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INTERPRETATION AND RE-CREATION:
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF POETRY IN THE *SANGUO ZHI YANYI*

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MPHIL

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 2003

INTERPRETATION AND RE-CREATION:
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF POETRY IN THE *SANGUO ZHI YANYI*

by
TAI Pui Shan

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy

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September 2003

ABSTRACT

Interpretation and Re-creation:
English Translations of Poetry in the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*

by

TAI Pui Shan

Master of Philosophy

This thesis is a textual and contextual study of English renditions of poetry in Luo Guanzhong's *Sanguo zhi yanyi*, in terms of their artistic approach and their bearing on the artistic functions which poetry fulfills in the novel. There are several English renditions of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* in full or in part, including two full translations by Charles H. Brewitt-Taylor and Moss Roberts. While the two full translations form the focus of the study, Roberts's abridged version is also included. Published fifteen years before the full rendition by the same translator, the abridged version serves every now and then as a reference point showing how an individual's interpretive perception may change over time and bear on choices made in a literary translation.

Insertion of poetry in a novel is basically unique to Chinese fiction, often contributing to its overall artistic effects as an organic element. A Western reader coming from a different cultural background may employ different standards in evaluating the artistic role and appeal of poetry in a Chinese classical novel. In an attempt to be as flexible and open-minded as possible, this thesis does not adopt any particular theoretical perspective, but makes use of literary concepts to facilitate the analysis as appropriate. To assess the literary translations, concrete analysis of selected original poems in semantic, syntactic, auditory, imagistic, symbolic and stylistic terms is made before the strategies adopted by the translated versions, along with their merits and limitations, are discussed. Detailed discussions of textual features and contextual elements offer an evidence-based appraisal of the renditions' artistic approaches, which are significant in shedding light on the translators' attempts to re-create and revitalize the artistic appeal of the source text within the multidimensional context of the target language and culture. It is also hoped that the thesis help shed light on some general as well as language- and culture-specific issues in the translation of classical Chinese poetry.

I declare that this thesis “Interpretation and Re-creation: English Translations of Poetry in the *Sanguo Zhi Yanyi*” is the product of my own research and has not been published in any other publications.

(TAI Pui Shan)
September, 2003

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL OF THESIS

INTERPRETATION AND RE-CREATION:
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF POETRY IN THE *SANGUO ZHI YANYI*

By

TAI Pui Shan

Master of Philosophy

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Chapter 1: Overview

I. Conceptual Frame of Reference

The concern of whether to stay close to the original piece of work has long been central to the practice of translation, and is still a hot topic of discussion from diversified perspectives. In his *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, published more than two centuries ago, Alexander Tytler gives an account of three general laws of translation leading to a good translation, in which “the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language, as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt” by the target readers as it is by the native readers.¹ A translation is expected to retain the style and manner of the original writing. The essence of this idea can be seen in some contemporary translation theories. In Nida’s view, while taking the readers’ response into consideration, “translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style”.² Emphasizing the intrinsic values of the source text, theorists like Nida rely a lot on close analysis of the original in the process of translation.

During the past three decades, scholars with different angles of interest in translation have been advocating the importance and autonomy of literary translation. In the process, they have been criticizing what they consider to be an old-fashioned

¹ The general laws are: I) The translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work. II) The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original. III) The translation should have all the ease of original composition. See Alexander Tytler, *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (1790) (London: J. M. Dent, 1907), 8-9.

² Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 12.

idea of the primacy of the source text. For example, polysystem theorists like Even-Zohar emphasize the importance of translation as a shaping force in literary history and the development of national cultures. Treating “translated literature as a particular literary system”, Even-Zohar observes that the translated literature is itself stratified, with some works acquiring a central and others a peripheral position. Moreover, translation activity is “dependent on the relations within a certain cultural system”. When the translated literature assumes a central position, it has more ability to “violate the home conventions”, leading the translation closer to the original through reproducing the dominant textual relations in the original.³ Translation does not occupy a static position, and in ideological terms is not essentially secondary to the original.

On the other hand, feminist perspectives have objected to “a cultural complicity between the issues of fidelity in translation and in marriage”,⁴ seeing both in terms of gender subservience. The role of a translator is emphasized because as Sherry Simon points out, language “does not simply ‘mirror’ reality” but “intervenes actively in the creation of meaning”; a translator, therefore, “can use language as cultural intervention”—in this case to assert female autonomy.⁵ Meanwhile, post-colonial theorists are interested in the dialectical relationship between hegemonic “master” systems and indigenous subversions of them, arguing for a review of the role and significance of translation. Through transforming the

³ See Itama Evan-Zohar, “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem,” in *Translation across Cultures*, ed. Gideon Toury (New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1987), 107-15 (quotations from pp. 107-8, 112-113).

⁴ Lori Chamberlain, “Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation,” in *Rethinking Translation*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 1992), 57-74 (quotation from p. 58).

⁵ Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 9.

colonial “original” for the target society, a translator can re-create an autonomous and legitimate identity for the latter. As Octavio Paz points out, a translator “is dismantling the elements of the text, freeing the signs into circulation, then returning them to language”—the language of the colonial oppressed.⁶ In this light, translation *per se* has its functional worth.

For post-structuralists, translation is a process of textual manipulation and rewriting, securing the survival of a text; Derrida even says that the source text is an unoriginal expansion of a preexistent idea, and thus itself a translation with no priority over translations of it.⁷ He and others have also found support in earlier voices like Ezra Pound and Walter Benjamin, who see translation as creating an afterlife for a dead author.⁸ In her essay “Transplanting the Seed: Poetry and Translation”, which has post-structuralist resonances, Susan Bassnett reaffirms the power of a translator and “the positive image of translation as energy-releasing, as freeing the linguistic sign into circulation, as transplanting, as reflowering” in the receiving culture.⁹ On another occasion, Bassnett observes that the transformative

⁶ Octavio Paz, “Translation: Literature and Letters,” trans. Irene del Corral, in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, eds. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 152-62 (quotation from p.159).

⁷ In his reading of Walter Benjamin, Derrida asserts that “in the very tongue of the original narrative there is a translation, a sort of transfer, that gives immediately (by some confusion) the semantic equivalent of the proper name which, by itself, as a pure proper name, it would not have.” See his “Des Tours de Babel,” trans. Joseph F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), 172.

⁸ Ezra Pound states in a letter to A. R. Orage in April 1919 that “there never was any question of translation, let alone literal translation. My job was to bring a dead man to life, to present a living figure.” See *The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 148-49. In “The Task of the Translator,” Walter Benjamin notes “a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life.” See his *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 69-82 (quotation from p. 71).

⁹ Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1998), 57-75 (quotation from p. 74).

process of translation “enables a text to continue life in another context, and the translated text becomes an original by virtue of its continued existence in that new context.”¹⁰ In sum, most recent theories of translation are target-oriented, focusing on declarations of self-worth and autonomous identity, while rejecting any hierarchy that champions the source text and reduces translation to a secondary position.

Accepting the inherent value and cultural significance of translation need not mean cancelling out the priority of the original text. For one thing, translation is not a totally independent activity because it is derived from an original text, regardless of the debates on the relationship between the source and target texts; and Derrida exaggerates his case in claiming that the source text is a translation, for the originality of a written literary text consists of an original combination of “unoriginal” elements. Although it is said that “language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation...from the nonverbal world, and each sign... is a translation of another sign”,¹¹ the specific use of language, or the “unoriginal” signifier, constitutes a creation, which can be highly original. Moreover, if this text has been tested by time and stands as literature partly because of language- and culture-specific artistic qualities¹² that continue to produce resonances among generations of readers, then these elements cannot be ignored or freely recast. What

¹⁰ Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 151. The outline of recent developments in translation theory sketched in this paragraph is condensed from Bassnett’s discussion in chapter 7 of her book, esp. pp. 139-58.

¹¹ Octavio Paz, “Translation: Literature and Letters,” in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, 154.

¹² One recalls in this connection the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that “no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.” In Edward Sapir, *Culture, Language and Personality* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1956), 69.

often gets pushed aside in the ideological rhetoric is a due consideration of artistic elements inherent in the original text.

To speak of language- and culture-bound artistic qualities inherent in a source text does not necessarily mean that the translation must be an inferior copy that loses vital elements in the original, based on any idea of a fixed text or belief in a single definitive reading. Rather, it is to draw attention to the real issues translation must face in trying to convey artistic elements shared by a continuing reading community in the source culture. Questions of gain and loss or translatability are not “old-style complaints”,¹³ but perennial issues in literary translation that involve the divergent cultural and aesthetic codes functioning in different traditions.

As Lambert and van Gorp have pointed out, one of the ways to study the problems arising from the various relations between the source and target systems is to study “the vocabulary, style, poetical and rhetorical conventions” of both source and target texts.¹⁴ Similarly, Ward-Jouve sees “the translator [as] a being in-between... endlessly drift[ing] between meanings.... You are led to reflect on how particular translations become constructed. What gets lost, what is gained, what and how altered, in the passage from one language to the next.”¹⁵ The same applies in passing from one artistic-cultural world to another, as the translator balances his way between two axes formed by the linguistic-literary norms and relations in the source text, and the norms and relations in the target system. Whatever ideological or theoretical position one may hold, it is this dialectic that always forms the core of

¹³ Bassnett, *Comparative Literature*, 152.

¹⁴ José Lambert and Hendrik van Gorp, “On Describing Translations,” in *The Manipulation of Literature*, ed. Theo Hermans (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 45.

¹⁵ Nicole Ward-Jouve, *White Woman Speaks with Forked Tongue: Criticism as Autobiography* (London: Routledge, 1991), 47.

the translation activity. As Toury observes, it would be “most illuminating [to conduct] a comparative study” of “translations of ...the same original text into one [target language], carried out in different periods of time and/or by different translators, ...or (above all) the comparison of a translation to the original text serving as its source, for without such a comparison one cannot even determine what type of initial norm underlies it.”¹⁶

Regardless of its conceptual form, translation is thus in practice a process of negotiation between an original work and its target-language rendition. This process becomes more complicated in literary translation, because much more is involved than the conveying of some “content” or “message”. G. R. Gachechiladze, a Soviet theorist, points out that “literary translation is... reflection of the artistic reality of the original”; this “artistic reality” is an “organic unity of form and content characterizing [the] literary work”.¹⁷ How this “reflection” can be achieved is always a difficult task, for literature is not a clearly definable entity. There is a constant tension between two polar positions—the literalist impulse to follow the letter faithfully regardless of differences in idiom and imagery between the two languages, and the liberal spirit that tries to capture the essence of the original by adapting it to the codes and idioms of the target system. Without a definite mode to follow, every translator must try to resolve the tension in each situation by striking a balance between the extremes. But it is relevant to remember that a central goal of serious literary translation is to re-create and revitalize the artistic appeal of the source text (which is not fixed) within the multidimensional context of the target

¹⁶ Gideon Toury, “The Nature and Role of Norms in Literary Translation,” in *Literature and Translation: New Perspectives in Literary Studies*, eds. James S. Holmes, José Lambert and Raymond van den Broeck (Leuven: Acco, 1978), 92.

¹⁷ Givi R. Gachechiladze, “Realism and Dialectics in the Art of Translation,” *Babel*, 13

language and culture.

By the same token, assessment of a literary translation must go beyond any evaluation of linguistic “fidelity” to examine the strategies used to re-create the original’s artistic spirit. In order to avoid impressionistic and potentially biased judgments, one should rely as far as possible on concrete analysis of language in the original and translated versions, in semantic, syntactic, auditory, imagistic, symbolic and stylistic terms alike. At the same time, meticulous micro-level discussions of verbal features must not cause one to lose sight of their larger significance, which is to offer an evidence-based appraisal of the rendition’s artistic approach. It is only by keeping this larger purpose in sight that detailed verbal analysis can rise above the level of localized and fragmentary observations; one must survey both the forest and the trees.

In short, while this thesis employs literary concepts as they bear on my analysis, it is not a theory-oriented piece of research. Rather, my thesis is based on textual analysis and comparison of the English renditions of selected poems in the Chinese novel *Sanguo zhi yanyi*, in the light of the artistic functions and significance which the poems have in the original novel. A background sketch of the history of the text and its translation is thus in order.

II. Textual and Translation History of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*

The *Sanguo zhi yanyi* is generally attributed (with some controversy) to Luo Guanzhong (c.1330-c.1400), and passed through an extended process of textual development. Since its first dated edition in 1522, many revised versions appeared in the ensuing two centuries. In the latter part of the 17th century, Mao Zonggang

(1967), 87-91 (quotation from p. 89).

(1632-after 1709), in collaboration with his father Mao Lun (dates unknown), produced a revised edition that contains an overall “guide to reading”, a commentary in front of each chapter and numerous marginalia, which has since become the standard edition of the novel.

Widely popular not only in China but also in East and Southeast Asia, the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* covers an exciting and disorderly period of almost a century up to the year AD 280, relating events that led to the downfall of the Han dynasty, the gradual emergence of three contending states each claiming and attempting to establish mandate over the whole country, and the eventual (if brief) reunification of the empire. Being the most influential novel produced in traditional China,¹⁸ the novel has been translated into a number of languages.¹⁹ In fact, it is so widely popular that there are many theme websites on the subject, including an English one hosted by a non-native reader.²⁰

There are several English renditions of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* in full or in part, including two full translations.²¹ The earliest translation of individual episodes in

¹⁸ William H. Nienhauser, et al., eds. *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 670.

¹⁹ Apart from English translations, the novel has been rendered into Japanese by Ogawa Tamaki 小川環樹 and Kaneda Junichirō 金田純一郎, *Sangokushi* 三國志 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), and into Korean by Pak Chong-hwa, *Samgukchi* 三國志 (Seoul: Omungak, 1984).

²⁰ The address of the website is www.threekingdoms.com.

²¹ Chronologically, they are (1) Charles H. Brewitt-Taylor, trans., *San Kuo or Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1925); (2) Z. Q. Parker, “The Story of the Three Kingdoms: The Battle of the Red Cliff”, *China Journal*, 3 (1925), 250-58, 308-16, 367-73, 426-30; (3) Moss Roberts, trans. and ed., *Three Kingdoms: China's Epic Drama* (New York: Pantheon, 1976); (4) Cheung Yik-man 張亦文, trans., *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (from Chapter 43 to Chapter 50: bilingual edition) (Hong Kong: Self-published, 1972); (5) Yang Xianyi 楊憲益 and Gladys Yang, trans., *Excerpts from Three Classical Chinese Novels* (Beijing: Chinese Literature/Panda, 1981), 5-110 (chs. 43-50); (6) Moss Roberts, trans., *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991); (7) Moss Roberts, trans.,

the novel dates back to John G. Steele's "The Logomachy, Being the 43rd Chapter of the Three Kingdoms Novel" (1907), which renders the chapter of Zhuge Liang's debates with Sun Quan's advisors on the issue of a joint attack on Cao Cao. Almost two decades later, Z. Q. Parker offered an excerpted rendition that includes four episodes on one of the novel's most remarkable events in his "The Story of the Three Kingdoms: The Battle of the Red Cliff", which appeared in the *China Journal* in 1925.

In the same year, the first complete English rendition of the novel by Charles H. Brewitt-Taylor was published, entitled *San Kuo, or Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. In his translator's note, Brewitt-Taylor tells us that his rendition is an attempt to add one in English to the then existing versions in, for example, Manchu and Japanese. He does not state on which original version his rendition is based, but the number of its translated poems shows that *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is translated from the Mao edition. It is a complete translation in that it renders all of the original text's 120 chapters, but the translation does not correspond closely to the original, as many conversations are summarized in brief descriptions. Moreover, the significant opening *ci* poem was not translated in this full rendition. There have been several reprints since the first edition, but no major changes have been made other than the addition of an introduction by Roy A. Miller since the 1959 reprint.

In 1976, Moss Roberts published an abridged translation of the novel entitled *Three Kingdoms: China's Epic Drama*. The opening *ci* poem and about one-fourth of the original (Chapters 20 through 85) are covered in that version, including many

Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel, abr. ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999). In addition, John G. Steele, trans., *The Logomachy, Being the 43rd Chapter of the Three Kingdoms Novel* (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1907), offers a translation of one individual chapter.

“summary bridges, condensations and splices” in the rendition, in the translator’s own words.²² Some time before and after Roberts’s abridged translation, two independent translations of the same chapters of the novel were published. Cheung Yik-man’s self published work (1972) and Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang’s excerpts (1981) both include Chapters 43 through 50, focusing on the Battle of Red Cliff.²³

Brewitt-Taylor’s version remained the only full English translation until 1991, when Roberts presented a complete translation of the novel *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*, which first took shape as the 1976 abridged version published for academic use.²⁴ It is a translation of the Mao edition, as Roberts states in his “Afterword”.²⁵ Roberts thinks that the subtitle “historical novel” is better than the term “epic drama” used in his abridged edition, as the former combines the Ming and Han aspects of the work.²⁶ Subsequent to his full translation, Roberts published a second abridged version in 1999, which includes excerpts from his complete version while summarizing the untranslated chapters. In this latest abridged edition, Roberts has added some bridging material “to ease the reader’s transitions from one section of the novel to another”.²⁷ But despite the changes necessitated by the abridgement, Roberts has preserved the title and the rendition of his full translation.

As can be seen from this brief account of the novel’s translation, most of the

²² Moss Roberts, trans., and ed., *Three Kingdoms: China’s Epic Drama* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), xxiv.

²³ See note 21 for publication details.

²⁴ Moss Roberts, trans., *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), “Acknowledgement”.

²⁵ Ibid., 1463.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Moss Roberts, trans., *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*, abr. ed. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999), vii.

renditions have only presented small parts of the novel, for the obvious reason that undertaking a full translation of the novel is a truly monumental task. This study of the English translations of the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* will thus focus on the two full translations to date by Brewitt-Taylor (1925) and Roberts (1991), while also paying attention to Roberts's abridged translated version (1976). Published fifteen years before the full rendition by the same translator, the abridged version serves as a reference point showing how a scholarly translator's interpretive perception may or may not change over time, and bear on the choices made in a literary translation. The 1999 abridged version will not be discussed, because other than the changes and bridging materials necessitated by the abridgement, Roberts has not made any major translation changes since his 1991 full rendition.

III. Poetry in the Chinese Novel: A Double Challenge for Translation

We may now turn to the more specific question of poetry in Chinese fiction. Insertion of poetry within narrative language is one of the characteristics of classical Chinese fiction,²⁸ often contributing to its overall artistic effects as an organic element. When poems become an integral part of the fictional narrative,²⁹ their artistic effects are to be gauged not only intrinsically, but in terms of how they relate to the development of the fictional themes, characters and plot. This literary mode of weaving poetry into narrative can be traced to the works of the Wei and Jin

²⁸ Lin Chen 林辰, *Gudai xiaoshuo yu shici* 古代小說與詩詞 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1992), 3-4.

²⁹ Zheng Tiesheng 鄭鐵生, *Sanguo yanyi xushi yishu* 三國演義敘事藝術 (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2000), 163.

dynasties (220-420),³⁰ and to the influence of the chantefable method of popularizing Buddhism in the Tang (618-907) dynasty.³¹ This form of narrative further developed as a typical oral storytelling method in Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) times, where poems or verses can complement the narration.³² With the advancement of printing, people were able not only to listen to a storyteller's tale, but also to read one by themselves; therefore, more attention was paid to the poetry as an integral part of the fiction. In the process of evolution, the role of poetry within narrative becomes multidimensional, establishing a uniquely "national" mode of writing³³ on the one hand, and enriching the overall artistic appeal of fiction on the other.

A Western reader coming from a different cultural background, however, may employ different standards in evaluating the artistic role and appeal of poetry in a classical Chinese novel. In his translation of the *Xiyouji*, for instance, Arthur Waley has struck off most of the "incidental passages in verse".³⁴ While Waley's reason for leaving out the verses is that they "go very badly into English",³⁵ the translational

³⁰ For example, rhymed lines are found in the *Soushen houji* attributed to Tao Qian 陶潛. In the story about Ding Lingwei 丁令威 in *juan* 1 of the book, a crane transformed from a student of Daoism called Ding Lingwei sings in the air four rhymed lines: 「有鳥有鳥丁令威，去家千年今始歸；城郭如故人民非，何不學仙豕壘壘」。See Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹, ed., *Soushen houji* 搜神後記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 1.

³¹ In the Tang dynasty, Buddhist stories are delivered by monks in a form of narrative interwoven with rhymed prose. See Ye Dejun 葉德均, *Xiju xiaoshuo congkao* 戲曲小說叢考, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 2:625.

³² Zhang Qingrong 張清榮, *Huashuo shuohua—sanyan erpai mingpian shangxi* 話說說話—三言二拍名篇賞析 (Taipei: Youshi wenhua shiye gongsi, 1995), 22-23.

³³ Lin Chen, *Gudai xiaoshuo yu shici*, 3.

³⁴ In Arthur Waley's abridged translation of the *Xiyouji*, only thirty of the one hundred chapters in the original are translated. See Arthur Waley, trans., *Monkey* (1943) (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 7.

³⁵ Ibid.

strategy adopted is also indicative of his view of the aesthetic value of poetry in narrative fiction. Another early Western sinologist, John Bishop, in discussing “some limitations of Chinese fiction”, even points out that verses in narrative are “unessential literary clichés” as a literary device.³⁶

As a matter of fact, the artistic functions which poetry serves in Chinese fiction became progressively enriched with the evolution of the latter genre. In immediate terms, the inserted poems can serve as plot summaries or critical commentaries, or add depth to the thematic understanding of a work. Meanwhile, some poems can even increase the “genuineness” of the narrative. This is especially relevant in the context of the Chinese historical novel,³⁷ because as we shall have occasion to see, truthfulness (真) is an aesthetic category in Chinese lyric poetics, while historical novels are often read in part as elaborations of historical truths and meanings. In other words, poems which are actually written by historical characters appearing in the narrative can enhance its sense of truthfulness, and are capable of enhancing the overall artistic appeal of the fictional work. Sometimes poetry can facilitate the portrayal of a character, while some rhymed lines help to create or heighten the fictional atmosphere. Other poems become a more active part of the narrative in influencing or foreshadowing plot development.³⁸ The best early example to illustrate how poetry functions as an organic part of sustained narrative is the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*, China’s first historical novel.

It is obvious, of course, that not all of the poems in the *Sanguo* are exquisite

³⁶ John L. Bishop, “Some Limitations of Chinese Fiction,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, 15 (1956): 239-47, esp. 240-41.

³⁷ Li Baochu李保初, “Foreword,” in *Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo juanzhong shici jianshang* 中國古典小說卷中詩詞鑒賞, eds. Li Baochu李保初and Wu Xiushu吳修書 (Beijing: Huawen chubanshe, 1993), 9.

³⁸ Zheng Tiesheng鄭鐵生, *Sanguo yanyi xushi yishu* 三國演義敘事藝術, 170.

compositions. Many routine complimentary verses about the characters add little to the total artistic appeal of the novel. In fact, Mao Zonggang and his father, in preparing what is by common consent the best and most popular version of the novel, deleted many “vulgar and ridiculous” pieces of work,³⁹ while adding 37 pieces by Tang and Song poets for a total of 205 poems.⁴⁰ The edited version generally raises the artistic appeal derived from the poems in the narrative. Functioning as key notes in their respective chapters, a number of poems in the novel give insight into the thoughts and personalities of some key characters. This is significant because, as Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft observe, usually “characterization is of the simplest kind” in early traditional Chinese novel, and “there is little need to seek to penetrate into the murky depths” of the main characters.⁴¹ In addition, the poems also offer commentaries on historical events, generating rich historical and cultural resonances which blend together Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist perceptions and sentiments. For instance, the opening *ci* poem, inserted by Mao in his edition, adds a penetrating—and I dare say indispensable—philosophical and historical perspective to the novel.

