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On Translating *Lun yü**

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With the exception of the enigmatic and problem-laden *Tao te ching* 道德經, *Lun yü* 論語 (hereafter LY) has been translated into Western languages more than any other classical Chinese text. Among the list of LY translators are the names of several of the most eminent Western sinologues: Legge, Soothill, Giles, Couvreur, Wilhelm and Waley.¹ To this impressive list we must now add the name of D.C. Lau whose studies of Chinese philosophy and language, along with his two earlier translations, have placed him at the forefront of contemporary sinological studies.² Lau's translation of LY joins his previous volumes as a part of Penguin Classics, a series which we hope will add still more works from the literary trove of early China.

As this review will indicate, I have serious questions about certain aspects of Lau's translation. Nevertheless, my general reaction to this new work is positive, and I believe it will long be used as a standard source in philosophy and comparative literature courses. Particularly valuable to student and scholar alike is a long and highly informative introduction. Although directed at the general readership which the Penguin series serves, it does not neglect those difficult issues with which LY specialists contend, such as the precise relationship between the terms *jen* 人, *min* 民 and *chung* 衆 as they appear in LY. Three appendices, "Events in the Life of Confucius," "The Disciples as They Appear in the Analects," and "The *Lun-yü*" are also useful addenda to the translation itself. I have only one reservation about this portion of the book—we can and should go beyond recapitulating Ts'ui Shu's 崔述 (1740–1816) insightful but shopworn study of the layers of the LY text. Ts'ui's research (though much he receives credit for was discovered earlier by Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋 [1617–1705])³ remains a

* This is a review article of Confucius, *The Analects*, translated and with an introduction by D.C. Lau (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1979). Pp. 249, \$3.95.

¹ *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. I, tr. by James Legge (Oxford, 1893); *The Analects of Confucius*, tr. by William Edward Soothill (1910; rpt. New York, 1968); *The Sayings of Confucius*, tr. by Lionel Giles (London, 1907); *Les Quatre Livres*, Vol. III, tr. by Séraphin Couvreur (Paris, 1895); *Gespräche; Lun Yü*, tr. by Richard Wilhelm (Jena, 1923); and *The Analects of Confucius*, tr. by Arthur Waley (London, 1938). A nearly complete list of the more than thirty Western language translations of LY can be found in Wang Erh-min, *A Bibliography of Western Translations of Chinese Works* (Taipei, 1975). Two very useful articles for the study of LY translations are Cheuk-woon Taam, "On Studies of Confucius," *Philosophy East and West*, 3.2 (July, 1953), 147–166, and Donald Leslie, "Notes on the Analects," *T'oung Pao*, 49 (1961–62), 54–63. Throughout this paper I have noted the sources of all LY translations. My own translations are prefaced by "Durrant."

² Particularly relevant here are such articles as "Some Logical Problems in Ancient China," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* NS, 53 (1952/3), 189–204; "Theories of Human Nature in Mencius (孟子) and Shyuntzyy (荀子)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 15(1953), 541–565; "On the Expression *fu yen* 復言," *Ibid.*, 3.6(1973), 324–333. Translations include Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963) and Mencius (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970).

³ See Roy A. Miller, "Some Japanese Influences on Chinese Classical Scholarship of the Ch'ing Period," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 72(1952), 62.

foundation upon which later analyses of the authenticity of LY stands, but recent scholarship on this subject, particularly by such Japanese scholars as Takeuchi Yoshio 武内義雄, Watanabe Takashi 渡邊卓 and Matano Tarō 俣野太郎 should not go unnoticed.⁴

Fortunately, translation is regaining respectability as a scholarly activity after a short but dark night in which social scientists, who usually rely upon translations more than anyone else, expelled it from the circle of hallowed scholarly tasks. As we enjoy this newfound respectability, and, in this country at least, accept NEH subventions, it is critical that we continue a vigorous dialogue on the methodology and theory of translation. It is precisely in such areas that Lau's LY translation raises questions which should be discussed before proceeding to a few results of a "hunt-and-peck scanning."⁵ These are questions of a translator's obligation to both his readership and the exegetical tradition within which he works, the problem of reproducing the original work's style and tone, those most elusive but critical constituents of any literary work, and that oldest and perhaps most overworked of translation questions, "freedom" versus "literalness."

