On Translation of Literary Terminology as Cultural Sign: with focus on translation of literary terms in *History of Chinese Literature* [1]

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Abstract: This paper examines the translation of literary terminology as cultural sign in the selected versions of the *History of Chinese Literature* in the Anglophone world. It argues that classical Chinese literary terminology with its rich connotations and strong prescriptiveness as 'symbol' in semiotics, holds great difficulty for translators and scholars. Its inherent social and cultural elements in determining the meaning of these terms cannot be transferred across cultures, thus causing problems such as 'neutralization' either in free or literally translation or transliteration of these terms. The paper points out that an ideal way out for translation of classical Chinese literary terms should be transliteration coupled with proper notes. Although not qualified as translation in the strict sense, transliteration could, in some way, remind the readers of the heterogeneity of the term, thus offsetting the negative effect by the "neutralization" of the term. It could also guarantee the term's independency with the ultimate aim to make the term accepted by and integrated into the culture of the new land.
Keywords: literary terminology, translation, literary history, sign, semiotics, neutralization

INTRODUCTION

Terminology is briefly defined as word or phrase referring to a certain concept, phenomenon or object in a field. It is a linguistic unity composed of signifier and signified. And the import and export of literary terminology has become a new trend along with the high frequency of inter-cultural communication. Against such backdrop, this paper discusses the translation of literary terminology, a certain kind of cultural sign, in selected English versions of *History of Chinese Literature*. As this paper will show, classical Chinese literary terminology with its rich connotations and strong prescriptiveness as symbol in semiotics, plays an important role in inter-cultural communication but at the same time poses great difficulties for translators. Such difficulty is partly due to the semiotic dimension of the literary terms as reflected in two aspects.

That is, the form and naming of a terminology (Xin, 2001: 69), the former aspect of which refers to the special signs mostly used in scientific fields in replacement of natural language and the latter one, mostly includes proper nouns and semiotic naming. Thus, translation of literary terminology, to some extent, is the translation of sign information encoded in a terminology.

This paper will start from a general review of the status quo of study on translation of literary terminology both in China and in the Anglophone world. It then narrows down the scope to the analysis of the problems in translation of literary terminology in the selected versions of *History of Chinese Literature* due to the terms' significance in scoring real progress for the Chinese literature to go global. Based on the phenomenon of "neutralization" in translation of these terms, the paper holds that the strategy of transliteration should be the best choice in carrying over the literary and cultural information encoded in these terms, thus being conducive to the global dissemination of the Chinese literary theory and thought in the long run.

STATUS OF STUDIES ON TRANSLATION OF LITERARY TERMINOLOGY IN CHINA AND IN THE ANGLOPHONE WORLD

The undoubtedly essential role of terminology translation in today's inter-cultural dialogue stands in stark contrast with the underrated status it currently enjoys in translation studies as seen from the following analysis. A brief review of research in this regard, both in China and in the Anglophone world, is useful for analysing the inadequacy and difficulty of translation of classical Chinese literary terminology. On the Chinese side, firstly, about 120[2] papers have been published on this aspect during the period of 2000-2015, such as "A Bibliometric Analysis of China's Production on Translation of Terms," with seven to eight papers each year on average, peaking around 2010. In addition, books on terminology translation mainly came out after 2010, numbering much less than papers on the whole. Furthermore, terminology dictionaries published focus more on professional fields.

Based on the statistics collected, two features of the study on terminology translation stand out in China. On the one hand, current research tends to focus on terminology in practical fields instead of

literary ones since "terminology in science, economics, medicine and so on constitutes the primary research object in current terminology translation under the guidance of practicability-oriented though rather awkward value in translation" (Chen and Wang, 2013: 61). Papers discussing terminology translation in social sciences and humanities occupy a small portion among the published ones. But such phenomenon does not argue against the importance of terminology in social sciences and humanities. Such bias also exists in books and conference anthologies on terminology translation. For instance, the conference anthology *Research on Terminology Translation* only devotes one paper to the analysis of literary terminology.

