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*'IF I HAVE WANDER'D IN THOSE  
PATHS': THE RECEPTION OF  
ROBERT BURNS IN CHINA*



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**This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**October 2024**



*For Shaohui Kuang*

## ABSTRACT

This research represents the first extensive critical study of the relationship between Robert Burns, arguably the most renowned Scottish poet, and China. It examines the spectrum of Robert Burns's reception in translation, criticism, music and Burns Night celebrations in China for over a century since Burns was initially mentioned in 1877 in the diary of Liu Xihong (d.1891), an ambassador of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912). In 1908, Burns's 'A red red Rose' was translated by Su Manshu (1884-1918) as the earliest rendition in China and it was continually translated throughout the 1920s, contributing to Burns's reputation as a love and lyric poet before 1937. Since the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, for Burns's Scottish identity in response to the need of fighting against Japanese aggression, Burns was shaped as a patriotic Scottish poet and a representative of the literature of ethnic minorities. In 1959, Burns's reputation as 'a great people's poet' reached its zenith for a consequence of his perceived peasant birth aligned with the political ideological demand of the New Folksong Movement (1958-9), and the celebration of the 200th anniversary of his birth. The subsequent Cultural Revolution (1966-76) disrupted the publication of commentaries and translations of Burns's works. Since the policy of reform and opening up in 1978, the ideological tint in Burns's reception began to diminish, marking a reevaluation stage that spans approximately fifty years of comprehensive scholarship from the late 1970s to the present day. In this context, this thesis specifically scrutinizes the translation strategies of Wang Zuoliang, an influential Burns scholar and translator in China, including the comparisons between his various translated versions, and his translations with those of other translators. Furthermore, this thesis examines Burns's appeal beyond text in mainland China and by the Chinese diaspora, not least through the celebration of Burns Night and Burns's music. This thesis ultimately argues that the political ideology and Chinese traditional Confucianism have attributed to the trajectory of Burns translations and reception in China.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 A LOVE POET: EARLY RECEPTION 1876 - 1930 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3 A PATRIOTIC POET AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LITERATURE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES: 1930 - 1949 .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>4 ‘A GREAT POET OF THE PEOPLE’: IDEOLOGICAL TRANSLATION AND RECEPTION OF BURNS IN ‘THE SEVENTEEN YEARS’: 1949 - 1966.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>5 REVALUATION SINCE 1976 .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>6 WANG ZUOLIANG: THE BURNS TRANSLATOR IN CHINA .....</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>7 BURNS RECEPTION BEYOND TEXT: ROBERT BURNS IN CHINA.....</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>8 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>253</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisors, Professor Murray Pittock and Dr Pauline Mackay, for their invaluable guidance, insightful feedback, and unwavering support throughout the entire process of researching and writing this dissertation during the long journey. In particular, during the pandemic, I was burnt out for my only daughter's depression in 2021. Their expertise, encouragement, and dedication have been instrumental in shaping the direction and content of this work.

I also extend heartfelt appreciation to the members of the Scottish Literature Department, Professor Rhona Brown and Professor Alan Riach, for their valuable feedback, constructive criticism, and scholarly insights, which have significantly contributed to the refinement and improvement of this thesis.

Special thanks are due to Ally Mackay, Donald Mackay, Essra Husain, Heather Thorp for providing meticulous proofreading work, Dr Yuanyuan Zhou for her helpful suggestions for final typesetting and Xiong Ni for her help in resources in China for conducting this research. I am also grateful to Professor Noel Peacock and Sandyford Henderson Church for their support, prayers, encouragement, and help throughout the process of my studies.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Shaohui Kuang who has provided the financial and spiritual support to me, my daughter, Emily, my sister, Suxian Li and my parents, whose unwavering love and encouragement have been a constant source of inspiration and motivation.

# DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

**Name:** Suping Li

**Date:** 10.10.2024



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNKI	The China's National Knowledge Infrastructure
CPC	The Communist Party of China
NFM	The New Folksong Movement
MFM	The May Fourth Movement
<i>My heart</i>	<i>My heart's in the Highlands: The Selected Poems of Robert Burns and A. E. Housman</i>
PRC	The People's Republic of China
SSJW	The Second Sino-Japanese War

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The reception of Robert Burns in China spans more than a century since the earliest recorded translation of a Burns poem into Chinese in the version of ‘A red red Rose’<sup>1</sup> by Su Manshu<sup>2</sup>, a Buddhist monk, in 1908. The piece, ‘A red red Rose’, has been translated into over thirty versions till the present day, including the influential translators’ like Wang Zuoliang (1916-1995), Yuan Shuipai (1916-1982) and Yuan Kejia (1921-2008). Burns has won a warm appeal not only in translations and academic studies but beyond text in the celebrations of Burns Night, Burns supper and music. Particularly, ‘Auld lang syne’, translated into ‘Friendship Everlasting’ (you yi di jiu tian chang), has been incredibly popular among Chinese populace that almost every one of them is able to sing it even if they are completely unaware of its author.

However, in relation to one-century of Burns’s reception in China, there are only three articles: Wu Yun’s ‘Historical Context and Translation Transition – Robert Burns’s Translation in China’<sup>3</sup> (2014), Song Da’s ‘Chinese Translation in Robert Burns – Insufficient Construction of His Scottish Identity’(2016), and Wang Gaidi and Chen Mingxi’s ‘The Bard of Ayrshire in China: A Review on Li Zhengshuan’s *Selected Poems*

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<sup>1</sup> All the titles of Burns’s pieces quoted and mentioned in this thesis are referred from *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* edited by James Kinsley, 3 Vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, Chinese names referring to surname at the front and first name at the back are translated into English according to the original forms without altering its order.

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the translations into English of Chinese in this thesis, including the comments on Burns, and the titles of books and criticisms, are made by the author.

of *Robert Burns* (2018), and one chapter in regards to Burns’s reception in China in Song Da’s doctoral thesis, *A Study of Chinese Translation Problems of Scottish Literature in the Framework of English Literature* (published in 2017).<sup>4</sup> Wu elaborates the transition in Burns’s translation approaches across various historical stages in China; Wang and Chen conduct a literature review on Burns’s translations in China for recommending Li Zhengshuan’s recent Burns’s translation (2016), while Song stresses the continuous absence of Scottishness (Scottish identity and dialects) in Burns’s translations. These studies focus on the various translating styles in the translations of Burns’s works within the various historical context in China without further discussions on Burns’s reception in the diasporic Chinese, the literary relation with China’s Burns scholars published Russia or Burns beyond text in China.

In international literary criticism, China’s Burns scholars have contributed articles in relation to Burns’s translations and reception. ‘Robert Burns and His Readers in China’ by Zhou Guozhen in 1991 examined Burns’s appeal in China, stressing the ‘brevity’ of his poetry and focusing on the comparison between Burns’s works and Chinese ancient poets.<sup>5</sup> Liu Xiaozhen conventionally examined ‘A red red Rose’ from the perspectives of ‘language’, ‘imagery’ and ‘rhetoric’<sup>6</sup> in ‘Robert Burns and ‘A red red Rose’’ in 2019. Li Zhengshuan exclusively expounded the transition of translation styles in seven versions of ‘A red red Rose’ in China in ‘A Survey of Translation of Robert Burns’s ‘A Red, Red Rose’ in China’ in 2016, and Li looked to the one-century reception of Burns translation in China in his recent ‘Robert Burns’ Poetry During Critical Years in China’ in 2023.

In Anglo-American academia, only Clark McGinn briefly traced the trajectory with two sections on Burns Night and the Burns Supper in Hongkong and China mainland from the very early records of St. Andrew’s Dinners by the Matheson trading family in 1832 in his *The Burns Supper: A Comprehensive History* (2019). In 2007, reconsidering Burns’s impact in a global culture, with support the Arts and Humanities Research

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<sup>4</sup> Song Da, *A Study of Chinese Translation Problems of Scottish Literature in the Framework of English Literature* [*ying guo wen xue kuang jia xia de su ge lan wen xue han yi wen ti yan jiu*] (Beijing: Capital Normal University Press, 2017). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>5</sup> Zhou Guozhen, ‘Robert Burns and His Readers in China’, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Vol.26: Iss. 1 (1991), pp.559- 68 (568).

<sup>6</sup> Liu Xiaozhen, ‘Robert Burns and ‘A red red Rose’ [Peng Si he yi duo hong hong de meigui]’, *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Vol. 311 (2019), pp.41-5.