Once we recognize the significant artistic functions which poetry can serve in Chinese fiction, we can see that the translation of poetry in fiction poses a double problem, in addition to the usual difficulties in translating prose fiction. First, as the most evocative and condensed form of literary expression, poetry is already the most

³⁹ See “Principles of editing” in the Mao edition.

⁴⁰ According to scholarly statistics, there are 344 poems in the Jiajing edition, the earliest published version, and 409 poems in “Li Zhuowu’s edition”, of which 168 were retained by Mao Zonggang. Adding another 37 poems, Mao made the total number of poems 205. See Zheng Tiesheng, *Sanguo yanyi xushi yishu*, 158-59.

⁴¹ Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, *A Guide to Chinese Literature* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 1997), 201.

difficult literary genre to translate. Second, if the poetry forms an integral part of the fictional narrative, then any inadequacy in the re-creation of poetic effects in the rendition may have a debilitating impact that exceeds the local. Negotiation between the target linguistic, literary and cultural systems and the source systems becomes a perennial issue in the transfer or re-creation of those artistic effects and values on the English plane. To assess the performance of an English rendition of the *Sanguo* as a work of art also means an evaluation of the rendition's transfer of aesthetic values.

This thesis will therefore adopt a dual organisational approach. The next chapter will offer a concrete, contextualized analysis of a key poem in the novel, which will shed light on some general issues as well as language- and culture-specific factors involved in the translation of classical Chinese poetry. Incidental reference to the artistic roles which this poem plays in the novel will lead to the organisational framework of the ensuing chapters, which will evaluate selected poems in terms of the artistic functions they fulfill in the novel, and the poems' renditions in terms of their ability to play equivalent artistic roles in the target-language version.⁴² The main artistic functions around which selected poems and their renditions are organised include character portrayal, condensing and enhancement of heroic spirit, and the offering of broad philosophical and historical perspectives. The renditions are examined along with their re-creation of the poetry's artistic appeal, leading to an evidence-based appraisal of the renditions' artistic strategies and approaches. I will now turn to the first dimension of my analysis.

⁴² This means that poems which are artistically less significant in the novel will not be selected for discussion, although they have been rendered in both full translated versions.

Chapter 2: A Case Study of Problems in Translating Poetry

I. Issues of Lexical Sense, Cultural Resonance, Imagery and Ambience

The opening *ci* poem in the novel offers a good example that illustrates some of the fundamental problems involved in translating a classical Chinese poem, especially one that serves an illuminating artistic function in the novel. It should be noted that it is only in the Mao version of the novel that the opening *ci* poem is found.⁴³ With hindsight, the poem inserted by Mao is of monumental importance, because it shows a different orientation from the main drift of the novel, offering alternative perceptions on its plot, themes and characters. While the novel delineates characters vying to subdue one another and inherit history, this poem sees through human events and lends additional depth to our understanding of the work, offering historical, existential and philosophical perspectives that are supramundane in outlook.

Although Brewitt-Taylor's full English translation of the novel was published as early as 1925, the first English rendition of the poem (hereafter R1a) only appeared in 1976 in Moss Roberts's abridged translation of the novel. Fifteen years later, Roberts translated the epigraphic poem again (hereafter R1b) in his full translation of the novel. In a subsequent abridged version published in 1999, Roberts left intact the latter translation of the poem. Since literary translation (especially of poetry) presupposes interpretation, how the translator responds to the multiple perspectives noted above will affect his rendering of the work's artistic import right from the

⁴³ The poem is Yang Shen's 楊慎 "Lin jiang xian" 臨江仙, an opening poem for Section 3 "Shuo Qin Han" 說秦漢 of his *Lidai shilüe cihua* 歷代史略詞話. See Wang Wencai 王文才, ed., *Yang Shen ciquji* 楊慎詞曲集 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1984), 293.

beginning. It will be illuminating to conduct a comparison of the original poem and its two renditions by Roberts.

<p>P1</p> <p>滾滾長江東逝水， 浪花淘盡英雄。 是非成敗轉頭空， 青山依舊在， 幾度夕陽紅。 5</p> <p>白髮漁樵江渚上， 慣看秋月春風。 一壺濁酒喜相逢， 古今多少事， 都付笑談中。 10</p>	
<p>R1a (1976)</p> <p>The Long River passes east away, Surge over surge, Whiteblooming waves sweep all heroes on As right and wrong, triumph and defeat all turn unreal. But ever the green hills stay 5 To blush in the west-waning day.</p> <p>The woodcutters and the fishermen, Whiteheaded, they've seen enough Spring air and autumn moon To make good company over the winejars, 10 Where many a famed event Provides their merriment.</p>	<p>R1b (1991)</p> <p>On and on the Great River rolls, racing east. [no stanza break] Of proud and gallant heroes its white-tops leave no trace, As right and wrong, pride and fall turn all at once unreal. Yet ever the green hills stay 5 To blaze in the west-waning day. 5</p> <p>Fishers and woodsmen comb the river isles. White-crowned, they've seen enough of spring and autumn tide [no stanza break] To make good company over the wine jar, 10 Where many a famed event Provides their merriment.¹ 10</p> <p>1. Mao Zonggang took this verse from <i>Ershiwu shi tanci</i>, a collection of popular songs on historical themes compiled during the Ming dynasty by Yang Shen (d. 1559). The verse opens section three of the collection, the section covering the transitions from the Zhou dynasty to the Han. The Great River is the Chang Jiang, sometimes called the Jiang or the Yangzi. A river is a conventional metaphor for history. See, for example, Lord Guan's speech opening the third act of Guan Hanqing's <i>Guan da wang fu dan dao hui</i>: "Battle follows battle on the Jiang;/ The second wave impels the first wave on." Also see <i>Analects</i> 9.16: "The Master stood above the river. 'Racing past like that—day and night, unceasingly,' he said." Yang Shen's poem recalls Su Shi's <i>ci</i>, "Remembering the Red Cliffs," translated under its tune-title, "The Charms of Nien-nu," in Cyril Birch, ed., <i>Anthology of Chinese Literature</i> (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 1:356. Mao Zonggang was the editor of the mid-1660s edition of <i>Three Kingdoms</i>, the one translated here. For further information, see the Afterword, pp. 1463-64 and 1505-28. In the notes, the form "Mao:" indicates a translation of an interlinear note to the text by Mao Zonggang.</p>

The most obvious distinction between the two translations lies in the number of verse lines used. R1a is rendered in twelve lines, with the original poem's line 1 converted into two lines and lines 6-7 into three lines. R1b matches the form of the original in ten lines, with “白髮” moved to line 7 in the rendition. For organisational convenience, we can look at the translations along a few readily recognizable dimensions, such as lexical sense and cultural resonance, imagery and ambience, prosody and rhythm.

We may begin with the most immediate level of analysis. Throughout the poem, cultural resonances inherent in the source text pose problems for any translation that tries to reach beyond lexical meanings. For instance, the first line “滾滾長江東逝水” offers a vivid picture of a timeless river in dynamic and irreversible motion, not only because of the Yangzi's magnitude and the semantic sense of “逝” as “passing”, but also because the geographical inclination of the Chinese terrain (with mountains in the west and the sea in the east) gives “東逝” a convincing sense of irresistible flow in the Chinese sensibility. But while the east-racing waters carry a natural meaning of “eternal impermanence” with a connotation of irrecoverable space and time, this culturally loaded poetic sense is not entirely transferable across languages; neither “passes east away” (R1a) nor “racing east” (R1b) can carry the full artistic resonances which “東逝水” evokes in the native imagination. To illustrate on a simple level: an American or African reader will not instinctively associate an eastward flow of waters with irrecoverable loss, because the Mississippi and the Nile flow along a north-south axis. Explanatory notes and cultural naturalization can only offer imperfect substitutes.

As can be seen even in this brief sketch of the cultural associations of “東”, lexical translation invariably crosses over to cultural translation for a literary text.

The word “空” (emptiness) offers an even clearer case in point, because no rendering can generate its full philosophical and existential resonances in the culture of the source system. Essentially, the state of “emptiness” does not mean “privation of something”, but “uncluttered by illusions” in Daoist terms, i.e. liberated from the imprisonment of artificial standards, values and objectives.⁴⁴ Clearly “emptiness” suggests a sublime ideal and dynamic outlook on life,⁴⁵ although the lexical term used in early Chinese philosophical texts is not “空” but its synonym “虛”. The *Laozi*, for instance, speaks of “xu” in many chapters: “doing one’s best to attain emptiness” will enable one to “watch the wax and wane” of the myriad things’ development” (致虛極，…萬物并作，吾以觀其復) (ch. 16),⁴⁶ and “the highest virtue is like a valley” (大德若谷) (ch. 41),⁴⁷ an image connoting inclusiveness and capaciousness precisely because it is “empty”. The *Zhuangzi* makes frequent mention of “xu” as well: for instance, “the Way only gathers in emptiness; emptiness is the fasting of the mind” (惟道集虛，虛者，心齋也), and “an empty chamber engenders purity” (虛室生白) (ch. 4). Thus the *Zhuangzi* advises people to “go away empty and return full” (虛而往，實而歸) (ch. 5); “if a man could empty

⁴⁴ For instance, people who pursue particular goals—including “heroes”—are driven by emotions evoked by desires; labouring within the context of “是非成敗” (l. 3) means that they are trapped within human values. Only when these are left behind can one be liberated from the prison of the human construct and live freely in the universe.

⁴⁵ Thus in his “Fu on the Owl” (〈鵩鳥賦〉), composed in 174 or 173 BC), the Western Han poet Jia Yi writes of the “true man ...drifting like an unmoored boat, ...nourishing and floating with Emptiness” (真人…泛乎若不繫之舟，…養空而浮). This is a direct echo of a passage in ch. 32 “Lie Yukou” of the *Zhuangzi*.

⁴⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in this thesis are mine, with editing by my supervisor, Dr. Charles Kwong.

⁴⁷ Laozi also relates the capaciousness of the “valley” to political administration: “If you are a valley to the world, the constant virtue will remain ample, and return to being the uncarved block” (爲天下谷，常德乃足，復歸于樸) (ch. 28).

himself and wander through the world, who could do him harm?” (人能虛己以遊世，其孰能害之！) (ch. 20).⁴⁸ While indicating the illusoriness of human goals and values, “emptiness” clearly embodies a positive, life-affirming spirit in the larger framework of natural existence and philosophical transcendence.⁴⁹

In this light, the line “是非成敗轉頭空” does not ultimately suggest a resigned negation of all human endeavours bound to “turn empty in a flicker”, for the evaporation of “right and wrong, triumph and defeat” will return one to the unfettered and harmonious spirit of natural life. Indeed the ensuing lines speak of Nature’s abiding essence when the artificial values and categories are gone: “As the green hills ever stay on,/ Oftentimes glowing in the setting sun” (“青山依舊在，幾度夕陽紅”). It is not possible to re-create the inspiring Daoist horizon of “kong” in English, however, because “empty”, with negative connotations of voidness, foolishness and meaninglessness,⁵⁰ can only render the surface meaning of “kong” in the original line. Here in both R1a and R1b the lexical choice is “unreal”, but a similar problem exists in that the word carries connotations of being illusory and devoid of truth or existence,⁵¹ rather than the liberating sense to which the source word points. This is perhaps why both R1a and R1b summon a conjunction “but/yet” to carry the translation from line 3 to line 4 of the original, for in the cultural context of the target language, the tenors of the two lines are not compatible

⁴⁸ The above quotations can be conveniently located in the Harvard-Yenching concordance as follows (chapter/line numbers): 4/28, 4/32, 5/2, 20/24.

⁴⁹ The Buddhist concept of “emptiness” will not be discussed here, not only because it entails a much longer explication, but because the supramundane philosophical perspective present in the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* is primarily Daoist rather than Buddhist.

⁵⁰ Based on explanations given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁵¹ Ibid.

the way they are in the source context. In fact, the original lines can be simultaneously felt as conveying a smooth turn of sense and sensibility that merges with Nature's spirit: "Right and wrong, triumph and defeat, *blend into* Emptiness in a flicker,/ *As* the green hills ever stay on,/ Oftentimes glowing in the setting sun". What we witness here is an instance of cultural specificity beyond the reach of translation strategies.

With man-made concepts discarded by the end of the first stanza, the poem's second stanza offers a quiet existential embodiment of the philosophical senses expressed, through a concrete depiction of a natural mode of life. The "hero" as a violator of Nature has been replaced by the fisherman and the woodcutter, whose pulse of life is in tune with the cycle of "autumn moon and spring wind". These figures do not compete for success or fight for goals within the self-defeating parameters of artificial values, but chime in with Nature's rhythm the way their livelihood accords with the environment. Like the heroes but in an opposite sense, the fishermen and woodcutters are cultural signifiers, and I will return to them shortly. For now I will explore the symbolic significance of the wine they share—"濁酒".

It is noteworthy that in strategy, neither R1a nor R1b chooses to translate the word "濁"—meaning "muddy" literally and "unstrained" in semantic context. As one may expect, "zhuojiu" does not merely refer to the affordable low-quality wine which country folks drink in their rustic life, for like Nature itself, "zhuo" is a fitting metaphor for inclusiveness and non-distinction in value. Heroic undertakings are not sublime deeds to the fishermen and woodcutters, who live within Nature and let everything be without clinging to artificial values. The wine they drink is not clear, and the world they inhabit is unifying, recalling the sense of "Hundun" (渾沌) in the

Zhuangzi. Chapter 7 of this Daoist classic relates how the rulers of the South and North Seas, “Shu” (倏) and “Hu” (忽), want to repay the kindness of Hundun, ruler of the Central Region, so they bore him an aperture each day to enable him to hear, see, eat, and breathe. Fully equipped with the differentiating senses on the seventh day, Hundun dies because his integral wholeness has been destroyed.

The allegorical characters are significant and pertinent to the present poem. For “Shu” and “Hu”, both meaning “swift(ly)” and armed with differentiating senses, are metaphors for a hurried life in a world of divisive experiences, much like the endeavours of the heroes in Stanza 1. Meanwhile, “Hundun”, or undifferentiated Chaos, also recalls an interchangeable term “混” in the *Laozi*.⁵² Thus the Way is described as “something amorphously formed before Heaven and Earth” (有物混成，先天地生) (ch. 25), and one is advised to be “thick like the uncarved block, amorphous like muddy water, [and] vacant like a valley” (敦若朴，混若濁，曠若谷) (ch. 15). In essence, artificially imposed distinctions should be properly disposed of, because everything in the world belongs to a non-differentiating totality. If we take this consonant philosophical association back to the present poem, then neither “muddy” nor “unstrained” can suggest the deeper import of the original word “zhuo”, for the latter sounds flat and the former is negative in connotation. It is possible that the repeated neglect of “zhuo” by the same translator reflects a strategy of conscious abandonment. What is clear is that words like “dong”, “kong” and “zhuo” carry untransferable affective and philosophical resonances, so that even the most accurate lexical rendering cannot guarantee a fitting re-creation of the spirit of the source text.

⁵² Various commentators have noted the equivalence between the two words. See Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之, *Laozi* [jiaoshi] 老子[校釋] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 60-61.

By the same token, images do not merely represent physical forms, but evoke objects, moods, and shades of artistic ambience that increase the complexity of translation. The essence of images is that they make poetry concrete rather than abstract. In the source text, the green hills and glowing sunset in lines 4-5 depict a colourful and magnificent natural scene, evoking connotations that revolve round the renewability and permanence of the natural cycle marked by a dynamic of change. What is more, line 4 can be treated as either a run-on or an independent line. When read as a run-on line, line 5 bonds grammatically with its subject in line 4 (i.e. the green hills blaze in the sun); when it is taken independently, the distich depicts two linked elements of a natural scene. While no crucial semantic difference is involved, the original lines still offer two nuanced shades of meaning between which the translation is linguistically forced to choose one. Here in both R1a and R1b, the images of “青山” and “夕陽” are rendered as “green hills” and “west-waning day”. Now the former is a direct translation that preserves the graphic image and its associative potential, even though the image of green hills does not contain the same connotative range and depth in the English imagination as it does in the Chinese sensibility.⁵³ But when “xiyang” is rendered as “west-waning day”, the vivid image becomes diluted along with its colours and evocativeness, because “day” reduces a concrete image to an abstract concept enfeebled in pregnancy and expressiveness. The same problem arises when the “kinetic aural images” of “laughter and talk” (笑談) in line 10 are rendered as “merriment”, because this word also distances the sight, sound and movement immediately tangible in the original, which can be fully felt by

⁵³ “青山” is part of Nature, or “自然” in Chinese. The Chinese term, though, carries three interrelated domains of meaning in philosophical Daoism which the English word “Nature” cannot encompass: physical Nature, natural human nature, and cosmic reality.

the target reader only when reconverted into sensory terms. The associative appeal of the source text, in which all heroics are dissolved in light-hearted conversation and “muddy” wine, has diminished.

We can perhaps outline some of the different codes and norms operative in the source and target systems. In the Western conception, a hero proper is a superior person who does brave or good deeds according to human standards, without carrying any implication of being fundamentally misguided. In the present poem, however, a Chinese reader informed with the Daoist spirit can easily switch from this standard meaning to see the “hero” as a violator of Nature. On the other hand, the woodcutter and the fisherman, paradigmatic Chinese figures in harmony with Nature, are uncouth men of lowly station in the Western context who do not evoke similar cultural resonances. The same applies to the Daoist image of the “muddy” wine, which helps to explain why R1a and R1b have chosen to sidestep the word “zhuo”, without seeing its philosophical power to “dissolve” all human affairs in itself amid casual talk and laughter. Indeed, even the conceptualization of images (into “day” and “merriment”) noted above can be ascribed to aesthetic disparities between the two systems, for classical Chinese poetry is more accustomed and sensitive than English poetry to the use of concrete imagery.

One of the perennial difficulties of poetry translation thus lies in the fact that the same word, image or idea often evokes different associations and resonances in different cultural contexts. While lexical equivalences can be handled more easily, a mastery of cross-cultural literary signification calls for an intuitive understanding of the cultural and aesthetic codes embedded in the languages of both source and target systems, and even then there always remains a gap between understanding and expression. Besides, there are often intertextual resonances that no translated

version can encompass. For instance, the sense of irrecoverable loss associated with the Long River's eastward flow has been affectively deepened by other poems in the poetic tradition (albeit with a different emotive tone), such as “恰似一江春水向東流” and “自是人生長恨水長東” in Li Yu's 李煜 (937-978) *ci* poems “Beautiful Lady Yu” (〈虞美人〉) and “Crows Crying at Night” (〈烏夜啼〉).

II. Poetic Music and Prosody

We may now briefly consider some aspects of the poem's music and prosody and their rendition. In classical Chinese poetry, prosody involves elements such as metre, rhyme, form, tonal qualities of syllables, and rhythm (which includes factors like stress pattern, syntax and style). These combine with other phonemic and rhetorical factors to constitute an overall sense of poetic music. As noted above, the poem begins with the irresistible momentum of a natural spectacle, with the powerful river's blooming waves sweeping away all human endeavours. Auditorily, the river's might is manifested through an integration of sound and meaning in the beginning reduplication, with the “rising” tone (上聲) and resonant [-n] ending of the word “滾” both suggestive of dynamic motion. Such a prosodic effect is difficult to re-create in translation. While “surge over surge” preserves the force of the waters in R1a, the placement of the phrase in the rendition's second line reduces the immediacy of the visual-aural effect. On the other hand, while R1b follows the word order of the original, “on and on” conveys the continuity of the river's flow rather than its might.

Perhaps a more serious consideration is that Chinese verse lines are usually self-standing, end-stopped lines, between which there exists ample affective and

reflective space for imagination. In the original poem, the first two lines move from towering momentum to quiet pondering, registering an empirically true phenomenon that lays the ground for the reflection in line 3: “right and wrong, triumph and defeat, turn empty in a flicker”. But since English requires far more explicit grammatical and logical relationships than classical Chinese, both renditions use a logical conjunction “as” to turn the original line 2 into a run-on line, pushing it towards closure in the third line (ll. 3-4 in R1a and ll. 2-3 in R1b). This syntactic pressure results in a hurried tone that upsets the quiet rhythm of the original and reduces its reflective space. Lines 7-8 of the source text offer another case in point. The lines are interconnected in sense, but also stand independently with no causal relationship to each other. Their individual autonomy is underlined by the end rhyme that marks each line as a complete unit, so that between them lies a poetic space for imaginative contemplation. But the translated versions again invent a logical tie between the lines that binds them into a structured sentence: “Whiteheaded, they’ve seen enough/ Spring air and autumn moon/ To make good company over the winejars” (R1a), and “White-crowned, they’ve seen enough of spring and autumn tide/ To make good company over the wine jar” (R1b) (emphasis added). The run-on structure not only contracts the room for affective rumination, but ruins the leisurely atmosphere in the original. In terms of the aesthetic sense in the source system, the translations sometimes read as though they had half-converted poetry into smooth, segmented prose.

This is not to say categorically that classical Chinese poetry is untranslatable, or that using run-on lines to translate it is necessarily disastrous. The English lines used in R1a and R1b to render lines 2-3 and 7-8 compress the reflective space in the source text partly because they are palpably hypotactic, i.e. they force logical, causal,

temporal, or spatial relations among the things expressed, through the use of words (such as “as”, “but/yet”, “to” and “where”) or phrases (such as “enough...to”) or the arrangement of phrases and clauses in subordinating relationships.⁵⁴ Chinese poetry, on the other hand, typically works through a paratactic juxtaposition of end-stopped lines that enables them to resonate with one another. For instance, lines 3-5 in the present poem are integrated in sense, sensibility and ambience, yet their relationship remains paratactic: the lines stand individually in a coordinating rather than subordinating sequence, without any explicit expression of relationship or even the use of connectives, thus allowing ample room for various dimensions of contemplation.

As a matter of fact, there are also run-on lines in the source text, which are part and parcel of its poetic flow and rhythm. Thus line 9 (“古今多少事”) “runs on” to line 10 (“都付笑談中”) in an unhurried rhythm, partly due to the poem’s transcendent perspective and quiet tone, and partly because the prosodic tempo of the lines remains unaffected by their syntactic structure. For in a largely monosyllabic language like Chinese, each syllable is in most cases an individual prosodic and lexical unit, so that pausing between syllables can occur naturally in step with turns of feeling and meaning. This linguistic feature, along with the structural line pause between lines 9 and 10, and the fact that level-tone syllables can be flexibly extended in duration to chime in with affective cadences, mean that the ten syllables can still carry the leisurely tone to the end regardless of the run-on syntactic structure. For a polysyllabic language like English, on the other hand, natural pausing occurs between words rather than syllables in connected speech, so that the rendition of line

⁵⁴ Cf. C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, *A Handbook to Literature*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 1998), 259, 374; M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 304.

10 as “provides their merriment” in R1a and R1b basically provides three pausable units within six syllables, and sounds more abrupt in comparison with the pentasyllabic original line.

