



RECONCEPTUALIZING AN IDEALISTIC ANCIENT CHINA: REFRACTION AND TRANSCREATION IN THE ENGLISH RENDERINGS OF CHUANG TZU



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Abstract: Chinese philosophy is a philosophy of ecology. The basic problem of Chinese philosophy is the relationship between heaven and man, that is, the relationship between nature and man. This is evident in the main schools of Chinese philosophy, such as Confucianism and Taoism. A correct understanding and evaluation of Chinese ecological philosophy has important practical significance for us to reflect on the ecological imbalance and environmental deterioration caused by the industrial civilization, created under the guidance of the mechanical concept of nature and anthropocentrism, and to re-examine the way of human existence, development, thinking and values. This paper aims to explore the elements of eco-philosophy in Chinese philosophy and analyze its influence on the concept, value and practice of ecological civilization.

Keywords: Chinese philosophy. Confucianism. Taoism. Ecological civilization.

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Resumo: O clássico cultural chinês *Chuang Tzu* foi amplamente traduzido para versões em inglês, durante o século passado. Como resultado, essas traduções em inglês refletem, parcialmente, a conceituação da China antiga que mudou, ao longo do tempo, entre os falantes de inglês de outras nações. Desse modo, o presente artigo investiga as imagens reconstruídas da China antiga, tal como se manifestam nas refrações e transcrições das traduções inglesas de *Chuang Tzu*, as quais foram interpretadas por tradutores estrangeiros, a partir da perspectiva da imagologia na literatura comparada. Todos esses fatos contribuíram para a descoberta de inúmeras imagens nacionais, através da exploração de *Chuang Tzu* do mundo anglófono, incluindo uma China antiga mestiça, uma China antiga misteriosa, uma China antiga ecológica e uma China antiga multifacetada. O mecanismo operacional da comunicação translacional sino-estrangeira foi elucidado através de um exame cuidadoso das variações das imagens, a fim de melhor compreender como os ocidentais constroem sua percepção geral sobre a nação oriental.

Palavras-chave: *Chuang Tzu*. Estudos de tradução. Imagologia. China antiga.

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RECONCEPTUALIZING AN IDEALISTIC ANCIENT CHINA: REFRACTION AND TRANSCREATION IN THE ENGLISH RENDERINGS OF *CHUANG TZU*¹

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Abstract: *Chuang Tzu*, one of ancient China's cultural canons, has been translated into massive English versions in the past century. Consequently, these English renderings, to some extent, reflect the chronological change of reconceptualization of ancient China's image from the people's perspective from English-spoken countries. Thus, from the angle of imagology in comparative literature, this paper probes into the recreated ancient China's images manifested through the refractions and transcreations in the English translations of *Chuang Tzu* interpreted by overseas translators. As a result, different national images have been found in *Chuang Tzu*'s expedition into the English world, which respectively are a gospel-graced ancient China, a mysterious ancient China, an ecological ancient China and a multi-faceted ancient China. Through a meticulous study of the image variations, the operational mechanism of Sino-foreign translational communication has been clarified to better burrow into the formation of the Westerners' general impression on the Eastern nation.

Keywords: *Chuang Tzu*. Translation studies. Imagology. Ancient China.

INTRODUCTION

As a representative work of ancient Chinese prose, *Chuang Tzu* is one of the core works of the Chinese cultural canon, reflecting ancient China's philosophical knowledge, social life, cultural customs and general ideology. "The Chinese will always have the imprint of *Chuang Tzu* on their culture" (Wen, 2011, p. 248). The book has long been worshipped and studied by local Chinese scholars and translators from many overseas countries. It has been translated into many languages, telling the ancient China's wisdom to the entire world. In English-spoken countries, the English translational activities of *Chuang Tzu* have been very

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fruitful, and the translation community comprises many translators from at home and abroad. According to the systematic survey, the book has 64 translations and monographs in the English world, including 12 full translations, 50 selected translations and two compilations, which have been widely and profoundly disseminated in many foreign countries.