And this inclination becomes more pronounced in dictionary compilations. We now still have rather limited number of bilingual dictionaries such as *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams in China. From the above analysis, it is obvious that "research on terminology in social sciences and humanities has just started off, or even not, in some fields… The bleakness in study on translation of Chinese literary terminology stays rather incongruous with the status quo and the needs to go global" (Fu, 2011: 109). Such a standpoint has wide resonance from scholars who speak in the same vein, holding that translation of Chinese literary terminology remains rather elementary for the present times with an urgent need for more practice and theoretical exploration. And systematic research on the current translation becomes even more urgent so as to make substantiated progress in the accuracy and standardization of terminology translation in the long run.

Another aspect featuring the research in China in this regard could be seen in the imbalance between the import and export of literary terminology with the import at the core of the existing publications. Only one paper in detailed discussion on English translation of Chinese literary terminology has been published in China but no bilingual dictionary on Chinese literary terminology. The imbalance is largely due to our following of western scholarship in literary theory in the last century since "the large scale introduction and translation of terms in western literary theory constitute the most fundamental and obvious feature of study in literary theory in the twentieth century China with due consideration of social and lingual differences and concentration of concept groups in the process in its aim of forming operative norms for terminology" (Wang, 1999: 87).

But such borrowing of western terms is unidirectional, from west to east, rather than bilateral. Furthermore, papers in this respect prefer the macro perspective in discussion with little reference to the detailed discussion of specific terms. For instance, Fu Huisheng's exploration of the translation of Chinese terms under the four genres of poetry, novel, drama and prose runs counter to the aim of clarifying features of Chinese genres for its adoption of western classification of genre in the analysis. And this phenomenon can be traced to the beginning of this century as elaborated by Wang Guowei in analyzing the literary development at that time. That is, "a new trend in literature in recent times is the introduction of new terms… translation of Western literary terms swarms into our academics. Some abuse it and the conservative reject it, for both of which I see no consent" (Wang, 1987: 112-13). The abuse or even rejection of literary terms may seem exaggerated for current times in terminology translation, but we occasionally encounter the misreading and mistranslation of literary terms. And the unqualified translated versions are responsible for the variation and even distortion of the term in its traveling to the foreign land. The two features of practibility orientedness and the imbalance between the import and export discussed above arises partly from the difficulty of understanding and the resulting various interpretations of these terms in today's context, especially in the inter-cultural context as demonstrated by the Western scholars' analysis of and attitude towards classical Chinese literary terminology and its translation.

THE TRANSLATION OF CHINESE LITERARY TERMINOLOGY IN THE ANGLOPHONE WORLD

The difficulty of understanding the classical Chinese literary terminology and its translation has wide resonance among the Western scholars, directly or indirectly discussed in their relevant works. For instance, based on the analysis of representative works of classical Chinese literary theory, C.H.Wang summarizes the features of classical Chinese literary criticism in his article entitled "Naming the Reality of Chinese Criticism" by claiming that this criticism is scattered, ambiguous and incomprehensible compared with the modern Western counterpart, resembling more a "private philosophy of literature" with frequent reference to the "problem" of literary terms in this respect. It holds that the feature of classical Chinese literary criticism stay mostly unchanged

despite the large amount of terms accumulated over the periods as shown by the literary tradition of the educated Chinese who "enjoyed literary philosophy, taking delight in its ambiguity as they did in poetry and philosophy. They found it intellectually and aesthetically satisfactory" (Wang, 1979: 530). And the ambiguity of the terms becomes more complicated against the backdrop of inter-cultural interpretation and translation as he mentions that "the most serious problem in wrestling with traditional Chinese criticism and theory is the translation of terminology" (Ibid: 534). And C.H.Wang proposes that the naming of the terminology in English may at most times sound more convincing than lengthy paragraphs on the term itself. And the terms would "illuminate without elaboration the reality of Chinese criticism and theory" (Ibid) in the different linguistic and cultural context.

