

# TRANSLATING *CHUANG TZU* INTO WORLD LITERATURE: TEXT AND CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** *Chuang Tzu* (《庄子》), as a traditional Chinese canon, has been translated into English for more than 100 years since 1881, successfully carving a niche in the realm of world literature, which has become an earth-shattering cultural event in the academia of overseas sinology and world literature. According to statistics, the book has been translated into 12 full translations, 50 selected translations, and two adaptations. The metamorphosis process of “full translation – deep translation – diversified retranslation”, has passed through four stages, namely religious, literary,


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philosophical, and diversified reinterpretation phases. Thus, from the perspective of Damrosch's view of world literature, this paper summarizes the characteristics of different stages based on different spatial-temporal contexts. In the light of translation form, translational outcomes, and translation mode of reading, the path in which *Chuang Tzu* entered into the field of world literature is specified for the operational mechanism of promoting national literature to world literature, which is dedicated to the enlightenment for practical translation work of introducing Chinese literature abroad. Meanwhile, by reviewing the history of English translations of *Chuang Tzu*, this paper sums up the deficiencies of current translation activities and research activities, with an attempt to provide constructive suggestions as well as to point out the direction for the future development of overseas studies of *Chuang Tzu*.

**Keywords:** Chuang Tzu. World literature. Translation history. Translation studies.

## INTRODUCTION

Chuang Tzu, a prestigious philosopher, ideologist, and man of letters in ancient China, is the co-initiator of Daoism with Lao Tzu. With Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu' as the core, Daoism is one of the four prevalent studies in the Pre-Qin Period along with Confucianism, Mohism, and Legalism. Chuang Tzu's thoughts and works have mainly been encapsulated in the book *Chuang Tzu*, which is also named *Nan Hua Jing* (《南华经》). As one of the four mainstream schools in the Pre-Qin Period along with Confucianism, Mohism, and Legalism, Daoism, jointly founded by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, takes their philosophy as the core, in which, Chuang Tzu is the prestigious philosopher, ideologist, and literate in ancient China, with his thoughts and works mainly encapsulated in the book *Chuang Tzu*, also named *Nan Hua Jing*. As one of the literary classics of Chinese culture, *Chuang Tzu* with its unique and distinctive status engraved in the history of Chinese and foreign literature has "[...] added a whole new dimension to Chinese thought and created a whole new fantasy world for Chinese literature." (BURTON, 2002, p. 31). In the history of translation and study for more than one century, the continuous crossing over language barriers, the gradual dissolving of East-West cultural barricades, and the deep integration into world literary trends have made the book *Chuang Tzu* world-renowned. The author successfully established numerous literary mirror images of the exotic lands, recounting the philosophical wisdom and literary charm of the ancient East. Throughout its history, "[...] translating *Chuang Tzu* into English is a process of both translation and study" (HUANG, 2009, p. 51), which strongly manifests that the translation and study of the book are inextricably linked. It is shown statistically that there are 64 translation achievements concerning *Chuang Tzu* in the English-speaking world, including 12 full translations, 50 selected

translations, and two adaptations, which have gone through four stages, namely, religious reinterpretation, literary reinterpretation, philosophical reinterpretation, and diversified reinterpretation.

The systematic review of the history of translation and study of *Chung Tzu* in the English-speaking world pushes this study to summarize the characteristics of different stages for this book to be translated into world literature about to text, paratext, and context, to grasp the current situation and problems of overseas studies on *Chuang Tzu*. Based on retrospection and reflection, previous shortcomings are pointed out to better guide the formation of world literature. Dealing with comparisons among works of literature from different nations, comparative literature could be applied to research pertinent to production, dissemination, and acceptance transcending the borders of culture, language, and territory. Since the global circulation of the Chinese canon is engaged in intercommunication among nations of different traditional conventions, it is undoubtedly viable to employ world literature theory in the dissemination area of English translation of *Chuang Tzu*.

## 1 WORLD LITERATURE: A TRANSLATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

What is world literature? In 1827, the term “Weltliteratur” was coined by German scholar Goethe when mentioning his conception of world literature during the conversation with the poetic Johann Peter Eckermann, which is not the first time to propose this term, but Goethe did specify its definition, stating that the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach. With Goethe’s idea coming from the massive reading of literature from other countries outside Europe, including China, which reminded him of the Eurocentrism prevalent at that time, he was deeply convinced that all the literary works from different nations are equal and inter-influenced. Hence, the transnational world literature characterized by cosmopolitanism means that attention should be paid to every country in the world instead of concentrating on Europe. In a word, world literature is a literary communication featuring cross-language, cross-nation, and cross-country.

Goethe’s concept was further explained by Karl Marx (2007, p. 32) and Frederick Engels in Manifesto of the Communist Party. They believed that

[a]s in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local pieces of literature there arises a world literature.

The circulation of the world capital is bound to promote the rise of world literature, forecasting the inevitability of formation of the world literature. Here, it is easy to see that economic development can bring about cultural dissemination, and the spread of international translations.

Translation plays a crucial role in the global circulation and canonization of the literature. Without translation, literature could never insinuate its way to overseas readers. “For 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.” (WALTER, 2000, p. 102). That literature with the failure of being translated would be marginalized or become dead, while those translated would gain their continued life or even afterlife.