In the translational journey of more than a hundred years, many translators have recreated ancient China's mirror images one after another in the Western world, implanting different images and impressions into the Western readers' minds. These images, directly or indirectly, drastically influence the judgment of China's mainstream discourse and dramatically guide the direction of people's impression about ancient China in the West. Nowadays, "[...] the interest in image-building, questions of (national or cultural) representation and imagological approaches, in general, are anything but outdated in Translation Studies" (Flynn; Leerssen; Van-Doorslaer, 2015, p. 1). Therefore, from the perspective of imagology of comparative literature, this paper intends to take the English translations of *Chuang Tzu*, interpreted by overseas translators, as the object of study. The historical changes in ancient China's reconstruction through foreign translations of *Chuang Tzu* would be carefully examined, using a combination of both inner-textual research and extra-textual research methods, with the goal of revealing the workings of Sino-foreign exchanges and communication. The struggles and conflicts between Chinese and Western cultures would also be intensified in order to minimize any misunderstandings and contradictions that may arise in interactions among individuals with various regional, racial and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, it is envisaged that incorrect and harmful preconceptions will be eradicated and that amicable interactions between people of different ethnic identities will be encouraged.

1 THEORETICAL BASIS: IMAGOLGY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

First and foremost, since *Chuang Tzu* enjoys an English translation history of more than a hundred years, there have been an immensely large number of studies specifically about the book. However, based on meticulous literature reviews at home and abroad, there are a great many studies solely concentrating on translation strategies, translation review, translation quality, translation comparison and translation studies. In this sense, the domestic and overseas academia has not yet noticed the importance of the reconstructed images of literary translation entangled with the shackles of text-essentialism. Therefore, it is in dire need to burrow into the different recreated images deriving from multiple English translations of *Chuang Tzu* to eventually discover the dominating factors that contributed to the variations of ancient China's image. Meanwhile, the imagology of comparative literature, as a viable means for analysis in translation studies, has unimpeachably become the optimal means to be utilized for studying the distortions of massive mirror images projected from different English translations of *Chuang Tzu* in the Western world.

For starters, the imagology of comparative literature can be traced back to France in the latter half of the 19th century. In the initiative stage of comparative literature, all attention has been drawn to the literary relations manifested in the cross-discipline, cross-language, cross-nation and cross-culture communications, which ineluctably entices the limelight of the academia towards the variations of national images demonstrated in literary works and those of their translations. It was well-acknowledged that “[...] mutual appreciation of nations and peoples is one of the main tasks of comparative literary studies” (Betz, 1896, p. 151). In the 1940s, a French scholar, J. M. Carre, distinguished imagology as an independent branch and defined it as a mutual interpretation among different nations, travel notes and imagination (Meng, 2001, p. 2). For the first time, the relation between images manifested in literary works from different countries was attached to grave importance. In the 1960s, Jean-Marc Moura and Yves Chevrel proposed that imagology is “[...] the foreign country presented in the literary work being studied” (Pageaux, 2001, p. 118). Therefore, in essence, imagology is mainly concerned with an exotic country’s variations in a literary work, and the descriptions, which directly or indirectly indicate an overseas country’s general understanding, are the major study objects in imagology.

In imagology, a few key concepts are worth elucidating, reasoning that those notions are part and parcel of conducting the relevant studies. Firstly, “variation” in imagology refers to the aberrance of certain information about an exotic country embedded in a literary work. It manifests the author’s views and opinions on the country.

Secondly, the “social imagination” refers to “[...] the comprehensive summation of viewpoint over a foreign country taken shape in the process of literalization and socialization” (Pageaux, 2001, p. 120). This concept emphasizes the national, collective, social and historical nature of the variations. In all actuality, the social imagination is possessed of polarity, which means the social dream either conforms to the general public’s will or goes against the mass opinion.

Thirdly, there is a group of inter-referential concepts: “the other” and the “the self.” Generally speaking, “the self” is the author himself or the whole country he lives in, while “the other” refers to the overseas countries’ people and affairs. In imagology, the relationship between the other and the self not only consists of the physical substance in the real world, but also comprises some intangible entities, such as value, ideology, sentiment, judgment and other assets of consciousness. The interaction between the self and the other contributes to image variations in literary works.