Similarly, Ngan Yuen-wan in her "Some Characteristics of Chinese Literary Criticism" mainly discusses the classical Chinese literary theory in correspondences, letters, prefaces, notes, annotations and so on, and points out its dominant feature as "light-hearted attitude, casual approach, the loosened and imprecision of critical language" (1981: 185-97). Despite its lack of elaboration on terminology translation, the features of the critical language discussed indirectly manifest the difficulty of terminology translation.

Another relevant important work is James Liu's *Chinese Theories of Literature* which elaborates the classical Chinese literary theory by utilizing Western theories. It classifies classical Chinese literary theory into six kinds: metaphysical, deterministic and expressive, technical, aesthetic, pragmatic and interaction and syntheses. Such systematic and comprehensive exploration could by no means skirt the topics of terminology translation. Liu suggests that the "translation of critical terms" should start from the following two aspects: the importance of context and the clarity in the meaning for the translated versions in terminology translation. The lack of clear definition for the Chinese literary term makes it impossible for us to render a term into the same version in all contexts. And for those intuitive-type literary terms such as xing (性) which rely on one's intuition to understand their meanings, it is better to translate them into knowledge-type concepts that have clear definitions and scope, but such translation may cause the loss of the terms' poetics (Liu, 1975: 13). Liu advocates for the literal translation combined with transliteration, rendering one term into different English versions or different terms adopting the same English version. Such a

strategy is prevalent in terminology translation, which may cause confusion and we will analyze such strategy in detail in the next section of this paper.

Approaches to Chinese Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, a conference collection on classical Chinese literary theory, also devotes due the attention to terminology translation as manifested by the following remarks that "in no doubt, many papers for this conference would deal with the semantics of key terms" (Rickett, 1978: 6). Take "Yen Fu and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao as Advocates of New Fiction" by C.T. Hsia for example. At the very beginning it differentiates the two terms "hsiao-shuo" and "fiction," which were not equal terms at that time. The signifier of "hsiao-shuo" is much larger than that of "fiction," referring to all the imaginative works except poetry. And that is why "Yan Fu and Liang Qichao strongly advocate for "hsiao-shuo." But since this paper focuses on the most popular form of "hsiao-shuo," namely, the novel, I see no need to select another word with broader meaning in translating hsiao-shuo, but choose fiction" (1978: 225).

Our discussion would be incomplete if we do not include Stephen Owen's *Chinese Literary Theory: English Translation with Criticism* that puts analysis of literary terms in the context of traditional Chinese culture. The intellectual tradition is mostly composed of a set of "terms" that have their own long history, complex resonance and influence and are mutually defined in the system which evolve along the passing of time and are related with the concepts in other fields (Owen, 2003: 2). Each literary term has its own history, during which its meaning and significance underwent redefinition and utilization, and a closed system was formed with other related terms. The meaning of classical Chinese literary terms separated from this system sounds inevitably ambiguous to the western scholars but rather clear and familiar to the ancient Chinese literati. Thus, Stephen Owen prefers an "awkward" version than a natural one in terminology translation, since readers would recognize the term having been translated when they are confronted with the "awkward" version. Translation of key terms should be combined with transliteration so as to remind readers of the reality that the literal translation does not equal the meaning of the Chinese characters (Ibid: 15).

In the chapter "Cultural Tang" in the *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* edited by Stephen Owen, literal translation combined with transliteration is adopted complemented with annotations sometimes as

advocated by James Liu. The underlying reason why he advocates for transliteration lies in the fact that there is no better translation for a certain term. The meaning of a term would be misunderstood after being translated for being divorced from its original cultural and historical context. But transliteration ranks first in reducing the extent of such misunderstanding. Thus, Stephen Owen digs deeper for the validity of transliteration, a commonly used translation method, and seeks to view the Chinese literary term on an equal footing with the Western counterpart instead of just accusing the classical literary term of lacking in modern terminology standards.