Council and directed by Professor Murray Pittock in collaboration with experts in England, Scotland, Ireland, Catalonia/Spain, the Czech Republic, France, Germany and Canada, the project ‘The Global Burns Network’ aimed to ‘raise the understanding of the nature and scale of Burns’s international profile and influence’.<sup>7</sup> One part of the project’s aims was to disseminate research findings in ‘the reception of Burns in other literatures and cultures, the impact of Burns on images of Scotland in these cultures, and the cultural and social presence of Burns: statues, Burns Suppers and the Burns Federation and their roles in the poet’s continuing international influence’.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it aimed to encourage not only scholarly publication on Burns but increased awareness and interest in Burns Suppers and other celebrations and the role of Burns in mutual understanding of his ‘global’ significance across cultures and beyond the borders of Scotland. Many publications grew out of this work and the Beyond Text project that followed, ‘Robert Burns: Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory, 1796 – 1909’,<sup>9</sup> including the essay collections *Robert Burns in Global Culture* (2011) and *The Reception of Robert Burns in Europe* (2014). Nonetheless, it can be seen that the collections in effect focus more on the European nations and North America though note *Robert Burns in Global Culture* has a chapter covering Jamaica and Bengal, yet the reception in Asian countries such as China is not mentioned. Therefore, this thesis will present China’s reception of Burns and insert the largest missing piece in the jigsaw of Burns in global culture.

Furthermore, the project, the Bibliography of Scottish Literature in Translation (hereafter BOSLIT), funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh, was relaunched with a new database in November 2023. This project, aims to rescue and secure BOSLIT, a digital bibliography launched during the 1990s and referencing more than 30,000

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Welcome to the Global Burns Network: Robert Burns Worldwide’

<<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/researchcentresandnetworks/globalburnsnetwork/>>  
accessed 14 March 2023.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Welcome to the Global Burns Network: Robert Burns Worldwide’.

<<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/researchcentresandnetworks/globalburnsnetwork/>>  
accessed 14 March 2023.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Robert Burns: Inventing Tradition and Securing Memory, 1796-1909’

<<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/researchcentresandnetworks/globalburnsnetwork/robertburnsinventingtraditionandsecuringmemory/>> accessed 14 March 2023.

translations of Scottish texts since the medieval era.<sup>10</sup> Currently, the database includes only four Chinese translations of Burns’s writing. This thesis serves as a significant contribution to augmenting the repertoire of informational materials concerning translations of Burns.

In order to delineate a panoramic contour of Burns’s reception in mainland China, in Chinese culture and by the Chinese diaspora, the thesis will draw on Western translation theory in the context of China, China’s translation theory of the last century, and Stuart Hall’s model of cultural reception in chapter five of Wang’s translation strategies, to determine: How and why Burns has been accepted and won the warm appeal in China; what, how and why the role of Burns has been in understanding Chinese culture? What approaches taken by Chinese translators to appreciate and read Burns; issues and deficiencies that have arisen during Burns’s dissemination and reception; The future of Burns studies in China and the extent to which Chinese translators and their renditions succeed in helping propel Burns’s appeal in China.

Meanwhile, besides the Burns’s translations and studies, Burns celebrations like Burns Night and Burns Supper, as a performance of Burns’s reception, have emerged in China and diasporic Chinese communities. As a form of cultural and social presence, what, how and why do the Burns Nights and Burns Suppers and their roles in the poet’s influence continue going in China beyond text? What are the deep roots behind them? By undertaking this research, the thesis intends to demonstrate a complete internal and external contour of Burns’s reception in the mainland China and Chinese diaspora, as well as an external picture of the comparison between Russia and China.

In light of a first account by Wu Yun in 2014, and recently reiterated by Song Da in 2016, and Wang Gaidi, Chen Mingxi in 2018,<sup>11</sup> it is possible to divide Burns’s

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Welcome to the BOSLIT – The Blog’

< <https://blog.boslit.glasgow.ac.uk/> > accessed 10 March 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Wu Yun, ‘Historical Context and Translation Transition: Robert Burns’s Translation in China [li shi yu jing yu fan yi bian qian–luo bo te Peng Si zai zhong guo de yi jie]’, *Anglo-American Literary Essays*, 20 (2014), pp.75-90. [Originally in Chinese]; Song Da, ‘Chinese Translation in Robert Burns – Insufficient Construction of His Scottish Identity [han yi Peng Si: su ge lan xing wei neng zhang xian de ying guo shi ren]’, *China’s Literary Studies*, 01 (2016), pp.113-21.[Originally in Chinese]; Wang Kaidi and Chen Mingxi, ‘The Bard of Ayrshire in China: A Review on Li Zhengshuan’s Selected Poems of Robert Burns [Peng Si shi ge bai nian yi jie zong shu: jian ping yi zhu Peng Si shi ge jing xuan]’, *Journal of Yanshan University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, Vol.19, 3 (2019), pp.34-40. [Originally in Chinese]

reception in China into three broad stages: an initial period of discovering Burns before the establishment of People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949; 'the seventeen years' of ideological translation from 1949 to 1966 when started the Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976); and the final period of reevaluation for Burns's works, forty years of a gradually depoliticalized scholarship of Burns from the late 1970s to the present day. Following the classification of the stages, this thesis will state further details under the frame of each period.

Before looking into Burns translation in 1980s, it is necessary to briefly clarify the difference of poems and songs between Britain and China. Poetry, in Chinese, broadly refers to poems and songs. In ancient-time China, those without tunes are poems, while those with tunes songs. Yet in modern-time China, unlike poems separated from songs in the West, poetry is generally referred to as only poems. Burns's songs in Chinese translations are referred as poems, specifically lyrical poems. For instance, Wang Zuoliang accounted in the preface in *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1985), 'This new translation collection consists of sixty-one poems. [...] In terms of lyrical poems, it adds many as well, such as 'Sweet Afton', 'Saw Ye Bonnie Lesley', 'The Gallant Weaver', 'Highland Mary', 'Open the door to me, Oh' and the other poems'.<sup>12</sup> It can be seen that Burns's songs are compiled into Wang's translation collection as poems or lyrical poems. It is not only Wang who sees and selects Burns's works in this way, as there are other Chinese translators of Burns like Yuan Shuipai and Yuan Kejia whose translation collections are referred as 'Selected Poems of Robert Burns'.

The early stage in the history of Burns's acceptance, strictly speaking, launched with the translation of 'A red red Rose' in 1908 by Su Manshu, a Buddhist monk, writer, poet and translator, and published in *Chao Yin*<sup>13</sup> in 1911. Prior to Su, Burns was mentioned at the first time in a diary of a scholar-official<sup>14</sup> of Qing Dynasty (1636-1912),

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<sup>12</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'Preface', in *Robert Burns: Selected Poems [Peng Si shi xuan]*, Robert Burns, tr. Wang Zuoliang (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1985), pp.1-36 (30). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>13</sup> *Chao Yin*, an anthology of foreign poetry edited by Su Manshu, was published in Tokyo in 1911, which will be discussed in detail in chapter one.

<sup>14</sup> The scholar-officials, also known as literati, scholar-gentlemen or scholar-bureaucrats, generally refers to the government officials and prestigious scholars in Chinese imperial society, forming a distinct social class.

Liu Xihong<sup>15</sup>(?-1891). Liu visited the United Kingdom in 1876, as a deputy ambassador of Qing, and stayed in Britain for over nine months. In accordance with the requirements of the Qing administration for ministers on diplomatic missions, ‘keeping a detailed record of the time of negotiation and the local conditions and customs of different countries’,<sup>16</sup> Liu left a diary, ‘Britain Journey’, describing his trip in Britain, including his visit to Scotland and Burns’s tomb. Liu described his first impression on seeing Burns’s tomb which will be elaborated in chapter one. Unfortunately, as a private diary, it was typographed by Jiangshi in Changsha after twenty years (1895-7) with only forty-eight copies in circulation, resulting in no impact in Burns’s role in Chinese readership albeit the first precious record of Burns.<sup>17</sup> More than almost a century later, it was republished by Hunan People’s Press in 1981, Zhonghua Book Press 1985 and Yuelu Press 1986. Yet despite an ancient archive, it did not influence in the 1980s, when Chinese translation came to focus more on modern Western literature.

It is interesting to note, to some degree, that the early twentieth-century China, into which Burns was brought, bears some resemblance to the eighteenth-century Scotland in which Burns lived. Both countries are in a period of turbulent social transition and ideological enlightenment. At the beginning of the twentieth century, China was in a complex and changing moment: the old times to the new times – the transition from monarchy to democratic, from agricultural to commercial civilization, and from handicraft to industrial society.