First of all, nowhere in his translation does Lau mention earlier translations or explain what unique contribution his translation makes to the ever-expanding field of LY studies. Though hardly more than a peccadillo, this oversight makes an evaluation of his work difficult. Walter Kaufmann, the leading translator of Nietzsche, has given some advice on this topic which translators would do well to follow:

Publishers may tell a translator that he is not the one to make comparisons between his own version and earlier attempts, assuming that his version is not the first. Yet in such cases the reader has a right to know why it is considered important to redo the work instead of tackling something not translated yet. One wants to know what, if anything, was felt to be inadequate in earlier attempts and what the translator tried to accomplish.⁶

Since our field has so many major works in obvious need of either a first complete English translation or a retranslation (*Lü shih ch'un-ch'iu* 呂氏春秋, *Yen tzu ch'un-ch'iu* 晏子春秋 and even *Shih chi* 史記 are three examples of the first category, and *Tso chuan* 左傳, *Kuo yü* 國語 and *Lun heng* 論衡 examples of the second), it is not too much to ask why the translator of a new version of LY considered his project necessary at all. Soothill, though filled with admiration for earlier translations, such as those by Legge and Zottoli, found the former's work "too formal . . . at times somewhat heavy" and the latter's literalness "rigid."⁷ Waley also praised his predecessors but claimed that his own work, unlike those by Legge, Soothill and Couvreur, had reached beyond the Sung and Han commentaries to the meaning intended by LY's first compilers.⁸ Such a

⁴ Takeuchi Yoshio, *Rongo no kenkyū* 論語の研究 (Tokyo, 1939), pp. 261–362; Watanabe Takashi, *Kodai Chūgoku shisō no kenkyū* 古代中國思想の研究 (Tokyo, 1973), pp. 248ff; Matano Tarō, "Gan En no tammei setsuwa o megutte" 顔淵の短命説話をめぐって, *Tōhōgaku*, 52(1976), 16–31.

⁵ The quotation here is from Roy Miller. In an excellent article on Japanese translations he notes that, "Until very recently, the entire field of Japanese studies has been distinguished by a striking lack of academic and scholarly concern for problems of translation. When such questions have been raised at all, they have almost always been limited to the most trivial level possible: hunt and peck scannings of this translation or that, generally in a critical review, and most frequently aimed only at demonstrating a reviewer's claim that this translator or that has incorrectly rendered a passage in some text" (*Journal of Japanese Studies*, 6:1 [1980], 2).

⁶ *The Future of the Humanities* (New York, 1977), p. 99.

⁷ Soothill, II–III.

⁸ Waley, p. 77. That Waley was successful in this attempts is doubtful. Leslie has argued that "The Ch'ing dynasty and twentieth century scholars have managed to overthrow the yoke of Chu Hsi's interpretation, but

direct statement of Lau's intention would be helpful in judging the success of his work.

I do not mean to imply that the existence of more than thirty Western-language translations of LY and the vast, multilingual mountain of scholarship upon which these translations rest preclude the possibility of novel insights, unique contributions and even monumental new translations. On the contrary, numerous possibilities leap to mind—a study of LY that comes at the text from older layers of the language, particularly the bronze inscriptions,⁹ detailed studies of both the rhetoric and language of LY,¹⁰ an encyclopedic collection in the manner of Liu Pao-nan 劉寶楠 (1791–1855) which incorporates and evaluates the scattered but useful interpretations of twentieth century scholars both Eastern and Western or a study of the Central Asian translations of LY.¹¹ But whenever the contribution is not obvious from the uniqueness or comprehensiveness of the project, it is important that the author or translator provide some rationale for his work.

This leads to a second criticism. It is regrettable that a translation by such a capable scholar appears in a format which prevents extensive footnoting. It is earnestly hoped that the current publisher's vogue for "unencumbered texts" will soon pass, particularly in our discipline where so many passages remain in dispute and cry out for the reasoned explanation which scholars such as Lau could provide.¹² In the case of his *Mencius* translation, Lau surmounted this problem by separately publishing a series of notes.¹³ A similar article on his LY research would be most welcome.

One obvious advantage of full annotation is that it allows us to see the translator's position within an exegetical tradition. Until the present century, LY exegesis existed primarily, though by no means exclusively, in two languages—Chinese and Japanese. However, in more recent years study of LY has become a worldwide endeavor, and progress will come only if we give ample consideration to a diversity of insights and

no one, not even Liu Pao-nan or Waley, has succeeded in getting beyond the Han. In fact, it is debatable if we will ever be able to give other than a traditional interpretation for many of the sayings, "Notes on the Analects," 1–2. If we are to reach beyond the Han in our study of LY, it must come as a result of careful examination of older levels of the language as preserved in *Shu ching* 書經, *Shih ching* 詩經 and inscriptional literature.

⁹ This has been done on a limited scale by Yü Hsing-wu 于省吾, *Shuang-chien-ch'ih Lun yü hsin-cheng* 雙劍謠論語新證 (Taipei, 1960).

¹⁰ An article which is working in the right direction, transcending the level of the particle to consider recurring sentence formulae, is Yajima Genryo 矢島亥亮, "Rongo saki" 論語瑣記, *Chizan gakuho*, 15 (1967), 35–44.

