful indicator as to how flexible a fully transformed state of translation can be and why such a translation is praised by Qian as a refined rendition able to reveal to us the extent to which a translation is still a translation.

In this essay, Qian (1985/2014) provides an insightful account of the pervasively held view in both China and the West that "pain engenders poetry more than pleasure does, that good poetry is, in the

main, an expression or discharge of the emotions of unhappiness, anxiety or frustration" (p. 190). For instance, as the Chinese historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 observes: "the classical compilations ranging from the *Book of Changes* (*Zhouyi* 周易) to the *Book of Songs* [*Shijng* 詩經] were 'mostly written by men of wisdom and ability when they were agitated (*fafen* 發憤)'" (as cited in Qian, 1985/2014, pp. 190-191). "These were men," he further stipulates, "who saw their wishes checked and frustrated (*yujie* 鬱結)" (Qian, 1985/2014, p. 191). Therefore, Qian (1985/2014) concludes that:

> Sima Qian emphasizes the "grievous" or "painful" nature of the *Book of Songs*, ignoring its "pleasurable" dimensions: the *Book of Songs* was written by men of sorrow, whose wishes have been "checked and frustrated," and their poetry consists "mostly" of "agitated" outbursts. (p. 191)

He refers to Shelly's poem and understands that "Our Sweetest Songs" is the parallel match for the translation of his "*Shi Keyi Yuan* 詩可以怨*,*" so he emphasizes the idea of translation as the result of entering "the state of total transformation." It implies that translation is a product where the original text has been completely transformed and appropriated into the aesthetic norms of the target culture, and yet the spirit and aesthetic value remains the same. This approach to translation testifies to Qian's belief that translation is similar to "the transmigration of souls" where the loss of external form has been compensated by the gain in expression in the new language community. This is in line with Gadamer's (1960/1989) thinking that the translation of a text "cannot be simply a re-awakening of the original process

in the writer's mind; rather, it is necessarily a re-creation of the text guided by the way the translator understands what it says" (pp. 385-386). Translation accordingly entails continual recreation and rewriting of the original. Qian's excellent scholarship and unbound imagination enable him to bring the intertextual connection between Shelly's poem and the Chinese poetic tradition to light for mutual illumination and to spontaneously come up with a translation that conveys to Western readers the spirit and connotative force of the Chinese original (Chang, 2019, p. 150).

In sum, when Qian's concept of *huajing* is rendered into "the realm of transformation" and "the state of total transformation," both renditions convey the specificity of the term and address the multifaceted aspects of translation when viewed as both process and product. Of course, the present writer understands that the suggested translations should not become dominant over all the various interpretations of *huajing*. That is to say, the two translations are not representative of better interpretations for the term *huajing*; and, moreover, Qian would likely be supportive of the interpretive pluralism that welcomes any other possible translations of the term, such as the aforementioned three. As Gadamer (1960/1989) says, "[u]nderstanding is not, in fact, understanding better, either in the sense of the superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production" (pp. 296-297). The present writer asserts that the proposition "we understand in a *different* way, *if we understand at all*" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 297) suffices. This paper has shown that Qian's concept

of translation has cultural foundations in the Chinese tradition; nonetheless, Qian cites and draws upon a wide range of authors from a variety of disciplines in conceptualizing translation. In this process he has also unveiled the inter-connectedness of concepts that, linked through their thematic affinities, exists between translation, philosophy, and aesthetics in both the East and the West. His efforts have enlarged the concept of translation and anticipated the present interdisciplinary approach to translation studies.

Huajing as a Translation Concept and Method

From the discussion above, we understand that *huajing* is a conceptual term that takes translation as a phenomenon, a hermeneutic task, a mode of thinking and reflection, and a way of understanding that is actualized in the realm of transformation. Translation, in this sense, requires a translator to read a text with their eyes, to type up the words on a computer's keyboard, and to "listen to" the voice of the text that constantly elicits the cognitive and emotive responses of the translator. This "corporeal and affective" engagement with the text indicates that translation is indeed both an embodied and spiritual activity in which a translator is drawn to translate and captivated in the realm actualized by the event. "Understanding begins," as Gadamer (1960/1989) says, "when something addresses us" (p. 299). In the activity of translation, a translator is both being appealed to by the sense of words and drawn to sense their existence embodied in the experience with language such that a translator confronts words in

the first sense as well as feels in the second sense what words would bring to him. Therefore, when one enters into the state of *huajing*, he is compelled to understand and to translate because he is drawn to this realm and beseeched by what is sensed. The process results in the transformation of his prior understanding along with a translation that is an act of producing that understanding. What one experiences in the *huajing* is not unlike what Berman (1995/2009) describes as the "drive to translate" that "makes the translator a translator: what pushes him to translation, what pushes him in the space of translation" (p. 58). It is also in line with the point made by Blumczynski (2016) who sees translation as a response to an address, arguing that "we reach understanding as much as understanding reaches us, dawns on us" (p. 40). In other words, when we see or sense something, we understand; similarly, when we understand a text, we translate. That is, "translators are (passively) drawn into an event: They experience the meaningful and are captivated by it" (Blumczynski, 2016, p. 41). While they are drawn into experiencing what they perceive and feel in this event, they respond instinctively and enter the realm of transformation or Qian's concept of *huajing*.