The study of Chinese literary terminology by Western scholars mostly proceeds from the Western perspective tinged with individual intellectual interest and judgment as noticed by C.H.Wang in his following remarks that "the scientific method that calls for analysis and synthesis of the subjects in the process of critical study, for purpose of interpretation and evaluation, is generally unknown in traditional Chinese criticism" (Wang, 1979: 530). But later he mentions that "declining familiarity with the classics in the twentieth century makes traditional criticism seem to be more of a problem than it actually is" (Ibid: 531), which may partly indicate that the accessibility of the background of such terms by the classical literati would generate no "problem" for them. Thus, such Western perspective makes foreign scholars sometimes stay blind to the intertextuality of Chinese literary terms that may seem ambiguous and inarticulated if taken away from its own system and context, especially compared with the features of modern Western literary criticism.

But Stephen Owen breaks the ground by analyzing Chinese literary terms in their own cultural context and opposes separation of the understanding of the term from the cultural system that produces the term. These terms stay essential to Chinese civilization, which are included in the history, rooted in the texts owned by the civilization, and shared by all other intellectual branches, being only a little bit different in the reference system in its use (Owen, 2003: 17). Besides, the variability of literary terms is also discussed, which is regarded as neutral reality and has the active response from other scholars as analyzed that "variability is a basic feature of language. Sapir once said that everyone knows that language is variable, but the variability is regarded as a negative feature of language over the past years, a phenomenon violating the norms of language needed to be eradicated" (Fang, 2012: 125). Thus, the freedom of change and possibility of redefinition of the terms stated by Stephen

Owen could be seen as a form of such variation, which requires no thorough eradication, especially for the Chinese literary terms. But the variation of misreading and mistranslation due to the inability of translator should be avoided since it is not conducive to the representation and dissemination of the connotations encoded in the term in the different language and world.

The discussion of classical Chinese literary terms by the Western scholars now and then in relevant works testifies to the importance of these terms in interpreting the Chinese literary theory and even the much broader Chinese culture. And their confusions in this regard show the difficulty involved in deep understanding of these terms and their translation. The proposed method of naming, literal translation and so on could not fully represent the terms' meaning in an inter-cultural context, which would be investigated in depth in the last part of the paper.

FACTORS FOR THE INADEQUACY OF RELEVANT STUDY'S STATUS QUO

The inadequacy of the study's status quo is rather obvious, which is attributable to the following factors and makes the study in the paper more meaningful. The first one is the underrated attention to this field. The marginality of study for translation of literary terminology on the whole has something to do with its low rate of practicability and usefulness in the short run compared with the terms in medicine and so on.

What's more important, it is related with the difficulty of translation of literary terms. One difficulty is the closedness of the literary terms with social and cultural dimensions, which "entails the reality of being hard to find two totally equal literary terms in literature between Chinese and English as those technical terms do" (Chen, 1989: 31). The basic requirement in terminology translation is its accuracy due to the scientific and professional feature of terms, which is hard to be realized in translation of Chinese literary terms due to the terms' strong literariness as analyzed by the above scholars. Thus, a more subjective and diversified standard should be introduced in this respect. Such a situation entails the problem of a definite disciplinary category into which literary terminology translation should be classified – namely, whether being

grouped into the category of terminology or into the field of literary studies.

And the interdisciplinary dimension of translation of literary terms makes the matter more complicated for the inclusion of knowledge of terminology, literature, culture, and art in interpretation and translation of the terms. And the tradition of "memorizing" and "awakening" of literature in ancient times left us rather limited documents to restore the context of the terms. Such situation in the final analysis arises from the literati's indifference to the defining of the terms.

The over-estimated importance attached to the Western terminology over the last several decades is also attributable to the inadequacy of study on translation of Chinese literary terminology for the Chinese side besides the above factors. The academics in China has been and is accustomed to expounding literature and art with Western terminology. Cao Shunqing names such phenomena as "aphasia," which refers to the loss of discourse. The commonality of "aphasia" to some extent illustrates the inadequacy of studies about terminology translation.