The importance of translation has been emphasized by several modern scholars, such as David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti, etc. Damrosch with an innovative perception of world literature holds that world literature is “[...] an elliptical refraction of national literature; the writing with gains in translation; a reading mode rather than a set canon of texts; and a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our place and time.” (JAMES, 1962, p. 64). From the perspective of circulation, translation, and reading mode, Damrosch regards world literature as dynamic, cross-language, and transcendent. With the ability to break the shackles of language and step into other countries to make a difference, world literature. The evaluation of the impact of a literary work should attach importance to the number of translations, the inclusion of literary anthology, literary criticism, and textbook prescription. The fact that a book is translated does not necessarily mean that it would become world literature. Thus, it all comes down to the quality of translation, especially concerning translation tactics, translation outcomes, and translation deciphering mode, while the above three dimensions are strongly affected by the context in which the translation takes place. “World literature is not an object, but a problem that asks for a new critical method.” (FRANCO, 2000, p. 54). Therefore, the exploration

of the history of the English translation of *Chuang Tzu* drives this paper to specify the connection among translation, context, and world circulation by summarizing the characteristics of different stages, to reveal the mechanism of national classics in China to gradually become global canon. Chinese canon translation is inextricably connected with research in the realm of overseas sinology, comparative literature, and translation studies. In light of the integration of translation and research in pertinent realms, it can be seen that essential translations could also be found in academic monographs, which means we cannot afford to neglect monographs while burrowing into the English translation of *Chuang Tzu*.

## 2 CHUANG TZU'S ROUTE TO WORLD LITERATURE

“World literature cannot be conceptualized apart from translation.” (LAWRENCE, 2013, p. 281). The canonization of the Chinese classic *Chuang Tzu* is inextricably connected to translations and studies of the book. Roughly speaking, the path of *Chuang Tzu* to global canon has gone through four phases, namely religious reinterpretation, literary reinterpretation, philosophical reinterpretation, and diversified reinterpretation, each one of which has a lot to do with the social context. A glimpse of the features and incentives of different phases would be generally displayed.

### 2.1 RELIGIOUS REINTERPRETATION (1881-1932)

When mentioning the ancient communication history among China and other exotic lands, it could date back to the initial stage when the Silk Road originally came into existence. To be more specific, it was the time when the Han Dynasty and the Roman Empire stumbled upon their incipient encounter which was largely conducive to the establishment of the contact avenue between the East and the West. With the enhancement of the comprehensive strengths of Ancient Rome, the empire decided to assign Christian missionaries of catholic churches from Europe to other countries, especially to the Far East, so that more foreign disciples could be successfully preached into firm believers of Christianity as well as of the miraculous marvels graced by the omnipotent God. Anticipating expanding the impact of the *Gospel of God*, Matteo Ricci summoned a panoply of missionaries to China who were committed to generating a more comprehensive understanding of

Chinese culture using translating Chinese canonical texts to eventually fulfill their missionary duties. Before the 19th century, the strategy of “Integrating Confucianism” adopted by Western missionaries prioritized the translation of Confucian classics. In terms of Taoist classics, only *Tao Te Ching* was translated into English (LAWRENCE, 2013, p. 71).

As it is stated by D’ Haen, “[...]my insistence on the relation between world literature and geopolitics is because I truly believe that they are the two sides of the same coin” (YU, 2012, p. 148), indicating the strong impact of political environment on translation activities. After the Opium Wars in the 19th century, more missionaries set foot on the land of China to implement mental colonization, making the missionary task more and more urgent. Thus, the occurrence of “the Spread of Oriental Literature to the West” brought about the explosive expansion of English translation of Chinese texts from the Confucian classics to other classics including Confucian classics, historical records, philosophical writings, and miscellaneous works.

From 1881 to 1932, the westerners’ attention to Chuang Tzu’s book promoted the translation of this one, including three full translations and one selected translation. In 1881, as the first Frederic Henry Balfour’s attempt to fully translate *Chuang Tzu* into English, the *Divine Classic of Nan-Hua: Being the Works of Chuang Tze, Taoist Philosopher* was published in Shanghai and Hongkong, whose translation quality is not very high with plenty of mistakes due to Balfour’s merchant identity and lack of language knowledge. In 1889, based on Balfour’s translation, Herbert Allen Giles published his interpretation, *Chuang Tzu: Mystic, Moralistic, and Social Reformer*, which was republished in 1926 and changed its name into *Chuangtzu, Taoist Philosopher and Chinese Mystic*, with an attempt to cater to English readers by interpreting *Chuang Tzu* with Christian concepts in fluent language. In 1891, being included in the work *Texts of Taoism* which belonged to a sinology book series, *The Sacred Books of the East* compiled by Max Müller, James Legge’s full translation entitled *The Writings of Kwang Zou* was brimming with paratexts like a preface, annotations, and index under the principle of fidelity, to burrow into Chuang Tzu’s profound thoughts. In 1906, Linoel Giles published the selected translation *Musings of Chinese Mystic: Selections from the Philosophy of Chuang Tzu* in the book series *The Wisdom of the East*.