As imagology derives from, comparative literature can also be utilized in translation studies, reasoning that there have been concrete instantiation and theoretical argumentation. Theoretically, translated texts are inherently a form of literature with changes brought about by the translator’s subjectivity. Translation studies can, therefore, make use of the comparative

literature study methodology and viewpoint. Meanwhile, there have been many successful instances in translation studies, such as Rudvin (1994, p. 199), Soenen (1995, p. 17), Kuran Burcoglu (2000, p. 143), Hung (2005), Frank (2007), Seifert (2007, p. 219), Flynn, Leerssen and Van-Doorslaer (2015, p. 1). The constant occurrence of studies integrating imagology into translation studies has acted as a convincing testimony to the sound applicability of the theory. The quintessential core of imagology is to probe into “[...] the constructed nature of image or identity” (Leerssen, 2007, p. 17). As it is known to all, all literary works would, to some extent, reflect the collective imagination of exotic lands when it comes to depicting foreign countries. Simultaneously, “[...] the characteristics of other countries and peoples” (Beller, 2007, p. 7) are also manifested in translational works. Accordingly, it is reasonable to burrow into the image variations between original text and translated text in literary translation.

Last but not least, as it is well-acknowledged by all, variations are bound to be found between the original text and the translated text in literary translation. This, when it comes to describing a nation or the citizens’ relevant depictions, lifestyle, language, culture, and so on. Generally speaking, national image originates from a country’s objective existence. However, owing to the translator’s subjectivity, such as personal purpose, cognitive level, ideological values, language proficiency, etc., variations of the national image are bound to emerge, and distortions could be inescapably discovered in the translated text (Arnold, 2017, p. 142). We are supposed to notice that such variations are not an individual’s ramifications, but a society’ outcome or even a culture. So, in order to understand the underpinning mechanism affecting image variations, factors inside and outside the translated text should be paid attention to. It is supposed to be necessitated to incorporate inner-textual method and extra-textual one.

In a word, the imagology of comparative literature concentrates on the variations of image concerning the exotic countries. Since those variations are the ramifications of subjectivity from not only the author or translator, but from also the society, culture, or even the whole nation. The national image variation occurs in the interactions between two countries, namely “the self” and “the other.” It should be noticed that the aberrations in national image originate from the “social imagination” and its impacts on every individual living in a specific nation. The interaction between the self and the other generates the “mental silhouette” (Beller, 2007, p. 4) in a group. Moreover, variation would also appear between source text and target one regarding the translational activities. The feasibility of integrating imagology into translation studies has been theoretically sufficient and practically viable. Therefore, in this paper, not only will the texts of the English translation of *Chuang Tzu* from different phases be scrutinized, but factors in the social and cultural context, in which the translation activities have taken place, will be studied meticulously. Specific context should unquestionably be carefully monitored since it is the main cause of the production of such variances in order to identify the key factors leading to the national image deviations in

translations. As a result, the history of the English translation can be divided into four stages, each of which has its own distinct vision of ancient China. In the analysis process, social context and historical information will be utilized.

2 VARIATIONS OF NATIONAL IMAGE: ANCIENT CHINA'S RECONCEPTUALIZATION

Chuang Tzu, a Chinese classic that represents the long history of traditional culture, is an intensive reflection of the ancient Chinese people's philosophical wisdom, as well as a comprehensive mirror of ancient China's social life. In the history of translation over a hundred years, *The Book of Chuang Tzu* has gone through four different phases, at which those translations have rebuilt countless mirror images of *Chuang Tzu* overseas that have been subtly influencing English readers' fantasies and ancient China's impressions in the Western world. "Imagology does not study what nations or nationalities are, but how they are represented" (Van, 2019, p. 56). Generally speaking, the expedition of the English translation of *Chuang Tzu* can be roughly classified into four phases where ancient China's different national images have been reconceptualized, namely a gospel-graced ancient China, a mysterious ancient China, an ecological ancient China and a multi-faceted ancient China.

2.1 A GOSPEL-GRACED ANCIENT CHINA

Since the beginning of the millennium, China and the West have already initiated their communication and exchange with regard to economy, culture, politics and religion, establishing a long history of translating cultural classics of each other. "In the process of global expansion of European countries, especially to the East, Orientalism became a necessity for national academic development" (Zhang, 2018, p. 8). Out of missionary purposes, the Christian Church in the West began to send knowledgeable and competent missionaries to the world's various corners in an attempt to expand the influence of Christianity worldwide further and to consolidate the spiritual ruling in its mental territory. Among those traveling missionaries, there were a great many of them who had been assigned to China for preaching. By the end of the 18th century, most ministers in China mainly worshiped the strategy of "merging into Confucianism," concentrating on translating the most representative Confucian classics. However, there were, for what it's worth, practically few translations of classics presenting the thoughts of other schools.