So the inadequacy of the current study in this aspect for one thing displays the difficulty of interpreting and translating classical Chinese literary terms and for another, proves the necessity of more research in future. And that's where the paper comes in and hopes to serve as a good beginning for future relevant study.

PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION OF LITERARY TERMS IN THE *HISTORY OF CHINESE LITERATURE*

Translation of literary terms, in essence, is the designation of the same signified in different signs. The irreconcilable differences among languages often determine the impossibility of completely representing a signified in another language for literary terms. Under such circumstances, translators may choose several different signifiers in the target language to represent the same signified in the original one. But it may cause the ambiguity and instability of the signifier of the literary terminology and polysemy of the original signified, which is also called phenomenon of "neutralization" by Roland Barthes in the brief sense. "Neutralization," a commonly used term in semiotics, means the presence of two signifiers for the same signified. "Neutralization" in the translation of literary terms in the *History of Chinese Literature* in the Anglophone world is manifested in the following aspects.

The first aspect lies in the disunity among translated versions for the same term in transliteration. Or more concretely, the adoption of two different pinyin systems for the same literary term in transliteration. For instance, we could find the two renditions of the Chinese genre "词"as "Tz'u" and "Ci" in the English versions of *History of Chinese Literature*. The selected eight books of *History of Chinese Literature* mostly use the Wade-Giles Romanization, except the two recently complied histories, namely the *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* and the *Chinese Literature: a very short introduction*.

But the explanation or literal translation juxtaposed with transliteration may constitute another kind of "neutralization" for explanation and transliteration are put on a par in designation of the same term. For instance, in the *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, "诸宫调"i s rendered into "all keys and modes (zhugongdiao)," where both "all keys and modes" and "zhugongdiao" could refer to the signified "诸宫调." Thus, "all keys and modes" and "zhugongdiao" with their respectively different signifiers form a "neutralized" rather than "opposed" relation, for they both refer to the same signified "诸宫调."

Another prominent kind of "neutralization" is the disunity in the translated versions for the same literary terms other than transliteration, whether by use of literal or free translation. And among the free translated versions, one calls for special attention due to its forced analogy between the Chinese and English literary terms in translation. Such analogy does little good in the "going out" for Chinese literary terms because it often interprets the Chinese terms under the Western discourse. Any translation could do changes to the source term, which is unavoidable in translation of core concepts and key terms that are essential to a nation's civilization due to the complex history encoded in these concepts and terms. The forced analogy of the Chinese term by the Western one, in essence, equals the replacement of the literary norm by another foreign one, causing the most detrimental changes in the meaning of a term, which is usually imperceptible by the readers.

The previous heatedly discussed "forced interpretation" first proposed by Zhang Jiang may offer some illumination in this regard. He expounds the definition of forced interpretation as "the subjective interpretation of text and literature under preconditioned intention, perspective and conclusion in deviation of the source literary discourse" (Zhang, 2015: 7). Western scholarship remains rather vigilant on the "extent" of

interpretation dating back to the interpretation of the Bible, down to the classical hermeneutics developed by Wilhelm Dilthey and philosophical hermeneutics proposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer. And the diversified development of Western literary theories further enlarges the extent of interpretation by including the dimension of readers. And the overestimated role of the readership as developed in readers' response theory and the resulting over-interpretation began to catch the attention of some scholars. One of them is E.D. Hirsch who put forward the concept of meaning of the author and significance of the text.

But Zhang's proposition of "forced interpretation," different from the Western scholars' focus on the literary theory itself, proceeds from the deficiency of the Western literary theory in inter-cultural interpretation. This proposition aims to bring forth the issue of the rebuilding of Chinese literary theory and its stance of analyzing Western theory on an equal footing with the Chinese one itself is a resistance to the Chinese scholarship's blind following of the Western theories.