The effect of using long run-on sentences in the renditions becomes more obvious when we consider them as a whole. Overall, the original poem is marked by a transcendent tone of quiet reflection that proceeds at a leisurely pace after the beginning line (or two). In this light, the basic prosodic problem of the translated versions, one probably underlain by the norms of English syntax, is that they constantly compress the reflective space inherent in the poem, through a consistent tendency to hook up the verse lines into long sentences. For example, the five lines of Stanza 1 are converted into two sentences in R1a and three in R1b, while Stanza 2, with an identical metrical pattern, is reduced to only one sentence in R1a and two in R1b. As M. H. Abrams observes, “run-on” lines are so called “because the pressure of the incomplete syntactic unit toward closure carries on over the end of the verse-line.”⁵⁵ This pressure is alleviated where the syntax is freer and the prosodic rhythm more flexible (as explained above in the case of classical Chinese), but the problem of hastening, “run-on pressure” in the translated lines becomes magnified in the context of our quiet, leisurely poem. On the other hand, the translations sometimes offer breaks where they should not occur, such as the full stops in lines 1, 3 and 6 of R1b and in line 4 (original line 3) of R1a. Other than the stanza break, the natural pauses in the poem should occur at the end of lines 2 and 7, where the end rhyme combines with the semantic sense to offer natural spots for pausing.

This brings us to the question of rhyme, which, being the most basic feature of

⁵⁵ Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 163. Alternatively, run-on lines are said to exhibit “enjambment”, a term derived from the French meaning “a striding-over”.

classical Chinese poetry, represents another difficult problem to handle. While most translators have concluded that rhymed English translation of classical Chinese poetry does more harm than good,⁵⁶ it remains a fact that rhyme (meaning primarily end rhyme) brings a sense of unity and internal resonance to a poem.⁵⁷ end rhyme is at once a dividing and binding element, marking off larger sense groups while aurally welding them together into a totality. In this sense, the use of a non-rhyming English translation of a Chinese poem can only be taken as an acceptance of an inevitable loss. Nevertheless, that does not mean all functions performed by end rhyme can be freely ignored. If the translations had to turn the original verse lines into run-on lines, the more “natural” sectional divisions should be lines 1-2, 3-5, 6-7, and 8-10. In sum, while there is a leisurely rhythm and effortless flow from line to line in the original, they are broken up in the translations through the mediation of English syntax, as seen in choices of phrasing, stylistic prosiness, extended hypotactic “run-on” syntax, and even punctuation.⁵⁸

As can be seen from the above discussion, many factors are involved in the analysis of literary translation, especially that of poetry as the most condensed and

⁵⁶ For instance, David Hawkes observes that “it is impossible to use the same rhyme for very long in English without running into serious difficulties, and at the same time introducing a heavy emphasis into the rhyming word which is not present in the Chinese. Moreover the effort of sustaining a rhyme in English verse generates a tension which often finds relief in laughter.” See his “Chinese Poetry and the English Reader,” in *The Legacy of China*, ed. Raymond Dawson (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), 90-115 (quotation from p. 99).

⁵⁷ In this opening poem, such an effect is enhanced by the use of a resonant rhyme (with [-ng] ending) in the second, third, and final (fifth) lines of each stanza—the rhyme of “空” itself.

⁵⁸ Note that in our discussion of the musical effects of classical Chinese poetry here, we have not mentioned the Chinese writing system because, as Hans H. Frankel has observed, “it is on the whole irrelevant to Chinese prosody.” See his “Classical Chinese,” in *Versification: Major Language Types*, ed. William K. Wimsatt (New York: Modern Language Association, 1972), 22-37 (quotation from p.22).

evocative literary form. In the final analysis, literary translation is always a matter of balance and compromise. The most difficult issues in the translation process are not language problems, but matters of artistic codes and norms, cultural resonance, and their verbal expression. While lexical meanings *per se* may not pose insuperable problems of equivalence, semantic terms are often cultural codes that carry affective, artistic and philosophical resonances, as words like “dong”, “kong” and “zhuo” have demonstrated. And as the treatment of “setting sun” and “laughter and talk” indicates, there also exist the elements of imagery and ambience, involving considerations of concreteness and abstraction, immediacy and remoteness in the rendition. All these problems intensify when we come to the intractable issue of prosody and rhythm, which Hawkes accepts is the “the least communicable aspect of Chinese poetry.”⁵⁹

In the above discussion, the problems and challenges involved in translating the opening *ci* poem in the *Sanguo* have been outlined without specific reference to the poem’s artistic significance in the novel. There will be occasion to return to this poem in context later in association with the novel’s closing poem. I would now like to proceed now to the next dimension of my analysis in the chapters that follow: to discuss selected poems in terms of the artistic roles they play in the novel, and then to evaluate the poems’ renditions in terms of their ability to serve equivalent artistic functions in the target-language version.

⁵⁹ Hawkes, “Chinese Poetry and the English Reader,” in *The Legacy of China*, 95. Hawkes notes that “some elements of Chinese prosody are totally incommunicable; others are theoretically communicable but are virtually incommunicable in practice.”

Chapter 3: Poetry and Character Portrayal

Generally speaking, the classical Chinese novel tends to focus on the narration of plot development, while paying less attention to the portrayal of the characters' inner emotions, aspirations, or subtle flow of thoughts. On the other hand, classical Chinese poetry has always served as a medium of expressing personal yearnings and feelings, unfolding the character's inner world. The complementing artistic roles played by narrative fiction and lyric poetry are especially clear in the *Sanguo zhi yanyi*, for most of the novel centres around the twists and turns of historical events, rather than the development of individual characters. It is thus gratifying to see certain poems add artistic depth and appeal to the portrayal of several characters, especially the central characters Zhuge Liang (Kongming) and Cao Cao.

I. Poems about Kongming

Kongming is *the* key character of the novel, directing the plot development from his emergence from reclusion in chapter 38 to his death in chapter 104. In these chapters, Kongming strikes us as a hero of great wisdom, benevolence and courage, a character devoted to a monumental historical endeavour. Nevertheless, we do not hear much of his voice during the process.⁶⁰ To understand Kongming's inner self and the heights and depths of his sentiments, we have to go back to his reclusion days in Nanyang, when he first appears in absentia.

In chapter 37, having heard from Xu Shu and Sima Hui about Kongming's extraordinary ability, Liu Bei goes with Guan Yu and Zhang Fei to visit Kongming,

⁶⁰ Even in his two petitions for military action, 出師表 of Chapters 91 and 97, and his prayer to extend his life made at Wuzhangyuan 五丈原, Kongming shows only his

hoping to invite him to join the endeavour to salvage the Han. Although Kongming does not physically appear in this chapter, his inner voice can be heard from poems chanted by others. During his first visit, Liu Bei hears Kongming's voice for the first time through a poem chanted by some farmers.

<p>P2 蒼天如圓蓋， 陸地似棋局； 世人黑白分， 往來爭榮辱； 4 榮者自安安， 辱者定碌碌。 南陽有隱居， 高眠臥不足！ 8</p>	<p>B2 The earth is a chequered board, And the sky hangs over all, Under it men are contending, Some rise, but a many fall. 4 For those who succeed 'tis well, But for those who go under rough. There's a dozing dragon hard by, But his sleep isn't deep enough. 8</p>
<p>R2a The blue sky's a rounded vault, The planed earth a chessboard, Where men their 'black-and-white' divide In seesaw conflicts' shame and pride. 4 For the winners, peace and comfort, For the losers, tiring toil. Liang in Nan Yang lies secluded, Securely sleeping. 'Stay abed'! 8</p>	<p>R2b The sky's a curving vault of blue, The level earth a chessboard, Where men their black and white divide, Disgrace or glory to decide. 4 For the winners, peace and comfort, For the losers, tiring toil. In Nanyang someone lies secluded, Securely sleeping. Stay abed! 8</p>

Liu Bei is told that the poem is written by Kongming, "Master Sleeping Dragon" ("臥龍先生"). In its simplicity and seeming casualness, the poem is reflective of Kongming's view of life.

It is important to note that the lyric voice and view of life manifested in this poem do not belong to a prime minister of the secular world, but to a poetic recluse. The *Laozi* observes that "when the great way falls into disuse, there are benevolence and rectitude; when cleverness emerges, there is great hypocrisy; when the six relations are at variance, there are filial children; when the state is benighted, there are loyal ministers" (大道廢，有仁義，慧智出，有大偽，六親不和，有孝慈，國

家昏亂，有忠臣) (ch. 18);⁶¹ “know the white but keep to the role of the black,...and you will return to the infinite; know honour but keep to the role of the disgraced,...and you will return to being the uncarved block” (知其白，守其黑，...復歸于無極；知其榮，守其辱，...復歸于樸) (ch. 28).⁶² In other words, distinctions and values are symptoms of a Dao lost, and simplicity is the way to the infinite.

In the poet's view, people are living in a value-fragmented world. Although the sky above is like a round canopy (“圓蓋”) that covers and includes everything, human beings turn the earth into a chessboard (“棋局”), where people distinguish between black and white (“世人黑白分”) and manoeuvre back and forth to contend for honour and victors (“往來爭榮辱”). The human world categorizes everything and establishes artificial values that drive desires and actions. In the meantime, the recluse of Nanyang favours the natural setting of the round sky and square earth;⁶³ remaining independent of the contentious material world in spirit, he contents himself with a simple life in his thatched hut (“南陽有隱居”). The poem provides an outlook on the world from the perspective of an “outsider”, implying that Kongming the philosopher-poet, is indifferent to artificial values. The images of the canopy-like sky and chessboard-like earth, and the other lexical items like “heibai” and “rongru”, are rich with cultural resonances that add depth to the philosophical perspective of the poem.

⁶¹ D. C. Lau, trans., *Tao Te Ching* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 74.

⁶² Ibid., 85.

⁶³ It is said in chapter 30 of the *Zhuangzi*, “Above, it takes its model from the roundness of heaven, following along with the three luminous bodies of the sky. Below, it takes its model from the squareness of earth, following along with the four seasons.” See Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1968), 342.

Let us now take a look at how Kongming's view of life is presented in the renditions. B2 is mostly a line-for-line rendition, except that its first two lines are in reverse order. In the original, right after the mentioning of the chessboard in line 2, black and white (l. 3) can be logically understood as chesspieces, while indicative of the artificial concepts of right and wrong. The semantic connection is thus smoothly made in the original, leading to the imagistic association of a busily contending "chessboard world" (l. 4). B2, however, does not bring out several important images. For instance, the image of the sky as a round canopy is replaced by the direct statement that "the sky hangs over all" (l. 2). Another suggestive image "棋局" is rendered as "a chequered board", which is a board with a pattern of squares in two or more colours, yet not equivalent to a chessboard. Lost in B2 are the graphic images of heaven and earth, especially the striking correspondence between a chessboard and a contending world, thus reducing the philosophical resonance of the poem by making it sound more abstract. This is also partly because the rendition does not keep the colour image and its metaphorical association. Instead, B2 substitutes a straightforward statement: "under it men are contending", which actually rephrases the meaning of the original lines 3-4. However, B2 transfers only the core meaning of the original lines, while losing the association between man and chesspiece in the absence of the colour images. What the rendition adds of its own accord is the result of the contention (l. 4). In short, the omission of the round canopy, chessboard, and coloured chessman images in the rendition reduces both the vividness and the depth of the poem's philosophical perspective.

On the other hand, an image absent in the original is added: line 7 of the rendition uses "a dozing dragon" to represent the recluse ("隱居"). At this point in

the narrative, the original poem has not directly disclosed the identity of the recluse, only that he lives in Nanyang. Although the information given by Xu Shu in the previous chapter and the purpose of Liu Bei's visit suffice to indicate that the recluse is Kongming, "recluse" is better than "dozing dragon" in highlighting a juxtaposition of two modes of life, as well as keeping the gradual pace of introducing Kongming bit by bit, which is one strategy the narrative uses to build up suspense, frustration and expectation, in Liu Bei's protracted quest for a superior minister. The rendition's explicit identification of the recluse as Kongming reduces the subtle suspense in the original.

Additional problems are found in the rhymed lines of the rendition. Prosodically, B2 renders the poem in eight lines, with four lines in seven and four in eight syllables, which basically carry three (mostly iambic) stresses. The even lines are rhymed, with lines 2 and 4 sharing one rhyme and lines 6 and 8 sharing another, making the overall rhyming pattern *abcbdefe*. The attempt to rhyme in B2 shows an effort to match the musical effect of the original. However, owing to the more limited rhyming resources of the target language, B2 is rendered in two different rhymes.

In fashioning the rhyming of lines 2 and 4, B2 moves the original's line 1 to the rendition's second line. The shift in line sequence affects the flow of the poem's description-narration, which moves very naturally from the sky (l. 1) and the earth (l. 2) to the human chesspieces (l. 3) that turn the earth into a contending chessboard (l. 4). The second rhyme in B2 (rough-enough) is achieved with fewer modifications, but the interpretation of the last line is problematic. In the original, the last line describes a recluse contentedly asleep, one who "cannot enjoy enough of his sleep". B2, however, renders the line as "but his sleep isn't deep enough", giving a perhaps

unintended implication that it is easy to wake a “restless” recluse up, because of a Confucian attitude of engagement that is ready to leave a secluded life. While this contain some truth in itself, the rendition seems to be jumping ahead of the narrative, and is not quite congruous with the leisurely atmosphere at this point. The semantic change reduces the transcendence of the poet’s spirit.

We now turn to Roberts’s renditions. Although R2b is rendered fifteen years later than R2a, only a few changes have been made in this later version. Thus we may look at the two renditions side by side. First, the original’s images of “a round canopy” and “a chessboard” are retained in both renditions, with the former rendered with minor variation (“rounded vault” in R2a and “curving vault” in R2b), and the latter rendered as “a chessboard” in both versions. Differences in the Western and Chinese games aside, “a chessboard” can convey the primary image of “qiju” and its associative meaning as a competitive world. The colours black and white are also preserved in the renditions, representing both the colours of the chesspieces and the moral associations of good and evil.

Prosodically, R2a is rendered in a metrical pattern similar to that of B2, i.e. mostly iambic trimeter or tetrameter with variations, though using instead a rhyme scheme of *abccdeff*. Unlike, B2, R2a uses rhymes every other couplet. The rendition inserts a stanza break between lines 4 and 5 and a syntactic break in the last line, ending its first half with a full stop and then continuing with an exclamatory imperative. R2b is very much like R2a with only a few changes in wording, which do not affect the rhyme and metrical patterns. The stanza break is removed in R2b, while the same rhymes are used for lines 3-4 and 7-8.

Regarding the rhyme scheme adopted by the two renditions, the last word of the imperative is rhymed with the last word of the previous line. However, in order to

rhyme with last word “abed”, the stress of “secluded” has to be artificially shifted from the middle to the last syllable. Despite this wrenching, R2b continues the rhyme scheme of R2a with the same rhymed words (secluded-abed).

Rhythmically, the imperative half of the last line makes the renditions end abruptly, disrupting the sense of easy, effortless flow that is part and parcel of the transcendent atmosphere. In addition, the connective “where” used at the beginning of line 3 makes lines 2-4 a single syntactic unit that slants the rhythm in the direction of prose (at least from a Chinese point of view), while blurring the clear contrast between the two modes of life given in lines 3-4 and lines 7-8. The springy and leisurely rhythm in the original poem is reduced with the altered construction and the imperative tone at the end.

Although R2a and R2b are very similar to each other, there is one obvious difference: the identity of the recluse remains unspecified in the later rendition. Such a change suggests that R2b recognizes that the artistic effects of the poem do not merely come from the indicative content of the poem but also from an organic match between the poem itself and the movement of the narrative. This simple change can help retain the subtle suspense of the poem and the narrative in gradually unfolding Kongming’s character. On the other hand, R2b retains the defective rhyme scheme and the use of a connective in R2a, showing the difficulties in attempting to re-create the prosodic effects of Chinese poetry.

In sum, although all three renditions of the poem match the original in eight lines, the poem’s content and artistic effects are re-created in different ways. As seen from the above explanation, B2 abandons the imagery (“棋局”, “圓蓋” and “黑白”) in the original and presents the content in a more straightforward manner, whereas R2a and R2b preserve every metaphor and image. Without retaining the

associative potential derived from the metaphors, B2 presents an indicative interpretation of the poem that leads to a more directive translation. R2a and R2b try to transfer most of the metaphorical effects, but even in accurate semantic rendering, the cultural resonances and artistic appeal inherent in the poem are difficult to preserve through a cross-cultural sensibility.

Unable to meet Kongming the first time, Liu Bei returns later for a second visit. On this occasion, Zhuge Jun, Kongming's younger brother, is mistaken for Kongming when Liu Bei hears him chant a poem in the thatched hut.

P3 鳳翱翔於千仞兮，非梧不棲； 士伏處於一方兮，非主不依。 4 樂躬耕於隴畝兮，吾愛吾廬； 聊寄傲於琴書兮，以待天時。 8		
B3 The phoenix flies high, ah me! And only will perch on a <i>wutung</i> tree. The scholar is hid, ah me! Till his lord appear[sic] he can patient be. 4 He tills his fields, ah me! He is well-content and I love my home, He awaits his day, ah me! His books and his lute to leave and roam. 8		R3 The phoenix winging on the air Will choose no tree Except the <i>wu</i> . The scholar keeping to his lair Will have no lord Except the true. Oh, let me till these furrowed fields, By this sweet home That I call mine. In books and song I place my dreams And wait the time The fates assign. 12

Despite being chanted by his brother, this poem is a fair reflection of Kongming's sentiments and outlook: the scholar leading a simple secluded life is happy to till his fields, while waiting for the right time and right master to realize his aspirations. The poem begins with the mythical bird of the phoenix, which flies freely among the heights and is very selective about its resting place. In parallel with the king of the birds, the scholar who is lofty and brilliant will not settle casually unless he finds the suitable lord, implying that Kongming is not just leading a carefree life of reclusion. In the meantime, despite his extraordinary qualities

which are destined to shine in the world, the scholar is happy to live a simple life and sow the fields (“樂躬耕於隴畝”). The transcendent side of his spirit is in tune with Nature, a non-differentiating entity. Content in his humble thatched hut (“吾愛吾廬”), the poet lodges his dignified spirit (“傲”, not pride here) in books and music for the time being, following the natural course of things and awaiting a “heavenly assigned opportunity” (“天時”) with an easy mind (note the tone of “聊”). There is a dual expression of the Confucian attitude of engagement and the Daoist attitude of transcendence that are held in a tensional yet harmonious balance of outlook.

The first problem which both renditions (the poem is not rendered in Roberts’s 1976 abridged version) inevitably encounter concerns the image of the phoenix, which has connotations quite different in the target society. In Western culture, the phoenix is an imaginary bird which burns itself to ashes every five hundred years and is born again. Although the phoenix is also a mythical bird in Chinese culture, its connotation is quite different, with an established tradition of referring to a person of lofty qualities.⁶⁴ Thus the rendition as phoenix does not evoke the same cultural resonances, though its formal correspondence to the scholar is clear. By the same token, the cultural connotation of the image of “廬” is not sufficiently re-created in B3 and R3, which render it respectively as “home” and “sweet home”. The latter, in particular, suggests an idea of a pleasant and charming home that is quite different in connotation from “lu”; “home” in B3 is more neutral but still flat. This is because from the informed, native reader’s point of view, “lu” recalls the humble abode of a lofty recluse like Tao Qian 陶潛 (365-427), with such lines as 「眾鳥欣

⁶⁴ 《論語·微子》:「鳳兮鳳兮,何德之衰也。」 The phoenix thus refers to a person of sagely qualities.

有託，吾亦愛吾廬」 and 「結廬在人境，而無車馬喧」.⁶⁵

We may now discuss the renditions more specifically in terms of their artistic effects. B3 is marked by a few distracting inaccuracies. First, “士伏處於一方”, literally “a scholar lives hidden in a corner”, is translated as “the scholar is hid”; the use of the passive voice obscures the conscious existential choice of reclusion which Kongming has made. The scholar’s lofty sense of dignity is also weakened when B3 does not translate the word “ao”. Instead, the rendition quite erroneously suggests that the scholar wants to “leave his books and lute” and “roam” freely (l. 8), for “books and lute” are precisely where the recluse lodges his spirit for the time being. Besides, B3 does not fully translate “tianshi” (l. 8, moved to line 7 as “his day”), thereby contracting the scope of the poet’s self-reflection and aspirations as well as overlooking the implied relationship between man and heaven.

Stylistically, one confusing feature in B3 is the odd mixture of personal pronouns, seen consistently in the third-person description (“he/his”) and first-person refrain (“ah me”), and most clearly in the rendition of lines 5-6 of the original: “*He* is well-content and *I* love my home” (italics mine). It is obvious that the person who enjoys the farming is the one who loves his home, and B3 can at least use either the third-person or the first-person (as in R3) throughout the line. In Chinese syntax, omission of the subject of a verb is very frequent in poetry,⁶⁶ but should not lead to any ambiguity of identity in this case.

Prosodically, B3 employs a strict metrical pattern. Of the eight lines in B3, the odd-numbered ones are rewritten in five syllables (except for the tetrasyllabic line 5)

⁶⁵ Respectively 〈讀《山海經》十三首〉之一 and 〈飲酒二十首之五〉.

⁶⁶ See James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962), 40. Liu also observes that at times, this omission can increase the sense of timelessness and universality of a poem.

plus the refrain “ah me”, whereas the even-numbered lines are in ten syllables (except for the enneasyllabic line 8). The standardization of the metrical pattern leads to additional limitations in the rendition. First, part of the content of the odd-numbered lines is either trimmed (“一方”, l. 3) or shifted to the even-numbered lines (“樂”, l. 5), sometimes through mutual exchange (ll. 7-8). Second, this has generated the need to use a refrain “ah me” for better syllabic balance, which creates an over-dramatized effect incongruous with the original spirit. The use of the passive voice to render line 3 is also a manifestation of this metrical strategy to standardize syllabic length. In addition, in order to rhyme lines 6 and 8 (home-roam), B3 even adds extra detail to the poem, which leads to an inaccurate rendition. All these show how B3 has allowed artistic spirit and meaning to be subjugated to form.

Returning to R3, although it is written in twelve lines, four more than the original poem, it is only composed of four complete sentences, each divided into three verse lines. The distribution of syllables for each of the three lines is 8-4-4. Line 3 rhymes with line 6, and line 9 with line 12. Amid the strict metrical pattern, R3 tries to stay closer to the original, showing an effort to achieve a balance between form and content. Some tailoring is of course still visible, e.g. “千仞”, “樂” and “聊” are dropped, while “sweet” is added; “lair”, chosen to rhyme with “air”, has wilder flavour than the recluse’s abode.

Semantically, apart from the difficulties in translating the images of “鳳” and “lu” mentioned earlier, the rendering of “tianshi” as “the fates” is also misleading, partly because “fates” often connote the idea of death or destruction,⁶⁷ and partly

⁶⁷ The *Oxford Dictionary*, 2nd ed. On-line. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989.

because the Chinese notion of “天” is a complicated one that includes a moral will, determined destiny, and even an acknowledgement of human effort. The rendition, however, gives a sense of helplessness as the scholar can only wait for something possibly unfavourable to happen. Lost in R3 is the original’s open, positive attitude of looking forward to realizing one’s potential with the facilitation of the opportune moment. As in the previous cases, the renditions do not fully bring out the spirit of Kongming’s character as the original poem does in the novel, for both linguistic and cultural reasons.

At the end of his fruitless second visit, Liu Bei further hears Kongming’s father-in-law chant a poem “Liangfu Yin” (梁父吟).