However, in the 19th century, the Opium Wars broke out in China. With the opening of China's border, there was an increasing number of missionaries who set foot upon Chinese land and took on the task of missionary sermon. At that time, in order to gain a better understanding of China, the missionaries set out to translate more Chinese classics. By

translating different representative works from various schools, they anticipated transplanting Western ways of thinking and religious beliefs into the minds of China's general public.

On the basis of chronological retrospection, the first English translation of *Chuang Tzu* took place in 1881 when Balfour, a British merchant trading in China, primarily translated the entire book into English, which started a long journey of the book into the English world. Between the 1880s and the 1930s, plenty of famous missionaries, such as James Legge, Herbert Allen Giles and Linoel Giles, also contributed to the initial encounter between *Chuang Tzu* and English readers. Since, at this point, the translators were mainly missionaries who had not received systematic education in sinology, Chinese language and Eastern culture, their translations were ineluctably full of mistakes and deficiencies. In addition, these missionaries, with their ultimate target borne in mind to prove the fact the Christian God had already visited ancient China, tended to use various Christian concepts to replace some cultural specificities that were exclusive to Chinese culture, integrating Chinese culture with the Christian context.

Example 1:

Source text: “鯢” and “鵬”

Target text: “Leviathan” and “Rukh” (Giles, 1889, p. 1)

In traditional Chinese myths and tales, “鯢” and “鵬” are two legendary cryptic creatures that are unique and distinctive in Chinese culture. And there are no linguistic equivalents in English. Thus, in the process of translating the book, Giles boldly introduced some concepts in the Bible to ensure the readability of the translation. For example, the giant beast Leviathan from the Christian Bible story is utilized to replace “鯢.” According to the descriptions in the Bible, the leviathan is a big beast that dwells in the deep sea, large and submerged in water. In Chinese mythology, “鯢” is also a giant beast that inhabits the bottom of the sea. In comparison between the two mythological creatures, obvious similarities can be found conspicuously, such as living deep down in the ocean and possessing extra ginormous body size. Therefore, it is unimpeachable that the two creatures can definitely be used for information equivalence.

What is more, the word “Rukh,” also known as “Roc,” which is the giant eagle that hovers above the Indian Ocean in Arabian mythology, has already entered English culture. It is an independent and meaningful word in English referring to “[...] a legendary bird of great size and strength believed to inhabit the Indian Ocean area” (Mish, 2012, p. 1078). By means of a concept well-known in English culture, these missionaries managed to deliver the information hidden behind the original text and to accomplish a high degree of readability.

Therefore, it is clearly manifested at this stage that these missionaries, with their own religious perspective, observed “the other” from the West. They translated the Chinese

classics of the Tao school with several Christian themes in order to get a better understanding of China and to support their missionary endeavors. With the intention of eventually introducing Christianity to the Chinese people, these missionaries recreated an ancient China that had been blessed by the Christian God's Gospel and visited by it. The general populace would naturally hold a sense of superiority in all life's spheres, including religion, as a result of Great Britain's advancement. They believed that, because their Christian God was omnipotent, he served as the inspiration for all human civilization. They reshaped ancient China by organically combining the religious cultures of both the East and the West. These variations in the translation texts, particularly the religious aberrances, came into being mainly as a result of Western ideology, the need for warfare strategies and the confidence of cultural traditions at that time. However, objectively speaking, this distorted ancient China successfully facilitated the spread of Chinese culture in the West, bringing *Chuang Tzu* and its related culture into Western society. In addition, these missionaries also initiated the history of English translations of *Chuang Tzu*.

2.2 A MYSTERIOUS ANCIENT CHINA

Before the 1930s, when the world had experienced World War I, all activities in the field of culture suffered from constipation, including the process of globalization and world circulation of national literature of great excellence. Around the globe, practically most of the translational activities concerning world literature were suspended. It was not until the 1930s that the United States stood out from the war to replace Great Britain as the world's new hegemon. However, the United States' rapid growth was accompanied by a radical expansion of social capital and an unbridled growth of ambition and oppression. As the capitalist society's shortcomings began to reveal themselves, people in Western society became disillusioned with the society in which they lived and turned to the distant East for spiritual solace and relief so as to fill the void of spirituality and faith. At this phase, the English translation of *Chuang Tzu* began to thrive and gradually drew the Western world's attention, for which the number of translations drastically increased. Instead of an ancient country brimming with the Christian God's touches, ancient China was depicted as a mysterious country full of literary atmosphere.