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<sup>15</sup> Liu Xihong (? - 1891) was a famous anti-westernization scholar-official of the Qing Dynasty in the 1860s, and one of the representative figures of conservatism. In 1876, he served as deputy ambassador to the UK and Minister to Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Netherlands. He could be seen one of the first diplomatic envoys to go abroad in modern times in China.

<sup>16</sup> Liu Xihong, *Diary of Britain Journey [ying yao si ji]* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1986), p.192. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>17</sup> Song Da, *A Study of Chinese Translation Problems of Scottish Literature in the Framework of English Literature*, p. 82.

After the First Opium War<sup>18</sup> (1840-2), the territorial and economic concessions arising from it, the Qing government was forced to be more open to European commerce and began to modernize accordingly.<sup>19</sup> China's learning journey has evolved from science and technology to political system finally to culture and literature. During the journey, translation is seen as a main channel. After the First Opium War, Wei Yuan<sup>20</sup> (1794-1857) presented an influential idea, 'Learning advanced technology from Europeans in order to fight against them'(shi yi chang ji yi zhi yi), opening the door of China's learning journey from the West. During the course of Westernization Movement,<sup>21</sup> the

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<sup>18</sup> The First Opium War, also known as the Opium War or the Anglo-Sino War, was a series of military engagements fought between Britain and the Qing of China between 1840 and 1842. The immediate issue was the Chinese enforcement of their ban on the opium trade by seizing private opium stocks from merchants at Canton and threatening to impose the death penalty for future offenders. Despite the opium ban, the British government supported the merchants' demand for compensation for seized goods, and insisted on the principles of free trade and equal diplomatic recognition with China. Opium was Britain's single most profitable commodity trade of the nineteenth century. After months of tensions between the two nations, the British navy launched an expedition in June 1840, which ultimately defeated the Chinese using technologically superior ships and weapons by August 1842. The British then imposed the Treaty of Nanking, which forced China to increase foreign trade, give compensation, and cede Hongkong to the British, accelerating the disintegration of China's smallholding economy. Twentieth century nationalists consider 1840 as the start of a century of humiliation, and many historians consider it the beginning of modern Chinese history.

<sup>19</sup> A Ying, *A History of Novels in the Late Qing Dynasty [wan qing xiao shuo shi]* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Literature and Art Press, 2009), p. 184. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>20</sup> Wei Yuan: a thinker, literati and statesman of Qing Dynasty. He was a representative of the first group of intellectuals who 'opened their eyes to see the world' in modern China and advocated learning the advanced Western science and technology.

<sup>21</sup> Westernization Movement, also known as Self-Improvement Movement, was carried out by the Westernization Group of the Qing administration from the 1860s to the late 1890s, which introduced western military equipment, machine production and science and technology to save the Qing administration. On January 11, 1861, Aixinjueluo Yi, together with Guiliang and Wen Xiang, presented *Six Issues for the Overall Foreign Affairs*, and launched a westernization campaign with the goal of enriching the country and strengthening the troops. After the Xinyou Reform in 1861, the Westernization Group introduced advanced western science and technology on a large scale and set up modernized military industry and civilian enterprises. In 1894, the entire Beiyang Navy was wiped out in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894), marking the failure of the Westernization Movement, which lasted for more than thirty years. Although the Westernization Movement objectively stimulated the development of Chinese capitalism and to a certain extent resisted the economic input of foreign capitalism, it did not make China on the road to prosperity.



translators/intellecuals expected to engage their translation to cater the needs of military to enhance the nation’s power, and they focused on military science and technology. However, after the entire defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War<sup>22</sup>(1894-5), for witnessing the huge improvement of Meiji Restoration to Japanese nation, the intellectuals with a desire to strengthen home country realized that a country only with advanced weaponry would not be a powerful one if without an advanced political system. The translation therefore shifted to the realm of European democratic politics. After the significantly political reforms, Hundred Days Reform<sup>23</sup> in 1898 took place and Xinhai Revolution<sup>24</sup> occurred in 1911 led by Sun Zhongshan (also known as Sun Yet-Sen, 1866-1925), the first president of the Republic of China who was related to Burns to some degree which will be examined in chapter six. Xinhai Revolution successfully overthrew the Qing Dynasty which represented that monarchy dominated China for more than 2,000 years resulting in the concept of democracy and republicanism widely accepted among people. Nevertheless, there is a prevailing sentiment of disillusionment among the Chinese

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<sup>22</sup> The First Sino-Japanese War refers to the conflict between Japan and China in 1894-5 that marked the emergence of Japan as a major world power and demonstrated the weakness of the Chinese empire. In 1894, the Donghak Uprising broke out in Korea, and the Korean government forces retreated steadily and were forced to beg for help from the imperial Qing government. Japan also took the opportunity to send troops to Korea to provoke a war. In 1894, the Fengdao naval Battle broke out on July 25, and the First Sino-Japanese War began. The war ended in the defeat of China and the total annihilation of the Beiyang Naval forces. Under the military pressure of Japanese militarism, the Qing government signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki on April 17, 1895. The Sino-Japanese War brought unprecedented national crisis to the Chinese nation.

<sup>23</sup> Hundred Days Reform, also known as Wuxu Reform, refers to a bourgeois reform movement in 1898 by reformists represented by Kang Youwei (1858-1927) and Liang Qichao (1873-1929) through the emperor Guangxu (1871-1908) to advocate the learning from the West, promoting science and culture, reforming the political and educational system, and developing agriculture, industry and commerce. The reform started on 11th June 1898 and ended up on 21st September 1898, lasting for only a hundred days therefore it is entitled as Hundred Days Reform.

<sup>24</sup> The Xinhai Revolution refers to a nationwide revolution that took place in the year of Xinhai in the Chinese lunar calendar, namely from 1911 to early 1912, aimed at overthrowing the autocratic monarchy of the Qing Dynasty and establishing a republic. In the narrow sense, the revolution of 1911 refers to the revolutionary events that occurred in China from the outbreak of the Wuchang Uprising on the night of October 10, 1911, to the New Year’s Day of 1912 when Sun Zhongshan took office as the provisional President of the Republic of China. Broadly speaking, Xinhai Revolution refers to the successive revolutionary movements that successfully overthrew the Qing Dynasty in China from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of 1911.

populace,<sup>25</sup> stemming from their observation of Japan's emergence as a robust and democratic neighbour, juxtaposed with the perceived ineffectiveness and inadequacy of the Chinese government, notably exemplified by its handling of the Paris Peace Conference, which in turn catalysed the May Fourth Movement (hereafter MFM)<sup>26</sup>. Intellectuals came to the realization that the mere presence of a sophisticated political framework was insufficient to fortify China; rather, they recognized the imperative of engaging with literary works to address the deficiencies within the social cultural sphere and thereby enlighten the populace.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, the third wave of translation in China's history came into being during the MFM. After more than half-century poverty and wars, the intellectuals pondered over how China could escape the fate of being invaded by the foreign powers, and soberly realized the defeats bought by the cultural tradition and cultural closure. China would always be in a passive situation if do not correct the closure or tradition. In order to save the nation and people from the peril, a cultural and ideological enlightenment movement

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<sup>25</sup> Liang Qichao, 'The Overview on Evolution of China During These Fifty Years [wu shi nian zhong guo jin hua gai lun]', in *The Anthology of Liang Qichao [Liang Qichao wen ji]*, ed. Chen Shuliang (Beijing: Yanshan Press, 2009), pp. 431-41 (437). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>26</sup> There have been four waves in the history of Chinese translation. The first is the translation of Buddhist scriptures from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Tang and Song Dynasties; the second is the translation of science and technology from the end of Ming Dynasty to the First Opium War; the third is the translation of Western learning from the First Opium War to the 1930s; there has been the fourth translation upsurge after the reform and opening-up in 1978.

The May Fourth Movement: On Fourth May 1919, thousands of students in Beijing walked the streets to protest the Paris Peace Conference's resolution to end the World War I. The Treaty of Versailles stipulated the transfer of German rights over Jiaozhou Bay to Imperial Japan even though China had always sided with the Allies against Germany. The Allies' indifference to China's sovereignty and the Chinese government's weak response aroused the nation's righteous indignation. The patriotic protests soon spread to all the major cities and set off a nationwide movement for sociopolitical and cultural reform. The May Fourth Movement, a significant turning point in the history of China, often refers to the period during 1915–1921 and often called the New Culture Movement in a broader sense, was 'a nation-wide cultural and political campaign begun on Fourth May 1919 that named for self-rejuvenation in response to China's setbacks in post-First World War international politics – as the turning point in China's search for a modern identity'. David Der-wei Wang, 'Chinese Literature from 1841 to 1937', in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume II: From 1375*, ed. by Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 413–564 (413).