P4 一夜北風寒， 萬里彤雲厚； 長空雪亂飄， 改盡江山舊。 4 仰面觀太虛， 疑是玉龍門： 紛紛鱗甲飛， 頃刻遍宇宙。 8 騎驢過小橋， 獨嘆梅花瘦！	B4 'Tis eve, the sky is overcast, The north wind comes with icy blast, Light snowflakes whirl adown until A white pall covers dale and hill. 4 Perhaps above the topmost sky White dragons strive for mastery, The armour scales from their forms riven Are scattered o'er the world wind-driven. 8 Amid the storm there jogs along A simple wight who croons a song. “O poor plum trees, the gale doth tear Your blossoms off and leave you bare.” 12
R4a Night long, north wind chill, Tinged clouds massed a myriad leagues. Everlasting space: the capering snow— The changeless land is what it never was. 4 Look into the vastness of sky. Could it be a jade dragon melee? Scales strewn every which way Quickly filling the hollow zone. 8 Aback a mule, across a bridge, Sighing, along, At the plumbtrees' skeleton.	R4b Nightlong, north winds chill, Myriad-leagued, dusky clouds expand. Capering snow through an infinite sky Transforms the never-changing land. 4 He looks into the ether's vastitude: Are jade dragons at war up there, Strewing their scales every which way, And filling up the hollow sphere? 8 Alone, Sighing for the plum trees' battered blooms. ¹ 1. The plum blossoms early in the year and thus often faces adverse weather. The flower became a symbol of heroism and sometimes, more specifically, the gallant resistance of the Song to Jurchen or Mongol power.

Like P2, this poem is attributed to Kongming in the novel. Though as yet

detached from the secular world, the recluse has in fact arrived at a thorough understanding of the macrocosmic situation of the world. The poem begins with a natural scene charged with kinetic energy (and perhaps even more potential energy): the atmosphere is imbued with a chilly north wind and dark clouds (“彤雲”) which signal the coming of snow. The connection between the first two lines and line 3 (“長空雪亂飄”) is thus smooth and natural, leading in turn to a totally altered visage of nature registered in line 4 (“改盡江山舊”). The concrete image of “江山”, however, does not merely refer to the natural setting of rivers and mountains, but points to the state in the Chinese cultural context. The natural images thus contain rich associative resonances in human terms. Indeed as the poet looks up the sky to see the flying snowflakes, he imagines them to be falling scales from a battle between jade dragons (or potential rulers), whose energy and momentum soon fill up the universe (“頃刻遍宇宙”). And yet in line with the ambience of the chapter, the human association takes an interesting turn at the end, with the poet riding a donkey at a leisurely pace and admiring the plum flowers. Amid the swirling cold and snow, the poet, donkey and flowers are all calmly at peace by the small bridge, in contrast to the restless aggressiveness of the visualized dragons in the sky. At the same time, the plum flowers, known for their endurance in cold weather, have cultural connotations of dignity and resilience. In the combination of images towards the end, the poem thus offers yet another contrast between the chaotic contending world and the peaceful spirit of a transcendent observer. The poem subtly expresses the duality of Kongming’s Confucian and Daoist sensitivities.

Let us now take a look at how the renditions work. B4 is organised around a prosodic form: verse lines in iambic tetrameter which rhyme every couplet (lines 5-6 are eye rhymes). This has resulted in semantic modifications here and there.

Some of them are clever and reasonable ones, such as the addition of “icy blast” to rhyme with “overcast” (ll. 1-2) and the redistribution of content among the two lines to make the metrical count work. Other modifications pose some problems: the image of the dark clouds is replaced by a plain statement “the sky is overcast”; the expansive view suggested by “萬里” in the original (literally “ten thousand *li*”) is dropped. Meanwhile, the complete transformation of the landscape (“改盡江山舊”) is rendered by a relatively mild line: “a white pall covers dale and hill”, without carrying similar connotations. As a result, the overwhelming dynamism of the landscape and the poet’s spirited perception of it are reduced. Other significant alterations can be found in B4, and at least one of them is worth special mention. Expanding the last two lines of the original poem into four lines (not for reasons of rhyme this time), B4 replaces the image of a poet on a donkey with a jogging wight, turns the plum flowers into plum trees, and makes up a monologue (ll. 11-12) that laments the bare, sorry shape of the plum trees. In fact, it is quite plausible that the plum flowers should look slender (“瘦”) rather than pathetic in the cold, and are admired (“嘆”[賞]) rather than lamented by the poet. The artistic resonance of the image and the lofty spirit of the poet are both lost in the rendition, which weakens the characterizing function which the original poem serves in the novel.

Like B4, R4a does not match the original poem in ten lines. The original’s last line is split into two lines, and the rendition is divided into three stanzas in line with the semantic groups, i.e. descriptions of the weather and atmosphere in the first stanza (ll. 1-4), the poet’s response in the second (ll. 5-8), and the poet’s own mode of life in the last (ll. 9-11). Without end rhyme or a basic metrical pattern, R4a imposes no fixed prosodic form.

This rendition generally re-creates the artistic spirit of the original poem better

than B4. There are a few medications visible in R4a, some of which matter more than others. For instance, “長空”, literally “vast sky” (spatial), is over-translated as “everlasting” (temporal) and abstracted as “space”, distancing the immediacy of the concrete image. And the term, “宇宙”, which refers to the universe or the whole world and synonymous with “heaven and earth” (天地), is further abstracted into a “hollow zone”. In the original poem, it is easy to visualize a grand spectacle of flying snowflakes resembling dragon scales, filling up heaven and earth in an instant (“紛紛鱗甲飛，頃刻遍宇宙”, ll. 7-8); imagining snowflakes filling up a “hollow zone” seems to sound a little weird, and even smacks of an unwanted extraterrestrial flavour.

The key image of the “plum flower” at the end of the poem is again replaced by another image that recalls B4: “the plumbtrees’ skeleton”. While the last line in the original does not necessarily carry a negative association—and is more likely to be a positive image of a slender plant thriving in the cold—“plumbtrees’ skeleton”, though vivid, is an emphatically withered plant associated with death rather than vitality and resilience.

Unlike R4a, R4b is rendered in ten lines with no stanza breaks, which match the original form. Like R4a, it has no fixed metrical pattern or rhyme scheme. There are modified translations of individual terms: for instance, “changkong” is translated more closely and imagistically as “infinite sky”, while the dynamic momentum of the snow is captured by the word “transform” that shows a kinetic effect of the weather. On the other hand, “太虛” is turned into “ether” (l. 5), which is more abstract than the original term. “yuzou” becomes “hollow sphere”, no more satisfactory than “hollow zone”. On the whole, the rendition of the first eight lines is not significantly different in effect from R4a.

Interestingly enough, the striking image of the scholar-poet riding a (usually slow and leisurely) donkey crossing a bridge—the entire line 9—is dropped in this rendition, leaving this line with a single word transposed from line 10 (“alone”) that emphasizes the solitude of the poet, and slants the poem towards a negative mood of “sighing for the battered blooms”.⁶⁸ It is unfortunate that all three renditions have missed the cultural resonances of the plum flowers. In so doing, they have also turned the transcendent image of a lofty, unperturbed poet into an almost downcast image that runs counter to the spirit of the narrative and its chief character.

By the end of chapter 37 in the novel, before Kongming the surpassing minister physically appears, he is already deeply ingrained in the reader’s mind as a lofty and transcendent spirit, due largely to the various lyric poems that allow us to hear his inner voice. In chapter 38, Liu Bei pays a third visit to Kongming, only to find that the latter is taking a nap. When Kongming finally wakes up, he chants a short poem.

P5 大夢誰先覺？ 平生我自知。 草堂春睡足， 窗外日遲遲。	B5 Can any know what fate is his? Yet have I felt throughout my life, The day would come at last to quit The calm retreat for toil and strife.
R5a When all’s a dream, who would first awake? But from our common life we learn: Indoors, spring’s simple sleep suffices; But outside, summer ripens time.	R5b From his great dream who would waken first? All along I’ve known the part to play: To sleep in springtime, and to ask no more, Though outside, longer, longer grow the days. ¹ 1. See <i>Shi jing</i> , ode 168, “Chu ju,” for the phrase “longer, longer grow the days.” The ode’s first lines are: Let our war-carts roll forth To that grazing field. They’ve come from Heaven’s Son To call us to war. We summon our drivers; We tell them to load. The king tasks us hard;

⁶⁸ This rendition is still made in spite of a note that partly recognizes the symbolic significance of the plum blossoms.

Simple in language and succinct in expression, the poem marks the culmination of Kongming's voice as a lyric poet in the novel: the poem has been prepared for by the previous ones, and comes from the voice of the poet himself. Chanted literally upon a moment of awakening, the poem fittingly begins by recalling an observation in the *Zhuangzi* about people's attachment to material life. Zhuangzi observes that "while [men] is dreaming, he does not know it is a dream, ...Only after he wakes does he know it was a dream. And someday there will be a great awakening when we know that it is all a great dream" (ch. 2).⁶⁹ For Zhuangzi, "great dream" is the essential nature of the secular world, enveloping the illusoriness of pursuing various man-made goals and standards. It seems that the poet has seen through a personal pursuit of worldly goals, and is content with a simple, delicious sleep in his thatched hut while the spring days are extending themselves.

We now take a look at how the poet's outlook on life is re-created in the three renditions. In B5, the very first characters "大夢" ("great dream") are rendered as "fate", a word with deterministic and even supernatural connotations that are a far cry from the illusory secular world which the original term suggests. This triggers a chain reaction: since "dream" is translated as "fate", "awake" cannot but be changed to "know", and "known" in line 2 to "felt". The contemplative space and philosophical resonance inherent in the first line of the original "who awakes from the dream first" is largely lost.

Lines 3-4 are not so much translation than directive interpretation that preserves neither the semantic meaning nor the leisurely mood. Like B3, B5 offers extra information in the first two lines, foretelling that the poet is about to quit his

⁶⁹ Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 47.

reclusive life; the days upon emergence from seclusion will be full of “toil and strife”. In fact, the last two lines of the original are imbued with a peaceful atmosphere, expressing the poet’s springtime ease and his attitude to life (“草堂春睡足，窗外日遲遲”⁷⁰). As far as the poem itself is concerned, the last two lines in B5 are quite beside the mark; what is relevant to note is that like the previous three translated poems in Brewitt-Taylor’s renditions, B5 employs a rhyme scheme which again forces him to adjust meaning to sound; it is as though the concoction of “strife” (l. 4) is made in order to rhyme with “life” (l. 2). Any gain in rhyming effect cannot compensate for the distortion of meaning and spirit in the characterization of Kongming.

In R5a, “dameng” is more satisfactorily rendered as “all’s a dream”, though there remains the intractable cultural problem of the lack of a term equivalent to “夢” in the target system, so that the rendition still cannot carry the depth of the philosophical resonance of the original term. An easier point to handle should be the poet’s personal self-knowledge, which is unnecessarily blurred by the use of a general plural “we” in R5a (l. 2). The collective pronoun impersonalizes the characterization of Kongming that undercuts the poet’s artistic effect in the original text. In addition, the abandoning of the images “草堂” and “窗外” reduces the vividness of the poet’s daily experience, especially the image “caotang” which carries spiritual connotations (more below). Stylistically, R5a uses the connective “but” to begin two verse lines (ll. 2 and 4). The sudden semantic change marked by the word “but” generates a rational tone that detracts from natural flow of lyric

⁷⁰ Based on the *Book of Poetry* (《邶風·七月》: “春日遲遲，采蘩祁祁”), “日遲遲” suggests a leisurely and poised manner. See Cheng Junying 程俊英 and Jiang Jianyuan 蔣見元, *Shijing zhuxi* 詩經注析, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 1: 406-16, esp. 409.

sentiment in the original.

Some differences in the translation of the poem are visible after fifteen years in R5b. First, “dameng” is not only “a dream” but rendered as “his great dream”. However, this should really be a general statement both in the poem and in the *Zhuangzi* itself; “dameng” should be “*the* great dream”. In addition, the first person singular “我” is reinstated in this later version, highlighting the poet’s unique sensitivity; yet the phrase “known the part to play” suggests an attitude of role-play that is incongruous with the poet’s spirit. A couple of new problems have emerged. Syntactically, the word “足” in the original’s line 3 is a complement of “春睡”, expressing the poet’s feeling that sleep is “ample” in spring. R5b abandons the word “suffices” used in R5a, and instead substitutes “to ask no more”. While the natural division of the phrase in the original line is between “caotang” and “chunshuizu”, R5b, having abandoned the image of a thatched hut, takes “chunshui” and “zu” as two independent semantic units, and comes out with a misleading rendition.

In addition, the image of “caotang”⁷¹ is an important one that should not have been left out by the rendition, because it is also reflective of Kongming’s character (imagine him, for instance, residing in a tall mansion instead). A thatched hut is a symbol of the humble dwelling of a scholar content in a simple life that is materially modest but spiritually rich. It is curious that all three renditions have abandoned this image as a constitutive part of Kongming’s characterization in the novel.

It should be clear that the above four poems allow the readers to feel an inner voice not otherwise audible in the narrative—that of a transcendent recluse soon to

⁷¹ 草堂 usually refers to a place in which a recluse lives, such as Du Fu’s Wanhua Caotang (浣花草堂) and Bai Juyi’s Lushan Caotang (廬山草堂). Culturally, a thatched hut carries

follow the call of social responsibility. When Kongming finally appears, his sense of engagement in the world is further manifested in his macrocosmic analysis of the military situation. Deeply moved by Liu Bei's sincerity and his appeal to help save the nation, Kongming promises to join his endeavour. But before he leaves, Kongming reminds his brother to keep tilling the fields, as he hopes to return to a secluded life when his task is accomplished. It is his superior worth and his undeserved ultimate failure to accomplish his noble mission that turn Kongming into a "tragic hero".⁷² The artistic appeal derived from this further deepening of Kongming's character is well expressed by a poem in chapter 38 that presages his eventual destiny:

P6 身未升騰思退步， 功成應憶去時言。 只因先主丁寧後， 星落秋風五丈原。	B6 Then, turning from his humble home, He thought of peaceful days to come, When he should take the homeward way And ne'er beyond the valley stray. But duty kept him in the west, And there he found his place of rest.
R6a About to soar, he fain would homebound walk. The task fulfilled, the parting words remembered in vain. For Liu Pei pleaded and pleaded again. Star falls—fall wind—the last campaign.	R6b About to soar, he felt himself drawn back; His task complete, he'll think of this farewell. Only for the monarch, who pleaded and pleaded again: The "falling star," the "autumn winds"—the "last campaign." ¹ 1. The late king is Xianzhu, the first ruler of Shu (the Riverlands), i.e. Liu Xuande. Wuzhangyuan ("the last campaign") is a place name. After a hundred-day stalemate in the war with Wei, Zhuge Liang died there in A.D. 234. It is now A.D. 208. The year A.D. 209 will be reached in chaps. 51-52.

If the previous four poems lift the spirit of Kongming's character to lofty heights, this poem deepens his affective appeal as a human being who deserves a better destiny. The poem expresses his modest, almost self-effacing sensibility,

an implication of noble and lofty sentiments.

⁷² A tragic hero in traditional Chinese context is not equivalent to a "tragic hero" in ancient Greek tragedy, due mainly to a hero's error of judgment or "tragic flaw." In Kongming's case, the tragedy comes from the discrepancy between his noble mission, his incomparable ability and his sad ending. For a brief reliable description of Western tragedy,

reflecting on his inability to act on his wish to withdraw at an opportune moment. Weighed down by a call of duty which his Confucian spirit cannot refuse, Kongming exhausts his life as an ailing star ultimately sunken on the battlefield. When readers come to chapter 103 where Kongming prays for an extension of his life for the public cause, they will recall this touching poem that foretells his eventual identity as a tragic character.

Let us now take a look at how the renditions handle this tragic characterization of Kongming. Strictly speaking, B6 is a free translation in formal and semantic terms. Although B6 is rendered in six lines (two more than the original), it is virtually unidentifiable with the original poem. It is probably not too fruitful to say which lines “roughly” correspond to which. The rendition transmits a faint shadow of part of the poem, but is totally devoid of any tragic sense. What makes Kongming a tragic character in the novel is not any fatal error in an otherwise noble character (as in the Greek mode), but a binding promise to carry out the dying wish of his lord (“只因先主丁寧後”), which eventually drains a bright star of its ethereal vitality (“星落秋風五丈原”). It is significant to note the spatial extension—the rise and fall—of the image constituted by “升騰”, “退步” and “星落”, set on a wild expanse in the autumn wind that almost weeps for him. Unfortunately, all this touching characterization is flattened by a rendition that is rather bland. From “humble home” to “peaceful days”, through the “homeward way” that “[doesn’t] stray”, the rendition loses the vivid sense of the rise and fall of a hero. The location of his death (“五丈原”), the atmospheric echo of the wind, are all neutralized in a statement telling of a fulfillment of “duty...in the west” that is “his place to rest”. The affective weight of the poem in deepening the character of Kongming is largely

see Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 321-25.

emptied. Indeed even the name “Wuzhangyuan” takes on an added echo later on, when the reader learns that it is there that Kongming prays in vain for Heaven to extend his life. Replacing the name with an abstract notion “his place to rest” reduces the affective touch.

Prosodically, B6 employs an iambic tetrameter with eight syllables in each verse line, along with three rhyming couplets (the first couplet being eye rhymes). This effort to re-create the rhyming effect of the original is partly undercut by a somewhat prose-like rhythm. The rendition uses connectives to begin five verse lines (i.e. all except l. 2), while lines 1-4 is in fact a single sentence. Among the poems selected for discussion in this section, B6 is probably the weakest in terms of any artistic function of characterization it may serve in the target-language version of the novel.

Now we turn to Roberts’s renditions. R6a is rendered much more in step with the original’s artistic spirit. Some terms are transposed. The rendering of “先主” as Liu Bei is not a problem, because the two are exchangeable: at this point in the narrative, the identity of “xianzhu” is already obvious. What is significant is that R6a brings out the irrefusable appeal which Liu Bei makes to Kongming. The place name “Wuzhangyuan” remains a problem. Like B6, R6a renders it into an abstract concept—“the last campaign”—which weakens the immediacy of the tragic sense. In addition to the significance of the name mentioned above, the place also completes the framework of affective atmosphere for the fallen star. “xing luo”, “qiufeng” and “Wizhangyuan” form a wholesome natural context that resonates with a tragic appeal, and it is probably the translator’s concern that “Wuzhangyuan” will be incomprehensible to the general target reader that he has rendered it the way he has. This weakened artistic effect is due to a cultural factor that lies beyond verbal competence. It is also possible that the choice of “last campaign” may be due to the

employment of a rhyme scheme; except for the first line, lines 2-4 share the same rhyme in R6a. Without applying a strict metrical pattern as B6 does, R6a generally works under fewer limitations, and produces a more pleasing effect on the whole.

Now we can take a look at R6b. Rendered line for line, R6b does not show much significant difference from R6a. However, the rendition of “退步” is a bit inaccurate, because while one cannot expect an English phrase to carry the connotation that Kongming wishes to resume his reclusion after he has “soared” to complete his task, “drawn back” suggests a sense of hesitation at that moment, which is incongruous with the artistic spirit of the original, for at that point, Kongming’s state of mind is already what we would call “義無反顧”. Also incongruous is the future tense of line 2, altered from R6a. If anything, the line should read “he should have thought of...” in this lyric reflection on the fallen hero. It is interesting to note that unlike R6a, the identity of “xianzhu” remains unspecified in R6b when it is rendered as “the monarch” (l. 3). Although this change has no significant effect on the rendition’s affective appeal, it shows that the translator has developed a different sense in translating the same poem fifteen years later. “Wizhangyuan” remains “the last campaign”, but a note is added to provide background information about the place. The note, of course, does not help much in enhancing the tragic spirit of the poem; the place name is still needed to synergize with “xing luo” and “qiufeng” to bring out the sense of desolation. Prosodically, R6b preserves the rhyme used in R6a, but takes away the rhyme in line 2 to leave two rhyming lines, which is euphonically appropriate. R6b has also changed the American “fall” to the British “autumn” in line 4, to avoid the repetition of the former word in adjacent positions.

In sum, B6 neutralizes the tragic characterization of Kongming in the original poem. While R6a and R6b are quite similar, I believe R6a is better in approaching

the original poem's artistic function, mainly because of the rendition of line 2. Revision in translation does not always guarantee improvement.

Overall, the poems in chapters 37-38 are artistically significant to the characterization of Kongming. The poems allow the readers a rare chance to see Kongming from the inside, because for the rest of the narrative, we see him essentially from the outside. Never again do we hear from Kongming an inner voice that expresses a leisurely spirit and transcendent state of mind. The last poem also foreshadows the tragedy of his engagement in the secular world. It is thus crucial for the renditions to bring out this complementing side of Kongming's character.

Regarding the English renditions of the five poems discussed here, some care more for prosodic features, some pay more attention to semantic representation, some take more liberty in trying to bring out the artistic appeal of the poetry. The extent of the renditions' success in preserving or re-creating the original poems' artistic spirit and characterizing function varies according to the specific strategies adopted. There are inevitable losses in sense as well as generations of unintended connotations and associations caused by the disparate cultural backgrounds of English and Chinese, as seen in the rendition of such items as "mei", "feng" and "tian". This has sometimes caused a related response in altering the meaning of the rendered terms (e.g. "caotang"). A partial inability to assimilate the artistic roles which ostensibly minor details may play in constituting a poetic ambience has also generated a similar response (as in the abandoning of "lu" and "xiaoqiao"). This further undercuts the artistic function of characterization which the original poems serve in the novel.

On the whole, strained or incongruous renditions are more observable in

Brewitt-Taylor's translations, principally because he tries to execute a chosen metrical pattern and rhyme scheme. Though varying considerably from the original, the carefully designed rhyme scheme for each rendition shows a consistent strategy to create a musical effect. As seen in the above analysis, however, the imposition of prosodic parameters place additional constraints on the process of translation, in which not only elements of meaning but spirit and atmosphere are recast, flattened or removed. While the re-created prosodic and rhyming effects can never fully re-create the original musical effects, the losses involved not only do injustice to the poems themselves, but undercut their artistic function of characterization in the novel.

In Roberts's abridged version, only some of these "characterizing" poems are translated, perhaps indicating that the poems' artistic function in the novel was not fully recognized. Compared with his 1976 renditions, Roberts's full translation does not make many significant amendments to the earlier versions, other than some changes in wording. The use of grammatical connectives and a style that reads more prose-like than the Chinese original are present in Roberts's renditions, a feature of the English language that often contracts the lyric or contemplative space of the Chinese poems.

In the final analysis, the most obvious difficulty shared by the renditions of the two translators is the issue of poetic music. As can be seen from Brewitt-Taylor's renditions, insisting on prosodic parameters in translation invariably do more harm than good, a limitation that becomes amplified when the poems should serve a novelistic function. Roberts has adopted a more balanced strategy in this regard in attempting rhymed renditions only for some of the poems.

II. Poem about Cao Cao

In the novel, Cao Cao, though intelligent, is mostly a morally negative character, particularly in the prose narrative itself. This is especially the case in the Mao edition, which praises Liu Bei but degrades Cao Cao.⁷³ His cruelty is clearly illustrated early in the novel when he kills not only his host Lü Boche's eight family members, but also the host for fear of his revenge. He defends himself with the memorable saying "I would rather be ungrateful to the world than let the world be ungrateful to me" ("寧教我負天下人，莫教天下人負我"). Thus any poem which can show Cao Cao in other than a negative light is likely to have a strong impact on his characterization and artistic appeal, more so than those about Kongming. This is because whether in prose or in poetry, whether from other people's voices or from Kongming's own lyricism, Kongming is consistently depicted in a positive light (in both Confucian and Daoist terms). If any one of these poems were removed, the character of Kongming would lose depth and spirit, but it would not be essentially altered. On the other hand, Cao Cao is manifested as a villain throughout the novel, where almost all the commentarial poems and narrative focus on his crafty ruthlessness. Although the poem in chapter 78, a recapitulation of his life, is written with a more balanced judgment, the appraisal is only based on Cao Cao's external behaviour, without making reference to his inner feelings. Only "Song in Short Metre" 短歌行, a poem written and chanted by Cao himself amid the narrative, offers a different angle in the understanding of his character.