In this stage, Chuang Tzu’s book initially drew the attention of the West, “[...] the chief object of the translator or translators is to show that the Mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity and the Incarnate God were anciently

known to the Chinese nation.” (THEO, 2016, p. 7). With the majority of translations as full translations, all the translators were from Europe with a Catholic background, for example, Balfour was a Christian merchant, Legge was a missionary of the London Missionary Society, and Giles and Lionel as diplomats were from a Christian family. In an attempt to trace the evidence of the Gospel of God gracing China before and confirm the universality of Christianity, the translators reconstructed overseas *Chuang Tzu* with Christian concepts such as Leviathan and Heaven to replace “鯤” and “天”, reasoning that they spared no effort to prove the God’s traces to China in advance so that the universality of Christianity could be sufficiently demonstrated. They were also encouraged to use literary translation to present a more thorough picture of Chinese culture due to missionary motives. Unfortunately, misinterpretations and misconceptions could be conspicuously and ineluctably spotted in their renditions, because those translators were scant in professional knowledge in terms of sinology and the Chinese language. To sum up, what incentivized the religious interpretation phase of *Chuang Tzu* were political considerations and religious purposes, out of which translators had no alternative but to employ reader-friendly tactics to consummate the English journey of the book. The Westerners managed to embrace Chuang Tzu’s book thanks to the simple nature of the initial renditions carving out the path for the global dissemination of *Chuang Tzu* and simultaneously laying down foundations for pertinent research and translations conducted by posterities.

## 2.2 LITERARY REINTERPRETATION (1933-1980)

During the period from the 1930s to the 1980s, the two world wars pushed the transference of economic, political, and cultural centers from Britain to America. World literature as “[...] a dynamic institution has developed in response to the changing historical conditions as well as the mutually competitive agents, visions, and values.” (JAMES, 1962, p. 53). So unlike in the religious reinterpretation stage, translators in the literary reinterpretation stage were mostly from America. Due to “[...] focus on the salvation and freedom of the individual, with little or no concern for the social orders” (ZHANG, 2018, p. 1), related to *Chuang Tzu*, with the end of World War Two, westerners with their disappointment at industrialization and capitalism anticipated the culture from the East, especially Chuang Tzu’s thoughts advocating liberation and naturalism, which can be acted as a remedy for social mentality to fill the vacancy of social belief.

In 1933, the translation of *The Inner Chapters*, namely *Chuang Tzu*, a new selected translation with an exposition of Kuo Hsiang's philosophy, was published in Shanghai by the Chinese scholar FENG You-lan, which was then republished in 1964, 1989, 2012, and 2015 under the name *A Taoist Classic: Chuang-Tzu*. This translation elaborated the philosophical reflection on Chuang Tzu with a dialectical comment on former annotations. In 1939, the *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, launched by Arthur Waley, incorporated reviews, comments, and selected translations with appropriate analysis. In 1942, Lin Yu-tang published his translation of *Chuangtse, Mystic, and Humorist* in the book *The Wisdom of China and India*, containing chapters in concise and precise language with prose form (RUSSEL, 1979, p. 11). In the same year, Hughes Ernest inlaid his selected translation of *The Inner Chapters*, which is entitled *Chuang Chou, the Poet of Freedom*, into the first chapter of the book *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times*.

After entering the 1960s, with the consecutive success of many translations, the successful triggering of westerners' reading and studying interests by the studies on *Chuang Tzu* led to the reoccurrence of full translations with an emphasis on literary representation and acceptance effects. In 1960, the book *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, edited by William Theodore De Bary and others, included a four chapter selected translation that demonstrated the essence of Taoism and demonstrated the significance of *Chuang Tzu* in the history of Chinese literature. In 1963, Chan Wing-tsit translated some selected chapters in the book *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* along with his comments. In the same year, *The Sayings of Chuang Chou*, the first full translation in the 20th century published by James Roland Ware, was targeted at academic scholars rather than, with abstruse vocabulary and no annotations. Publishing a selected translation and a full translation respectively named *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings and The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu in 1964 and 1968*, Burton Watson with solid language skills and sinology experience strived to retain original cultural images, metaphoric features, and writing patterns with abundant paratexts, thereby successfully realizing function diversification of loyalty, readability, and academic authority. In 1965, a selected translation *The Way of Chuang Tzu*, launched by Thomas Merton, prioritized literary performance by recomposing a collection of parables. In 1974, a selected translation of *Chuang Tzu: Inner Chapters*, jointly published by Feng Gia-fu and Jian Ying, was republished in 1997 and 2000, which innovatively interpreted the core of *Chuang Tzu* by merging with the Hippié Spirits, thus making this version popular and republished for multiple times.



In the second phase, the literary essence of *Chuang Tzu* was prioritized by western translators who have just laid their eyes on the book. Different renditions emerge in large numbers with most of them conducted by professional scholars specializing in sinology, world literature, and philosophy instead of merely missionaries in the religious reinterpretation phase. Those translators have successfully generated translations of high quality with the assistance of sufficient referential materials as well as proficient language skills. In the meanwhile, Chinese voices were introduced into the translation realm when Chinese scholars attempted to convey their English interpretation to the world. The combination of study and translation, which is the dominant paradigm in American sinological academia, cannot be overlooked when it comes to the major characteristics at this stage. Pertinent studies were conducted based on textual translation so that the renditions could be given full play in terms of the incorporation of multidimensional values. Considering that most Westerners would presumably be estranged from the book, most renditions shouldered the accountability to better disseminate the Chinese classics and oriental culture, eventually assuaging the agony of war-tormented people. To skim it in a broader picture, most translations were selected ones concentrating on representative chapters with well-known expressions that were intentionally contrived for English readers' reading customs and aesthetic expectations. The literary features of the original text were reserved to the most extent in plain languages concerning the lexical, syntactical, and paragraphic levels. Thus, the literariness and readability of the translated texts were both taken into account. Unfortunately, this translation strategy restricted the translation and research to literal interpretation and circumscribed angles, which concealed the true essence of the book under the darkness.