<sup>27</sup> Liang Qichao, 'The Overview on Evolution of China During These Fifty Years', p.437.

arose among the Chinese intelligentsia. In 1915, Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), as one of the leaders of the intellectuals, published articles in relation to ‘democracy and science’<sup>28</sup>, and set off the New Culture Movement of the MFM, advocating a new morality and new literature opposing to the old ones. The new morality and new literature refer to the Western morality and Western literature, while the old ones the traditional China’s morality and literature. The Western literary works were seen as the tool of thoughts to enlighten and educate people, conveying the new idea of liberty and democracy. The Western literary translation, serving as an intermediary for national salvation, enlightenment and moral education, became an effective tool in their hands that the intellectuals exerted to fiercely attack the old traditional culture. The more details will be elaborated in the later chapter one.

It was under such a historical context that Burns was firstly introduced and translated in China. As a matter of fact, it was during the first wave that a large number of classical Western literary works including Burns’s were introduced into China early in the twentieth century. The translation style at the time was strongly influenced by Yan Fu (1854-1921), a forerunner of Chinese modern translation, claiming the three principles of translation, ‘Faithfulness’, ‘Expressiveness’ and ‘Elegance’. The Burns’s translations approach of the time like Su Manshu’s under Yan’s influence adopted the free translation mainly with the principle ‘Elegance’ whereby an archaic form of five-character poetry, which will be elaborated in detail in the later chapter one.

Meanwhile, the translators of the time generally pursued the political function of literary translation yet did not pay more attention to the correspondence with the sense of aesthetics or the unique national cultural connotation within original text. In 1896, Liang Qichao<sup>29</sup>(1873-1929), an influential thinker, statesman, historian, literati and one of the leader of Hundred Days Reform, claimed in his *On Translation*, ‘If we intend to survive in today’s world, it is absolutely necessary to take the translation as the top measurement

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<sup>28</sup> Chinese intellectuals affectionately at the very beginning translated the Western conception ‘democracy’ and ‘science’ into Mr. De (democracy) (de xian sheng) and Mr. Sci (sai xian sheng) at the time to welcome them when democracy and science had no formally corresponding Chinese.

<sup>29</sup> Liang Qichao: A thinker, politician, educator, historian, litterateur, one of the leaders of the Hundred Days Reform and representative of the modern Chinese reformists.

for being a powerful nation'.<sup>30</sup> In 1897, Yan Fu, in his 'The Regulations on Translation of The Imperial University of Peking', presented his tenor of translation, 'Firstly, enlightening the minds of the public; secondly, encouraging the plainness; thirdly, learning from the others and striving for progress; fourthly, the righteousness of definitions without obscurities'.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, political function has gradually become the basic discourse of literary translation. Even in the translations of love poetry, it is endowed with the educational function of breaking the political indoctrination of feudal ethical code. Burns's 'A red red Rose' was introduced as a Western poem of bold and free choice for romantic love of young men and women.

When it came to 1920s, after the MFM in 1919, with the continuous import of the Western culture and the New Cultural Movement at its peak, the main body of Chinese culture gradually lost its unified and stable status with the falling apart of the old literary system. The accepting attitude of Chinese intellectuals towards the Western literature was becoming increasingly mature and they began to reflect, question and reconstruct the previous thoughts of literary translation in the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China. In the previous translation, the translators put more emphasis on the political function to educate people, while ignoring the ontological characteristics of the original, that is to say, more 'Expressiveness' than 'Faithfulness'. At the time, the discussion of 'Faithfulness' in translating increasingly became the core of translation theory and the practical goal of translators' attention. The ideas of translation came to shift from 'the old style contains the new artistic conception' into 'the meaning of original text cannot be changed, or add some Chinese elements'.<sup>32</sup> Therefrom, the cognition of literary translation turned to 'Faithfulness' as the priority rather than previous 'Expressiveness'. Likewise, the translation in poetry gradually overthrew the thoughts of recreation ignoring the original text in the late Qing Dynasty yet turned to the essential match with the original text, opening a completely various translation practice of Western literary

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<sup>30</sup> Liang Qichao, 'On Translation [lun yi shu]', in *The Complete Works of Liang Qichao [Liang Qichao quan ji]*, Vol. I, 10Vols, ed. Zhang Pingxing (Beijing: Beijing Press, 1999), pp.44-50(45). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>31</sup> Yan Fu, 'The Regulations of Translations of The Imperial University of the Capital [jing shi da xue tang yi shu ju zhang cheng]', in *The Works of Yan Fu [Yan Fu ji]*, Vol I, 5 Vols, ed. Wang Shi (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Press, 1986), pp.127-130(130). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>32</sup> Luo Jialun, 'The Novels' Field of Nowadays China [jin ri zhong guo zhi xiao shuo jie]', *New Trend*, 1(1919). [Originally in Chinese]

poetry. It will be elaborated in more detail in later chapter one linked to the context to Western translation theory.

With the popularization of vernacular Chinese after the MFM, the translation of Burns with archaic form disappeared and. Since Su Manshu, for the preference of Chinese translators for Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’, the numerous retranslation made this love song widespread and Burns be accepted as a love poet before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (SSJW) in 1937. Of the translators, Zhou Shoujuan (1895-1968) and Wu Fangji (1896-1932) made a great contribution to Burns’s reputation as a love poet. It will be discussed further in later chapter two.

Since the SSJW, the appeal of national independence and national spirit soared in China and the ‘revolutionary literature’ emerged. In 1923, Deng Zhongxia (1894–1933) and Yun Daiying (1895–1931), members of the newly founded the Communist Party of China (hereafter CPC), declared in their journal *Chinese Youth* (zhong guo qing nian) that ‘literature should serve as a weapon to arouse the Chinese people’s revolutionary consciousness’.<sup>33</sup> Literary works, undoubtedly, became a powerful vehicle against Japanese invaders. Under such a context of the national crisis, Burns was shaped into a patriotic poet of calling on independence and freedom. Sun Yong (1902-1983) and Yuan Shuipai were the crucial translators for the shift in Burns’s reputation, particularly Yuan’s *My heart’s in the Highlands’ – Selected Poems of Robert Burns and A.E. Housman* (hereafter *My heart*) in 1944, the first Burns’s translation collection although compiled with another poet. Yuan Shuipai consciously selected some Burns’s pieces of yearning for freedom and liberty, like ‘Robert Bruce’s March to Bannockburn’, ‘The Tree of Liberty’ to encourage the spirit of fighting against the invaders. ‘The Tree of Liberty’ is seen as a Burns’s dubia by modern scholars insofar as no manuscript or confirmed printed text survives. Yet, it is interesting to note that Chinese translators see this piece as Burns’s and collect it into their selections of Burns for the theme of it linked to the French Revolution and freedom. The developing details of this piece’s translation will be discussed in later chapter three. Yuan’s selection reinforced Burns’s Scottish identity as oppressed peasantry which was exactly corresponding to the popular Chinese national literature during the period of the SSJW. As Yuan put it, ‘The thirty poems are unable to represent the oeuvres of Burns’s poetry. Yet, we can see the poet’s hatred to the darkness,

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted. David Der-wei Wang, ‘Chinese Literature from 1841 to 1937’, in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, Volume II, pp. 413–564 (494).

mourning to the poor, and joyful hymn to the American War of Independence and French Revolution in his poems.<sup>34</sup> Further to this, Yuan adopted China's folk arts like folk-song, folklore, children's song, and opera to attempt to translate Burns's Scots to be appealed to Chinese readers, which will be offered more details in later chapter. Yuan's translation is in the Chinese vernacular instead of old-style poetry, and basically corresponds to the sentence sequence, diction, pause and rhyme of the original poem. On the whole, the translation is characterized by Europeanization and is basically faithful to the original work. However, the expression is in a stiff and anglicized style, which did not accord with the reading aesthetics habit of the Chinese readers without the beauty and charm of poetry, which will be elaborated in detail in later chapter. Yet, by Yuan's translation, Burns's class identity was established and shifted into a peasant poet from previous love poet only. Although Burns was mentioned as a significant poet, Yuan essentially couched the poet in terms of the peasant stressing his class identity. Simultaneously, despite the fact that 'Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn' was translated the first time, the lack of historical background to the battle of Bannockburn made it difficult for Chinese readers to grasp Burns's context of Scottish national identity. Yet, admittedly, it is the first translation collection of Burns poems in China despite being collected with an English poet. Yuan elaborated on the reasons for selecting the two poets compiled into one book in its 'Preface',

Compared with other great poets, Burns and Housman are only 'Minor Poets'<sup>35</sup>. [...] There is no good reasons for me to put the Scottish and English poets from different times together. Or because I encountered their books in Hongkong and intended to be in memory of those days. [...] Burns and Housman were too far apart in age, a full century, but their styles were both close to folk songs. The former is more popular and natural because the society is not far away from him, while the latter is quite different, only similar in form to the folk songs, while the poet is an individualist who is unfamiliar with the masses.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Yuan Shuipai, 'Preface,' in *My Heart's in the Highland: Robert Burns and A. E. Housman* [wo de xin ya zai gao yuan: Peng Si, A. E. huo fu man], tr. Yuan Shuipai (Shanghai: Xinqun Press, 1944), p.1-14 (10). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>35</sup> "Minor Poets" is the original phrase referred in Yuan's preface in English.