⁷³ See Huang Zhongmo 黃中模, "Lun Mao Zonggang pinggai *Sanguo yanyi* de zhuyao sixiang yiyi" 論毛崗評改三國演義的主要思想意義, in *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究, vol. 3 (1986), 283-96.

<p>P7</p> <p>對酒當歌， 人生幾何？ 譬如朝露， 去日苦多。 4 慨當以慷， 憂思難忘。 何以解憂， 惟有杜康。 8 青青子衿， 悠悠我心； 但爲君故， 沉吟至今。 12 呦呦鹿鳴， 食野之萍。 我有嘉賓， 鼓瑟吹笙。 16 皎皎如月， 何時可輟？ 憂從中來， 不可斷絕。 20 越陌度阡， 枉用相存。 契闊談宴， 心念舊恩。 24 月明星稀， 烏鵲南飛； 繞樹三匝， 無枝可依。 28 山不厭高， 水不厭深。 周公吐哺， 天下歸心。 32</p>	<p>B7</p> <p>When goblets are brimming then song is near birth, But life is full short and has few days of mirth, Life goes as the dew drops fly swiftly away, 'Neath the glance of the glowing hot ruler of day. 4 Man's life may be spent in the noblest emprise, But sorrowful thoughts in his heart oft arise. Let us wash clean away the sad thoughts that intrude, With bumpers of wine such as Tu K'ang once brewed. 8 Gone is my day of youthful fire And still ungained is my desire. The deer feed on the level plain And joyful call, then feed again. 12 My noble guests are gathered round, The air is trilled with joyful sound. Bright my future lies before me, As the moonlight on this plain; 16 But I strive in vain to reach it. When shall I my wish attain? None can answer; and so sadness Grips my inmost heart again. 20 Far north and south, Wide east and west, We safety seek; Vain is the quest. 24 Man's heart oft yearns For converse sweet, And my heart burns When old friends greet. 28 The stars are paled by the full moon's light, The raven wings his southward flight, And thrice he circles round a tree, No place thereon to rest finds he. 32 They weary not the mountains of great height, The waters deep of depth do not complain, Duke Chou no leisure found by day or night Stern toil is his who would the Empire gain. 36</p>
<p>R7a</p> <p>Cup to cup calls for song. Man's life—how long? A morning's dew? Alas! Many a day is done—</p> <p>But bear a noble spirit Against all haunting sorrows, Sorrows naught allays, Save the cup, since ancient days. 8</p> <p>'Green, green the youth, Long my longing heart.' On the king's cause Brood without pause. 12</p> <p>'Loo! Halloo!' sing deer And nibble the plain. We have honored guests For string and reed to cheer. 16</p> <p>The moon beckons afar. Who can cull it?</p>	<p>R7b</p> <p>Here before us, wine and song! For man does not live long. Like daybreak dew, His days are swiftly gone. 4 Sanguine-souled we have to be! Though painful memory haunts us yet. Thoughts and sorrows naught allays, Save the cup Du Kang first set.¹ 8 "Deep the hue of the scholar's robe; Deeper, the longing of my heart."² For all of you, my dearest lords, I voice again this ancient part. 12 Nibbling on the duckweed, "Loo! Loo!" the lowing deer.³ At our feast sit honored guests For string and reed to cheer. 16 The moon on high beckons bright, But no man's ever stayed it. Heart's care rises from within, And nothing can deny it. 20 Take our thanks for all your pains; Your presence does us honor.</p>

And sorrow within, What can annul it?	20	Reunited on this feasting day, We well old loves remember.	24
Now all come their ways, Bear hardship to join us. Long absent ones share our feast, Where old favor is well remembered.	24	The moon is bright, the stars are few, The magpie black as raven. It southbound circles thrice a tree That offers him no haven.	28
Moon swells, stars fade. The raven flies south, And circles a tree That lends no shade.	28	The mountaintop no height eschews; The sea eschews no deep. And the Duke of Zhou spat out his meal ⁴ An empire's trust to keep. ⁵	32
The mountain no height eschews, The sea no deep, Nor did the earnest Duke of Chou* An empire's trust refuse.	32	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Du Kang was the legendary first vintner. 2. <i>Shi jing</i>, ode 91, "Zi jin." The ode's theme is longing for an absent love. 3. <i>Shi jing</i>, ode 161, "Lu ming." The ode's theme is the welcoming of guests. 4. Sima Qian quotes the Duke of Zhou as saying, "At any meal, in my anxiety not to pass up one of the empire's worthy men, I may spit out my food and rise from the table to receive men of standing." See <i>SJ</i>, "Lu Zhougong shijia." 5. There is a second part to this ode, which Luo Guanzhong omits; it elaborates on Cao Cao's historical models. The Duke of Zhou is the historical model of the loyal regent, which Cao Cao invokes to show his support for the legitimate Emperor and his determination not to usurp the throne. The two other figures Cao compares himself to are Patriarch Huan of Qi and Patriarch Wen of Jin. They were the archetypal <i>ba</i>, or hegemons (rulers by force rather than virtue), who always subordinated themselves to the Emperor in formal or ritual matters, while concentrating great military power in their own hands. In the <i>Analects</i> Confucius expresses the deepest admiration for the Duke of Zhou and he acknowledges the achievement of Patriarch Huan, but he does not cite Patriarch Wen, whose reputation has suffered because he once compelled the Emperor to attend a meeting and thus was guilty of insubordination. On that occasion appearances were preserved by saying that the Emperor was going on a "hunting expedition." The hunting party in chapter 20 therefore suggests that Luo Guanzhong could see Cao Cao as a Patriarch Wen, but did not share Cao Cao's appraisal of himself as a Duke of Zhou or Patriarch Huan. (The historical Cao Cao wrote the song.) 	
*The Duke of Chou is the historic model of the loyal regent.			

In the novel, this poem is indispensable to the characterization of Cao Cao in that it offers an occasion for him to express a different voice, showing that he is not just a villain who would sacrifice others to secure himself, but a man of deep sentiments and high aspirations as well.

Employing Cao Cao's own poem in the novel serves several functions at the

same time. First, it can strengthen the coordination between historical and artistic reality. Second, the poem intensifies and complicates the atmosphere created during a banquet held a few nights before the critical Battle of Red Cliff. On the verge of a military turning point that is supposed to sweep away the political obstacles before him, Cao Cao finds himself in a poetic mood on a beautiful, relaxing night. Interestingly, he does not express his sense of achievement—which is undeniable given his military success through many battles with tough enemies⁷⁴—but chants a poem in a reflective, almost sad state of mind. Though the poem itself is an independent work of art, having it appropriately positioned in the novel allows a deeper and more comprehensive reading of the poem. Although a fierce battle is expected soon, Cao Cao releases his inner feelings in a pensive poetic mood, leading the readers to evaluate his ambition and his sentiments from an alternative angle. In this poem, Cao Cao is no longer manifested as a cruel villain, but a poet of delicate thinking and deep sentiments, a comrade who shows gratitude to his peers, and a prime minister who is willing to learn from the Duke of Zhou's example.

These qualities of Cao Cao are unfolded by eight sense groups in the poem, each of which consists of four lines. The first four lines convey the poet's concern with the brevity of life and regret about the loss of time. The poem is particularly poignant with sentiment in line 2, with the rhetorical question following the factual statement at the beginning. Singing of an enjoyable occasion initially, the poet shifts to a melancholy mood when he instantly wonders how often one can enjoy it. In this streak of melancholy, his regrets about the brevity of life and the loss of time arise spontaneously, leading to the following two lines (ll. 3-4) where he compares

⁷⁴ Cao Cao has beaten Lü Bu, Yuan Shu and Yuan Shao successively.

life to morning dew. Meanwhile, apart from the word “sorrow” (“憂”), which appears three times in the poem and directly reveals the poet’s feeling, the word “苦” in line 4 (literally meaning “bitter”, here used adverbially) is also indicative of the poet’s inner mood.

Lines 5-8 show that despite a spirited and expansive outlook, the poet is still laden with sorrow, which can only be soothed by drinking. The rhetorical question and answer in lines 7-8 respectively reinforce the poet’s rueful feelings. Nevertheless, the poem is not completely drowned in a sad mood, since Cao Cao shows his soaring aspirations in spite of his regrets about the passage of time. In the next four lines (ll. 9-12), the poet’s allusive reflection on “zi jin” 子衿 (ll. 9-10) expresses his desire for worthy men. Quoted verbatim from *The Book of Poetry*, the allusion is originally a love song but refers to a longing for able men in the present poem.⁷⁵ In the same vein, the next allusion to the poem “Lu ming” 鹿鳴 (ll. 13-16), also from *The Book of Poetry*, expresses a similar longing for able “guests”/assistants.⁷⁶ However, in lines 17-20, Cao Cao’s sorrowful feelings surface for the third time when he is inspired by the moon. Then in lines 21-24, the poet imagines a scenario when he is reunited with his valuable men converging from all places. But the concrete images of the birds finding no place to rest (ll. 25-28) inspire the poet with concern about the able men’s situation. Comparing himself to a historical paragon, the poet’s allusion to the Duke of Zhou 周公 in the last four

⁷⁵ 《詩經·鄭風·子衿》：“青青子衿，悠悠我心，縱我不在，子寧不嗣音。” This is a love song expressing how a woman is emotionally attached to her lover. 青衿, literally green lapel, is part of a student’s dress in classical times, and thus refers by extension to a scholar or youth. See Cheng Junying and Jiang Jianyuan, *Shijing zhuxi*, 1: 252-54.

⁷⁶ The allusion is quoted verbatim from a poem called < 鹿鳴 >, which is a song played for the guests, as mentioned in the preface to the poem: “鹿鳴，燕群臣嘉賓也。” Ibid, 2: 437-41.

lines implies his well-disposed intention towards worth officials and his political aspirations. Overall, the poem movingly reveals Cao Cao's inner voice, expressing a rich, complex range of conflicting emotions and aspirations.

Prosodically, the flow of sentiments goes along with rhyme shifts. Let us first look at the rhyme scheme adopted by the poem. In general, a change of rhyme occurs every four lines, dividing the poem into eight rhymed units. In addition to even lines rhyming, five out of the eight units have the first of the four lines within the unit rhyming as well.⁷⁷ Since all the sense groups are in four lines, the scheme of rhyme shifts tallies with the turns of meaning and mood, and is thus semantically significant to the poem. As always in classical Chinese poetry, the rhymes also make the poem more memorable and richer in affective appeal.

We may now take a look at the three renditions and the different strategies they adopt. Putting lexical ambiguities in individual lines aside, B7 does not completely render the original line for line; the total number of translated lines is 36, four more than the original. Except for the first and last eight lines of the original, which are translated line for line (ll. 1-8 and 29-36 in B7), the rendition alters the other lines in several ways.

First, there are expansions and contractions in the rendition. The original four lines from lines 9-12 are translated into only two lines (ll. 9-10), which in fact cannot be easily identified with the corresponding original lines. It is only because lines 11-14 of B7 clearly correspond to the original's lines 13-16 that lines 9-10 of B7 can be taken as a rough translation of lines 9-12 of P7. Strictly speaking, lines 11-12 of the original are omitted in the rendition. On the other hand, there are six original lines (ll. 17-18 and 21-24) where each is broken into two lines in the rendition

⁷⁷ The rhyme scheme is *aaba cded ffgf hhih jjkj lnmn oopo qfrf*.

(respectively ll. 15-18, 21-28 of B7). For example, line 17 of P7, which mentions the bright moon (“皎皎如月”), becomes two lines: “Bright my future lies before me,/ As the moonlight on this plain”; the rhetorical question in line 18 of P7 is also rendered as two lines. Meanwhile, there are also combinations of lines; lines 11-12 of the rendition, for instance, are a combination of the original’s lines 13-14. On the other hand, lines 19-20 of B7 expand on the meaning of line 19 of the original, while dropping line 20 of P7. The first half (“none can answer”) of line 19 of the rendition, the only line divided by a semi-colon, is simply added by the translator.

Second, with two original lines omitted and six others rendered into twelve lines, there are deletions and additions of content in the rendition. With the omission of lines 11-12 and the vague translation of lines 9-10 of the original, the affective force of the entire allusion and the poet’s reflection on it are lost. Cao Cao’s inner voice is thus weakened. The addition of the half line of line 19 in the rendition, on the other hand, inserts a made-up answer to the rhetorical question in the previous line, along with the addition of the logical connectives “and so”. Since the unanswered rhetorical question in the original creates more room for affective reflection, the insertion of an answer in the rendition dilutes the affective appeal.

Semantically, there are several lines in the rendition that are quite different from the original. For instance, the first line (which literally means “in front of wine and song”) is rendered as “when goblets are brimming then song is near birth”, suggesting a sequence of drinking and singing activities. Besides, B7 translates the rhetorical question in line 2 into a plain statement “But life is full short and has few days of mirth”, while misinterpreting the question words “幾何” as “how long” instead of “how often”. What is more, while the original lines 1-2 form a single unit that evokes a lyric-reflective mood along with an affective resonance, the

translated lines, with “when...then” and “But...”, are far too rational to evoke much reflective and lyrical depth. On the other hand, while overlooking the sense of pity over the loss of time with the word “ku” (“bitter”, l. 4), which also shows a kind of personal sensitivity to life, the rendition creates an image of a “glowing hot ruler of day”, which takes away the dew drops mentioned in the previous line. This may be derived from the word “日”, which not only signifies a day but also the sun in the Chinese context. The rendition then imposes the ruler image on the sun, something that is not only absent from the original but quite reductive and inappropriate. In the meantime, the rendition further dilutes the poet’s melancholy by omitting the word “bitter” in the original.

Let us now take a look at how the three allusions are handled in the renditions, beginning with that by Brewitt-Taylor. For the first allusion, the clothing image of “zi jin” is changed into an abstract noun: “youthful fire” (l. 9). Although “zi jin” can represent youths or scholars, it is more sensible in this context to take the image as a substitute for worthy men. The rendition, however, takes the alternative meaning, which leads to a different understanding of the line that follows. Instead of expressing the poet’s longing for able assistants, which reflects public-spirited sentiments, the translated line only mentions the poet’s personal “desire” (l. 10), which is reductive. This feature, together with the non-translation of lines 11-12, reduces the emotional depth of the original lines,⁷⁸ while narrowing down his public-spirited aspirations. In this sense, the rendition both distorts Cao Cao’s inner voice and reduces his positive characterization.

For the allusion “lu ming” in lines 13-16, B7 preserves all four lines, with

⁷⁸ The poet’s long for able assistants is implied in the original’s line 12 “沉吟至今”, meaning roughly “to keep pondering”.

descriptions of the deer and the guests. However, the connection between the guests and the deer's song suggested by the allusion can hardly be appreciated by the target readers without explanation. Thus the original image of Cao Cao the public-spirited statesman is further diluted. As for the allusion to the Duke of Zhou, the rendition does not re-create the vivid image of Zhou's spitting out the food. The rendition indicates the Duke of Zhou's diligence by saying that "Duke Zhou no leisure found by day or night", but loses the important attribute of valuing capable men as a virtue crucial to his achievement in the original allusion. Again, the unavoidable distance created by unfamiliarity with the historical Duke of Zhou poses some reading difficulty to the target readers, further blurring Cao Cao's aspiration to become a virtuous leader. Overall, the poet's lofty reflection and affective expression are weakened in the translation.

It should be noted that using allusion as a poetic device is quite common in Chinese poetry. The immediate function of using allusion is that allusions suggest certain facts, ideas or even emotions with an economy of words; as James Liu observes, "a great deal of Chinese poetry is allusive....allusions can be used as an economical means of presenting a situation".⁷⁹ For allusions to common knowledge and beliefs, few explanations are required. With regard to the strengthening of poetic effects, allusions seeking identification of a past event with a present occasion can add depth to the reading of a poem by introducing additional implications and associations.⁸⁰ In this light, the contextualized use of allusions in "Song in Short Metre" can effectively and economically lead to an alternative understanding of Cao as a statesman aspiring towards virtuous leadership, thus

⁷⁹ James Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, 131-32.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

deepening his characterization and enhancing the overall artistic effect of the narrative. The rendition, being either unable to re-create the allusion's implications and associations or unable to convey them with the same immediacy of effect, weakens the original poem's artistic impact on the novel. This is ultimately an unavoidable limitation which no translation can overcome, simply because allusions are very condensed cultural codes that cannot be transported cross-culturally with ease.

Prosodically, Brewitt-Taylor's rendition does not adopt a unified metrical pattern as the original does. While the original can be semantically divided into eight parts and the rhyme changes parallel the turns of mood and meaning, there are only five metrically divided parts in B7, employing line length ranging from four to twelve syllables.⁸¹ Apparently, the metrical divisions in the rendition are not closely related to the flow of the mood in the original. Admittedly, the final three metric parts in terms of syllable count (lines 21-36 in the rendition), corresponding to lines 21-32 of the original, are divided in line with the last three sense and rhyme groups in the original. That is, lines 21-28 of B7 correspond to the original's lines 21-24 (in which the poet imagines meeting his comrades); lines 29-32 of B7 correspond to the original's lines 25-28 (which give concrete images of the nocturnal scene); and lines 33-36 correspond to the original's lines 28-32 (which allude to the Duke of Zhou). However, it is unclear why lines 21-28 of B7 are singularly turned into tetrasyllabic lines, and what unique effects they achieve. It is also uncertain why B7 imposes regular divisions of syllabic count in the rendition, since all the

⁸¹ Lines 1-8 are rendered in 11 syllables (except lines 4 and 7 in 12 syllables) with 4-5 stressed syllables; lines 9-20 are in 8 syllables with minor variations and 4 stresses; lines 21-28 are in 4 syllables with 2 stresses; lines 29-32 are in 8 or 9 syllables with 4-5 stresses; and lines 33-36 are in 10 syllables with 4-5 stresses.

rendered lines other than lines 21-28 use 4-5 stressed syllables. Furthermore, the progression of meaning in the original's lines 1-20 is blurred in the rendition, because by the translator's own device, the first five rhymed groups of the original are reduced to only two metrical parts in syllabic count.

The employment of five metrical patterns in the rendition may reflect an overlooking of the semantic significance of the original's rhyme scheme, which leads to a rendition that reduces the artistic effect of the original. In the final analysis, however, intrinsic differences between the source and target languages mean that it is unrealistic to expect a rendition with equivalent rhyming patterns, let alone patterns with an equivalent poetic appeal. The rendition adopts a rhyme scheme that shows an effort to reproduce some rhyming effect,⁸² but the adoption of rhyme in the rendition imposes additional limitations on the transmission of content. For instance, in order to make lines 16 and 18 rhyme (plain-attain), the rendition creates an image of plain (l. 16). Although the use of rhyme does not essentially change the original meaning here, the strains of using rhyme in translation are still observable.

In the meantime, the original poem's lyric intensity is diluted by the long lines of the rendition. The rendered lines range from two to three times the syllable length of the original (lines 21-28 of B7 are actually two lines or eight syllables to one original line), reducing the artistic force of the verse lines. Whether we take the 8-syllable rhetorical question of lines 1-2 or the lyric question and answer of lines 7-8, the original poem's verse lines flow with a natural ease, concise immediacy and affective force that are dispersed by the inevitable wordiness of the rendition. As we have seen, lines 21-28 are not really tetrasyllabic, and do not preserve the lyric

⁸² The overall rhyme scheme is *aabbccddeeffgghhijffklmlnonoppqqpppf*.

intensity of the original; no particular artistic effect seems to be attained by breaking one line into two. On the contrary, the original's lyric intensity is diluted by doubling the number of lines in the rendition. In reducing the poetic mood of the poem, which is essential in the narrative context, the rendition reduces the target readers' understanding of the positive side of Cao Cao's character.

Let us now see how Roberts's renditions work. R7a, one of the poems selected by Roberts in his 1976 abridged translation, is a line-for-line rendition divided into eight stanzas with four lines each. Metrically, the syllable count of the verse lines ranges from four to nine, but except for the sixth and eighth stanzas (whose lines are in uneven number of syllables), most stanzas are quite even in line length. The main metrical pattern is five to six syllables with three stresses; other lines range from having two stresses in four syllables to having four stresses in seven or more syllables. Compared with B7, the most distinctive quality about R7a is that apart from a long line or two, it preserves the clean, brisk poetic rhythm of the original poem.

R7a is a partially rhymed rendition, with a rhyme scheme varying from stanza to stanza;⁸³ except for the unrhymed sixth stanza, all stanzas consist of two rhymed lines irregularly placed. Being divided into eight stanzas, R7a is formally similar to the original, which is aurally composed of eight semantic units as noted. Though irregular, the rhyme changes in the rendition signify the progression from one stanza to another and parallel the progression of meaning. In formal terms, R7a thus largely preserves the artistic function of the original rhyme scheme in this regard.

On the other hand, as is almost inevitably the case, the use of rhyme in the rendition causes distortion or reshaping of meaning to fit the auditory requirement.

⁸³ The scheme adopted by R5a is *aabc deff ghii jklj mnon pqrs tuvt wxyw*.

The translator seems to have adopted a “compensating” strategy in his rendition: semantically, line 2 of R7a is more pessimistic than the original (probably involving an inaccurate understanding of lines 1-2),⁸⁴ yet line 6 is more heroic than the original. Likewise, an emotive interjection “Alas” is also added to line 3 of the rendition, as though to compensate for the untranslated mood of regret suggested by the word “ku” in the original’s line 4.

In a similar vein, the rendition syntactically preserves the original’s two rhetorical questions in lines 2 and 18, turns line 17 into a plain statement, and yet renders two statements (ll. 3 and 20) as questions, making the number of rhetorical questions in the rendition one more than the original. We know that the employment of rhetorical questions can directly engage the reader in the poetic spirit. As a literary device aimed at convincing or swaying the audience while making a deeper impression on the hearer,⁸⁵ a fitting rhetorical question does stir the readers’ sensitivity and increase the poem’s affective resonance. The two consecutive rhetorical questions in lines 2-3 in the rendition are probably meant to intensify the sense of helplessness over the brevity of life, though the syntactic constructions (with each short line divided into two parts) read a little scrappy in effect. On the other hand, the poet’s deep yearning for relief from sorrow in line 7 is flattened into a direct statement in the rendition. Although the rendition uses more rhetorical questions than the original poem, there is still the question of placement and construction, which bears on the way the questions contribute to the poem’s affective resonance and appeal. The overall effect of the exchange in rhetorical question and emotive expressions in R7a is a mixed one.

⁸⁴ Line 1 of the original, literally meaning “in front of wine and song”, is rendered as “Cup to cup calls for song”; “幾何” in the original’s line 2 is not rendered as “how often” but “how long”.

How are Cao Cao's aspirations manifested in the rendition? As noted above, Cao Cao's aspirations are crystallized in three allusions in the poem. In R7a, the first two allusions are almost translated literally. The allusive term "zi jin" is taken as "the youth", while "青" is literally rendered as "green". The translation of the allusion to "lu ming" preserves the onomatopoeic quality of the original words. While the first two allusions are rendered in relatively concrete images, an abstract notion of "earnestness" is substituted for the image of "spitting" in the last allusion.