Example 2:

Yellow Emperor got it and ascended to the cloudy heavens. Chuan Hsu got it and dwelt in the Dark Palace. Yü-ch'iang got it and stood at the limit of the north. The Queen Mother of the West got it and took her seat on Shaokuang — nobody knows her beginning, nobody knows her end. P'eng-tsu got it and lived from the age of Shun to the age of the Five Dictators (Watson, 1968, p. 45).

The Yellow Emperor and Chuan Hsu are legendary rulers. The Queen Mother of the West is an immortal spirit who lives in the Far West. Yii-ch'iang is a deity of the far north. P'eng-tsu's life span, as given here, extends, by traditional dating, from the 26th to the 7th centuries B.C. (Watson, 1968, p. 46).

In *The Book of Chuang Tzu*, there are many parables and stories whose authenticity and facticity are not historically verifiable (Van, 2015, p. 57). Some myths, happening among legendary figures and deities, are even more mysterious. Burton Watson mostly employed translation techniques, such as literal translation and transliteration, in the body text, interpreting the concepts and characters unique to Chinese culture into English, as can be seen from the translation example above. Watson, however, makes flexible use of the paratexts, such as the comments and footnotes, to supplement the translations in the body section with information about cultural context, thus making the original text more readable. Each figure in the legend was thoroughly presented and explained in the paratexts by Watson. From his paratexts, it could be seen that ancient China was full of mystery with its own religious system of mystical legends, which recreated an ancient China's image as mysterious, authentic and unique.

Example 3:

Prince Wen Hui's cook

He was cutting up an ox.

Out went a hand,

Down went a shoulder,

He planted a foot,

He pressed with a knee,

The ox fell apart

With a whisper.

The bright cleaver murmured

Like a gentle wind.

Rhythm! Timing!

Like a sacred dance,

Like "The Mulberry Grove,"

Like ancient harmonies!

(Merton, 2010, p. 45)

In addition, scholars and translators of this period were keen to restore as much of ancient China's cultural flavor as possible, with a strong emphasis on the literary atmosphere of the translation. Some original translators, such as Merton, translated the original prose into the English poetic genre, separating some fables from their original context. By converting the prose into a poem, the literary atmosphere is intentionally magnified. Furthermore, with the ethereal and aesthetic diction and syntax, these translators have recreated ancient China's literary culture, even amplifying it for an English audience.

From the 1930s to the 1980s, translators in the English-spoken world, mainly specialized translators and scholars with academic backgrounds in terms of literature studies, sinology and translation studies, have recreated an ancient China's image that was closer to the real one than ever before, by rendering it with mysteriousness and reshaping its literary qualities through precise and exquisite language. In this fictional ancient China image, people led a simple life in mystery and often talked about literature, which was exactly what the Americans needed at that time. They expected to learn from ancient China's wisdom and adapt Eastern spirits to confront and debilitate the ferocity, brutality and cruelty in American society with transcendentalism to satisfy the Western society's need for spirituality. The desperate wish and mental demand from the whole society infused the "social collective" into that translator, which contributed to the distortion of ancient China's image. Through the manifestation in literary translation, they were longing to become spiritually liberated.

2.3 AN ECOLOGICAL ANCIENT CHINA

After the 1980s, the introduction of *Chuang Tzu* to the English-spoken world entered an unprecedented booming period, with translators digging deeper into its profound ideas and philosophical values. The analysis used distinctive viewpoints from many fields as the philosophical ideas were given priority. The U.S. government started turning its focus back to China in the Far East at this point due to economic, political, cultural, and national strategic considerations. I was eager to learn more about China through the translation of traditional Chinese cultural classics and to develop a thorough understanding of its cultural traditions and current political situation. Consequently, the translation of Chinese classics has been well funded and financially supported by favorable policies, which has led to an unprecedented development in canon translation, including the translation of *Chuang Tzu*.