### 2.3 PHILOSOPHICAL REINTERPRETATION (1981-1999)

“As already noted, literature itself is the outcome of cultural practice, and in terms of world literature, it is endowed with a particular historical density.” (DJELAL, 2004, p. 3). When it enters the 1980s, prosperity and maturity graced the translation and research relevant to *Chuang Tzu* in the West. Most translators and scholars strived to excavate the philosophical kernel of the book from a philosophical perspective. With the thriving migration wave, a great many Chinese immigrant compatriots carried invaluable substantial materials and intangible culture into the land of America, gravely facilitating pertinent studies and translations of philosophical features. What's

more, politically speaking, the USA Government attempted to manipulate the discourse power in Asia by inserting strategic deployment in the East, which engenders the demand to learn more about China. Consequently, many translational projects and research proposals about Chinese canons were subsidized by official funding, realizing three full translations, 13 selected translations, and two adaptations in this period.

In 1981, a selected translation of *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings* from the *Book Chuang-tzu*, published by A.C. Graham, was taken in The Hackett Classics series and renamed to *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters* in 2007, in which the order of all chapters and paragraphs was rearranged, with some contents omitted, thus retaining about four-fifths of the book. Meanwhile, aiming at professional readers instead of general ones, Graham's translation systematically expounded the core thoughts of *Chuang Tzu* based on documentary reviewing, which has an important impact on the study of Taoist thinking, Chinese philosophy, and overseas sinology.

Graham's successful translation launched a research norm of translation and elucidation, which is common in international studies of sinology. This paradigm is responsible for the translation and study of later times. In 1982, Wu Kuang-ming delved into his partial translation from the perspective of Existential Phenomenology in his monograph *Chuang-tzu: World Philosopher at Play*. In the next year, Hongkong resident Chad Han-sen analyzed *Chuang Tzu* based on linguistic philosophy and logistics in his monograph *Language and Logic in Ancient China*. In 1989, Robert E. Allison conducted a partial translation under the scope of hermeneutics in *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation: An Analysis of the Inner Chapter*. Simultaneously, Graham discussed his reconsiderations of Chuang Tzu's dialectical thinking and analytical capability in his other monograph *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*. In 1990, Wu Kuang-ming concentrated on the first three chapters and conducted a contrastive analysis between Chinese and Western philosophies in *The Butterfly as Companion: Meditations on the First Three Chapters of the Chuang Tzu*, which demonstrated the philosophical disparities of countries with different cultural conventions.

As monographs kept turning up, there were still some scholars carrying on the mission to spread *Chuang Tzu* and producing several popular translations. In 1992, Chen Han-sen issued another monograph *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*, which burrowed into *Chuang Tzu's* skepticism and emphasized the significance of the book

in the history of Chinese philosophy development. Meanwhile, Derek Bryce conversed with Leon Wieger's (1931) French-selected translation of *Les Pères du Système Taoist* into the English version *Chuang-Tzu Nan-Hua-Ch'en Ching*, or *The Treatise of the Transcendent Master from Nan-Hua*. In addition, Brian Bruya cooperated with Taiwan caricaturist Cai Zhi-Zhong to publish a cartoon adaptation *Zhuangzi Speaks: The Music of Nature*, and they worked together in 1997 to issue another adaptation *The Dao of Zhuangzi: The Harmony of Nature*.

In 1993, Thomas Cleary translated seven chapters in which the different stories, parables, and anecdotes in *The Essential Tao* were restructured with simple and accurate vocabulary. In 1994, Victor H. Mair published a full translation of *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu*, that was reissued in 1998, where the emphasis on faithfulness, literariness, and popularity pushed Mair to deeply restore the style and stylistic format of *Chuang Tzu*, reconstruct a translation with poetic language, and arrange the preface, introduction, appendix, and other paratexts, to help readers understand the book.

With its exquisite cover and supporting paratexts, Martin Palmer's 1996 comprehensive translation of *The Book of Chuang Tzu on Penguin Books* sped up the global adoption of *Chuang Tzu*. Meanwhile, Stephen Owen selectively translated two chapters in *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. In addition, Alex Page converted the German-selected translation of *Martin Buber* (2017, p. 1) in the monograph *Chinese Tales: Zhuangzi, Sayings and Parables; Chinese Ghost and Love Stories*. In 1997, David Hinton's selected translation of *Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters*, which was included in his monograph *The Four Chinese Classics: Tao Te Ching, Analects, Chuang Tzu, Mencius* in 2013, successfully juxtaposed literal translation and absence of annotations by simple native expressions, tight literary coherence, and prudent philosophical criticism. At the same time, WANG Rong-Pei and REN Xiu-Hua published a full translation of *Zhuangzi: Chinese-English*, which was included in the *Library of Chinese Classics* in 1999. The phenomenal English proficiency made two Chinese scholars successfully carry out their rigorous academic pursuit of high-quality translation. In 1998, 22 chapters in *The Essential Chuang Tzu* were cooperatively translated by Sam Hamil and J. P. Seaton, with the humorousness and concision manifested by its clear language, detailed introduction, and convenient keyword list.