Qian is himself the practitioner of this hermeneutic understanding of translation because understanding as a translation implies that there is no such thing as a dichotomy between concept and method. When one is drawn to understand in the state of *huajing*, s/he is compelled to translate. In an English essay entitled "The Return of the Native," Qian (2005) makes a concise yet illuminating analysis of the metaphor of life as a journey and death as the return to one's own home. In the

process of elucidating this figure of speech employed by the ancient Buddhist thinkers, the Chinese mystics and Confucianists, Qian has always been driven to translate these passages into English so that he can comprehensively expound on the issue in detail. While discussing the two Chinese words *gui* 鬼 and *gui* 歸, Qian introduces us to a passage from Liezi 列子 who says 鬼，歸也，歸其真宅 which is translated by Qian as "[t]o become a ghost or spirit is to return, to return to the real home, that is" (Qian, 2005, p. 353). In this translation, Qian has translated the noun 鬼 into an infinitive verb-noun structure, "to become a ghost," along with the other two adjacent to-infinitives, "to return" and "to return," thus giving this rendition a dynamic and active taste. Although he cannot replicate the same rhyming effect among the three words, namely 鬼, 歸, and 歸, in English, the formal correspondence with the use of three to-infinitives as an anaphoric expression has added rhythm and made it more evocative to read. The addition of the exclamatory remark "that is" at the end of the translation has also reinforced the concept of returning home as approaching one's death.

Qian (2005) continues to reference Leizi who gives the most "eloquent expression" on this metaphor of life as journey and death as home (p. 353). Leizi tells us:

> 大哉死乎！君子息焉，小人伏焉。古者謂死人為歸人，則生人為行人矣。遊於四方而不歸者，世必謂之為狂蕩之人矣。(as cited in Qian, 2005, p. 365)

Qian (2005) has rendered this passage into English as:

> Great is death! It gives peace to the wise and wins victory over

the foolish. In our ancient idiom, a dead man is one who has returned home. A living person is, therefore, still a wanderer. He who ranges over all four quarters of the world and never thinks of returning home, must be a foolish tramp. (p. 353)

In this English translation, it is evident that Qian has rebuilt the sender-receiver relationship by foregrounding "death" as the subject that "gives peace to" or "wins victory over" humans. He also adds some explanatory meaning in the translation by rendering the Chinese original *guzhe* 古者 (the ancients) with the explicating phrase "our ancient idiom," which gives readers an impression that this is a principle faithfully adhered to by long ago ancestors. Regarding the translation of the last phrase 遊於四方而不歸者，世必謂之為狂蕩之人矣, Qian has applied the skill of reduction by omitting *shi* 世 (the general public) and *wei* 謂 (to call) and yet highlighted the word *zhe* 者 (person) with the translation "He" at the beginning of a new sentence, so that his translation becomes more subject-centered and directs the reader's attention to the person who is doing the action. Interestingly, Qian has rendered 狂蕩之人 into "a foolish tramp," and thus the original Chinese phrase, which indicates that a person lives an arrogant and dissolute life, has been transformed into a new image of a wanderer who travels from place to place and does not know where he should head to next. In addition, the translation of the two Chinese cultural terms *junzi* 君子 and *xiaoren* 小人 into "the wise" and "the foolish" respectively also demonstrates Qian's active and subjective involvement in the interpreting process, tailoring the translation to the stylistic feature of the entire translation. It

shows that Qian has rewritten the original and made a particularized interpretation of these terms. So the Chinese original has undergone a process of transformation whereby the translator actively contributed his subjective understanding to an interpretation and recreation of the original text in translation.