Example 4:

Nothing in the world is bigger than the tip of an autumn hair, and Mount T'ai is small; no one lives longer than a doomed child, and P'eng Tsu died young; heaven and earth were born together with me, and the myriad things and I are one (Graham, 1981, p. 55).

Annotation: Hui Shih said that ‘Heaven and earth are one unit.’ At first sight, one might expect Chuang Tzu to agree with that at least... It may be noticed that Chuang Tzu never says that everything is one (except one side of the paradox) and always speaks subjectively of the sage treated as one (Graham, 1981, p. 56).

As is displayed in example four, A.C. Graham, a sinologist specializing in ancient Chinese literature, published a selective translation on the basis of a rigorous, cautious and critical literature review. The original text is a typical sentence that reflects one of the core ideas of Chuang Tzu, namely the general view on nature. In ancient China, one of the most common worldviews was the idea of the unity between heaven and man, or to put it more simply, the idea of responding to the heaven’s mandate. In ancient China, philosophers and sages were all convinced that every life’s walk in the world was actually a unified integration. Every existence, living or dead, was closely connected, and they could feel each other deep down. Their co-relation was the key to the entire universe’s harmonious and stable operation. The translation “heaven and earth were born together with me” demonstrates that Graham was agreeable to this point of view. What is more, he further explained this idea in the annotation. The translator, judging from detailed explanations in the paratexts, thought highly of the view that man and nature should live together in harmony, reflecting an eagerness to promote respect for nature. In a word, the harmonious co-existence should be advocated in the Western society.

In a capitalist society, where industry and capital were rapidly and highly developed, people in the West were willing to sacrifice the natural environment and the Earth’s resources merely in exchange for swift and high profits in order to facilitate their economies. However, this recklessness, relentlessness and ruthlessness have brought about irreversible and serious consequences, causing unprecedented damage to the natural environment and resources. The critical ecological destruction crisis triggered the Green Movement in America. During the Age of Ecology of the 1970s (Sessions, 1987, p. 121), a number of people in the US were struck by an epiphany and became aware of the negative consequences of environmental pollution and devastation. Hence, a social trend of “Deep Ecology” was formed. The translators and scholars, who were immersed in this trend, endeavored their best to put their fingers on ancient China’s ecological ideas at the philosophical level so that environmental protection and ecological lifestyle could be promoted. As a result, by translating *Chuang Tzu* into English, they succeeded in reconstructing an ancient Chinese image in which all people would respect, esteem and live harmoniously with nature. Human beings were leading an orderly life with nature, which was precisely what Westerners were striving for at that time. In consequence, an eco-friendly ancient Chinese image was represented to the English world and was successfully disseminated in a wide range.

2.4 A MULTI-FACETED ANCIENT CHINA

After the commencement of the 21st century, as the years of research and the advancement of information communication have already entered a state of maturity, Westerners have gained an in-depth understanding of China. The way they regard China has changed considerably compared to that one of the past. At the same time, as China's comprehensive power continues to rise and grow, the enthusiasm for learning about Chinese culture is increasing worldwide. In the English-speaking world, not only sinologists and translators, but also scholars specializing in other fields, such as philosophers, psychologists, theologians and even cartoonists, have taken actions to innovate the English translation of *Chuang Tzu* in terms of genre, form, content and perspective, reinterpreting the book in multiple dimensions. The classic *Chuang Tzu* itself is a collective prose that incorporates materials from disparate resources and touches upon Chinese ancient society's different aspects, manifesting miscellaneous approaches to life and different reflections on the world. It is a complication in terms of contents and philosophies. What is more, since the Chinese classics have been studied and translated in different realms, an ancient China's multi-faceted image is naturally formed.

Example 5:

The accomplished man (zhiren) turns his essence and spirit back to what has no beginning and pleasantly rests in the territory of what has no existence. Like water running into the formless, he overflows into the Great Clarity (Pregadio, 2005, p. 36).

The translation of example five derives from a book on alchemy in ancient China, with its main focus on *Chuang Tzu*. In Taoism, the concept “太清” refers to the heaven or the heaven's essence. Meanwhile, it also equals a Taoism deity who is in charge of alchemy. Legend has it that this deity is capable of making pills of immortality. The translator of this English version is a scholar in the realm of alchemy. The actual meaning of that, in the original Chinese, was the Great Clarity, which is how he translated it. The translator opts to translate the word in the manner in which it is typically employed in alchemical studies rather than giving it an explicit definition. In addition to this idea, the translator tries to decipher Chuang Tzu's traces and trails in order to delve into the core of alchemy in ancient China. Alchemy has given the idea of ancient China a new dimension by adding this component of life.