¹¹ In an earlier article I referred to three Manchu translations of LY; see Stephen Durrant, "Manchu Translations of Chou Dynasty Texts," *Early China*, 3 (Fall, 1977), 52–54. I overlooked a fourth translation which is described by Walter Fuchs in "Eine unbeachtete Manju-Übersetzung der Vier Bücher von 1741," *Collectanea Mongolica. Festschrift für Professor Dr. Rintchen*, ed. by W. Heissig (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 59–64. A Mongolian translation appeared in 1756. My preliminary and somewhat superficial examination of this text indicates that it is translated from Manchu and is therefore of lesser value than the Manchu translations. A portion of a Tangut version with commentary is published in *Kitajska klassika v tangutskom perevode*, ed. by V.S. Kolokolov (Moscow, 1966) and has been discussed by Wu Chi-yu, "Sur la version Tangoute d'un commentaire du *Louen-yu* conservée à Leningrad," *TP*, 55 (1968–69), 298–315.

¹² Recently Stephen Owen has defended the practice of scant annotation. I agree that we need not presume total ignorance on the part of a reader and rehash what has been proven time after time before, but in the case of LY, new interpretations constantly appear, and a translator should strive to bring the reader up-to-date. Moreover, where numerous other translations exist, a new translator has more, not less, to explain. See Stephen Owen, "A Defense," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, 1.2 (July, 1979), 257.

¹³ "Some Notes on Mencius," *Asia Major*, N.S., 15(1969), 62–81.

interpretations. Our position today in the study of several of the most important ancient Chinese texts is not unlike that of the translators of the Geneva Bible who gave thanks because of "the great opportunity and occasions which God hath presented unto us in this Church, by reason of so many godly and learned men; and such diversities of translations in divers tongues."¹⁴ The rhetoric of the Geneva translators is not that of our time, but their sentiment, that we must humbly and gratefully consider the work of others, is one for which we should all have sympathy.

Perhaps a number of specific examples will clarify this second criticism. One of the most problematic analects is the following:

LY 9:1	子罕言利與命與仁
Lau:	The occasions on which the Master talked about profit, Destiny and benevolence were rare.

This passage has puzzled exegetes and spawned a multitude of interpretations. These interpretations have been ably summarized by Wing-tsit Chan who, after all is said and done, opts rather uncomfortably for the orthodox Ho Yen 何晏 (d. 249) - Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130–1200) interpretation.¹⁵ The problem with this ostensibly straightforward analect is that, judging from the content of LY, Confucius spoke a great deal about at least one of these three topics—*jen* 仁 "benevolence." Moreover, the variety of meanings and functions represented by the graph *yü* 與 (interrogative, marker of coordination, preposition "with," verb "to participate in," verb "to give," etc.) allows for considerable latitude in explication.¹⁶ For example, Wang Jo-hsü 王若虛 (1174–1243) suggested that *yü* in this passage should be equated with *hsü* 許 "to permit, to go along with:" "The Master rarely spoke of profit. He did allow discussion of Destiny; he did allow discussion of benevolence."¹⁷ This interpretation was followed by Shih Sheng-tsu 史繩祖 (fl. 1230) and became the subject of an article by Derk Bodde.¹⁸ Berthold Laufer responded to Bodde's article with his own interpretation,¹⁹ and more recently, Göran Malmqvist, on the basis of a detailed study of *yü* in the *Kung yang chuan* 公羊傳, concludes that the final *yü* in the problem passage should be understood as the preposition "compared with, than," yielding the following translation: "The Master spoke more rarely of profit and human destiny than of humanity."²⁰

I am not at present advocating any one of these conflicting interpretations, my point is that a translator should inform his reader of the existence of such difficulties and perhaps even make reference to other plausible readings; to fail to do so gives a reader a false impression that the chosen interpretation is beyond doubt. It is, of course, possible that Professor Lau passes over this analect in silence because he feels that it is useless to heap more comment upon an already tangled mass of interpretation.

¹⁴ Alfred William Pollard, *Records of the English Bible* (London, 1911), p. 280.

¹⁵ *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 34–35.

¹⁶ On the variety of meanings and functions of this character in one early Chinese text, see Göran Malmqvist, "What did the Master say?" *Ancient China: Studies in Early Civilization*, ed. by David T. Roy and Tsuen-hsuei Tsien (Hong Kong, 1978), pp. 137–156.

¹⁷ As cited in Yang Po-chün 楊伯峻. *Lun yü i chu* 論語譯注 (Peking, 1957), 108.

¹⁸ "A Perplexing Passage in the Confucian Analects," *JAOS*, 53 (1934), 347–351.