　　We can observe that Qian frequently restyles the original Chinese passages in his translations, so he does undertake rewriting of these passages. Qian's approach to translation demonstrates that translation is a practice of difference, and this difference does not exclude the bilateral kinship of a translation with the original. The complex interaction between a translation and the original, therefore, aptly defines the practice of translation as an activity performed in the realm of transformation where a text is given a new lease of life and resuscitated with new linguistic attributes. This realm of transformation manifests the nature of translation as a compromise between the foreign and the familiar, or the earthy nature of words that always resist translation and the revealing orientation of words that relentlessly long for meaningful expression, despite the existing differences between the two cultural traditions. As the idea of *huajing* signifies a phenomenological realm of transformation, Qian's translation not only adheres to the spirit of the original but also produces an aesthetic effect, owing to its being a realm in which our body-and-mind can engage in a world by which a cognitive stimulation of a range of possible experiences is afforded to us. That is to say, the images, actions, events, feelings, and emotions are all activated and embodied in these renditions, so much so that they have created a realm of

transformation. What has been transformed is not only the meaning of words in the literal sense but also a reader's emotions, feelings, and his or her perceptions that are enlivened by the aesthetic reading taking place while he or she is engaged with the translations.

Huajing Versus Translator's Invisibility/Visibility

In the state of *huajing*, a translator is empowered to perform the act of translation and his/her subjectivity is accordingly heightened. In the course of presenting his *huajing* concept in his essay on Lin Shu's translations, Qian foregrounds the daunting task of translation with reference to Schleiermacher's two methods of translation, tying together translation and hermeneutics.[6] In Schleiermacher's (1813/2012) view, translation is a negotiation and communication between the author and the reader, but the point at which the two parties meet "will always be the position of the translator" (p. 49). Therefore, the translator is seen as a hermeneuticist who has to understand the author as intimately as possible in order to bridge the distance between the author and the reader in an intersubjective relation (Chang, 2019, p. 89). Drawing on Schleiermacher to discuss the phenomenon of translation suggests that Qian's *huajing* concept takes translator visibility as a focal point.

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[6] Qian points out that there exist two methods of translation, as recognized by Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher in his famous lecture in Berlin in 1813: "The first method would attempt to 'Europeanize' (*ouhua* 歐化) the translation as far as possible, thus leaving the foreign author in peace and quiet and leading Chinese readers towards him. The second method would seek to 'Sinicize' (*hanhua* 漢化) the translation as much as possible, leaving Chinese readers in peace and quiet to the greatest extent practicable and leading the foreign author towards us" (Qian, 1985/2014, p. 140).

Qian's interest in the famous late Qing-early Republican translator Lin Shu, who undertook considerable manipulations of source text in his translation works, is perhaps the best testimony to his concern for the translator's role in the translational act.

However, this suggestion of a strong sympathy and bond between the author and the translator is contested by Lawrence Venuti who argues that such advocacy has formulated an imagined identity that facilitates the idea of translators "participat[ing] vicariously in the author's thoughts and feelings" and by extension a "veritable recapitulation of the creative process by which the original came into existence," thereby producing an "illusion of transparency" (Venuti, 1995, p. 274). Venuti's hostile attitude toward a negating correlation between author and translator has been further set forth in his concept of resistant versus fluent translation: his critique of domesticating translations that lead to forced invisibility through fluent transparency versus his advocacy for what he calls a resistant foreignizing approach to translation that accentuates the translator's visibility (Venuti, 1995). However, given that Qian has brought up Schleiermacher to develop his translation concept, it is unlikely that he would easily surrender to Venuti's line of reasoning. Translation as an interpretation always involves a deep understanding between the translator and the author and is by nature very interpersonal. As Gadamer (1960/1989) says, "every interpretation includes the possibility of a relationship with others" (p. 397). Venuti's rejection of a translator's sympathetic understanding of the author is based on the assumption that it suggests a relation of identity and sameness with the imagined author. Against

this view, Stolze (2011) contends that "when we widen that concept by redefining it in terms of similarity rather than sameness, we will reach a hermeneutical view" (p. 131). Indeed, translation is, first of all, an understanding between the translator and the author, a recognition of the similarity or approximation between two cultures and the Buberian encounter between I and thou. This understanding is not always satisfactory but it is this willingness to know the other that urges the translator to render into another culture the ideas and aesthetics voiced by an author.

Furthermore, in the essay "Translation, Community, Utopia" Venuti (2000) amplifies the differences among all the agents involved in translation and fiercely dismisses the idea of "imagined communities" constructed by translators who expect that foreign and domestic readerships share the same interests in the translations (p. 482). That is to say, so-called imagined communities are filled with incongruent interests and values existing between cultures, so that any attempt to build a common understanding in the translated communities is of no avail. As Venuti (2000) says, "the differences will be incommensurable," and yet, "the greatest communication gap here may be between the foreign and domestic cultures" (p. 482). This is why Venuti renders these communities as "heterogeneous," having scarce commonality in their shared interests, values, and morality with the host cultures. The overemphasis on the "differences" between domestic and foreign readers has turned the intercultural understanding and connection established through translation into a utopian venture. When compared with Venuti, Qian Zhongshu