In this stage, relying on profound academic literacy, those specialized translators gradually converted the old research paradigm into a new one characterized by a combination of academic elucidation and selected translation. At that time, the book was studied concerning “(1) selected areas of Taoist thought and practice, (2) Taoist history, and (3) the exploration of primary source materials for the study of Taoism.” (FRANCISCUS, 1995, p. 322). The objective to get the hang of Chinese culture from the core made the philosophical value of *Chuang Tzu* naturally the priority. In those translations and monographs, translation and elaboration were juxtaposed or, sometimes, the latter one even occupied a longer length than the former one. The change of the main target in this period from popularization to specialized research pushed the translators to pay great attention to the academic rigorousness during their translation. Thus, they would prudently consider the translation of every word based on obvious verification and bibliographic confirmation. Moreover, *Chuang Tzu* was studied using different themes, plots, and characters. In addition, some scholars who continued to shoulder the task of promotion launched a small number of popular translations. The philosophical deciphering method was dominant at this stage, and various means from different fields were applied to translations to provide English mass readers with concise and easily understandable translations, such as comic adaptations. Some translators from different countries even collaborated across nations. Chuang Tzu's philosophy was burrowed into interdisciplinary approaches by scholars from other disciplines. In 1983, Victor H. Mair issued an article compilation *Experimental Essays on Chuang-Tzu* incorporating several articles composed by scholars specializing in psychology, game theory, and other interdisciplinary angles. In 1996, P. J. Ivanhoe and Paul Kjellberg collectively published a paper compilation *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*. In addition, in 1998, Roger T. finished another collection wandering at *Ease in the Zhuangzi*. Philosophical analysis of the book was launched from diversified angles in those essay collections. When overseas sinology got acquainted with paper compilations, it was manifested that discipline-awareness had already shed its light on the academia and relevant studies about *Chuang Tzu* had become mature. But the research emphasis at this stage could not break free from philosophical constraints, thereby neglecting other aspects of value concerning the book as well as its reinterpretation.

## 2.4 DIVERSIFIED REINTERPRETATION (2000-NOW)

After entering the 21st century, the continuously improving national comprehensive strength has promoted China to implement the policy of “Chinese Culture Going Global” by keeping spreading Chinese culture to the world, which has caused the unprecedented rise of the interest of other countries in Chinese culture as well as the continuous increase of their attention to sinology and Chinese. The book *Chuang Tzu* as one of the world literature is enjoying. (GAYATRI, 2003, p. 94). Therefore, receiving constant attention, *Chuang Tzu* as a vital carrier of Chinese culture has four full translations and 28 selected translations.

In 2000, Yang Ru-zhou’s publication of the selected translation *Chuang-Zue Lan Hou Cheng Translated/Commented in Chinese/English Spoken Languages* was completed by using daily expressions and colloquial vocabularies. Meanwhile, as a psychological therapist rather than a sinologist or professional translator, Gerald Schoenewolf launched his monograph *The Way: According to Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, and Seng Tsan* comprising 37 stories, to probe into the psychological healing effects on modern mental diseases. In 2001, Bryan William and Van Norden co-edited *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* whose fifth chapter was Paul Kjellberg’s selected translation. In 2003, Patrick Edwin Moran issued a selected translation of *Zhuangzi*. What’s more, Harold David Roth commented on Graham’s version from the aspects of translation methods, literary criticism, and philosophical analysis in his finished monograph *A Companion to Angus C. Graham’s Chuang Tzu: The Inner Chapters*. In addition, Richard John Lynn from Canada launched a selected translation *Zhuangzi: A New Translation of the Daoist Classic as Interpreted by Gua Xiang (Translations from the Asian Classics)*.

The translation and study of the book have changed their emphasis from literal translation to philosophical reinterpretation with the incorporation of research perspectives from various fields in light of the previous translation paradigm. In 2004, Hans-Georg Moller studied the literary performance and spiritual kernel of *Chuang Tzu* in *Daoism Explained – From the Dream of the Butterfly to the Fishnet Allegory* while Steve Coutinho probed into the impeccable translation tactics for optimal representation of the intelligence and humor of the original book. Concurrently, Coutinho conducted a discussion on the ambiguity of the work under the realm of hermeneutics, semiotics, and philosophy together with the selected translations of the two beginning chapters.

At the moment, multimedia is utilized for translation as the translational mode and paradigm are becoming more and more diversified. In 2006, Nina Correa disclosed her electronic version of translation on an online forum *Dao-Is-Open* and Fabrizio Pregadio innovatively applied the *Alchemist* perspective to the investigation of *Chuang Tzu in Great Clarity: Daoism and Alchemy in Early Medieval China* to elucidate the primitive alchemy convention of China. Moreover, Wang Qin and Qiang Fang-Zhen cooperated to render the book in *Zhuang Zi Says* while Christopher Tricker from Australia issued a selected translation named *Village Philosopher: The Stories of Zhuangzi*.