¹⁹ "Lun Yü IX, 1," *JAOS*, 54 (1934), 83. Laufer argues that the second *yü* is to be taken as comparative. Thus, he translates as follows: "The Master rarely discussed material gain compared with the Will of Heaven and compared with humaneness."

²⁰ Malmqvist, p. 156.

However, in still other cases there are excellent suggestions which have left no mark on his translation.

Several years ago, Mao Tzu-shui 毛子水, National Taiwan University's leading LY scholar, published an article in which he argued that there are previously unrecognized interpolations (*yen-wen* 衍文) in at least five analects.²¹ His arguments for the five cases are more or less persuasive, but at least two merit consideration and comment from subsequent translators. I will not restate Mao's arguments here since they may be easily consulted, but they result in the following readings (parentheses mark the suggested interpolation):

- LY 6:21 子曰。中人（以上）可以語上也。中人以下不可以語上也。
 Durrant: The Master said, "Although men of the middle level can be instructed in the best, those below the middle level can not be instructed in the best."
 LY 9:19 子曰。譬如爲山。未成一簣止吾止也。
 （譬如平地）雖覆一簣進吾往也。
 Durrant: As in the case of forming a mountain, if I stop when I have not yet finished, a single basketful of dirt remaining, then it is a fact that I have stopped! Although I have overturned a single basketful, if I am progressing, then it is a fact that I am going forward!

Another article, which perhaps appeared too late to influence Lau's translation, is Lin Yü-sheng's excellent study of the pre-Confucian meaning of *jen* 仁. One result of Lin's research is that *jen*, as it appears in LY 4:7, need not be emended to *jen* 人.²² Briefly stated, Lin argues that in the early years of the Eastern Chou *jen* 仁 meant "manliness" or "man's distinctive quality" (abstracted and generalized from *jen* 人 "man"). A trace of this earlier meaning still can be seen in LY:

- LY 4:7 子曰。人之過也各於其黨。觀其過斯知仁矣。

Various interpretations have attempted to wring sense from the final phrase of this passage; Lin suggests the following: "The Master said, 'The faults of men are characteristic of the [different] classes to which they belong. By observing [a man's] faults [we shall] then have known his distinctive quality.'"²³

One final and perhaps self-serving example. Several years ago I wrote that Manchu translators had rendered LY 2:12 so as to reflect the pre-verbal negative *pu* 不, while their Western counterparts had translated as if the passage contained pre-nominal *fei* 非:

- LY 2:12 子曰。君子不器。
 Lau: The Master said, 'The gentleman is no vessel.'
 Ma (1756): Fuze hendume. ambasa saisa be tetuseci ojurakū. (The Master said, "One must not treat officer-worthies as utensils.")²⁴

²¹ "Lun yü li chi ch'u yen-wen te ts'e-yi" 論語裡幾處衍文的測議, *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 2(1960), 29–39.

²² Lau follows this reading which is suggested by a quotation of this passage in *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, 64. The emendation is also followed by Yang Po-chün in his excellent *Lun yü i chu*, p. 39.

²³ "The Evolution of the Pre-Confucian Meaning of Jen 仁 and the Confucian Concept of Moral Autonomy," *Monumenta Serica*, 31 (1974–75), 181.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, 52. As a result of collating this 1756 Ch'ien-lung Manchu translation with the 1677 K'ang-hsi translation (*Jih Chiang Lun yü chieh-yi* 日講論語解義), I now know that the 1756 reading represents a conscious correction of the earlier version which read, *Kungze hendume. ambasa saisa tetun waka*. (Confucius