"Forced interpretation" and the above mentioned "aphasia" could also describe the translation of Chinese literary terms. We would term this as "forced translation," which is rather common in the translation of the name for a literary genre in the selected histories. For instance, the translation of the genre "诔," which is rendered into the term "dirge" other than "lei."

Despite their similarity in expressing sorrow in memory of the deceased, "诔" and "dirge" are not identical in their signifiers. Firstly, they are different in the object of the composition. "诔" is usually used by one with higher social ranking compared with the deceased so as to decide the posthumous title under the ancient feudal hierarchical system. Such invisible rule is nowhere to be found in composition of a dirge. What's more, it is rare for a "诔" to be created for an animal.

In addition, they differ in the content. "诔" in its pursuit of objectivity is usually filled with praise for the deceased due to its determining role in judging value of a person's lifehood. But "dirge," thanks to the absence of such role, is more oriented towards the expression of one's sad feelings with philosophical ponderings on the life and death of human.

And lastly, the divergences in their forms. The composition of a "诔" integrates the prose with verse while dirge is mostly hexameter. Thus, the analogy of "诔" by dirge covers the uniqueness of the former produced

and developed in its own cultural context. "诔" s better rendered into "Lei" with notes of "an ancient Chinese literary genre sung over the dead for its lifelong accomplishments in the form of parallel structures." Thus, "forced translation" reduces or even eradicates the culturally semiotic dimension of these genre terms in representing the inherent literary and cultural connotations for a nation's literature. And such translation strategy should be rejected to the utmost extent.

Finally, the "neutralization" in the form of literally translated versions also abounds in the selected histories such as in the translation of literary school. Take the translation of literary school "建安七子" for example. "子," literally meaning sons and daughters, could also be a respectful title to teachers or refer to a learned man. And "子" in "建安七子" mainly carries the last aspect of meaning. Translation of terms as "建安七子" should give due consideration of the cultural connotations of the literary school and its role in the development of literary history. Thus, one should not simply choose words as "school," "master" and "poet."

We would have a brief introduction of the school's background before analyzing its translated versions. "建安七子", a term originally originated in "Historical Allusions and Essays", a work on literary theory by Cao Pi, includes the seven literati in the Jian'an period. The school is now seen as literary symbol in that period. The earlier literary creation by this school focuses more on the social issues due to the destabilizing environment then. But later members of this school turned to the expression of illusory personal feelings in face of reality. Though belonging to the same school, the seven literati are rather individualistic in creation under the encouragement of following one's temperament. The selected histories render this term into "the Seven Poets of Jian'an Period," "the Seven Masters of Jian'an Period" and "the Seven Scholars of Jian'an Period."

These renditions are mainly different in the translation of "子," all of which could not fully represent the cultural connotations of the term. Firstly, the word "poet," originally taken from the Greek "poiētēs or poētēs," has the initial meaning of "maker." It later began to gain the sense of writers for all kinds of composition until the fourteenth century. It now mainly refers to writers in verse composition and persons with strong imagination and creativity. Poets are usually seen as "godlike" for their important role in civilization since they are "born and prechosen

rather than acquired. Poet is more like eulogy to person with talent than a description of his occupation… Poetry is often related with wisdom in many cultures. R. W. Emerson regards poet as the namer who turns the world into words" (Greene, 2012: 923). Thus, poet has high status in the Western culture, often being deified. Writers such as Virgil and Dante are called "the Poet."