<sup>36</sup> Yuan Shuipai, 'Preface', pp.5-13.

As a result, Yuan removed A. E. Housman away to make Burns’s works into a monograph translation when the book was republished in 1959 as the previous appeal of Yuan’s translation.

After the founding of People’s Republic of China (hereafter PRC) in 1949, Mao Zedong (known as Mao Tse-tung) (1893-1976) articulated the concept of ‘the Sinofication of Marxism’,<sup>37</sup> establishing a dominant influence over the realm of literature and arts. This principle asserts that literature and arts should be directed by Marxist ideology, tailored specifically to the circumstances of China. Mao’s Speech at the Symposium on Literature and Arts in Yan An (hereafter Yan An Speech) in May 1942 became the dominant guide to the literary works and marked the solidification of the politicization of literature and arts in China. The Speech stressed the subordination of literature and art to politics and proposed to affect and express politics by means of various art forms. The unification of politics and art, content and form, political content of revolution and art form are not only the core of Mao’s thought on literature and art, but also of ‘political aesthetics’ of modern Chinese literary theory at the time. Mao regarded literature and art from the realistic revolutionary cause and the requirement of political task with a strong practical feature. Under the guidance of the ideology, Burns as a peasant poet, completely accorded with the political ‘led by the working class and with the worker-peasant alliance as the foundation’,<sup>38</sup> thus attracting more attention from Chinese scholars. Of Burns’s pieces, in the eyes of the readers at the time, there are a number of writings with peasants’ description, dissatisfaction with the England-led process of capitalism, and yearning for freedom, which entirely coincided with the politic discourse of China. Burns and his poetry became a vehicle for the dominant ideology, therefore the translation and study of Burns has also entered an upheaval.

Furthermore, since 1949, the government came to follow the way of the Soviet Union, carrying out the ‘Lean to One Side’ in foreign policy and fully emulate the Soviet model. The China’s literature, including translation literature, was affected by the Soviet one as well which can be summed up into how to make literature better serve the society,

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted. Stuart R. Schram, ‘Mao Tse-tung’s Thought from 1949 to 1976’, in *The Cambridge History of China. Volume. 15. The People’s Republic, Part 2: Revolution within Chinese Revolution 1966-1982*. ed. Roderick MacFarquhar, John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.1-106(2).

<sup>38</sup> Quoted. Stuart R. Schram. ‘Mao Tse-tung’s Thought from 1949 to 1976’, in *The Cambridge History of China. Volume 15. The People’s Republic, Part 2: Revolution within Chinese Revolution 1966-1982*. p.6.

politics and the masses under the dominant ideology. The ideological principle originated from the two poles of Soviet literature: on the one hand, the ideology that attaches great importance to literature; on the other hand, literary works only focuses on the bright side of life, leading to the gradual ideologicalization and eulogization in Chinese literature during the seventeen years (1949-66).<sup>39</sup>

Burns as ‘a positive revolutionary hero’<sup>40</sup> in Soviet system was introduced to China and accepted by Chinese translators alike. Burns’s Scottish peasant identity was completely converted into become a spokesman-position for Chinese peasants. Burns’s satirical attack on the landlord and the church was fully interpreted as the image of a revolutionary for class struggle, with hatred for the exploitation of class enemies, while the beggars’ joy and the passionate pursuit of love of Scottish young men and women in his songs were depicted as the praise for the peasants and the bright side of their lives. The detailed consideration of Samuil Marshak’s translation’s impact on Chinese translation at the time and the Soviet model in Burns’s translation will be discussed in later chapter three.

At the same time, the trend, from vernacular to modern Chinese (known as Mandarin), has bred the need of retranslating the Western literary classical works since the NFM of the MFM. Mao Dun (1896-1981), an influential writer and critic, claimed that ‘translation must be raised to the level of artistic creation’<sup>41</sup> in 1954, and Bian Zhilin, an influential translator at the time, further echoed that translation should avoid ‘the generalization and vulgarization of language’<sup>42</sup> in 1959. Burns’s works composed from Scottish folk songs are suitable for translation and expression in vernacular Chinese,

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<sup>39</sup> Wu Xiuming, ‘‘Lean to One Side’ Cultural Policy and the ‘Soviet Model in Contemporary Literature [yi bian dao wen hua zheng ce he dang dai wen xue zhong de su lian mo shi]’, *Theory and Creation*, 03(2005), pp.22-43(22-3). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>40</sup> Natalia Kaloh Vid, ‘The Reception of Robert Burns in Russia’, in *The Reception of Robert Burns in Europe*, ed. Murray Pittock (London, New Delhi, New York and Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.155-178(160).

<sup>41</sup> Mao Dun, ‘To Strive for the Development of Literary Translation and the Improvement of Its Quality [wei fa zhan wen xue fan yi shi ye he ti gao fan yi zhi liang er fen dou]’, *Translation*, 10 (1954), pp.1-17(14). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>42</sup> Bian Zhilin, Ye Shuifu, Yuan Kejia and Chen Rong, ‘Ten Years of Foreign Literary Translation and Research Work [shi nian lai de wai guo wen xue fan yi he yan jiu gong zuo, *Literary Review*, 05 (1959), pp.49-77(57). [Originally in Chinese]



which is perfectly in line with the tenet of China’s NFM started in 1958.<sup>43</sup> Folk songs were seen as an important tool to encourage people to join in the Great Leap Forward Movement,<sup>44</sup> embodying the conspicuous intention of the mainstream literary world to serve politics by constructing ‘new literature and art’. The folk literature foundation on which the NFW relies makes the workers, peasants and soldiers become the new literary subject while the Chinese intellectual tradition on which the MFM based was completely overturned.

As a result, with the summit of the NFM in 1959, Burns’s reputation spontaneously reached a zenith as ‘a great poet of the people’<sup>45</sup> in China as well. As Wang Zuoliang put it, ‘During the course of massive NFM in the 1950s, the writer and preserver of Scottish folk songs was seen as having the same pace as the movement, together with the his 200th anniversary, therefore, the translation and studies of Burns have reached a new peak’.<sup>46</sup> In addition to Yuan Shuipai’s collection *My heart* republished in 1959, the two most influential translation collections of Burns, Wang Zuoliang’s *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* and Yuan Kejia’s *Poems of Robert Burns*, were published at the same year as well. Burns’s works evolved into a powerful weapon of political discourse. Several influential periodicals, like *Literature review*, *World Literature*, *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, *Western Language*, *Poetry*, *Literature*, *New Port* and *Xinhua Semi-monthly*, in 1959, carried intensive publicity and reviews on Burns’s works, providing the aesthetic sample for the campaign. Burns’s translation were integrated into the socialism life of the Chinese people with the artistic standard of Mao’s thought, endowing a strong ideological discourse during the seventeen years (1949-66), the most political period in Burns’s reception of China. ‘A red red Rose’ in the historical context of the translation aim that literature could be better integrated into the discourse of political ideology at the time, the translators consciously highlight Burns’s revelation and criticism of reality and express

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<sup>43</sup> The New Folksongs Movement focuses on the theme of eulogization, and the form of artistic expression extremely exaggerated instead of singing from the heart and real life experience. And they are only administrative imperative tasks and subject to the political needs. It lasted for only one year, ending in 1959.

<sup>44</sup> The Great Leap Forward Movement refers to a far-left campaign in economic construction from 1958 to 1960, aiming at the realization of industrial and agricultural high production targets.