Our next preliminary consideration is perhaps best introduced by a quotation from the sixteenth century French translator Jacques Amyot: "The office of a fit translator consisteth not only in the faithful expressing of his author's meaning, but also in a certain resembling and shadowing out of the form of his speaking."²⁵ The reproduction of style and tone is difficult enough between two cognate languages, but where the languages and their genius are as far removed from one another as classical Chinese and modern English, the challenge becomes enormous. This challenge is increased by the fact that we have so few studies of the rhetoric and style of particular classical Chinese texts.²⁶ In view of the large number of translations of LY into Western languages, it is surprising how little discussion has focused upon questions of style and rhetoric. Richard Wilhelm, for example, speculates on the history of LY prior to the oft-discussed *Lu lun* 魯論 and *Ch'i lun* 齊論 collections. He believes that there was a large stock of "sayings" transmitted orally and only written down after the time of Mencius, but he does not say anything on how this long period of oral transmission might have influenced the form and style of sayings.²⁷ Several others have commented upon the "enigmatic" nature of some LY passages, a feature which results, according to Chavannes, "parce que nous ne savons pas exactement dans quelles circonstances elles ont été prononcées."²⁸ Lin Yutang has called the LY style "staccato," and certainly it is the terse, even cryptic nature of much of the text which first impresses a reader.²⁹ In addition to such traits, LY has a very hardy, concrete style which is seldom captured by translators who have tended to dilute and level out these features with prolixity and imprecision. I shudder to confess a belief that, despite his misconceptions about the Chinese script and his misunderstanding of numerous sayings, it is Ezra Pound who comes closest to capturing LY's peculiar concreteness and economy. Compare, for example, his translations of the sayings below with the somewhat verbose and vapid style of Lau's renditions:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| LY 1:16 | 子曰。不患人之不己知患不知人也。 |
| Lau: | The Master said, 'It is not the failure of others to appreciate your abilities that should trouble you, but rather your failure to appreciate theirs. |
| Pound: | He said, "Not worried that men do not know me, but that I do not understand men." ³⁰ |
| LY 4:2 | 子曰。不仁者不可以久處約不可以長處樂。仁者安仁知者利仁。 |
| Lau: | The Master said, 'One who is not benevolent cannot remain long in straitened circumstances, nor can he remain long in easy circumstances. 'The benevolent man is attracted to benevolence because he feels at home in it. The wise man is attracted to benevolence because he finds it to his advantage.' |

said, "Officer-worthies are not utensils"). I should note here that "officer-worthies" is a literal translation of the unusual Manchu translation of Chinese 君子 (*ambasa-saisa*).

²⁵ Quoted in Flora Ross Amos, *Early Theories of Translation* (New York, 1973).

²⁶ To cite a single example, we do not yet have a comprehensive discussion of the "philosophical essay" as it developed from Mo tzu 墨子 through Hsün tzu 荀子 and eventually to such Han writers as Wang Ch'ung 王充.

²⁷ Wilhelm, XXXI.

²⁸ Edouard Chavannes, *Les memoires historiques*, Vol. V (Paris, 1967), p. 440.

²⁹ *The Wisdom of Confucius* (New York, 1938), 5.

³⁰ *Confucius* (New York, 1969), 197. For a fascinating discussion of Pound's interest in Confucius, see Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 445-459.

Pound: He said; without manhood one cannot stand difficulties, nor live for long amid pleasures. The real man is at rest in his manhood, the wise man profits by it.³¹

Lau's translation of *pu jen che* 不仁者 as "one who is not benevolent" is to be preferred over Pound's "without manhood," and Lau's "straitened circumstances" is a more accurate translation of *yüeh* 約 than "difficulties," but Pound's translation more accurately echoes LY's austerity and specificity of language.

In this new translation, as in many of its predecessors, one perceives a tendency to attenuate LY vocabulary. Few would argue with the contention, persuasively stated in Lau's article "Translating Philosophical Works in Classical Chinese—Some Difficulties," that a single Chinese word occasionally must be rendered in different passages with different English words.³² However, the translator should guard against an excessively liberal application of this principle. For example, *mou* 謀 is correctly rendered by Lau "make plans" (7:11) and "to take counsel" (15:40), and we can even accept, somewhat charitably, "concern oneself" (8:14), but the translation "to undertake" (1:4) goes too far afield. The word is used here in its basic sense and is rendered correctly by Chan: 為人謀而不忠乎 ". . . whether in counseling others I have not been loyal."³³ Likewise, *sung* 誦 implies the action of "chanting" or "reciting," as translated by Lau in 9:27, rather than the more passive "know by heart" in 13.5.

Unlike the two cases noted above, Lau consistently translates *wen chang* 文章 as a compound meaning "accomplishments" (5:13 and 8:19). But since *chang* 章 by itself is also translated "accomplishments" (5:22), one wonders what meaning Lau attributes to *wen* 文 in the first term. Although *wen chang* is usually glossed by lexicographers, following commentaries, as having two slightly different meanings in the two LY passages where it appears,³⁴ I agree with Lau that the same equivalent in each of the two cases is justified; however, the rather general term "accomplishments" should not be that equivalent. I will not digress into an etymological discussion here, but it is interesting to note that the Manchu translators do not treat *wen chang* as a compound—to them it is *šu yangse*, "culture and form."³⁵ Certainly both Waley's "culture and outward insignia" and Chan's "culture and its manifestation" are preferable to "accomplishments."

The reverse of rendering one Chinese term with several different English terms is the translation of several Chinese terms with a single English equivalent. Although this too is excusable on occasion, Lau's translation has one regrettable example—*chün tzu* 君子, *fu-tzu* 夫子 and *shih* 士 are all translated "gentleman," distinguished from one another only by the fact that the last of these three terms is awarded a capital "G." This leads to at least one passage where the English is ambiguous:

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

³² *The Art and Profession of Translation*, ed. by T.C. Lai (Hong Kong, 1976), pp. 52–60.