An artistic problem arises when the spirit condensed in the allusion becomes altered in essence by the incomprehensible rendition of some items. When "zi jin" is taken as "the youth" (l. 9), what the heart longs for (l. 10) is turned into the poet's personal past, connecting a nostalgic, perhaps even resigned view of life. Besides, "green youth" creates the curious, unintended association of an "inexperienced youngster", which is a far cry from the original connotation, further misrepresenting the poet's inner voice. All these impressions are incongruous with the heroic spirit of Cao Cao in expressing his aspiration to rule the empire by virtue. While Cao Cao does feel sad about the rareness of carefree ease and even the brevity of life, he does not lose sight of his political aspirations, as attested by his desire for able men's assistance. Thus, the mood of the rendition produces a weakened depiction of a public-spirited character.

Meanwhile, much like the previous allusion, the literal translation of the "lu ming" allusion as "dear nibbling the plain" is not comprehensible to the target readers without an explanation. Without sufficient background information about the allusion, the onomatopoeic words may even result in a funny effect. These two allusions present a different rendition problem than the last one, because at least the

⁸⁵ Harmon and Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, 443.

main referent of the Duke of Zhou is clear. The rendition of the last allusion (l. 31), while omitting the spitting image, can still present Cao Cao's attitude towards his endeavour, though in a less vivid manner. Besides, with a note explaining who the Duke of Zhou is, the rendition of this allusion conveys more of the poet's inner voice, compared with the translations of the previous two allusions.

Roberts's later version, R7b, is also rendered in 32 lines, with the stanza breaks removed. It is almost a line-for-line translation, except that lines 13-14 of the rendition reverse the order in the original, and line 27 of the rendition takes a word ("southbound") from the original line 26. The length of the verse line varies from four to nine syllables, ranges mostly between six and eight syllables, with a basic metrical pattern of seven syllables with four stresses. The rhyme scheme is also slightly different from and more regular than that of R7a.⁸⁶ Except for the unrhymed lines 21-24, a shift of rhyme occurs every four lines, making a total of seven rhymed units in the rendition. Although the stanza breaks are removed, the progression of meaning is still noticeable in the changes in rhyme, which parallel the movement of the former.

On the other hand, the lyric lines of R7b are relatively wordy. Although the use of rhyme helps to make the rendition more memorable, the lengthy lines drag out the rhythm and dilute the lyric intensity. Rendered by the same translator, R7a and R7b show that it is very difficult to achieve an equally satisfactory performance in preserving content and form. Either one of them has to be considerably compromised.

Although the rhyme shifts tally with the semantic turns, the mood created is not quite the same as the original. Unlike R7a, which uses one more rhetorical question

⁸⁶ The rhyme scheme is *aaba cded fghg ijkj lnmn opqr stut vwxw*.

than the original, R7b uses no rhetorical question. On the other hand, it adds five supplementary notes at the end of the poem. Replacing rhetorical questions with plain statements makes the lyric expression less able to engage the readers and thus weaker in affective appeal, especially since the poem is a manifestation of Cao Cao's deeper sentiments. In fact, the rhetorical question often has an effect more lyrical than rhetorical; it contributes to the expression of the lyric sentiments, and induces a smooth continuation to the following line.

As regards some other elements in the original reflecting the poet's inner sentiments, namely "you" (ll. 6, 7 and 19) and "ku" (l. 4), the former is preserved in the corresponding translated lines, while the latter is not rendered, slightly diluting the emotive effect of melancholy mixed with an enterprising spirit.

As noted already, there are five notes included in R7b, all of which offer background information to facilitate the understanding of the poem without adding commentary, except for the last note which also suggests a way of reading. The note states that the author of the novel, Luo Guanzhong, "did not share Cao Cao's appraisal of himself as a Duke of Zhou".⁸⁷ The comment, however, is not necessary at this stage in reading the novel, and prevents the readers from understanding Cao's character in an open-minded manner as the original would suggest. As a translation strategy, it may be more appropriate to put the comment in a separate section not directly related to the immediate reading activity. Meanwhile, the note to the "zi jin" line is not very helpful to the understanding of the allusion, for the note only gives its original tenor ("longing for an absent love") without providing the implied meaning of the allusion in the present context. As a matter of fact, since R7b

⁸⁷ To see how the judgment is made in the inserted supplementary notes, see Moss Roberts, trans., *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press; Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), 1624-25.

already translates the implied meaning of “zi jin” as “the scholar”, the allusion becomes more comprehensible to the target readers, and the note may not even be necessary. Nevertheless, the notes are helpful to some extent, especially when R7b preserves the allusions’ images, which are otherwise incomprehensible in the cultural context of the target language.

In addition, we can also see from the rendition of the allusion to “lu ming” that a note has been added, providing some background information. Though inserting notes to a target text is not generally a preferred translational strategy, in the present case it is essential to making sense of the allusion in the poem. Likewise, a note is also significant in the allusion to the Duke of Zhou, for the “spitting” image of the Duke of Zhou, though vivid, may not arouse the target readers’ sympathy the way it stirs the native readers. The added note helps to relieve the burden of comprehension, while preserving the immediacy of the allusion itself. Given that Cao Cao’s aspirations are manifested through allusions, adding notes in the rendition can at least facilitate the grasp of meaning, though its artistic value is inevitably reduced in the process.

Among the differences observed in Roberts’s two renditions, R7b’s more precise translation of semantic items may be indicative of a different interpretive input into the translation process. For instance, “zi jin” is rendered as “the youth” in R7a, but subsequently becomes “the scholar’s robe” in R7b. As mentioned above, R7b’s interpretation seems more closely related to the poet’s yearning for capable men in the poem; it is also more consistent with the other two allusions in manifesting Cao Cao’s aspirations. The fact that Roberts’s later rendition offers a different translation of the allusion reflects the gaining of a new perspective in the course of time.

Generally speaking, R7a and R7b are renditions with little distortion of meaning compared with B7, but no rendition has a satisfactory performance in transmitting poetic prosody.

In short, “Song in Short Metre” is very significant to the characterization of Cao Cao in the novel, because it discloses the poet’s inner voice which otherwise cannot be heard in other chapters. The poem does not function in ways as subtle as those poems about Kongming, where factors like atmosphere and associative space synergize with the content to contribute to the characterization. The perspective on analyzing “Song in Short Metre” should thus be different. Instead of paying attention to the re-production of the aura and subtlety and atmosphere in the poem, a rendition of Cao’s song should consider more whether the tenor is accurately transmitted. Although the artistic effects of the allusions, concrete images, and prosody are not completely re-created in the three renditions, the characterizing function of the original poem is not seriously damaged. Nevertheless, R7a and R7b perform better in the function of characterizing Cao Cao, as they are renditions with less distortion of meaning, especially R7b in its accurate translation of the allusions. Overall, R7b, despite minor defects in re-creating lyric intensity, performs the best among the three renditions. In terms of general translational approach, Brewitt-Taylor seems quite concerned about re-creating the original’s prosodic effects, even at the expense of altering the poem’s content. On the other hand, Roberts does not insist as much on using rhyme, in order to lessen the additional limitations on transmitting the tenor of the original poem.

Chapter 4: Poetry and the Novel's Heroic Spirit

Given that military contention for control of the empire is the plot of the *Sanguo*, many episodes throughout the novel are filled with a heroic spirit. Insertion of poems in the text can sometimes serve to condense such a spirit, while reinforcing the high momentum and elevating the heroic encounter to a higher level. Two poems are selected for illustration here. One is a long poem describing the fight between Lü Bu and the three sworn brothers, and the other is about Zhao Yun. We may take the latter poem first.

I. Poem on Zhao Yun

Zhao Yun's dauntless commitment and valiant effort are fully manifested for the first time in the battle at Changban Slope in chapter 41. Having described Zhao Yun's rescue of the young master A Dou while killing more than fifty generals under Cao Cao's command, the novel offers the following poem as a culmination of the powerful scene:

P8 血染征袍透甲紅， 當陽誰敢與爭鋒？ 古來衝陣扶危主， 只有常山趙子龍。	
B8 Blood dyed the fighting robe and crimsoned his buff coat; None dared engage the terrible warrior at Tangyang; In the days of old lived the brave Chao Yün, Who fought in the battlefield for his lord in danger.	R8 In bloodsoaked battle gown and armor bloody red, He faced down every foe at Dangyang town. Of all who ever fought to keep a king from harm, Who excels Zhao Zilong, hero of Changshan?

The poem is an open eulogy of Zhao Yun's valour without much semantic ambiguity. In heptasyllabic lines, the poem begins with the visual image of his armour soaked in blood. What is more, the word "blood" that opens the poem

generates a striking effect in colour and meaning, emphasizing the extraordinary valour of the hero. Meanwhile, the combination of the Chinese words “染” (literally “to dye”) and “透” (literally “to penetrate”) helps to give a sense of power and character to the blood. Especially noteworthy is the word “透”, first because it is a verb imparting a dynamic quality to the description of the armour, which absorbs the blood and turns red. Second, the word, usually suggesting a motion of penetration from the outside to the inside, takes on an additional sense of vividness and momentum in the present context, because it indicates a penetration from the inside to the outside—with blood oozing out. With this particular word, the first line offers a graphic image of the hero’s commanding presence, which accentuates the ferocious fighting that just happened and further elevates the momentum of the text.

In the following line (l. 2), a rhetorical question asked through another image (“cross swords”) is used to sharpen Zhao Yun’s matchless prowess. Since an admirable warrior’s valour is usually directed by his loyalty and rectitude, the last two lines highlight Zhao Yun’s exceptional heroism among those who have saved their masters from harm. Having vividly and pithily sketched the hero’s act in the first three lines, the poem mentions his name at the end of the last line in a crescendo of spirit. The poem manifests the hero’s prowess and loyalty through graphic images instead of abstract adjectival descriptions, making the eulogy come to life. Imbued with passion, the poem not only eulogies Zhao Yun’s valour, but also enhances the overall heroic spirit of the narrative.

Prosodically, the poem uses resonant [-ng] end rhymes, which embody a vibrating effect and augment the resonating appeal generated by the meaning of the poem. Along with its semantic and syntactic elements, resonant rhymes help to

amplify the poem's heroic atmosphere through an integration of sound with meaning.

Let us now see how the renditions work. B8 is rendered in four lines, and is semantically quite close to the original's content. However, other factors (as noted in the analysis of the original poem) have to be considered in evaluating the rendition's re-creation of the heroic spirit. Let us begin with the first line. Similar to the original, the image of blood is retained at the beginning of the first line in B8. In fact, the first line of the rendition is almost a word-for-word translation, preserving not only the semantic items but also the use of verbs. In the rendition, the original verbs "ran" and "tous" are rendered as "dyed" and "crimsoned". Although "buff coat" is not quite the same as "甲", the verbs "dyed" and "crimsoned" do bring out some of the dynamic qualities of the blood, and re-create the graphic image that symbolizes the terror and momentum of the ferocious battle. What is overlooked by the rendition is the heroic force of the word "tous".

Stylistically, the rhetorical question in the original's line 2 is changed into a plain statement, while a verb "engage" is used to replace the kinetic image of crossing swords. As a direct statement, the rendered line does not fully bring out Zhao Yun's heroic spirit as vividly as the original.

While the first two lines are translated in step with the original, the last two lines are a combination of the corresponding lines in the original, with the hero's name transposed to line 3. As discussed above, the fact that the hero's name appears last marks the culmination of his heroic stature. Here, Zhao Yun's brave act, "衝陣扶危主" (l. 3), is rendered as "fought in the battlefield for his lord in danger" in a non-defining clause and moved to line 4, which is subordinate to line 3 of the rendition. This syntactically dispensable line suggests a less forceful presentation of the hero. While the accumulation of details in the original's first three lines

builds up Zhao Yun's heroic image, and creates a climactic effect with the hero's name appearing last, the rendition is weaker in momentum and spirit, as it breaks up the sense group in the first three lines of the original.

Furthermore, Zhao Yun's valour is not explicitly stated in the original poem, but mostly *shown* in the vivid images of oozing blood and crossed swords. On the other hand, the adjectives "terrible" (l. 2) and "brave" (l. 3) used by B8 to describe Zhao Yun are abstract notions which *indicate* rather than *embody* the heroic spirit, and hence do not engage the readers' sympathy as effectively as the original.

Prosodically, B8 is rendered in lines of uneven length (ranging from 10 to 14 syllables). Although the original is a short poem, supposed to generate fewer problems in the employment of rhymes in translation,⁸⁸ the rendition does not adopt a rhyme scheme, which is noticeable given Brewitt-Taylor's usual preference for rhymed translations. The immediate auditory effect generated by the use of end rhymes in three of the four lines in the original is given up, and one returns to Arthur Waley's observation that "rhymes are so scarce in English (as compared with Chinese) that a rhymed translation can only be a paraphrase and is apt to fall back on feeble padding".⁸⁹ The concord between auditory and spiritual resonance of the poet's subject offered by the resonant [-ng] end rhymes in the original is lost in the rendition.

Now we turn to Roberts's rendition (there is none in his 1976 abridged version). R8 offers almost a close, line-for-line rendition of the original meaning, yet not

⁸⁸ As noted before, Hawkes observes that "it is impossible to use the same rhyme for very long in English without running into serious difficulties," implying that using rhyme in brief English verse may cause fewer problems. ("Chinese Poetry and the English Reader," in *The Legacy of China*, 99).

⁸⁹ Arthur Waley, trans., *One Hundred & Seventy Chinese Poems* (1918), new ed. (London: Constable & Co., 1962), "Introduction" (1960), 9.

without semantic and syntactic changes. The first line of the rendition retains the image of blood, but while the original verbs “dye” and “penetrate” help to create a dynamic momentum, the prepositional clause in the translated line offers a static description; the replacement of verbs with adjectives (“bloodsoaked” and “bloody”) renders the imagistic effect less compelling. Despite being largely accurate in transmitting the original meaning, R8 does not re-create the inspiring heroic air, as it ignores the artistic power of the words—“ran” and “tousled”.

Like B8, R8 translates the original rhetorical question (l. 2) into plain speech, while abandoning the image of crossing swords. Since the rhetorical question and the graphic image are significant in elevating Zhao Yun’s heroic spirit, this translated line in R8 manifests the same problem observed in B8, namely that of blunting the heroic spirit. Similarly, the rendition does not retain the dynamic image of “衝陣” (literally means “breaking into the enemy troops”) in line 3 of the original. Instead, R8 simply extracts the basic meaning of the concrete image with the use of the verb “fought”, again abstracting the heroic spirit.

Meanwhile, the rendition’s line 3 and 4 are syntactically bound, with the two lines combining to form a single rhetorical question. The hero’s name still appears in the last line—in step with the heightening of the heroic atmosphere in the original poem—but the artistic effect is different. Whereas Zhao Yun’s stature is exemplified by concrete details in the original, making us feel his heroic qualities more deeply, in R8 he is categorized as “hero of Changshan”. Starting with a plain description which reduces the dynamic effect of the original, R8 needs to make a claim that Zhao Yun is “hero of Changshan” in order to sustain the heroic image. It is always less powerful and convincing to tell than to show.

Prosodically, R8 does not seem to manifest any preconceived design. The

rhyming effect of the original is again not re-created in R8, which is an unrhymed rendition. Like B8, R8 is an unrhymed rendition that forfeits the original auditory effect and its amplification of the heroic spirit.

Looking at the two renditions, one feels that B8 is able to create a higher momentum and heroic spirit than R8, as the former preserves the dynamic qualities of the original's first line. On the other hand, the combination of the last two lines in B8 weakens the artistic effect. Overall, it is much more difficult to translate a shapeless heroic spirit across languages than it is to translate "material content".

II. Poem on Battle between Lü Bu and the Sworn Brothers

Another poem that poses a similar problem is the long poem in chapter 5. This is inserted after the ferocious fight between Lü Bu and the three sworn brothers, Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei. At that time, Dong Zhuo is controlling the imperial court and abusing the civilians. Having enlisted Lü Bu's support, Dong Zhuo is aiming for control of the empire. At the battle of Hulao Pass (虎牢關), no warrior from the imperial court can defeat Lü Bu, setting the scene for a fierce fight between him and the three brothers.

P9

漢朝天數當恒靈，炎炎紅日將西傾；	
奸臣董卓廢少帝，劉協懦弱魂夢驚。	4
曹操傳檄告天下，諸侯奮怒皆興兵；	
議立袁紹作盟主，誓扶王室定太平。	8
溫侯呂布世無比，雄才四海誇英偉；	
護軀銀鎧砌龍鱗，束髮金冠簪雉尾。	12
參差寶帶獸平吞，錯落錦袍飛鳳起；	
龍駒跳踏起天風，畫戟熒煌射秋水。	16
出關搦戰誰敢當？諸侯膽裂心惶惶；	
踴出燕人張翼德，手提蛇矛丈八槍。	20
虎鬚倒豎翻金線，環眼圓睜起電光；	
酣戰未能分勝敗，陣前惱起關雲長。	24
青龍寶刀燦霜雪，鸚鵡戰袍飛蜺蝶；	
馬蹄到處鬼神嘍，目前一怒應流血。	28

英雄玄德掣雙鋒，抖擻天威施勇烈； 三人圍繞戰多時，遮欄架隔無休歇。 喊聲震動天地翻，殺氣迷漫牛斗寒； 呂布力窮尋走路，遙望家山拍馬還。 倒拖畫桿方天戟，亂散銷金五彩旛； 頓斷絨 走赤兔，翻身飛上虎牢關。	32 36 40	
B9 The fateful day of Han came in the reigns of Huan and Ling, Their glory declined as the sun sinks at the close of day. Tung Cho, infamous minister of state, pulled down the youthful sovereign from his throne. It is true Liu Hsieh was a weakling, too timid for his times. Then Ts'ao Ts'ao proclaimed abroad these wicked deeds, And the great lords, moved with anger, assembled their forces. In council met they and chose as their oath-chief Yüan Shao, Pledged themselves to maintain the ruling house and tranquillity. Of the warriors of that time peerless Lü Pu was the boldest. His valour and prowess are sung by all within the four seas. He clothed his body in silver armour like the scales of a dragon, On his head was a golden headdress, fastened with a massive pin, About his waist a shaggy belt, the clasp, two wild beasts' heads with gripping jaws, His flowing, brodered robe fluttered about his form, His swift courser bounded over the plain, a mighty wind following, His terrible halberd flashed in the sunlight, bright as a placid lake. Who dared face him as he rode forth to challenge? The bowels of the confederate lords were torn with fear and their hearts trembled within them. Then leaped forth Chang Fei, the valiant warrior of the north, Gripped in his mighty hand the long snakelike spear, His moustache bristled with anger, standing stiff like wire. His round eyes glared, lightning flashes darted from them. Neither quailed in the fight, but the issue was undecided. Kuan Yün-ch'ang stood out in front, his soul vexed within him, Black dragon his sword shone white as hoar frost in the sunlight, His bright coloured fighting robe fluttered like butterfly wings, Demons and angels shrieked at the thunder of his horse hoofs, In his eyes was fierce anger, a fire to be quenched only in blood. Next Yüan-tê joined the battle, gripping his twin sword blades, The heavens themselves trembled at the majesty of his wrath. These three closely beset Lü Pu and long drawn out was the battle, Always he warding their blows, never faltering a moment. The noise of their shouting rose to the sky, and the earth re-echoed it, The heat of battle ranged to the frozen pole star. Worn out, feeling his strength fast ebbing, Lü Pu thought to flee, He glanced at the hills around and thither would fly for shelter, Then, reversing his halberd and lowering its lofty point, Hastily he fled, loosing himself from the battle; With head low bent, he gave the rein to his courser, Turned his face away and fled to Hulaokuan.	4 4 8 8 12 12 16 16 20 20 24 24 28 28 32 32 36 36 40	R9 The house of Han approached its Heaven-destined end; Deep in the west its fiery sun had bent. Dong Zhuo deposed the rightful Emperor And filled the feeble prince with dreams of fear. ¹ So Cao Cao sent his writ to all the lords, Who summoned up ten thousand righteous swords, Elected Yuan Shao to their league's command, And swore to stay the house and calm the land. Dong Zhuo's man, Lü Bu, warrior without peer, Far surpassed the champions of his sphere: In armor clad, a dragon etched in scales, His headpiece fledged with gallant pheasant tails, His jagged jade belt scored with lion jaws, A phoenix spread in flight; his surcoat soars. His chafing charger stirred a fearsome wind, In every eye his halberd's piercing glint. No lord could face his call to brave the field: Their hearts went faint, their senses reeled. Then Zhang Fei made his way into the list, His giant snake-head lance fast in his fist. His beard stuck out, defiant strands of wire; The circles of his eyes shot angry-fire. They fought their fill. The contest undecided, Before his line Lord Guan no more abided: His dragon blade as dazzling as fresh snow, His war coat, parrot-hued, aswirl below. His pounding horse aroused the dead to howl. Blood would flow before his dreadful scowl. With double swords Xuande now joins the fight. The crafty owl will show his zeal and might. The brothers circle Lü Bu round and round. He fends, he blocks, too skillful to be downed. The hue and cry set sky and land ajar; The bloodlust sent a shudder through the stars. His power spent, Lü Bu found an out And rode for safety to his own redoubt, His mighty weapon trailing at his back, His gilded five-hued streamers all awrack. Riding hard, he snapped his horse's rein, Hurling up to Tiger Trap again.
	40	1. I.e., Liu Xie, prince of Chenliu, now Emperor Xian.

Strictly speaking, this long narrative poem does not add much to the depth of character portrayal or contribute to plot development; the poem mainly re-captures a breathtaking battle described in the narrative. Thus instead of focusing on the poem's function of characterization, this poem, like its previous counterpart, should be discussed from the perspective of its amplification of the heroic spirit in the

narrative.

Semantically, the poem can be divided into four sections. The first eight lines give a brief account of the late Han historical and political background that leads to the punitive expedition, and the action of forming an alliance. Thus the background that is given in over four narrative chapters is condensed into eight poetic lines, lifting the narrative momentum to a higher level. While Lü Bu's manner and outfit have been vividly depicted in the narrative, the poem's second section (ll. 9-16) condenses his spectacular martial spirit and intensifies his dominant power through the description of his horse (l. 15). The third section (ll. 17-32) focuses on the prowess of the three sworn brothers, with lines 17-18 being a transition to the fight, in which Zhang Fei comes first (l. 19). In addition to the graphic description in the narrative, Zhang Fei's indignant look is highlighted by the use of a dynamic word “踔” in line 19 (the phrase “踔出” literally means “to jump out energetically”); and the description that a flash of lightning bursts from his wide open eyes in line 22 (the narrative only states that his eyes are wide open) heightens the atmosphere of the battle between the two warriors. While Guan Yu's appearance is not mentioned in the narrative, the poem offers a lively portrayal of his dazzling and brilliance and valour in lines 25-26, adding more to the heroic spirit.⁹⁰ In precise and vivid language, the poem brings out the essence of the sworn brothers' first encounter with Lü Bu. Lines 33-40 form the last section: having concretely captured the atmospheric momentum of the fight between Lü Bu and the brothers in lines 33-34, the poem's remaining 6 lines are descriptions of Lü Bu retreat from the battlefield.

In addition, the division of sections is accompanied by changes in rhymes, with each section using one specific end rhyme (section 3, twice the length of the other

⁹⁰ It should be noted that the eulogistic description of Liu Bei's valour (ll. 29-30) is

sections, has two rhymes). In other words, sound parallels sense in the poem. As the rhyme shifts signify changes in content and atmosphere, the adoption of a rhyme scheme, adding aural resonance to the poem, does not only make the long poem memorable, but also becomes semantically significant. In this light, the organic use of rhymes is an indispensable element of the poem's total artistic effect.