In 2007, Wu Chung published a selected translation of *The Wisdom of Zhuang Zi on Daoism* to deeply inspect philosophy and humanism. In 2008, Great Wall Bookstore publishing house issued *Quotations from Zhuangzi* in Wang Rong-pet's translation, and meanwhile, Fabrizio Pregadio published a monograph *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* to demonstrate the panorama of Taoism about historical development, leading figures, and essential masterpieces according to the integration of the commonality of Taoist texts through the selected translation of some representative chapters. In 2009, Brook Ziporyn issued a monograph *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, in which the different versions of many ancient Chinese scholars' annotations, such as GUO Xiang, Wang Fu-Zhi, Cehng Xuan-Ying, Shi De, were analyzed using their respective translation, discussion, and comment.

In 2010, Solala Towler's translation of seven chapters in *The Inner Chapters: The Classic Taoist Text* is attached with many pictures taken in Towler's Daoist ascetic journey, thus creating a sense of Daoist vibe by combining the translator's own experience, to help readers better understand the spiritual core of *Chuang Tzu*. In 2011, Livia Kohn published a monograph *Chuang-tzu: The Tao of Perfect Happiness – Selections Annotated & Explained* to conduct concise selected translation and analysis on the sense of value concerning the world, physical body, mentality, and self-transformation. In 2012, Roy Melvyn launched a translation collection *The Four Taoist Classics – Daodejing, Huahujing, Zhuangzi, and Liezi* with an emphasis on the Taoist views on life, society, the natural world, and humanity.

In 2014, Wang Yi-Zhen and Wang Guo-Zhen issued *The Wisdom of China: Zhuangzi-Enjoyment of Life in an Untroubled State in the Chinese Wisdom* book series, where the man Chuang Tzu's life, purpose, and spirits were introduced with vivid parable translation. Meanwhile, Livia Kohn issued

another monograph *Zhuangzi: Text and Context*, where the Taoist thoughts on individual philosophy, moral ethics, social value, ecologism, cosmology, and other themes were further illustrated with accurate selected translation. In 2015, the e-book *The Tao of Happiness: Stories from Chuang Tzu for Your Spiritual Journey* issued by Derek Lin has the effect of mental enlightenment through its selected parables translated in an easily understandable way.

In 2016, A. Charles Muller issued the paper *Zhuangzi* online including the translations of two chapters and appropriate annotations. Then, Hyun Hochsmann, Yang Guo-Rong, and Daniel Kolak jointly issued *Zhuangzi in the Longman Library of Primary Sources in Philosophy* book series. In 2017, Nik Marcel and Leon Wieger worked together to publish a French-English selected translation, and Cai Zhong-yuan published a new full translation *New Paraphrase of Chuang Tzu* catering to English reader's reading habits. In addition, Hans-Georg Moller and Paul J. D'Ambrosio published a monograph *Genuine Pretending: On the Philosophy of the Zhuangzi*, in which, with the analysis of some core concepts, the translations were also reinvented, such as translating “真人” to *Zhenuine Pretender*.

In 2018, Haun Saussy issued a selected translation as *Citation: Zhuangzi Inside Out* under the guidance of dynamic principle, and Michael Nylan published a monograph *The Chinese Pleasure Book* with the translations of three chapters from a historiographic perspective. In 2019, a new full translation of *Sir Lush in China* launched by Zhao Yan-Chun served as a textbook for English major students, in an attempt to produce an authoritative translation out of pedagogic purpose. Moreover, part of Lin Yu-tang's translation of *Tao Te Ching and Chuang Tzu* is selected by Michael Xu to be compiled into *Taoist Classic Complete Works: Tao Te Ching, Chuang Tzu*.

In addition to translation and academic monographs, essay collections and history reviews are also two major outcomes of overseas sinology concerning *Chuang Tzu*. For example, in 2003, Scott Cook scrutinized copious literature and collated pertinent studies in his review hiding the *World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi* with an expectation to specify the developing route of research and translation. In 2014, Livia Kohn translated Wang Bo's (2004) monograph *Philosophy of Zhuangzi* into English and renamed it *Zhuangzi: Thinking through the Inner Chapters*. In the next year 2015, Kohn integrated 13 essays composed from innovative perspectives, such as neuroscience, pedagogy, and sociology, into the paper collection *New Visions of the Zhuangzi*. Concurrently, Roger T. Ames and Takahiro Nakajima



included the latest academic outcomes conducted under the perspectives of formal logic, alternative epistemology, and transcendental mysticism, in their jointly-compiled essay collection *Zhuangzi and the Happy Fish*.

At this point, the proliferation of translations and monographs, as well as the growth of translation organizations in Canada, Australia, and other English-speaking nations, all demonstrated how deeply the influence of *Chuang Tzu* had permeated the English-speaking World. The continuously expanded depth in the translation and study of *Chuang Tzu* made the study achievements not only include the outcomes from the inheritance of predecessors but also develop innovations, mixed with some new translations. The translation and study show the transparent polarization, that is, extremely popular and extremely academic. On the one hand, some scholars continuing on the mission of popularization used concise, plain, and natural language to introduce the translations that general readers can accept. On the other hand, more translational work has done its bit to satisfy the public's inquisitiveness about Chinese culture and Taoist thinking. Such translations trying to eschew obscure expressions restructured *Chuang Tzu* into popular literature absolutely without any academic traits. As for issue media, diversification is also an obvious feature. While publishing paper-based books, numerous scholars also issued electronic versions to further facilitate the accessibility of reading and study, who can skillfully make use of modern technology to create online forums dedicated to deliberation over *Chuang Tzu*, so that the general public could have the opportunity to express their viewpoints.