³³ Chan, p. 20.

³⁴ The distinction made by lexicographers (see *Chung-wen ta tz'u-tien* [Taipei, 1973], 13766.485) is based upon Chu Hsi who defines *wen chang* in 5.–3 as *te chih hsien hu wai che* 德之見乎外者 "That aspect of virtue which appears externally," and in 8:19 as *li yüeh fa tu yeh* 禮樂法度也. "It is ritual Form, music, laws and standards" (*Ssu-shu chi-chu* 四書集注, SPPY ed., 3.4a and 4:13).

³⁵ Hans Conon Von der Gabelentz, *Sse-schu, Schu-king, Schi-king in Mandschuischer Uebersetzung* (Leipzig, 1864), pp. 25 & 33. This is a roman transcription of the 1756 Manchu translation.

LY 12:8 惜乎夫子之說君子。

Lau: It is a pity that the gentleman should have spoken so about the gentleman.

I am uneasy about the traditional use of the English term "gentleman" for Chinese *chün-tzu*, and I do not think it is an improvement that "gentleman" has now invaded the domain of "master" and "knight." These latter two equivalents for Chinese *fu-tzu* and *shih* can surely be improved upon, but not by assimilation to the already vague English "gentleman."

Much of the preceding discussion points towards that oldest controversy of translators. In the fifteenth century scholars characterized this debate as "word for word" versus "sense for sense," and translators of both positions pursued their theories to ludicrous extremes.³⁶ Most modern translators have nestled well inside these two earlier extremes, but we continue to argue, as we should, about the degree of freedom that can be allowed. The intensity of this debate is seen in the discussion appended to the papers of *The Art and Profession of Translation* as well as in the recent clash of Professors Kroll and Owen in the pages of *CLEAR*.³⁷ I hesitate to pass judgement on Western translations of Chinese poetry, but the translation of classical Chinese *prose* texts has not suffered from an excess of literalness and precision. For example, the one notable attempt to bring greater exactness to the translation of Confucian terminology, supplanting the 19th-century heritage of "benevolence," "righteousness" and "gentleman," has had, so far as I can judge, no impact at all upon subsequent translations.³⁸ However, my major concern here is not with a more precise English rendering of Confucian terminology but with the requirement that a translator capture style and grammatical nuance. The sensible principles laid down by the Hebraist Theophile Meek, which are summarized in a brief paragraph below, should serve as our guide:

To my mind, in translating we should reproduce the words, verbal forms, constructions, figures of speech, and other features of the original by their English equivalents, and not resort to paraphrase except (1) when the resultant translation does not make sense, (2) does not convey the thought of the original, or (3) violates the English idiom. Then, and only then, is paraphrase allowable.³⁹

³⁶ The conflict between these two extreme positions forms an important part of the discussion in Amos' *Early Theories of Translation*. Aelfric is an example of the extreme literalist when he says in the preface to his *Anglo-Saxon Preface to Genesis*, "We dare write no more in English than the Latin has, nor change the orders (endebirdnisse)." See *Ibid.*, p. 55. The other end of the spectrum is typified by the following comment of the translator Horace Drant, "First I have now done as the people of God were commanded to do with their captive women that were handsome and beautiful: I have shaved off his hair and paired off his nails, that is, I have wiped away all his vanity and superfluity of matter. Further, I have for the most part drawn his private carplings of this or that man to a more general moral. I have Englished things not according to the vein of the Latin propriety, but of his own vulgar tongue. I have interfered (to remove his obscurity and sometimes to better his matter) much of mine own devising. I have pieced his reason, eked and mended his similitudes, mollified his hardness, prolonged his cortall kind of speeches, changed and much altered his words, but not his sentence, or at least (I dare say) not his purpose." "To the Reader," *A Medicinable Moral, that is, the two books of Horace, his satires Englished according to the Prescription of St. Hierome* (London, 1566), quoted in Amos, pp. 112–113.

³⁷ Paul W. Kroll, review of *The Poetry of the Early T'ang* by Stephen Owen, *CLEAR*, 1.1 (January, 1979), 120–128; and Stephen Owen, "A Defense," 257–261.

³⁸ Peter A. Boodberg, "The Semasiology of Some Primary Confucian Concepts," *Philosophy East and West*, 2.4 (January, 1953), 317–332. William G. Boltz has recently reminded us of Boodberg's suggestions and urged their adoption by translators. See his review of *Hsin-lun (New Treatise) and Other Writings by Huan T'an 43 B.C.–28 A.D.*, trans. by Timoteus Pokora, *JAOS*, 98.4(Oct.-Dec., 1978), 527–528.

³⁹ "Old Testament Translation Principles," *Journal of Bible Literature*, 81 (1962), 143–154.