Up to this point, the English translation of *Chuang Tzu* has entered a stage of great maturity, and the question of semantic accuracy no longer haunts scholars and translators. Instead, they are working on studies and translations from brand new perspectives in order to reinterpret ancient China's wisdom. Indulged in carving out ancient China's different sides, these people have completed some parts of the puzzle and restored an ancient China's full

picture as much as possible from multiple angles. From the ancient Chinese life's smallest scenes to the largest philosophical, religious and value reflections in terms of all human affairs, contemporary researchers strive to study the book from the perspective of theology, psychology, hermeneutics, semiotics and logistics. Since the book is powerfully interpretative and awesomely ambiguous, they attempt to find clues and leads that can testify to ancient China's intellectual profundity and cultural abundance. Therefore, different pieces of the puzzle have been put together to complete ancient China's multi-faceted image.

Thus, the reasons for this variation are as follows. Firstly, owing to the development of the depth and width of relevant studies, with the assistance of scholars of traditional translation studies and international sinology, traditional research methods and perspectives have lost their value in digging deep into the book. Therefore, they can only continue to expand the breadth and depth of research. Secondly, as Chinese culture is gaining more attention from the world, its influence has permeated into life's all walks. The elites in every sector have sought to expand their understanding of China by seeking clues about their discipline in ancient China. The rapidity and swiftness of China's development stimulated curiosity in the West, incentivizing to ponder over t modern China's ancient origins so as to seek the historical roots of its power through a multi-faceted examination. Last but not least, modern China, in most Westerners' eyes, has already broken from the shackles of past stereotypes that China was destitute, unadvanced and imperforated. As a result, a comprehensive understanding of China changes the impression in the general public's minds. This is projected on the English translation of *Chuang Tzu*, recreating an ancient China's multi-faceted, multi-constructed and multi-dimensional image in the Western world.

3 TRANSITION OF ANCIENT CHINA'S IMAGE IN TRANSLATIONS OF *CHUANG TZU*

Generally speaking, the other country's image in translated texts is reshaped and reconceptualized through the canonization of a literary work of foreign nationality, which involves three steps, namely "[...] the selection of translation, translation strategies, and receptive context" (Ma, 2007, p. 73). By reviewing the English translation history of the Chinese classic *Chuang Tzu*, it can be summed up that it has gone through a transition from a gospel-graced ancient China, a mysterious ancient China, an ecological ancient China, to a multi-faceted ancient China. Firstly, in the very first phase, translators were mainly missionaries who entered China to preach. In order to better promote Christianity, those missionaries turned their eyes to cultural classics of different schools rather than solely Confucianism. During translation, they borrowed a lot of Christian concepts to replace China's those ones so as to ensure readability. However, their moves recreated a gospel-graced ancient China in front of English readers. This phenomenon not only resulted from their identities and

[...] translatorial habitus mediation [that] provides a practical explanation for the (largely self-inflicted) coercion brought about by the configuration of the field in which translation takes place-and in no small amount also, by the structuration of adjacent fields (Simeoni, 1998, p. 1).

But also stemmed from the general impression of the social mass. They were eager to, as their leaders wished, control and dominate the entire China for territorial considerations. In order to support their manipulation, they made an effort to demonstrate the Christian God's earlier existence. As a result, at that time, the English translations revealed an ancient China that was graced by the gospel.

Secondly, from the 1930s to the 1980s, since *Chuang Tzu* managed into the English world, there were more and more specialists, such as sinologists and professional translators, who embarked on translating *Chuang Tzu*. Although more information about China had flooded into Western countries, they still could not have access to sufficient sources concerning Chinese culture. For them, China was still a mysterious, distant country veiled in a disguise of elegance and refinement. Chinese culture, especially those mystical legends and mythologies, massively intrigued Westerners who were accustomed to Christian Bible stories; therefore, what the entire English-spoken world considered China penetrated into those sinologists and professional translators, which contributed to the national image variations towards China.