<sup>45</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Robert Burns: A Great Poet of Scottish People [wei da de su ge lan ren ming shi ren Peng Si]’, *World Literature*, 01 (1959), pp.144-52(144). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>46</sup> Wang Zuoliang, *The Completed Works of Wang Zuoliang [Wang Zuoliang quan ji]* (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Studying Press, 2015), p.761. [Originally in Chinese]

the poet's love for the working people and hatred for the class enemy. 'A red red Rose', a song for love, was continuously translated and praised as 'an outstanding expression of the sincere and passionate love of the working people'<sup>47</sup>. However, this song is not the best tool for political ideology, nor the most revolutionary and militaristic one. The songs, like 'For a' that and a' that', endowed a feature of 'bright militancy'<sup>48</sup>, with full of the denunciation towards the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary optimism and confidence in the future, which was accord with the working people's position.

During the decade of the far-left Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the translation work of Western literature was interrupted entirely. In 1978, China's government decided to implement the policy of internal reform and external opening up to develop the national economy. Being a great poet of people before, Burns immediately came back into the eyes of the scholars, for instance, Niu Yongmao's 'Scottish Peasant Poet Robert Burns' in 1978, Xue Chengzhi's 'On a Distorted Poem of Burns' in 1979, and Huang Yuehua's 'Working People's Poet – In Honour of Robert Burns's 200th Birth' in 1979. After a decade interruption, it was unlikely to expect a giant improvement for Burns's scholarship. The studies during this period were roughly equivalent to those in 1959 and remains in a state of general introduction to Burns's works and life. Meanwhile, these criticisms still follow the previous political ideology deeply affected by the Soviet model since 1949, and continue Mao's thought of class struggle without making contributions on the Burns's research.

When it came to 1980s, the Chinese literary circle started a debate on the subjectivity of literature, arguing whether literature and art are subordinate to politics.<sup>49</sup> Through the discussion on literary thought, the common view that literature must be separated from politics in the academia and the political discourse began to fade away in

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<sup>47</sup> Yuan Kejia, 'Robert Burns and Folksong – The Bicentenary of the Birth of Robert Burns [Peng Si he min jian ge yao – Peng Si liang bai zhou nian dan cheng]', *Literary Review*, 5 (1959), pp.39-54(52). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>48</sup> Yuan Kejia, 'Robert Burns and Folksong', p. 45.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, Cao Tinghua, 'It Is an Unscientific Proposition That Literature and Politics Are Subordinate to Each Other [wen yi he zhen ge zhi shi cong shu guan xi shi bu ke xue de ming ti]', *Studies of Literature and Arts*, 03 (1980), pp.24-8; Wang Ruowang, 'Literature and Politicis Are Not Subordinate Relation [wen yi yu zheng zhi bu shi cong shu guan xi]', *Studies of Literature and Arts*, 01(1980), pp.61-5; Liu Jigang, 'On the Relation of Literature and Politics[guan yu wen yi yu zheng zhi de guan xi]', *Literary Review*, 02 (1980), pp.36-44. [Originally in Chinese]

the field of literary translation and criticism. The 1980s thus saw a wave of constant revision and republication of the 1959 ideological translation in Burns translation despite no new translation collections published. The two influential Burns translations, Wang Zuoliang’s *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1959) was revised and published in 1985 and republished in 1987 and 1988, and Yuan Kejia’s *Poems of Robert Burns* (1959) was revised and published in 1981 and 1986. The revised editions have undergone significant adjustments, whether it be adding or subtracting content from the poems, rearranging the sequence of the pieces, or modifying the translation of the poems themselves. In addition to Wang Zuoliang and Yuan Kejia, there are translators who revolved in Burns translation, for instance, Gao Jian translated ‘A red red Rose’ ‘for the purpose of further exploration in some aspects of meter and rhythm’<sup>50</sup>. Furthermore, the 1980s heralded an increasing interest in human nature and the gradual recognition of the concept of ‘literature is the study of human’, enabling the lyrical poems and love poems of Burns to regain the attention of readership. After the seventeen-year political discourse in literature, followed by a decade of interrupted Western literary translation during the Cultural Revolution, there was a surge in demand for love poetry in the literary circles and readership. Since 1980s, a large number of translated poetry collections of Western love poems and lyrics compiled Burns’s works have been published.<sup>51</sup>

During the 1980s, Burns remained to be studied mainly in terms of his life and general works with no in-depth as in the late 1970s and 1959. Yet the studies attempted to remove the ideology of class struggle. While the 1980s’ Burns’s studies did touch upon Burns’s peasant background and its influence on his poetic style, they fail to place Burns within the context of Scottish history. Burns was often referred to as a poet of the people and peasants, with studies generally offering a broad overview of his life and writing style. However, a noteworthy criticism is Jiang Jiajun’s ‘Burns’s ‘Highland Mary’ and Other Four Poems About Her’ in 1988. While not surpassing previous Yuan Kejia’s overview in 1959, it signals a shift in Burns studies towards focusing on specific poems

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<sup>50</sup> Gao Jian, ‘Preface’, in *An Essence of British Poetry [ying shi lan sheng]*, ed. And tr. Gao Jian (Taiyuan: Beiyue Literature and Art Publishing House, 1992), pp.1-2(1). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>51</sup> For instance, *Selected Lyric Poems of the World [shi jie shu qing shi xuan]*, ed. Tu An (Shenyang: Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House, 1983), collected three pieces of Burns; *Selections Renowned Foreign Poems [wai guo shi ge ming pian xuan du]*, ed. Zhou Hongxing (Beijing: Writers Press, 1986), collected one piece of Burns [Originally in Chinese], and a number of other poetry collections.

and songs rather than general introductions. Nonetheless, this shift towards more focused analysis of specific poems and songs marks a positive direction for Burns studies.

When it came to the 1990s, the influence of political discourse in literature continued to decline. The translation practice attempts to explore how to pursue, based on ontological characteristics of poetry and artistic standards between the East and the West, the balance between the beauty of form and music of poems and songs. Contrasted with the previous practice of omitting the original text and presenting the Chinese translation directly to the reader, Burns's translation after the 1990s, for the foreign language capability of Chinese readers is generally improved under the background of globalization, came to be bilingual with the original and Chinese translation alike. The translation did not ignore the original language, also the target language as the reference, to reflect in the successive compilation and publication of bilingual compendium with Chinese and the original language. From 1990 onwards, of twenty-five poetry collections with Burns's pieces published, twenty four were in both the original language and Chinese. Bilingual translation has become a widely applicable edition for Chinese readers. In terms of vocabulary, semantics, rhetoric, syntax and other aspects, the translators followed the principle of 'not disturbing the peace of the original text and allow the readers themselves to get close to the author'<sup>52</sup>. It indicates that since the 1990s there is a more open and inclusive attitude to perceive the Western literary works to enrich and update the local literature, providing readers with a better appreciation of the Western poetry and encouraging further exploration into the art of poetry translation. It is noteworthy that the recent Burns's translation, Li Zhengshuan's *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* in 2016, the largest collection of translations of Burns in China, includes 108 poems and songs of Burns, but many significant pieces have not been translated yet like 'The Vision', 'The Ordination', 'Address of Beelzebub', 'A Winter Night' and a number of others. The insufficiency of Burns's translated pieces has strongly impeded the development of Burns's study in China. Therefore, translating Burns's complete works is still an urgent issue for Chinese scholars.

In relation to Burns studies, since 1990 to April 20, 2023, according to the data of Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure (hereafter CNKI), the articles focusing on Burns and Burns's works are approximately 189 in total, not to mention the numerous

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<sup>52</sup> Tan Zaixi, *A Brief History of Western Translation [xi fang fan yi jian shi]* (Beijing: Beijing Commercial Press, 1991), p.135. [Originally in Chinese]

related to the poet and his pieces. Burns studies since 1990, in every respect, have been a great improvement comparing with the previous eras. The perspectives of studies are more diverse, such as the politics, democracy, ethics, geospatial images in Burns’s works and the analysis of his works from the perspectives of functional pragmatics and stylistics. In addition to the studies focusing on Burns’s works, there are also studies on the comparison between Burns’s works and those of other poets, Burns’s translation studies and Burns’s reception studies, all of which did not appear until 1990s. Compared with the studies focusing on Burns’s works, the current studies on Burns’s translation and Burns’s reception have done better in China. After all, these are the two areas that Chinese scholars are familiar with and have the most say in. The only doctoral thesis on Burns came out of this. In 2016, Song’s doctoral thesis, *A Study of Chinese Translation Problem of Scottish Literature in the Framework of English Literature* (published, Beijing: Capital Normal University Press, 2017, originally in Chinese), stressed the undiscovered Scottishness (Scottish identity) in the translation of Burns, Scott and Byron despite only one chapter given to Burns.