Proceeding from this admittedly conservative position, I find much of Lau's verbiage unnecessary. Two short examples might serve as illustrations:

- LY 4:8 子曰。朝聞道夕死可矣。
 Lau: The Master said, 'He has not lived in vain who dies the day he is told about the Way.'
 Waley: The Master said, 'In the morning hear the Way, in the evening, die content!'⁴⁰
 LY 4:18 子曰。事父母幾諫。見志不從又敬不違勞而不怨。
 Lau: The Master said, 'In serving your father and mother you ought to dissuade them from doing wrong in the gentlest way. If you see your advice being ignored, you should not become disobedient but remain reverent. You should not complain even if in so doing you wear yourself out.'
 Durrant: The Master said, "In serving parents remonstrate subtly. If you see that they intend not to follow, remain respectful and do not disobey. Although wearied, do not complain."

The application of Meek's principles is exceedingly challenging, for the demands of English often inflate a translation beyond one's original intentions, but in the case of LY our effort should always be in the direction of a faithful reproduction of the striking terseness of the original.

I have also referred above to the necessity of a translator capturing grammatical nuance. Are *ju* 如 and *kou* 苟 exact equivalents in texts where they both occur (e.g., LY 13)? Or is there some subtle distinction which a translation should try to capture? Long ago Von der Gabelentz suggested that *kou* had the meaning "if only" (*wenn nur*), adding an element of emphasis or restriction to the protasis.⁴¹ It is this feature which lies behind the traditional Chinese gloss *ch'eng* 誠 "truly" → Karlgren, "if really, if only."⁴² An even more striking example of this problem is posed by the sentence-level final particles of classical Chinese which are characteristically homogenized in English translations. Granted that a comprehensive study of all the various combinations is needed, certainly both *yi hu* 矣乎 and *yi fu* 矣夫 are stronger than "suppose:"

- LY 5:27 子曰。已矣乎。
 Lau: The Master said, 'I suppose I should give up hope.'
 Durrant: The Master said, 'Am I indeed finished?'
 LY 6:27 子曰。君子博學於文約之以禮亦可以弗畔矣夫。
 Lau: The Master said, 'The gentleman widely versed in culture but brought back to essentials by the rites can, I suppose, be relied upon to turn against what he stood for.'
 Durrant: The Master said, 'If a gentleman is widely learned in culture but restricts it with ritual Form, is it not so that he cannot rebel against it?'⁴³

⁴⁰ Waley, p. 103.

⁴¹ Georg Von der Gabelentz, *Chinesische Grammatik* (rpt., Halle, 1960), p. 509. See also Stephen Durrant, "An Examination of Textual and Grammatical Problems in *Mo tzu*," (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1975), pp. 223–227.

⁴² See, for example, the pseudo-K'ung gloss on LY 4:4 in *Lun yü Ho shih teng chi-chieh* 論語何氏等集解, SPPY, ed., 4:1b. For Karlgren's definition see *Grammata Serica Recensa*, *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 29 (Stockholm, 1957), 48.

⁴³ It is admittedly difficult to convey the force of final interrogative *fu* 夫 "n'est-ce pas?" in idiomatic

It should be emphasized once again that these criticisms concerning methodology and translation technique in no way vitiate the general merit of Lau's work. The two of us approach the task of translation from quite different positions, and it is important that each give full expression to his doubts even though those focus upon minutiae within the larger fabric of scholarship.

Having considered these more general questions, let us turn our attention to a few of the gleanings of my "hunt and peck scanning." The character *shih* 始 in LY 1:15 does not mean "only" but "only now," "for the first time," or "begin":

- LY 1:15 子曰。賜也始可與言詩已矣。
 Lau: The Master said, 'Ssu, only with a man like you can one discuss the Odes.'
 Durrant: The Master said, "Ssu, only now can I begin to discuss the Odes with you."

One of the most unusual but least discussed features of LY is the tendency to isolate and emphasize auxiliary verbs, particularly *pi* 必, with the particle *yeh* 也. Lau usually handles this feature appropriately (see, for example, 6:30 "if you must . . ."), but the translation of this formula in 3:7 is too free:⁴⁴

- LY 3:7 君子無所爭必也射乎。
 Lau: 'There is no contention between gentlemen. The nearest to it is perhaps archery.'
 Legge: The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said he cannot avoid them, shall this be in archery?⁴⁵

Or, more strictly,

- Zottoli: Sapiens nihil est in quo contendat; si plane esset, nonne in sagittando foret?⁴⁶

In LY 5:28 there is no linguistic basis for the word "unlikely." The Master is not the least bit modest regarding his penchant for learning:

- LY 5:28 子曰。十室之邑必有忠信如丘者焉。不如丘之好學也。
 Lau: The Master said, 'In a hamlet of ten households, there are bound to be those who are my equal in doing their best for others and in being trustworthy in what they say, but they are unlikely to be as eager to learn as I am.'
 Chan: Confucius said, "In every hamlet of ten families, there are always some people as loyal and faithful as myself, but none who love learning as much as I do."⁴⁷

English. As Graham has argued, this final particle invites the hearer "to confirm the statement which it follows." Graham further demonstrates that it is an interrogative particle and might be a fusion of *fei hu* 非乎. See his "The Final Particle *fu* 夫," *BSOAS*, 17 (1955), 120–132.