Thirdly, after the 1980s, capitalism in America and other Western countries enjoyed a booming period. The entire society, including the economy, politics, culture, and other social sectors, prospered at a considerably swift speed. However, the rapid development came into being at the price of the natural environment and resources. The negativities of environmental destruction unleashed a great many detriments to life's all walks in the West. Suffering from health crises and environmental jeopardy, Westerners began to realize the importance of natural protection and launched the Green Movement. This advocated trend pierced their society and kindled ecological awareness in every individual. Their desperate needs are reflected in the translational activities. Thus, translators endeavored to find proof and evidence in *Chuang Tzu* so as to take it as a mental cure for the whole society's sickness. Intentionally or unintentionally, translators tended to deliver the ecological thoughts of Taoism by means of thick translation, literal translation, and other translation strategies. Consequently, an ecological ancient China was formed in the majority of translations.

Fourthly, with the start of the 21st century, people in the West have already gained a more objective and comprehensive understanding of China. And the rapid enhancement of national strength triggers the world's curiosity. Many people in foreign countries start wondering what are the historical factors resulting in modern China's fruitful outcomes. There are massive speculations that need proving and discussing. Scholars and specialists from different realms crowd to burrow into Chinese classics, such as *Chuang Tzu*, looking for

answers to fulfill their inquisitiveness. Various theoretical perspectives from different fields are applied to relevant studies so as to complete China's puzzle piece by piece. Therefore, in various translations of *Chuang Tzu*, ancient China's many aspects have been put together for replenishment, such as psychology, semiotics, philosophy, and so on. Thanks to their unremitting endeavor, a multi-faceted ancient China is implanted in most Westerners.

From the English journey of *Chuang Tzu*, it can be concluded and deduced that there are many factors influencing the manifestation of a foreign country's national image in translated texts. Roughly speaking, they can be divided into two major categories, which are in-text factors and extra-text ones. Internally, the translation strategies and tactics that are adopted by translators would immensely impact the presentation of the national image. However, these are just the substantial and superficial factors (Hanna, 2007, p. 30). What ultimately determines the variations of the national image is the subjectivity of both the translator and the whole society of the target language. Every person in a society, including the translators who are experts in both cultures, would have their ideology invisibly, subtly and unnoticeably shaped by that society's social imagination. Every person in a society contributes to the overall atmosphere, which in turn continuously contributes to the development of each person's values. In actuality, the translator serves as the lens through which a country views "the other." Variations are certain to happen through this vehicle. The dominant discourse and the shadowy puppet master with secret authority control every translational action. Although the national image will inevitably reflect, it can be reconstructed in a more logical manner. For translators, stereotypes and biased prejudgments should be diminished and exterminated as much as possible before the translation process, so as to do justice to the exotic country.

In a word, in most Westerners' minds, there is an idealistic ancient China that derives from the introduction of Chinese classics, especially the Taoist canon *Chuang Tzu*. Variations as there are, ancient China's national image has already earned its place in the formation of the Westerners' general impression on the Eastern nation.

CONCLUSION

Chung Tzu, a philosophical classic and literary treasure in China's cultural history, has been introduced to readers all over the world in various language versions. As far as the English translation is concerned, there are more than ten types of complete and selected translations. Chinese classics are grand and magnificent, vividly carrying China's profound cultural foundation and long-standing ethnic heritage. A good translation is a reliable bridge for the introduction of traditional Chinese culture to the West, and a translator with high comprehensive literacy is a cultural ambassador with a heavy burden on his shoulders. Through the appreciation of the English translation of *Chung Tzu*, we have recognized the comprehensive qualities that translators should possess and realized the possible handling

methods for Chinese-English translation problems caused by cultural differences. We have encountered a thought path that can be used as a guide, particularly for the English translation of well-known ancient writings. This paper investigates ancient China's reconstructed images as they appear in the refractions and transcreations in the English translations of *Chuang Tzu* that were interpreted by foreign translators from the perspective of imagology in comparative literature. As a result, three distinct national visions of ancient China — an ecological ancient China, a mystical ancient China, and an ancient China with many facets — have been discovered during Chung Tzu's exploration of the English-speaking world. Through a meticulous study of the image variations, the operational mechanism of Sino-foreign translational communication has been clarified so as to better burrow into the formation of the Westerners' general impression on the Eastern nation.

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