also makes some similar remarks on the irreducible foreignness in translation, suggesting that translations always take the source text as the point of departure and target language as the intended destination. The result is never satisfactory as they "either violate the meaning and tone of these originals, or, at the very least, fail to quite match them" (Qian, 1985/2014, p. 141). Qian keeps on saying that this is what we refer to as the "misrepresentation" or that which is inferred from the frequently cited Western adage, "[t]he translator is a traitor (*Traduttore traditore*)" (Qian, 1985/2014, p. 141). Indeed, since the geographical and cultural-historical differences between the foreign and the domestic readers are difficult to fully assimilate and incorporate, a perfect understanding between the two sides through the translation can never be completely reached. Nevertheless, Qian always holds out hope for a better translation, as evidenced by his concept of *huajing*. In addition to this, through close examination of the concept of utopia, we come to realize that "utopia expresses and explores what is desired; under certain conditions it also contains the hope that these desires may be met in reality, rather than merely in fantasy" (Levitas, 1990, p. 191). Accordingly, Levitas's idea of utopia is at odds with Venuti's since it signifies a transformative impulse used for one to transgress what is thought to be the impossible to reach desired aim. By contrast, Venuti's overemphasis on the heterogeneity of the built community has given rise to a conception that suggests cultural difference to the extreme, which is not, in fact, an appropriate manifestation of the nature of utopia but, quite the contrary, a dystopic vision par excellence (Chang, 2019, p. 96).

Translation, insofar as we are aware of it, is deemed a mixture of both familiar and unfamiliar elements with each iteration and is always different from the original. However, no matter how foreign the original is, it is always more or less translatable, albeit the result may never be satisfactory. Translation also involves an interpretation or an understanding of in-betweenness: It seeks the highest possible cross-cultural communication and helps two sides reach a better understanding. That is what Qian (1985/2014) substantiates as the ethical function of translation, establishing the "literary affinities" between nations (p. 142). Of course, this is not easy as a text that derives from cultural specificity always resists cognition; nevertheless, there always remains a moment within the text that can be apprehended and elucidated. This point of tension is where we see most clearly how Qian's *huajing* is the realm calling for translations that create the possibility of intercultural communication. Immersed in the state of *huajing*, one's understanding of the other will be elevated, and he or she will be empowered to carry the other beyond itself, thus enabling two cultures to grow and flourish in this constructed intersubjective mode of communication.

Conclusion

This essay began with a brief discussion of the current Western-centric conceptualization of translation, followed by calls for a broad conceptual framework of translation with contributions from the non-West regions, especially from the organic translation resources in

China, and then conducted a detailed analysis of Qian Zhongshu's *huajing* concept and its various translations and interpretations. An attempt to piece together Qian's remarks and fragmented commentaries on translation from Qian's books and articles and synthesize them into coherent arguments was undertaken in an effort to prove the theoretical potential of Qian's conceptualization of translation and its connection with the Western literary, aesthetic, and hermeneutic theories. Qian's translation concept implies a tension between concealment and revelation in the essence of words, a Heideggerian criticism of language, and an endless hermeneutic impulse to experience and understand the foreign, or the idea of *Bildung*,[7] which indicates an edifying and self-cultivating process of continuously learning and renewing oneself in the realm of transformation—*huajing*. Within this struggle and conflict, we begin to comprehend the possible unconcealedness of the meaning of words, and the afterlife and renewal of the work of art revealed through the transformative force of translation, an enduring task of the translator as told by Benjamin (1923/1973).

Qian's *huajing* concept is a process-centered activity with the translator playing an important mediatory and visible role in a dialogue between East and West, where two distinct traditions with different linguistic and cultural attributes meet without superimposing one

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[7] *Bildung*, according to Antoine Berman, is "*closely connected with the movement of translation—for translation, indeed, starts from what is one's own, the same (the known, the quotidian, the familiar), in order to go towards the foreign, the other (the unknown, the miraculous, the unheimliche*), and, starting from this experience, to *return to its point of departure*" (Berman, 1984/1992, p. 46).

cultural norm over the other. Qian's *huajing* concept is also product-based, but this complete state of transformation in the translated product is also the temporary result of the hermeneutic process of understanding and interpreting the text that will be continuously translated and retranslated. Process and product should not rule out the kinship of the translation with the original. All in all, Qian's conceptualization of translation indicates the translatability of cultures between the East and West and is of great value to the tradition of solid scholarship that testifies to the potential of the Chinese theoretical resources for the enrichment of present-day translation studies. Revisiting Qian Zhongshu's concept of translation is perhaps the necessary first step in the rediscovery of the wealth of resources presented by previous translation scholars in China but possibly other regions as well. This is, thus, only a taste of the potential to enlarge our horizons and contribute to the theoretical biodiversity now keenly demanded in the translation studies eco-system through the review of an overlooked body of translation scholarship.

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