The inappropriateness in selection of "Poet" in translation of "建安七子" derives from the overrated evaluation of this school for even they had played an important role in literary development, they do not enjoy such status as Dante in the Western literature. Besides, their composition includes diversified genres other than just poetry. And the other two versions also fail to fulfill the task of representing the cultural dimension of this term. Scholar, derived from the word "school," refers to learned and knowledge persons. And the word "master" means persons with professional excellence in a field usually combined with propositions "in" and "of." Therefore, the choice of these two words may generalize the meaning of this literary term. Furthermore, "scholar" in the modern sense is quite a different concept from "writer" in ancient times. "子" here may be better rendered into "littérateur," a term from the French, means "a man of letters" who engage in literary research or creation. Thus, we have the translated version for the term: Jian'an Qizi, the Seven Great littérateur of Jian'an Period.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis, it is obvious that simple free and forced translation should be avoided for its failure to convey the culturally semiotic dimension of classical Chinese literary terms. Such translation strategies indicate the stance towards the foreign culture. Transliteration, though qualified as translation in the strict sense, could be an effective way to make a term enter the foreign culture if combined with proper notes or interpretation. It could, in some way, remind the readers of the heterogeneity of the term, thus offsetting the negative effect of "neutralization" and guaranteeing its independency, with the ultimate aim to make the term integrated into the culture of the new land. Standards such as "dynamic equivalence" have no validity in judging the quality of translation for literary terminology due to the strong prescriptiveness of Chinese characters.

As known, signs are divided into icon, index and symbol based on C.S. Peirce's categorization with descending degree of resemblance or iconicity. Despite the inherent iconicity of the majority of signs, a small portion has less or even no iconicity, and their meaning has to be decided by the interpreter, as in the case of symbols characterized by prescriptiveness. Since prescriptiveness is socially bound, symbols in most cases cannot be universally applied across cultures, as icons and indexes do. As most languages in the world, Chinese characters are dominated by such kind of prescriptiveness. They originated from pictographs, and has not evolved along the direction of alphabetic writing, partly to satisfy the need of consolidating the great empire of ancient China. The character "文" (wen) literally means "pictures", and becomes written language only if combined with pronunciation. Prescribed pronunciation, written style and interpretation constitute to be a prerequisite for an object to attain the status as a lingual sign (Zhao, 2016: 86). Among the four-kind of methods of word-formation in Zhen Qiao's "Six categories of Chinese characters" (六书), Zhao Yuanren holds that "Pictographs equal icon, and the other three, namely Ideographs, Compound Ideographs and Phonetic Compound are all index developed based on pictographs" (1968: 103-04). The increased proportion of "Phonetic Compound" in modern Chinese partly resulted from the turn from traditional characters to simplified ones, promoting the "evolution in the Chinese character from icons into indexes and further into symbols guided by prescriptiveness" (Zhao, 2016: 87).

Such prescriptiveness poses great difficulty for translators due to the role of the inherent social and cultural elements in the terms in determining character interpretation, which is nowhere to be found in a different languages and cultures, as with the literary terminology discussed above. This changed environment could easily destroy "prescribed interpretation" for source literary terms due to Chinese and Western literary divergences and the intra-cultural evolution of terms. This would cause various interpretations and the 'neutralization' for one single term in the different languages. Thus, transliteration could be effective in avoiding neutralization, and it should be advocated for in the translation of literary terminology. It would help adjust the mind-set of following the Western literary theory in order to rebuild classical Chinese literary theory in modern contexts. More research on translation of literary terminology is a good starting point because of its importance in the literary tradition.

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Notes

[1] The selected versions of *History of Chinese Literature* refer to those written in English, including: *A History of Chinese Literature* (Giles 1901), *Chinese Literature: A Historical Introduction* (Chen Shou-yi 1961), *Early Chinese Literature* (B. Watson 1962), *A History of Chinese Literature* (Lai Ming 1964), *An Introduction to Chinese Literature* (Liu Wu-chi 1966), *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (Mair 2010), *The Cambridge*

History of Chinese Literature (Kang-i Sun Chang & Stephen Owen 2010), *Chinese Literature: a very short introduction* (Knight 2012).

[2] The number "120" is cited from the statistics made by the following two papers: "A Probe into the Terminological Translation Studies and the Lack of Literary Terminology Translation Studies in China" and "A Bibliometric Analysis of China's Production on Translation of Terms".

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