As a vivid recapitulation of the battle in both sound and sense, the poem reinforces the ambience and momentum of the battle, arousing an intense heroic air alongside the narrative. Although this poem does not convey any deep meaning, it vigorously depicts and condenses the sworn brothers' prowess, and reinforces the readers' participation in the heroic atmosphere.

We may again begin with Brewitt-Taylor in discussing the translational strategies adopted by the renditions. B9 is an unrhymed line-for-line rendition, preserving most of the details of the original. The length of each translated line ranges from 11 to 22 syllables. In terms of the transmission of content, B9 can re-produce a recapitulation of the battle.

However, the vividness of the translated recapitulation is not sufficiently re-created, partly because several concrete images are not adequately rendered. Some of them are ignored or replaced by other images. For instance, in the description of Lü Bu, “簪雉尾” is translated as “fastened with a massive pin”, thus dropping the image of the pin in colourful feathers. One should not ignore the importance of Lü Bu's spectacular attire, as it reflects not only the warrior's handsome appearance but also his dazzling valour and prowess. In this light, “a massive pin” in B9, indicating only an abstract idea of its size, is not precise enough in the description of Lü Bu's demeanour. The translation of “飛鳳起” in line 14 of

the original is another case in point. While the original phrase visualizes Lü Bu's posture as a phoenix ready to take off, the image of a phoenix also implies the surpassing ability of the hero. B9, however, does not offer a concrete image as it merely uses "his form", another abstract idea, to describe Lü Bu's appearance.

Moreover, the word "鳳" is accompanied by the word "龍" in a lexical item "龍駒" in the ensuing line of the original, creating a sense of extraordinary stature and spirit from the associations of the two legendary creatures. The rendition gives up the associative images in return for plain descriptions: "his form" and "swift course" replace phoenix and dragon respectively. Another example of changing concrete images into flat language can be found in the translation of line 38. In the original, the scattered colourful banners signify the setback experienced by Lü Bu without directly telling the fact. However, the corresponding line in the rendition says in a plain statement that Lü Bu tries to escape from the spot, making the poetic line read like the previous narrative. In sum, replacing concrete images with abstract concepts makes the heroic figure less impressive and the heroic spirit less valid: the translation that prosifies the poem disperses its heroic spirit.

At the same time, the frequent use of conjunctions at the beginning of a line also makes the poem read like prose. For instance, lines 5-6, 19, and 37 in B9 start with connectives such as "then" and "and", making those lines stay close to their previous lines logically. While the semantic connection is not prescribed in the original, preserving the poem's characteristic of sublimating the spirit of the battle, the connectives in B9 prolong the lines but contract the imaginative space. Instead of condensing the heroic air in concise and concrete language, the lengthy lines make the rendition closer to being a shortened duplicate narration of the battle. In addition, though many lexical items are retained, the concrete images are not

properly transmitted, with some being ignored or replaced by other images.

Let us now proceed to analyze the artistic approach employed by R9. The rendition is translated line for line, with thirty-one lines in ten syllables and the others in eight to twelve. Meanwhile, every couplet employs a rhyme, producing a remarkable auditory difference from B9. By unifying the number of syllables in most lines and adopting a rhyme scheme, an effort is made to re-create the prosodic effect of the original. Given the potential awkward impact of using rhymed English to translate a rhymed Chinese poem, R9 tries to improve the effect by frequent shifts of rhyme every two lines, making the rendition more memorable without sounding funny. The frequent rhyme changes, however, nullify the original rhymes' function of signifying transitions of atmosphere and content. Being the most fundamental aesthetic attribute of classical Chinese poetry, the use of rhyme poses an intractable problem for English translation, which can never rhyme as naturally as the Chinese original.

Apart from this inherent difficulty, some translational features adopted by the rendition also affect the re-creation of the original artistic effects. For instance, the use of connectives and relative pronouns at the beginning of some rendered lines make them read more like prose, especially the first eight lines of which lines 3-8 are converted into two sentences. For instance, lines 4 and 8 begin with a conjunction "and", grammatically connecting with the previous line, while the relative pronoun "who" in line 6 subordinates it to line 5 which itself begins with "so", suggesting a causal relation with line 4. In other words, lines 3-8 in R9 become interdependent syntactically, leaving little associative space between the lines. While the original lines are relatively independent grammatically (though related in sense in narrating the historical background), R9 expresses a logical relationship among the lines that

prosify them.

Nevertheless, many images are preserved in the rendition, manifesting the heroic spirit from the lively descriptions of the warriors. On the other hand, the replacement of some images leads to different associations which are not suggested in the original. The image of “the crafty owl” in line 30 of the rendition is a case in point. The owl image is not found in the original. It is very likely a translation of 梟, extracted from 梟雄 which refers to an ambitious and formidable person. The owl image in the rendition reflects the translator’s misinterpretation of the culture-specific item, while evoking additional and irrelevant associations about the character (which is Liu Bei in the poem) which distort the picture in the original.

In sum, the translators seem to have reversed their usual strategies in rendering this poem. Brewitt-Taylor tends to submit to English syntax as can be seen in his longer verse lines; Roberts, on the other hand, tries to preserve the original’s rhythm by employing a stricter metrical pattern. Both renditions can transmit most of the original message, yet R9 has made more effort in re-creating the artistic effects, especially in its attempt to use a rhyme scheme and modulate the number of syllables in each line to achieve a regular rhythm. While both renditions suffer prosodic loss, R9 is more satisfactory than B9, as the latter flattens the heroic spirit by prosifying the original poem, while the problem in the former is not as serious.

Chapter 5: Poetry and Philosophical-historical Perspectives

There are two poems in the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* that are especially worth noticing, namely the opening *ci* poem and the closing *shi* poem. The ancient style poem at the end is already found in the Jiajing edition, while the beginning epigraph is inserted by the Maos. Let us now look at the closing poem before returning to the opening *ci* poem, which has already been discussed in detail in an earlier chapter.

P10		
高祖提劍入咸陽，炎炎紅日升扶桑。		
光武龍興成大統，金烏飛上天中央。	4	
哀哉獻帝紹海宇，紅輪西墜咸池旁。		
何進無謀中貴亂，涼州董卓居朝堂。	8	
王允定計誅逆黨，李傕郭汜興刀槍。		
四方盜賊如蟻聚，六合奸雄皆鷹揚。	12	
孫堅孫策起江左，袁紹袁術興河梁。		
劉焉父子據巴蜀，劉表軍旅屯荊襄。	16	
張燕張魯霸南鄭，馬騰韓遂守西涼。		
陶謙張繡公孫瓚，各呈雄才佔一方。	20	
曹操專權居相府，牢籠英俊用文武。		
威挾天子令諸侯，總領貔貅鎮中土。	24	
樓桑玄德本皇孫，義結關張願扶主。		
東西奔走恨無家，將寡兵微作羈旅。	28	
南陽三顧情何深，臥龍一見分寰宇。		
先取荊州後取川，霸業圖王在天府。	32	
嗚呼三載逝升遐，白帝托孤堪痛楚。		
孔明六出祁山前，願以隻手將天補。	36	
何期歷數到此終，長星半夜落山塢。		
姜維獨憑氣力高，九伐中原空劬勞。	40	
鍾會鄧艾分兵進，漢室江山盡屬曹。		
丕睿芳髦才及奂，司馬又將天下交。	44	
受禪台前雲霧起，石頭城下無波濤。		
陳留歸命與安樂，王侯公爵從根苗。	48	
紛紛世事無窮盡，天數茫茫不可逃。		
鼎足三分已成夢，後人憑吊空牢騷。	52	
B10		R10
It was the dawning of a glorious day		As Gao Zu entered Xianyang, sword in hand,
When first the Founder of the House of Han		Han's fiery sun climbed the tree of Dawn.
Hsienyang's proud palace entered. Noontide came	4	Then dragonlike Guang Wu restored Han's rule,
When Kuang-Wu the imperial rule restored.		And the solar crow soared to the noon of sky.
Alas, that Hsien succeeded in full time		But when this great realm passed on to Xiandi,
And saw the setting of the sun of power!		The fiery disc set in the Pool of Night.
Ho Chin, the feeble, fell beneath the blows		He Jin's folly sparked the eunuchs' coup,
Of palace minions. Tung Cho, vile though bold,	8	And Dong Zhuo came and seized the halls of state.
Then ruled the court. The plot Wang Yün devised		Wang Yun formed a plan and struck the rebel down,
To oust him, failed, recoiled on his own head.		But Li Jue and Guo Si rose up in arms.
The Li and Kuo lit up the flame of war		Across the land rebellions seethed and swarmed
And brigands swarmed like ants through all the land.	12	As vicious warlords swooped down on all sides.

Then rose the valiant and deployed their might. The Suns carved out a kingdom in the east, Honan the Yüans strove to make their own. The Lius went west and seized on Pa and Shu, Another Liu laid hold on Ching and Hsiang, Chang Miao, Chang Lu, in turn held Chêng by force. Each of three others seized upon a fief; T'ao Chien, Han Hsiu and Kungson Ts'an, the bold. But overtopping all Ts'ao Ts'ao the strong Became first minister, and to his side, Drew many able men. He swayed the court, Without, he held the nobles in his hand; By force of arms he held the capital Against all rivals. Of imperial stock Was born Yüan-tê, who with sworn brothers twain Made oath the dynasty should be restored. These wandered homeless east and west for years, A petty force. But Destiny was kind And led Liu Pei to Nanyang's rustic cot, Where lay Reposing Dragon, he who knew Already that the empire must be rent. Twice Liu essayed in vain to see the sage; Once more he went, and then his fortune turned. Chingchou fell to him, followed Ssuch'uan. A fitting base to build an empire on. Alas! He ruled there only three short years, Then left his only son to K'ung-ming's care. Full nobly K'ung-ming played protector's part, Unceasing strove to win first place for Shu; But Fate forbade; one night for aye his star Went down behind the rampart of the hills. Chiang Wei the strong inherited his task And struggled on for years. But Chung and Têng Attacked the Hans' last stronghold, and it fell. Five sons of Ts'ao sat on the dragon throne, And Ssuma snatched the scepter from Ts'ao Huan. Before him bowed the kings of Shu and Wu, Content to forfeit kingly power for life All down the ages rings the note of change, For fate so rules it; none escapes its sway. The kingdoms three have vanished as a dream, The useless misery is ours to grieve.	16 20 24 28 32 36 40 44 48 52	The house of Sun emerged beyond the Jiang. In the north of the clan of Yuan held sway. To the west Liu Yan and Zhang ascended. Liu Biao's legions camped in Jing and Xiang. Zhang Yan and Lu were Hanzhong's overlords; Defending Xiliang, Ma teng and Han Sui. Tao Qian of Xu, Zhang Xiu, and Gongsun Zan Cut bold figures in their several <i>zhou</i> . Cao Cao took power, xiandi's minister, Drawing valiant men with arts of peace and war. Xiandi in his thrall, Cao ruled the lords And with his martial hosts controlled the north. "Twin Mulberry" Xuande, descendant of the throne, Leagued with Guan and Zhang to save Xiandi. He scrambled round the realm (he had no home), His forces scant, a stranger wandering. Thrice Xuande's ardent quest led to Nanyang, Where Sleeping Dragon unveiled Han's partition: "First take Jingzhou, next the Riverlands; On that rich region, base your own royal stand." Near death in Baidi, having reigned three years, Bei sadly placed his son in Kongming's care. By six offensives from the hills of Qi Kongming sought to change Han's destiny. But the time of Han had run—could he not tell?— That night his master star fell past the hills. Jiang Wei alone still strove with might and main: Nine times more he fought the north—in vain. Zhong Hui and Deng Ai next led armies west: And to the Cao, Han's hills and streams now passed. Cao Pi, Cao Rui, Fang, Mao, and briefly, Huan— The Sima took the empire in their turn. Cao's abdication changed the face of all; No mighty battles marked the Southland's fall. Three kings no more—Chenliu, Guming, Anle. ¹ The fiefs and posts must now be filled anew. The world's affairs rush on, an endless stream; A sky-told fate, infinite in reach, dooms all. The kingdoms three are now the stuff of dream, For men to ponder, past all praise or blame. ²
		1. These are the enfeoffment titles of the last rulers of Wei, Wu, and Shu (i.e., Cao Han, Sun Hao, and Liu Shan) after they had relinquished their thrones. 2. Only the last line of the ballad differs in <i>TS</i> : "With unity [restored], the primal forces of creation belong again to Jin." (<i>TS</i> : Luo Guanzhong. <i>Sanguo zhi tongshu yanyi</i> . Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1980.)

It may be noted that this poem achieves several artistic effects. First, on the most immediate level, it serves as a pithy recapitulation of the novel's plot, theme and characters. One of the potential problems intrinsic to a complex, panoramic novel is that of "artistic diffuseness". Since the *Sanguo* is a long narrative with a

vast historical setting, involving numerous characters and an intricate plot, the novel is bound to be uneven in focus, tempo and design. Highlighting the key people and events, the poem makes the novel easier to grasp and sharper in focus.

Second, the poem's economic language condenses the spirit of the historical drama in a concentrated form. For instance, lines 13-24 pithily depict the battling generals who lead their forces in various corners of the empire, almost offering a verbal map of the overall military situation that sets the scene for the central action. Raising the novel's epic flavour, the poem and the prose narrative complement each other, with the latter giving the details and the former evoking the heroic spirit in a concise fashion.

Another artistic effect is derived from the prosodic elements of the poem. As we have seen throughout this analysis, poetry in rhyming and rhythmic lines is more memorable than prose and more effective in touching the reader affectively. Going back to the contenders' distribution map mentioned above, for instance, the rhymes effectively add to the resonances among the lines and reinforce the macrocosmic heroic spirit. Meanwhile, the rhyme changes are in line with the poem's major sense groups. Semantically, the poem can be divided into three parts. Ending with an [-iang/ang] rhyme, the first twenty lines offer a summary of the rise and decline of the Han dynasty, and the subsequent chaotic period when contenders from various sectors vie for the empire. The second part is from lines 21-38, which focus on the three protagonists, namely Cao Cao, Liu Bei, and Kongming. In this part, the rhyme changes to an [-u/-ü] ending. Lines 39-52, with an [-iao/-ao] ending, form the last part, which describes the period after Kongming's death and offers concluding remarks on the historical events. Rhyme, therefore, serves as a prosodic unifier that generates resonances among the lines sharing the same rhyme. In this

light, the poem's use of rhyme augments the overall artistic effect.

At the same time, poetry also allows a more affective element of lyrical expression. As we can see, this long narrative poem is not written from a totally detached position. Instead, the critic of history expresses his emotions in his descriptions of the Shu-Han (lines 25-38). For example, the word “恨” in line 27 shows Liu Bei's regret in not having a home, and lines 5 and 33 begin with an interjection (“哀哉” and “嗚呼” respectively). Besides, the words “情何深” in line 29 state the critic's personal observation on the relationship between Liu Bei and Kongming. Instead of using a direct statement to tell the idea of their close relationship, the verse line uses an interjectory expression (“何”, meaning “how” here) that heightens its affective appeal. While an interjection can present the readers with an immediate expression of emotion, emotive words (e.g. “恨” and “深”) can engage the readers' sympathy through expressing the author's own sentiments. In line 36, Kongming is even likened to the Chinese mythical goddess Nüwa 女媧, the only Chinese figure able to mend the sky single-handedly. Associating Kongming with Nüwa shows the critic's admiration for Kongming's lofty aspirations, peerless ability and selfless devotion, elevating his status above all other characters.

Finally, in describing the rise and fall of the Shu-Han endeavour, the poem also recapitulates a particular historical perspective, which has been played out in the narrative. This artistic effect is essentially condensed in the poem's final four lines (ll. 49-52), which would not be convincing if they were placed at the poem's beginning. These lines reiterate the novel's perspective of what seems to be a humanly unpredictable and unchangeable heavenly order and cycle of history (“分久必合，合久必分”). By so doing, the closing *shi* poem resonates with the opening

epigraphic *ci* to evoke multiple figurative images and the novel's perspectives on universal truth. On the mundane human level, heroes are washed away by waves (“浪花淘盡英雄”); affairs of the three kingdoms have become a dream (“鼎足三分已成夢”); and the descendants can do nothing but ponder (“後人憑吊空牢騷”). From the macro perspective of heaven's order, every human construction turns empty in a flicker (“是非成敗轉頭空”); the countless secular affairs (“紛紛世事無窮盡”) cannot go beyond heaven's reckoning (“天數茫茫不可逃”). The two poems echo without being identical to each other (there is also a naturalistic perspective in the *ci*), creating ample room for the reader to ponder on the implications of history, and the ephemerality of individual human endeavours in contrast with the ceaseless flow of history.

In view of all these artistic effects, the closing poem is artistically significant to the novel. What is more, these effects are synergic, augmenting one another to constitute the total artistic appeal. Obviously, not all of these aspects are subject to the same degree of mediation through the translation process. We can now proceed to examine the specific negotiations taken by the two renditions.

In formal terms, the earlier rendition, B10, is rendered in 54 lines, two more than the original text. The number of rendered lines is greater than the number of lines in the original poem because of a series of adjustments. While line 18 of the original is omitted, the number of lines shrinks on other occasions: four lines from the original (ll. 39-42) are rendered into three lines (ll. 44-46), and another four (ll. 45-48) are rendered into two lines (ll. 49-50), with some semantic content missing. At the same time, there are expansions and additions: lines 9-10 become lines 9-11, lines 21-24 become lines 21-26, lines 27-30 become lines 29-33, while the next two rendered lines (ll. 34-35) are added. The examples of expansion include instances

where a single line in the original is broken into two lines in the translated version (note that many verse lines are not end-stopped). There are also alterations in the line sequence; for instance, the first two lines are in reverse order in the rendition.

Omitting line 18 about Ma Teng and Han Sui as well as some semantic items in the shortened combinations of lines, the rendition trims the original's content in some cases (for instance, the five emperors of the Wei mentioned in the original's line 43 are summarized as "five sons of Ts'ao" in the rendition's line 47). On the other hand, the addition of lines elaborates on some particular events or characters without deviating from the novel's main plot (for example, line 10 of the rendition adds the death of Wang Yun, while lines 34-35 illustrate the process of Liu Bei's three visits to Kongming). Given that the original poem serves as a recapitulation of the novel's plot, themes, and characters, the omissions in the rendition are probably more obvious than the elaborations. Meanwhile, as long as the rendered lines retain their original content, the rearrangement of the line sequence does not have a significant influence on the plot recapitulation.

Let us now take a look at how the rendition bears on the rhythm of the original narrative poem. Metrically, the number of syllables is primarily kept to ten, with only four lines having a difference of one syllable (ll. 6, 16, 36, 50). It seems that B10 has made a sustained effort to unify the metrical pattern. But meanwhile, besides having a single line rendered into two, some translated lines are turned in two halves, with the second half running over to the following line. The division does not necessarily alter the number of lines (e.g. see lines 3-4). Other examples can be found in the rendition's lines 8-9, 23, 26, 30 and 45. In both situations, it is not unusual to find some lines in the rendition starting with connectives. For instance, while the rise and fall of the Han are described in six pithy and independent lines in

the original (ll. 1-6), they are rendered into syntactically bound lines; the connectives at the beginning of the alternate lines (ll. 2, 4, 6) in the rendition make the whole section read like prose. In fact, thirteen lines begin with connectives so as to create syntactic bonds with preceding or succeeding lines; twenty-four lines are linked by connectives. In other words, about 44 percent of the lines in the rendition are not composed of relatively independent lines like those in the original. Although B10 tries to re-create the original poem's regular rhythm by unifying the number of syllables used, the attempt is partly ineffective because some translated lines are divided into two halves, interrupting the flow of rhythm of the original. Besides, compared to the original poem's clean, brisk language in condensing the spirit of the historical drama, the frequent use of connectives in the rendition undermines the poetic sense and dilutes the heroic atmosphere. In the discussion of the poem about the battle between Lü Bu and the sworn brother, we have already seen how the use of conjunctions prosifies a poem and weakens its rhythm and overall appeal to the reader. This problem intensifies for the current poem because the brisk tempo of the original is even more significant in bringing out the macrocosmic sweep of the historical drama.

This brings us to the question of rhyme, another prosodic factor that bears on the artistic appeal of poetry. Surrendering the rhyming flow of the original, the rendition does not adopt any rhyme scheme. As we have seen before, the use of rhyme augments the tempo and intensity of the heroic spirit, while rhyme shifts are artistically significant in corresponding to transitions of meaning. This organic integration of sound and sense is dropped in B10 for understandable reasons. If the rendition of some lines (e.g. ll. 14-26) can be improved in terms of the immediacy of the semantic items, the artistic loss resulting from the absence of rhyme can hardly

find compensation for. Arthur Waley's opinion that "lack of rhyme will not be felt as an obstacle" in translation is offered as a Western reader;⁹¹ that the English rendition gives up the use of rhyme is an appropriate choice that nonetheless forfeits a key artistic effect.

In terms of imagery, which directly affects the artistic immediacy and appeal of the poem, a number of images in the original are either dropped or replaced by abstract concepts or subjectively interpreted elements in B10. For instance, the image of Liu Bang 劉邦 "holding a sword" ("提劍", l. 1) is dropped, while the mythical *fusang* tree ("扶桑", l. 2) and bathing pool for the sun ("咸池", l. 6), allusive images respectively signifying sunrise and sunset, are abstracted into "dawn" and "the sun of power" (ll. 1, 6), which tend to *explain* the situation and make the lines less evocative. Even more serious in effect than these individual changes is the handling of Kongming, for B10 does not preserve the associated image of Kongming as a latter-day version of Nüwa, a critical element that shows his incomparable heroic qualities and the author's endorsement of the Shu-Han endeavour. In the rendition, Kongming's concrete undertaking and the striking vivid image in lines 35-36 of the original are replaced with reductive conceptual descriptions ("played protector's part", "win first place", ll. 40-41). Needless to say, such a plain description of Kongming is much less evocative and affective than the Nüwa image in the original. While the absence of an equivalent figure in the target system makes it unlikely for the rendition to re-create a corresponding effect, the associated meaning could still have been better preserved.

Working along with imagery to build up the poem's artistic appeal is the

⁹¹ Arthur Waley, trans., *One Hundred & Seventy Chinese Poems* (1918), new ed. (London: Constable & co., 1962), "Introduction" (1960), 9.

presence of appropriate lyric content. This element, as we have noted, is concentrated on the Shu-Han endeavour and the characters undertaking them. B10 retains the interjections in the original's lines 5 and 33, but passes over some expressions that charge the poem with a sustained sense of lyric empathy, e.g. "hen", "qingheshen" and "kantongchu" (ll. 29, 29, 34). Consequently, the affective appeal is partly diluted in the rendition, as is its ability to engage the readers' sympathy. If classical Chinese poetry is marked by an affective lyric appeal often visible in narrative poetry as well, B10 does not fully re-create this lyric appeal in the rendition.