⁴⁴ This formula has been noted and discussed very briefly by Yajima (*op. cit.*). The phrase *pi yeh* 必也 occurs seven times in LY (3:7, 6:30, 7:11, 12:13, 13:3, 13:21 and 19:17). However, it does not occur in other concordanced pre-Han texts which are currently available to me. This is a distinctive feature of LY language and is deserving of further study.

⁴⁵ Legge, p. 157.

⁴⁶ This volume is not accessible to me at the present time. I have quoted the passage as it appears in Soothill, pp. 188 & 190.

⁴⁷ Chan, p. 29 (Numbered as 5:27).

LY 11:18 is a passage where the Master points out the deficiencies of several of his disciples:

- LY 11:18 子曰。柴也愚。參也魯。師也辟。由也喭。
Lau: The Master said, 'Ch'ai is stupid; Ts'an is slow; Shih is one-sided; Yu is forthright.'

Is "forthright," usually considered a virtue, the best English equivalent for Chinese *yen* 喭? There are several explanations for this problematic character. Chu Hsi defines it as "coarse" (*ts'u su yeh* 粗俗也),⁴⁸ but this is possibly based upon the description of Tzu-lu 子路 (i.e., Yu) in LY 13:3 (野哉由也 Lau: "Yu, how boorish you are.") rather than upon independent lexicographical evidence. Both Cheng Hsüan 鄭玄 (127–200) and Hsing Ping 邢昺 (932–1010) equated the term *yen* with the compound *pan-yen* 畔喭, alternately written *p'an yen* 畔喭 and defined in the *Kuang-yün* 廣韻 as "careless."⁴⁹ Whichever of these possibilities we accept, context clearly requires a perjorative term.

The first sentence of LY 1:7 has quite consistently been rendered according to the pseudo-K'ung gloss quoted by Ho Yen and the similar gloss of Chu Hsi:

- LY 1:7 子夏曰。賢賢易色 ...
Legge: Tsze-hsia said, "If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous. . . ."⁵⁰
Couvreur: Celui qui, au lieu d'aimer les plaisirs, aime et recherche les hommes sages. . . .⁵¹

Lau, if I have understood him correctly, follows the same interpretation: "I would grant that a man has received instruction who *appreciates men of excellence where other men appreciate beautiful women*." This is undoubtedly one passage where the meaning will remain a subject of conjecture and debate. However, both the interpretations of Wang Yin-chih 王引之 (1766–1834), followed recently by Mao Tzu-shui (*yi* 易 = *ju* 如, after the *Kuang ya* 廣雅),⁵² and that of Ch'en Tsu-fan 陳祖范 (fl. 1750), followed by Yang Po-chün (*yi* 易 in the attested meaning of *ch'ing-yi* 輕易 "light, frivolous, to esteem as light"),⁵³ are more plausible than the tortuous reading of the Ho Yen-Chu Hsi interpretation. These alternatives would yield the following translations:

- Wang-Mao: Esteem excellence as much as physical beauty.
Ch'en-Yang: Esteem excellence and regard physical beauty lightly.

Finally, I might add that the publisher has done an excellent job of typesetting and printing. I noticed only two very minor errors. The first concerns a deletion of "I" in the word "listen" on p. 112. The second is more unfortunate. Those of us who have been trying over the years to break students from what seems to be a natural tendency to spell Confucius "Confucious" will notice with dismay the spelling "Confucious" which stands at the head of p. 67. Despite the hundred or more times the Master's name is correctly spelled, I am sure it will be this one misspelling that will lodge in my students' minds.

⁴⁸ *Ssu-shu chi-chu*, 6:4a.

⁴⁹ See Takezoe Koko 竹添光鴻, *Rongo kaisen* 論語會箋 (rpt., Taipei, 1961), 11.17b, and *Chung-wen ta tz'u-tien*, 3441.

⁵⁰ Legge, pp. 140–141.

⁵¹ Couvreur, p. 73.

⁵² *Lun-yü chin-chu chin-shih* 論語今注今釋 (Taipei, 1975), p. 6.

⁵³ Yang Po-chün, p. 6.