On the other hand, based on selected translations, scholars from different realms tentatively study the book from multiple perspectives, such as hermeneutics, semiotics, logic, and so on. Deciphering methods are reinvented to explore different values in different fields. While this is going on, more and more Chinese scholars are continuing to share their perspectives with the world, with some of them already catching the scholars' interest from other countries. The re-publishment overseas of some Chinese monographs already translated into English indicates that the voices from Chinese academia have been echoed in the global sinology circle. Chinese and foreign scholars have gradually begun to communicate and cooperate, thus forming a mode of interaction between the East and the West.



### 3 CHUANG TZU'S CANONIZATION THROUGH TRANSLATION

In 1881, the book *Chuang Tzu* as “[...]optimal exposition of Taoist thinking” (CREEL, 1956, p. 139) of China, successfully found its way to the English-speaking world, thereby transforming world literature. The process of “Tentative Translation – Deep Translation – Repeated Translation” can show that translation is massively responsible for the canonization of *Chuang Tzu* about refraction way, translation outcomes, and reading mode which are all closely connected with the specific context.

First and foremost, the elliptical refraction indicating the duality of world literature is affected by the host culture and source culture simultaneously. “Even a single work of world literature is the locus of a negotiation between two different cultures.” (DAMROSCH, 2003, 283). The translated text with more or less different from the original would not be directedly and completely implanted overseas. The refraction that the traces of both host country and source country are bound to be found in every piece of world literature is always in dynamic change instead of being static. The specific characteristics of different Spatio-temporal contexts push the translations in different stages to show different traits. In the religious reinterpretation stage, the purpose of colonization brought about the active translation of *Chuang Tzu* into the English-speaking world, with the impacts from the receiving culture showing apparent dominance, thereby the translations adaptation to context drove *Chuang Tzu* to manage to catch westerner’s eyes and make a difference in overseas sinology. As in the literary reinterpretation stage, mental demands were still predominant, resulting in many faithful, authentic, and easy-to-understand translations. When it comes to the philosophical stage, the need of China for pushing its culture to the globe and the pressing demand of America for forming in-depth insight into Chinese culture, both led to the dramatic increase in translation outcomes and the prevalence of rigorous monographs. In the last stage, besides the impacts from social context, the translation and study of *Chuang Tzu* were even affected by modern technology. The translation of national literature is significantly influenced by both the host and receiving cultures. It can be fairly concluded by using various methodologies from other domains to this book for a new interpretation. Context-specific trails can be easily found in the translations from different contexts, especially the additions or omissions in terms of theme, plot, and characters. “We can say that the works circulating into world literature continue to bear the marks of their national origin, and yet these traces are increasingly diffused and

become ever more sharply refracted as the work travels farther from home.” (DAMROSCH, 2003, p. 283).

Secondly, since “[...] world literature is the writing with gains from translation”. (DAMROSCH, 2003, p. 281), translation as the only possible way for national literature to become world literature plays a vital role in spreading the literature across languages, nations, countries, culture, ideology, and even time and space. The acceptance must be taken into account to determine whether a work can become world literature. The change in the number of translations of *Chuang Tzu* from 4, 11, 18 to 32 indicates that it has achieved maturity and received strong attention from westerners. Besides the translation and study of *Chuang Tzu* from the perspective of theology, literature, philosophy, and multi-disciplines, there are still some translations, such as Watson’s translation, which has been included in the *UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, Chinese Series*, as well as some famous literature anthology, including *The Norton Anthology of World Literature* (2012, 2015), *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature, Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translation*(2002) etc. (MARIANO, 2010, p. 336). Numerous book reviews and literary criticisms are written concerning different translations. Sinology academia also burrows deep into the book. All the achievements in these dimensions suggest that the achievement of *Chuang Tzu* to become world literature shall thank the consecutive English translations.

Several factors and constituents account for the global acknowledgment of *Tzu*, namely the number of translations and republications, the inclusion of literature anthology, and opinions from literary critics at home and abroad, all of which account for the justification of the world literature status of *Chuang Tzu*. In the literary reinterpretation phase and philosophical reinterpretation one, similar to these two phases, it can be revealed that the former attaches importance to the literary manifestations of the original text while the latter emphasizes the reinterpretation of kernel spirits. There is still a salient disparity between the two.

Last but not least, the detached engagement mode of reading is also critical. “Read intelligently, while an excellent translation can be seen as an expansive transformation of the original, a concrete manifestation of cultural exchange and a new stage of a work moving from its initial home towards the world.” On the one hand, needs to be prioritized. Readers, on the other hand, always interpret translated texts in light of their own experiences as

well as the unique perspectives shaped by the receiving culture. The mode of reading determines the way that the national literature metamorphoses into world literature. For instance, in the philosophical reinterpretation stage, with the wrestling of American society with mental treatment, as well as the occurrence of the Counterculture Movement, Green Movement, and other social campaigns, the liberation and naturalism of *Chuang Tzu* resonated with the individualism of America, value tradition of freedom and the deep ecologism, thereby the translations of *Chuang Tzu* were accepted actively by the Western readers.