Finally, we may take a look at the degree to which the rendition re-creates the depth of the philosophical-historical perspective in the original poem, which is given in the final four lines (ll. 49-52). The rendition is quite close to the original here, except that the spatio-temporal sense of unfathomable vastness inherent in "無窮盡" (l. 49, both "countless" and "endless") is reduced to a "note of change" (l. 51 in B10). Similarly, the amorphous yet deterministic reckoning of Heaven's unpredictable reckoning suggested by the reduplication "茫茫" is overlooked in the rendition, diluting the human sense of powerlessness over the turns of destiny as well. If the sense of change in the original poem (as in the opening *ci* poem) is shown through events that leave more contemplative depth and artistic subtlety in the poem, "the note of change" in the rendition explicitly tells the conclusion. This explicitness contracts the reflective space in the rendered poem and reduces its artistic appeal. Likewise, the helpless mood in the original ("空牢騷", l. 52) also runs deeper and broader than its rendition as "the useless misery". As a more precise and analytical language than classical Chinese, English is not quite as capable of re-creating a vast, amorphous and indefinable mood. Overall, the rendition cannot avoid reducing the

depth of the perspective in the original poem. A final observation that may be offered is that since Brewitt-Taylor's rendition does not include the opening *ci* poem, the historical and existential perspectives implied in these four lines do not create as deep an impact as the original, in which the epigraphic poem coordinates and resonates with the closing poem to draw the reader into a reflective mood.

Let us now turn to Roberts's rendition. R10 is a line-for-line translation, with most of the semantic elements retained. Although the division of lines is very much like the original, the connections between the lines are different. While lines sharing the same rhyme in the original are naturally interconnected through aural resonance, R10, operating under the logic of expression in English, also tends to use connectives to seal syntactic bonds. For instance, "where" in line 30 forges a relationship between "Nanyang" (l. 29) and "Sleeping Dragon" (l. 30), and "by" in line 35 indicates Kongming's perseverance of changing the Han's destiny (l. 36). It is also relevant to note that as in B10, the first six lines in R10 are hooked up by four connectives that begin lines 1, 3, 4 and 5, which slant the poem towards a more prose-like rhythm. Like B10, there are also thirteen lines beginning with connectives; a total of 22 (or 42 percent) of the rendered lines are interconnected by these words.

Semantically, R10 reproduces the poem's recapitulation of the historical drama. But in terms of poetic resonances, the rendition shows inadequacies similar to those in B10. To take the original's lines 13-24 for illustration again: although the rendition outlines the battles in brief and precise verse lines, the immediacy of the original section is obscured, partly because the intensified immediacy of the heroic spirit condensed in the originally rhymed section is not realized in the rendition. Like B10, R10 does not employ rhymes in translating the poem, and the length of the

verse line is ten syllables with slight variations. An effort in re-creating the rhythmic flow is thus noticeable in the almost unified metrical form, though again R10 has to forfeit the enhancement of poetic resonance and artistic memorability derived from rhymes. Moreover, the aurally discrete lines in R10 cannot re-create the musical and rhythmic flow accompanied by the rhyme shifts in the original. The rendition is caught on the horns of a dilemma: to suffer either the loss of poetic effect in abandoning rhymes, or the amusing effect of using them.

Imagistically, the most important allusive image in the poem, the associative image of Nüwa, is again overlooked in R10. While the essential qualities of other allusive images in the poem (such as “金烏” and “咸池”) are basically preserved in the translation,⁹² Nüwa’s heroic image is absent in the plain, direct statement in line 36 of the rendition: “Kongming sought to change Han’s destiny”. The lack of a corresponding figure in Western mythology makes this problem of image association an intractable one when transported across cultures. As this touching image of Kongming’s incomparable ability, virtue and will is centrally constitutive to the poem’s (and the novel’s) artistic appeal, weakening the image of Kongming means weakening the affective power of the poem and reducing the depth of the historical perspective as well.

Originally part of its affective touch, the poem’s lyric element is again not consistently re-created. For instance, while the sorrowful tone in line 34 of the original (“kantongchu”) is preserved in the rendition, the two interjectory expressions of emotions in lines 5 and 33 are not retained. Likewise, the sense of regret in line 27 is not dealt with, while Liu Bei’s predicament of having no home is put in

⁹² 金烏, literally “golden crow”, is a mythical three-leg bird living in the sun, hence a metaphor for the sun. R8 renders the image as “solar crow”, which is semantically closer to the original; 咸池, with the metaphorical meaning of sunset, is translated as “Pool of

parentheses, turning the affective expression into information. The author's admiration of the appreciative relationship between Liu Bei and Kongming in line 29 ("qingheshen") is also largely lost, replaced by a more rationally flavoured "ardent quest". As a result, the rendition cannot fully re-create the poem's affective touch or fully engage the reader's empathy.

This brings us to a discussion of how the last four lines of the rendition perform in presenting the novel's historical-philosophical perspective. One should always remember that the last four lines of the original closing poem artistically echo the images and themes foreshadowed in the opening *ci* poem, which is translated in Roberts's rendition. On the mundane, human level, the expressions of "taojin", "chengkong", "konglaosao", suggesting a resigned and helpless mood, are translated as "leave no trace", "the stuff of dream", and "past all praise or blame". While these are close in sense to the original, "past all praise or blame" partly neutralizes the original emotional touch. Macro-level expressions like "zhuangtoukong", "wuqiongjin", "mangmang buketao" are translated as "turn all at once unreal", "an endless stream", and "infinite in reach, dooms all". Although "buketao" tells the impossibility of escaping from the arranged destiny, it does not necessarily (or only) have a negative connotation, as the bleak and pessimistic word "doom" in the rendition would suggest. The original poem's perspective is thus somewhat misrepresented.

In translating this long poem, Roberts still chooses to stay close to the original content by translating the poem line for line, whereas Brewitt-Taylor makes certain extensions and contractions that result in a more syntactically bound rendition. Having reviewed the artistic significance of the closing poem and evaluated the

Night", preserving the implied meaning of resting.

respective performance of the two renditions, we can see that while some artistic functions can be re-created across languages without much difficulty, such as a recapitulation of historical events, others are subject to more obstacles through the translation process, especially the prosodic elements and certain affective allusions in the poem. Although both renditions fall short of the original's artistic power because they cannot fully re-create the synergy of the artistic functions which the poem generates in the novel, Roberts's rendition performs better in terms of overall poetic sense and rhythm, as it does not break the original lines into halves like Brewitt-Taylor's rendition, while preserving more contemplative space and depth of perspective in the poem.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

It is now time to take stock of my analysis. As has been shown throughout this thesis, the appreciation and translation of poetry involve multiple criteria, among which the musical aspects are the most difficult ones to deal with. But before I offer my conclusions, it will be pertinent to briefly outline some available reviews of the full and abridged translations of the *Sanguo* by Brewitt-Taylor and Roberts, which are more eulogistic than my own evaluation.

For the first complete English rendition of the novel by Brewitt-Taylor, a critic has observed that “despite some errors, Brewitt-Taylor’s *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is in general faithful to the original, and the English is smooth and readable”.⁹³ However, the interpretation of “yanyi” as “romance” has been criticized by a subsequent translator of the novel, Moss Roberts, who thinks the word denotes a world removed from reality.⁹⁴

For Roberts’s 1976 abridged translation, entitled *Three Kingdoms: China’s Epic Drama*, Cyril Birch’s review says that the rendition retains the novel’s “power or subtlety” despite its heavy abridgment, with Roberts’s “strong, imaginative prose” instilling new vigor into the heroes.⁹⁵ In a similar vein, Theodore de Bary notes that the translation is “a great service to those who wish to understand China as the Chinese people have understood themselves”.⁹⁶

⁹³ Ye Yang 葉揚, “San Guo Zhi Yan Yi,” in *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, 2 vols., ed. Olive Classe (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), 1222.

⁹⁴ Moss Roberts, trans., *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*, 1463.

⁹⁵ Excerpt quoted on backcover of *Three Kingdoms: China’s Epic Drama*.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

More reviews have been given to Roberts's full translation. Patrick Hanan notes that Roberts's rendition is written in lively English,⁹⁷ while Anthony Yu regards it as a translation of "surpassing excellence and impeccable scholarship".⁹⁸ Frederic Wakeman observes that Roberts's elegant and powerful translation...has a stunning directness that aptly conveys the dramatic boldness of the original episodic narrative",⁹⁹ while Ye Yang believes that "Roberts succeeds in preserving the vigor and flavor of the original, and the translation is not only graceful but also very reliable. It supersedes Brewitt-Taylor's translation and will no doubt remain the definitive English version for many years to come".¹⁰⁰

As we can see, the reviews are mostly positive from the perspective of the target language. However, the rendition of the poetry in the novel is not a subject of particular attention in these reviews.

I. The Renditions' Strategies in Translating Poetry

The criteria for evaluating poetry translation are somewhat different from those underlying literary translation in general, not only because poetry is the most condensed and evocative literary form, but mainly because poetic prosody and music are involved. To add to the complication, translations of poems that form an organic part of a novel need to be examined with yet one more criterion, namely whether or not the renditions can serve corresponding artistic functions in the

⁹⁷ Moss Roberts, trans., *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*, backcover.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ye Yang, "San Guo Zhi Yan Yi," in *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, 1222.

target-language version. The renditions of poems in the *Sanguo zhi yanyi* are thus evaluated on the basis of their artistic significance in the novel, along with their re-creation of the inherent artistic appeal of the original poems.

The poems examined in this thesis show that Brewitt-Taylor and Roberts manifest various responses to the different elements they have to deal with, such as meaning, imagery, allusions, syntax, style, ambience, spirit, phonetics, prosody and poetic music. These elements pose perennial challenges for translation, because they are often interrelated, and encompass linguistic, aesthetic and cultural dimensions. Some of the translator's verbal choices reflect consciously adopted strategies; other choices lie beyond the manoeuvre of linguistic facility. We may briefly review some of these elements.

While the basic aim of translation is probably to transmit the core meaning of the source text, determining this core meaning is not always easy, because even on the most immediate level, words may carry more than one meaning. In the line “獨嘆梅花瘦” (P5), for instance, “嘆” can connote “admire” or “lament”, and “瘦” can refer to a kind of slender grace or fading form, which has led both Brewitt-Taylor and Roberts (twice) to pick a “negative” interpretation. While I have argued that the “positive” connotation is likely to be the better choice in the context of the poem (with the other connotation as a possible undertone), the point is that the translator can only pick one connotation in most cases. The same holds true in other situations where syntax generates meaning; thus in “青山依舊在，幾度夕陽紅” (ll. 4-5, P1), line 5 can refer to the sunset's red glow or the green hills glowing in the sunset. While any choice in rendition is not as potentially reductive here as in the previous poem because the two connotations partly imply each other, the general point remains that even the immediate lexical level of a poem can pose intractable

problems of equivalence, as attested by the fact that they have not been overcome in the fifteen years that separated Roberts's two translations.

Problems of equivalence amplify when they involve allusions imbued with deep-seated meanings—artistically, philosophically or culturally. Terms like “濁” (P1) and “大夢” (P5), for instance, can be rendered lexically in these poems, but not philosophically without attending to their resonances in the *Zhuangzi*. This difficult problem has triggered various responses from the translators: “濁” is not translated by Roberts, “大夢” is translated as “dream” by Roberts without annotation (which itself would not solve the problem), while “大夢” is misleadingly interpreted and rendered as “fate” in B5.

It may be pertinent to note that Brewitt-Taylor seldom inserts notes to help illuminate terms that carry cultural resonances, while in his full translation, Roberts tends to use explanatory notes. While the insertion of notes can facilitate the target reader's understanding to some extent, it is at best an ancillary device because it is not part of the rendition itself, a point that is especially relevant in the translation of poetry. Anton Popovič has pointed out that shifts in the semantic properties of the text take place in the translation process, reflecting the translator's endeavours to “convey the semantic substance of the original in spite of... the differences between the two languages and between the two methods of presenting the subject matter.”¹⁰¹ However, the depth of meaning and associative potential are inevitably contracted for the original allusions, as part of the “semantic substance” and associated resonances have to be left out.

¹⁰¹ Anton Popovič, “The Concept of ‘Shift of Expression’ in Translation Analysis,” in James Holmes ed., *The Nature of Translation* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970), 78-87 (quotation from 79-80).

By the same token, images can evoke different associations in different cultural contexts, thus always posing a challenge beyond the linguistic level. The allusive image of Nüwa is an obvious case in point. The power and affectiveness of the imagistic expression, which depend on the familiarity of the reader with a set of cultural references, can find no equivalence in the target culture. Instead of preserving the images and inserting a note in the case of translating the allusions, both translators have therefore chosen to abandon the image and replace it with direct statements, although these cannot possibly re-create the immediate affective appeal of the original image within the target system. In a less obvious way, even simple, “transparent” images pose a similar problem: natural images in classical Chinese poetry are seldom just nature (see P1), but carry rich existential and philosophical overtones.

We can next take a brief look at syntax, including rhetorical aspects that come into play in lyric poetry. Since Chinese “does not strictly parallel English’s analytical syntax” and is “not concerned with verb conjugations, or plurals, or any of the niceties of tense so basic to English”,¹⁰² it is always difficult to offer a word-for-word translation. Alterations in sentence structure are thus to be expected in making an English rendition. What is worth noting is how English poetic syntax sometimes replaces Chinese poetic syntax in the renditions. I refer in particular to the common use by both translators of connectives in initial line positions to link up verse lines. Eight of Brewitt-Taylor’s nine renditions discussed in this thesis use a fair number of connectives. Among Roberts’s earlier renditions, four of the six poems discussed here (R1a, R2a, R5a, R7a) use similar connectives to create

¹⁰² Burton Raffel, *The Art of Translating Poetry* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1998), 45.

syntactic links between lines, while nine of the ten poems among his later renditions discussed here show the same syntactic form. Since verse lines in classical Chinese poetry are end-stopped, with ample lyric and reflective space among the independent verse lines, the frequent use of connectives to bridge verse lines will tend to prosify the poetry from a Chinese point of view, even though it is more acceptable within the context of a syntactically more logical and precise language like English.

A related point in poetic syntax (which often falls into the domain of rhetoric) concerns the use of rhetorical questions and answers. Although Burton Raffels has observed that with “[n]o two languages having the same syntactic structures, it is impossible to re-create the syntax of a work composed in one language in another language”,¹⁰³ the rhetorical question as a common literary device in both the source and target systems should have less difficulty in finding equivalence. It is relevant to note that out of the six rhetorical questions found in four original poems (P5-P8), half of them are rendered into direct statements in Brewitt-Taylor’s renditions. For Roberts’s renditions, while three of the four rhetorical questions in P5 and P6 are retained in his abridged version, only one rhetorical question is preserved in his later rendition. The rhetorical questions in the original poems have the effect of engaging the readers affectively; turning the question into plain statements appeals more for rational persuasion, often at the expense of the lyric and poetic mood.

The problems of meaning, imagery, mood and syntax become more intricate when issues of poetic music and prosody are involved. In face of the most intractable dimension in poetry criticism and translation, whether cross-culturally or intra-culturally, André Lefevere observes that the rendition of poetry at best is “an approximation to the sounds of the source text as filtered through the ‘phonemic

¹⁰³ Ibid., 14.

grids' of the target language".¹⁰⁴ In this light, none of the translations examined can do much about the poetic music of an original text. As Raffel points out, translators have to "contend with the absolute nonequivalence of linguistic phonology".¹⁰⁵

Prosodically, perhaps the most obvious observation that can be made is Brewitt-Taylor's attempt to re-create a clean sense of rhyme and rhythm in his renditions. As we have seen, he often creates rhymes for his renditions, while also trying to maintain regular metrical patterns in terms of syllable and stress count: six of his nine poems are rhymed renditions (B2-B7) in strict metrical patterns. But while this may give the impression of an attempt to approximate the sense of rhyme and rhythm in the original, Brewitt-Taylor often deviates from the original in the number of lines used. Four out of the nine translations are rendered in more lines (B4, B6, B7 and B10). While the rhymed renditions re-create a sense of poetic music to a certain extent, this strategy is pursued at the expense of the original meaning, spirit and atmosphere, as noted above. Besides, the lengthy lines of the renditions also sometimes dilute the poetic sense. In other words, Brewitt-Taylor has adopted a paradoxical, sometimes self-conflicting strategy in his handling of the issue of poetic music and prosody.

Among Roberts's early renditions, only two (R1a and R4a) are longer than their original poems in the number of lines used. On the other hand, R2a, R4a, and R7a insert stanza breaks not found in the originals. However, these formal differences between the translations and the original poems no longer exist in the renditions in Roberts's full translation of the novel—except for R3, which has twelve lines

¹⁰⁴ André Lefevere, *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), 20.

¹⁰⁵ Burton Raffel, *The Art of Translating Poetry*, 28.

compared to eight in the original. The nine renditions are in line with the original in overall length with stanza breaks removed, thus keeping close to the original forms. Rhyming is a slightly smaller concern for Roberts; three out of six translated poems in our sample (R2a, R6a and R7a) of his early renditions and five out of ten (R2b, R3, R6b, R7b and R9) of his full version are rhymed (in addition, it should also be noted that Brewitt-Taylor's renditions rhyme more tightly). With his renditions less constrained by the demands of a rhyme scheme, the issue of semantic re-engineering in the translation process is not as serious as that in Brewitt-Taylor's work. In terms of line length, it should be noted that any attempt to re-create prosodic effects in translation always entails some sacrifice of meaning; witness R7a in maintaining the number of stressed syllables at three to four in order to keep pace with the original. Once Roberts decides to stay 'closer' to the original semantically in his later version, the lyric lines of R7b become longer than those of R7a.

In balancing various claims on the translator ranging from linguistic to cultural ones, the two translators have inevitably focused on some elements at the expense of others. Differing in their overall translational approaches, each deserves credit for prioritizing his concerns and strategies according to the needs of his target readers. Brewitt-Taylor's work is a target-text oriented rendition aimed at the general reader; it is more "reader-centered", "mov[ing] the writer toward the reader", in Schleiermacher's expression.¹⁰⁶ As stated in his translator's note, Brewitt-Taylor even simplifies the names of some characters in order to lighten the burden on the

¹⁰⁶ Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the Different Methods of Translating," trans., Waltraud Bartscht, in Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet eds., *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 36-54, (quotation from p. 42).

target readers' memory.¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that Brewitt-Taylor does not clearly mention his intention in translating the novel, other than that he wants to add an English version while there are already translated versions of the novel in other languages. However, his identity as Commissioner of Customs and Director of the Customs College in Beijing strengthens the textual evidence that his rendition is not meant to be a scholarly one. Taking the general public as his target readers, Brewitt-Taylor has made many alterations to the original text, so as to provide as much reading pleasure as possible. The greater liberty taken with the original text and the greater degree of deviation from the latter are to be expected of a rendition that caters for smoother and easier reading. The subtleties of meaning, spirit and atmosphere become a secondary concern in his translation process.

More academic in approach especially in his full rendition and aimed at the culturally informed reader, Roberts's approach is more "author-centered", "mov[ing] the reader toward the writer".¹⁰⁸ As a professor of Chinese at New York University, Roberts offers renditions that are more for academic use, as mentioned in his prefaces. With this academic purpose, he has adopted a source-text oriented principle in his translation process. Moreover, his work belongs to a period of scholarly translations of lengthy classical Chinese novels that includes David Hawkes and John Minford's translation of 《紅樓夢》 (1973-86) and Anthony Yu's translation of 《西遊記》 (1977-83). In his full rendition of the *Sanguo*, Roberts has attempted to preserve as many elements inherent in the original poems as possible. In many cases, he chooses to give up the musical element of the original

¹⁰⁷ Brewitt-Taylor, "Translator's Note," in Brewitt-Taylor trans., *San Kuo or Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

¹⁰⁸ Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On The Different Methods of Translating," in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, 42.

poems in order to offer a more “accurate” transmission of meaning.

Although the evocative classical Chinese language contributes to the richness and succinctness of the poems, it also poses reading difficulties for most contemporary non-native (even many native) readers, as it is no longer a daily used language. In this light, the English renditions extend the life of the original text among Western readers, and make a valuable contribution to the novel’s broadened and continuing vitality. My evaluation of the poems’ renditions in this thesis have been made as a bilingual reader, which has made me pay primary attention to the original poems’ artistic appeal and the renditions’ re-creation of these artistic effects in the context of the novel. Had I been a reader who does not understand the original text, my evaluation of the rendered texts would certainly have been different.

II. Evaluation of Poetry Translation in the Context of the Novel

For poems in the *Sanguo*, the adopted translational strategies and accompanying challenges affect not only the artistic appeal of the renditions themselves, but also the artistic functions which they can serve in the target versions of the novel. Because these functions are different, the criteria in assessing the efficacy of the renditions also shift according to the context. For instance, in assessing the poems that bring out the Daoist transcendence, Confucian commitment and tragic stature of Kongming, all the elements that embody this spirit are essential—from poetic images that offer lyric-contemplative space and notions that carry existential-cultural resonances, to stylistic and syntactic elements that help evoke the appropriate spirit and mood. Since Brewitt-Taylor’s renditions take much greater liberty with the original poems’ content, my analysis above has shown that his renditions are less satisfactory in enriching the characterization of Kongming: artistically significant images, ideas or

descriptions are removed from time to time. Roberts's renditions, on the other hand, stay closer to the original poems, and in so doing are also more able to connect with the spirit of the narrative. In the case of Cao Cao's poem, the key characterizing touch lies in highlighting a positive, public-spirited voice in his personality, and the rendition that best brings out this dimension will be the most satisfactory rendition—in this case, Roberts's later rendition.

With respect to poems enhancing or condensing the novel's heroic spirit (P8 and P9), the original poems' vivid images, rhetorical verve (especially for the short poem on Zhao Yun), stylistic briskness and rhyming patterns are all contributing factors. As discussed above, the two renditions by Brewitt-Taylor and Roberts are variously hindered by their treatment of the images and the rhetorical question. But Roberts does a much better job in re-creating the heroic spirit of the long poem about the fight between Lü Bu and the three brothers (P9); despite some degree of prosiness, Roberts sustains his rendition in a rhymed and rhythmic rendition that is quite memorable.

Regarding the artistic function of revealing the larger philosophical and historical perspectives of the novel, Brewitt-Taylor's rendition is less satisfactory than Roberts's in many ways. First, Brewitt-Taylor does not translate the opening *ci* poem, showing that he does not understand the crucial illuminating function which this poem serves in the novel when Mao Zonggang inserted it. In so doing, the macro resonances between this poem and the closing *shi* poem are also lost. The limitations of Roberts's renditions are more obvious in the shorter *ci* poem, which is imbued with cultural codes and more pregnant with philosophical, existential and historical resonances in a condensed manner. But at least Roberts's later rendition is complete, allowing the *ci* poem to create an echoing contemplative space with the

closing poem.

Looking back on the analysis done throughout this thesis, perhaps the observation that stands out most clearly is that with the exception of isolated instances, rhymed translations of classical Chinese poetry are almost invariably unsatisfactory in one way or another. This holds true whether the renditions are considered on their own or in terms of their fictional significance. There is a certain paradox about this observation, for rhyme is the most enduring factor of classical Chinese poetry. And yet rhyme is ultimately one element of prosody, and prosody one dimension of poetic music, which itself is part of the total artistic appeal of the poem. Poetry is always a combination of sound and sense, and while it would be misleading to say categorically which of the two has relative priority, it is important to remember that poetry (unlike music) is ultimately a verbal art. That is perhaps why Brewitt-Taylor's devoted efforts in adjusting sense to the needs of sound often lose more than they gain, and why Roberts's renditions have produced more balanced results on the whole. With different aims, approaches and target audiences, both translators have made valiant efforts to re-create the spirit of the fascinating novel that the *Sanguo* is. In the end, they are perhaps joined by a sobering yet reassuring observation by the translator-critic-writer Burton Raffel: "the impossibility of [a full] translation is in a sense not debatable", but one can still be content with the goal of "satisfactory translat[ing]... most things and [translating] them well".¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Burton Raffel, *The Art of Translating Poetry*, 11.

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