When carrying on the triangulation between our presentation and the enormous variety of other cultures around. The works of world literature will be so fully enshrined within their cultural context as we do when reading those works within their traditions. A certain distance from the local tradition can help us to appreciate the literary work that reaches out and is away from its point of origin. (ZHU, 2019, p. 170).

Only when translators pay attention to the mode of reading can they effectively facilitate the accessibility of the national literature to world literature.

## CONCLUSION

Successful as *Chuang Tzu* obtains in the English-speaking world, there are still some problems to attend to and better solidify its world literature status. Firstly, translation and study have already stepped into a bottleneck period. The existence of numerous excellent translations pushes translators and scholars to shift their attention from pure translation to “selected translation + elucidation”, with the urgent need to carry on full translation under the guidance of different principles, especially some innovative reinventions, while the gradual polarization of being extremely popular and extremely academic promotes the requirement for the production of more hybrids juxtaposing popularity and rigorousness. What’s more, there is a lack of meta-study on *Chuang Tzu*. As the world literature triggers multitudinous outcomes, the book shall be regarded as an independent branch under overseas sinology, which is reasonable. Thus as a branch, it is necessary to propose a unique methodology suitable for relevant translation and study. In addition, on the whole, with westerners mainly holding the power of reinterpretation, Chinese scholars’ natural advantages to render and decipher the book are neglected or

overshadowed in the realm of sinology. Therefore, it is recommended that the Chinese voice should be delivered to the world and Chinese theory should be applied to the process of translation and study.

After more than a century of translation and study, the “form and focus in translation” of *Chuang Tzu*. (ZHU, 2019, p. 173). The group of translators, the mode of translation, and the carrier of translation have all shifted from simplification to diversification. And the research team, research paradigm, research awareness, and research approaches have also altered from fragmentation to systematization, contributing to abundant translations and monographs. In the future, diversification and systematization would continue, making more popular translations as well as specialized monographs. The status of *Chuang Tzu* in sinology would be further reinforced, forming a more concrete standing in the realm of world literature. As a systematic approach to translating and studying *Chuang Tzu* has developed, the field of reinterpretation will inevitably expand as more and more translators and academics make meaningful and creative efforts.

At present, “[...] the translation and circulation of literature today are historically unprecedented once we consider how quickly books enter various national markets in small or large size or even across several continents.” (REBECCA, 2015, p. 46). The mechanism behind the formation of world literature has become the limelight, yet meanwhile, a conundrum to academia. The path of *Chuang Tzu* to world literature fundamentally shows that the role of translation should be given its due share. In terms of choice of translation. (WANG, 2016, p. 380). Thus, translators and scholars should turn their eyes to both host culture and source culture, striking a balance between the original intention and target readers’ anticipation. Based on this perception, the multiple possibilities of reinterpreting should be prioritized for consideration to get close to the true essence of the book. In the process of translation and study. (BAI, 2014, p. 79). More complete translations that are authoritative, accurate, faithful, reliable, and simple to accept are urged given the current situation. As world literature is the elliptical refraction of two cultures. The appropriateness of Western theories and methods cannot be exaggerated, thus it is necessary to further introduce Chinese theories to achieve an equilibrium between the two cultures. Lastly, a deep dialogue among China and other English-speaking countries should be held to promote overseas studies on *Chuang Tzu*, thereby creating windows of opportunities for the rest of the world to have a deeper understanding of Taoist wisdom.

LIN, J.; YU, X.; LIU, S.; LUO, M.; CHEN, Y. Traduzindo *Chuang Tzu* para a literatura mundial: texto e contexto. *Trans/form/ação*, Marília, v. 46, n. 1, p. 121-142, Jan./Mar., 2023.

**Resumo:** *Chuang Tzu* (《庄子》), como um cânone tradicional chinês, foi traduzido para o inglês por mais de 100 anos, desde 1881, conquistando com sucesso um nicho no reino da literatura mundial, que se tornou um evento cultural devastador na academia de sinologia ultramarina e literatura mundial. Segundo as estatísticas, o livro foi traduzido em 12 traduções completas, 50 traduções selecionadas e duas adaptações. No processo de metamorfose da “tradução completa – tradução profunda – retradução diversificada”, passou por quatro fases, nomeadamente fases religiosas, literárias, filosóficas e reinterpretadas diversificadas. Assim, na perspectiva da visão de Damrosch a respeito da literatura mundial, o artigo resume as características de diferentes estágios, com base em diferentes contextos espaço-temporais. À luz da forma tradutória, dos resultados tradutórios e do modo de leitura tradutória, especifica-se o caminho pelo qual *Chuang Tzu* entrou no campo da literatura mundial, para apreender o mecanismo operacional de promoção da literatura nacional à literatura mundial, que se dedica ao esclarecimento para o trabalho prático de tradução da introdução da literatura chinesa no exterior. Enquanto isso, revisando a história das traduções inglesas de *Chuang Tzu*, o artigo resume as deficiências das atuais atividades de tradução e pesquisa, com a tentativa de fornecer sugestões construtivas, bem como apontar a direção para o desenvolvimento futuro de estudos de *Chuang Tzu* no exterior.

**Palavras-chave:** Chuang Tzu. Literatura mundial. História da tradução. Estudos de tradução.

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