In the realm of Burns’s scholarship, while there has been proliferation of perspectives and a wider range of research compared to previous eras, it has not more contribution than Yuan Kejia’s ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’ in 1959, and Wang Zuoliang’s preface in his *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* in 1985. The predominant focus of Burns’s studies remains on his lyrical poetry, particularly ‘A red red Rose’, which is almost a quarter of the studies. In addition, critics have been dedicated to pieces such as ‘My Heart’s in the Highlands’, ‘To a Mouse’, ‘Anderson, my jo’, and ‘Auld lang syne’. However, there is a notable absence of scholarship discussing other influential pieces, such as ‘Tam o’ Shanter’, ‘Love and Liberty’, and ‘The Cotter's Saturday Night’. Of the almost 200 criticisms of Burn, it is notable that Xu Xiaodong’s ‘Burns’s Debt to Macpherson’s Ossian Forgery’ (2012) explored the influence and benefits Burns had from Macpherson’s Ossian. Overall, Burns’s studies have entered a new phase since 1990, displaying a thriving research landscape. Burns studies are characterized by a departure from merely introducing the poet’s life background or poetic style, towards a deeper exploration of specific aspects within Burns’s works, including political motifs, geospatial imagery, sentimentalism, Scottish identity, democracy and freedom, and pastoral theme.

Overall, the translation and study of Burns in the new era has spurned the strategy of pursuing revolution and political discourse before the Cultural Revolution, returning

to an appreciation of the inherent language and structure of the original. The ideological-driven large-scale translation of Burns's works in 1959 has not appeared. Further to this, compared with the stressing on the popular and revolutionary nature of Burns's works in the seventeen years, Burns's study since 1990s are mostly focused on the theme of love and friendship, indicating that the great changes in Chinese society since the end of the twentieth century enable Chinese people to explore the changes in their spirits and thinking. As Qian Zhongwen (1932- ) put it, 'The aesthetic description of literature can also reveal the requirements of the common humanity of human beings, displaying the universal feelings and aspirations of human beings, and making it transcend the feelings and ideological tendencies of certain community, thus to be another manifestation of the aesthetic ideology of literature'.<sup>53</sup> People from various nations is able to sing 'Auld lang syne' together, experiencing and sharing the beauty of songs, the universal aesthetic realm without utility or purpose on the culture, knowledge and aesthetic perception.

Compared with a great number of monographies to Burns's biography in Anglo-American academia, Burns's biography in China remains in the field of Burns's brief life introduction as a background for his poetics in articles. Burns's criticism, albeit an enormous improvement since the twenty-first century, still remains in an infant stage, without a doctoral thesis on Burns exclusively yet. In respect to Burns's articles, the situation stays alike. The influential criticism on Burns, without a substantial breakthrough, remain on the foundation of Wang Zuoliang's criticism on Burns's poetry and poetic skills in 1985 and Yuan Kejia's in 1959. Few Chinese scholars dwell on the subjects which were very occupied in Anglo-American academia like Burns's religion, politics, and his various registers. Let alone those new trends and fields like Burns studies in the cultural-historical context involving with British and Scottish Romanticism in recent years. Certainly, for Chinese researchers, a huge difficulty in grasping Burns poetry attributes to the completely heterogeneous cultural context, as well as lacking and hardly getting access to the involved knowledge of history, religion and politics of eighteenth-century Scotland, which causes Burns's studies in China, albeit the history of more than a hundred years, to develop slowly. Despite the fact that an increasing numbers of scholars and students come to pay close attention to Burns and Scottish literature, and Burns is one of poets translated the most in China, for the barrier of Scots dialect as well

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<sup>53</sup> Qian Zhongwen, *Theory of Literary Development [wen xue fa zhan lun]* (Shanghai: Economy and Science Press, 1998), p.122. [Originally in Chinese]

as Burns’s poetry involved with the religion, politics, history and culture of eighteenth-century Scotland, there is still an enormous space which were very occupied in Burns’s study in China by far. Therefore, the next move in Burns’s translation and study still has work to do. In the twentieth-first century, From 2000 onwards, China’s economy has developed rapidly. Since 2010, the GDP of China has surpassed that of Japan to climb up top two in the world, only below of the United States. China has already been an indispensable part within the global community. The communication and exchanges between China and the West, including economy, politics and culture, will go further and more comprehensive. Chinese intellectuals and academics are also pressing for a more comprehensive understanding of Western translations. It can be predicted that the study of Burns, the translation of the complete works of Burns, the translation of his biography in book-length and the publication of the monographs in Burns criticism will be the next targets of Burns study in China.

In addition to Burns’s reception in translations and studies, Burns’s reception beyond text takes place in mainland China and among its diaspora as well. The earliest record related to Burns celebration can be traced back to the St Andrews Dinners in 1832 arranged by the Jardine Matheson trading family starting on board one of their ships, the *Jamesina* off Fukien, and with annual dinners at the family residence beside their trading depot in Guangdong province celebrating their Scottish roots. Besides it is noteworthy that Sun Zhongshan, the first president of The Republic of China (1911-49), almost certainly attended Burns Night in London, during his period of London from 1896-7 under the auspices of his lifelong friend, Sir James Cantlie, the President of The Burns Club of London. And in the United States, Chang Yow Tong (1858 –?), the member of the Imperial Chinese Commission at the 1904 St. Louis World Fair, wrote the poem ‘Lines to Burns’ for the dedication of Burns cottage at the fair in 1904. And in Vancouver the ‘Gong Haggis Fat Choy’ blending Burns Night and Chinese New Year since 1999 by a Chinese Canadian, Toddish McWong, now has an influence in a wider range of North American sites serving the purpose of acting as a social meeting ground for the substantial ethnic Chinese and Scottish diasporas. After 1949, Burns was promoted as a great poet of people, reaching a zenith at the bicentennial of his birth in 1959. The literary circle held a memorial meeting for World Culture Celebrities in Shanghai to commemorate 200th anniversary of Burns’s birthday. After the Cultural Revolution, the Burns scholars and translators consecutively celebrated Burns Night in Beijing in 1981, 1982, 1983 and had a Burns commemorate tea party in 1992. While the Burns Nights by Beijing Scottish

Society since 2016 and Shanghai Scottish Club since 2007 demonstrate an entirely different picture. They in a sense are a gathering of Scottish diasporas in China focusing more on social, entertainment, and Scottish tradition such as food, singing as well as ceilidh dances. Such Burns Nights celebrations might be viewed as a way for the Scottish diaspora to relieve their homesickness, reconnect with their homeland culture through national bard and to allow Chinese people more available to understand the impact of Burns on images of Scotland. Whereby the celebrations, an increasing number of Chinese people are able to access and be aware of Burns and Scottish culture. Reading the original text in Scots by themselves is an incredible task for Chinese readers. Probably, Burns Night, as a vehicle, is a better approach for them to appreciate and understand Burns and Scotland as well as a link between China and Scotland.

It is noticeable that the century-long reception of Burns in China is closely related to the historical context and ideology at the time as well as the understanding of Burns. Under the various context of history and political situation, Chinese readers have their own understanding towards Burns. The identity of being a peasant understood by Chinese readers has had nothing to do with the identity of Scottish peasant in Burns's own era. Burns has become a peasant poet and people's poet the Chinese people have expected, and Burns's identity as the peasant poet and people's poet was defined by China's national conditions. The three stages of Burns's acceptance in China might be clarified into: enlightening politicization, ideological politicization and depoliticization. In the massive picture of Burns in global culture, Burns in China is the largest missing piece of chicken-shaped fragment (the map of China looks like a huge hen). By this thesis, it can be fully and perfectly further developed in a transnational context for Burns reception.

The thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter delineates the discovery of Burns in China and the shaping of Burns's reputation as a love poet since Su's translation of 'A red red Rose' in 1908. Chapter two focuses on how Burns's reputation was transited from a love poet to a patriotic poet and a representative of the literature of ethnic minorities from 1920 to 1949. Chapter three offers a discussion of Burns's ideological reception and the zenith of Burns's reception during the course of the seventeen years from 1949 – 1966. Chapter four moves into the stage of Burns's reevaluation since 1976 to the present day. In 1976, the far-left Cultural Revolution was ended, a decade interruption for the translation of the Western literary works including Burns's. Being a great poet of people previously, Burns returned to the eyes of scholars quickly after the Cultural Revolution. Against the background of an appeal for human nature back into the



literary works rather than the politics dominant in it in 1980s, Burns’s lyric and love works returned to the attention of the readership. As such, it brings along a wave of revision and republication of Burns’s translation attempting to remove the previous ideological tint. Since the 1990s, Burns’s studies come into a prosperous era with a number of more perspectives criticisms away from ideological politics. Chapter five turns to the influential Burns’s translator Wang Zuoliang and his translations in Burns. This chapter examines Wang’s successful translating approaches, the comparison between Wang’s various versions, the comparison between Wang and other Burns translators, and Wang’s influence on the subsequent Burns translators. The final chapter offers another landscape of Burns cultural reception in mainland China and Chinese diaspora. It demonstrates Burns celebration beyond text including Burns Night, Burns Supper and the spreading of Burns’s song, ‘Auld lang syne’, in mainland China, Hongkong, Britain, the United States and Canada. The conclusion dwells on the features of Burns’s reception in China and more opportunities for the next phase in Burns’s studies.

## 2 A LOVE POET: EARLY RECEPTION 1876 - 1930

The reception of Robert Burns in China is closely associated with the historical context of China and reflected in its translation practices. Robert Burns, born in Scotland in the eighteenth century, experienced a transition mediated through Scottish Enlightenment's reflection on the stadial development of societies, as seen in the work of Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and Burns's friend Dugald Stewart.<sup>54</sup> Ferguson and Smith's ideas on societal progress, emphasizing human reason, economic development, and social evolution, were central to the Scottish Enlightenment, and while Robert Burns's poetry was not a direct outcome of stadialism, it nonetheless reflects the social and economic transformations of the time, capturing the tension between traditional rural life and the forces of modernization and economic change within this broader intellectual context. It is intriguing and coincidental that the very beginning of the twentieth century, when Burns was firstly introduced to China, was also a transitional period for China from a monarchical empire to democratic republic, and an enlightenment era bringing secular thoughts to the Chinese and reshaping the ways people understood the issues such as science, democracy, freedom and equality. This chapter focuses on the very beginning of Burns's reception discovered in China between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and how Burns was shaped as a love poet in terms of the historic background of China at its very early stage. It will first present an exploration of the era in which the poetry of Burns entered China.

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<sup>54</sup> See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*, 3 Vols (5 ed.) (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1904 [1776]), Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (London: Louis Schneider, Transaction Publisher, 1995[1767]).

A new era dawned in China since the First Opium War. The defeats of two opium wars<sup>55</sup> and the Anglo-French occupation of Beijing climaxed by the burning of the Summer Palace<sup>56</sup> in 1860 had shocked a number of insightful Chinese into a realization that it was urgent to save China from perishing, and the best and only way to save the country was to ‘seek truths from the West’<sup>57</sup>. During the course of seeking truth from the West, translation spontaneously served as the main channel. In this sense, the translation in modern China was endowed with the political function of saving the country from the outset. In light of the common views of Chinese scholars in translation history, the translation practices have evolved into three stages since the First Opium War: from the First Opium War to the First Sino-Japanese War, translations mainly focused on the Western natural sciences; from the First Sino-Japanese War to 1911 the year when the Republic of China established, turned to the Western social sciences; finally, after 1911 to 1949 when the PRC was founded, the Western literary works.<sup>58</sup>

The first stage of translation practice started with the defeat in the Opium Wars, in which Burns was first mentioned in China and this will be discussed later in this chapter. The First Opium War ended the ‘close door’ policy of Qing dynasty (1636-1912) lasting for more than two centuries. Prior to the First Opium War, China was little aware of the West as a geographical location, conceiving itself globally in a Sinocentric fashion as the ‘Middle Kingdom’ (zhong guo). Since the war, China opened its door to the West as a concession. In the course of resisting the European forces in the two Opium wars, China was particularly impressed with the British military power. Qing’s official-scholars

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<sup>55</sup> The Second Opium War (1856-60) is known as the Second Anglo-Sino War, the Second China War, the Arrow War, or the Anglo-French expedition to China. It was a colonial war which pitted the British Empire and the French Empire against the Qing dynasty of China.

<sup>56</sup> The Summer Palace was established in 1707. This large imperial garden from the Qing Dynasty is located in the western suburbs of Beijing, serving as the emperors’ summer palace, political centre, recreational area, and a place for receiving foreign envoys.

<sup>57</sup> Wang Kefei, *On the History of Translation Culture [fan yi wen hua shi lun]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1997), p.67. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>58</sup> See Ma Zuyi, *A Brief History of Translation in China – The Part Before the May Fourth Movement [zhong guo fan yi jian zhi – wu si yi qian bu fen]* (Beijing: China Foreign Translation and Publishing Company, 2004) [Originally in Chinese], *Historical Manuscripts of Translated Literature in China [zhong guo fan yi wen xue shi gao]*, ed. Chen Yugang (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1989) [Originally in Chinese], and Wang Kefei, *On the History of Translation Culture [fan yi wen hua shi lun]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1997) [Originally in Chinese].

recognised the superior Western weaponry and the need for China to emulate it. But how? For Lin Zexu<sup>59</sup> (1785-1850), the first person who organised the translation work of the Western newspapers, ‘an effective way is through translation’<sup>60</sup> and Wei Yuan<sup>61</sup> (1794-1857), a renowned thinker, influentially claimed ‘learning advanced technology from Europeans in order to fight against them’(shi yi zhi ji yi zhi yi), becoming the theoretical source of learning from the West. Since Lin and Wei, China came to walk on the path of learning from the West through translation.

In addition to the aforementioned political function of saving the country, at the same time translations in modern China were endowed with another function of pragmatism. The subsequent Westernization Movement from 1861-95, characterized by the influential principle of ‘Chinese learning as the essential principle and Western learning the practical application’,<sup>62</sup> aimed at two aspects: importing European industries (military industries mainly) to manufacture warships and weaponry for the suppression of domestic peasantry uprisings and the resistance of foreign invaders, and reforming the education systems to create modern schools for training translators for foreign affairs and the Western works of natural sciences.<sup>63</sup> The Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau translation agency, established in 1865, translated the most works during the period of the Westernization Movement, mainly on the natural science and technology including mathematics, measurement, chemistry, astronomy, ships, medicine, technology, marine and military law, and shipbuilding.<sup>64</sup> The translation work of this period was to meet the urgent demand of China to produce immediately ‘the powerful battle ships and cannons’ (jian chuan li pao) to resist foreign forces. The approach to translation at this stage was basically dictated by the Western missionaries, recorded and embellished by Chinese

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<sup>59</sup> Lin Zexu (1785-1850): a commissioner, writer, thinker and national anti-drug hero in the late Qing dynasty.

<sup>60</sup> Yen-p’ing Hao, Erh-min Wng, ‘Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-95’, in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume II, Late Ch’ing, 1800 – 1911, Part 2*, ed. John K. Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.142-201(146).

<sup>61</sup> Wei Yuan (1794-1857): an Enlightenment thinker, statesman and writer in Qing dynasty.

<sup>62</sup> Zhang Zhidong, *Exhortation to Learning [quan xue pian]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 2002), p.39. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>63</sup> Ma Zuyi, *A Brief History of Translation in China – The Part Before the May Fourth Movement*, p.336.

<sup>64</sup> Ma, pp.341-2.

translators,<sup>65</sup> for Chinese translators were slightly aware of foreign languages while the Western missionaries were unable to write in proper and elegant Chinese,<sup>66</sup> resulting in rough translations being far from the original. Furthermore, the translations at the time were to meet the demand of immediate manufacturing of war ships and weaponry instead of being concerned with diction, rhetoric and accuracy. The discovery of Burns to China was occurred at this time as well.

When it comes to the 1890s, the second stage of translation saw a transition of the focus from the Western natural science to the social science, in which Burns was firstly introduced to Chinese readership. In the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, the Imperial Chinese Beiyang Fleet of the Qing dynasty suffered a disastrous failure against the Imperial Japanese Navy whose warships of Alexander Hall’s order were from Aberdeen shipyard at the dawn of the Meiji era. This disappointed the scholar-officials’ confidence to strengthen China through a powerful military. The crisis prompted the Western-minded intellectuals to reflect on and realize that it was insufficient to save the nation simply by acquiring advanced Western science and technology of warships and weaponry. They hoped that China would embark on the road of being a powerful nation through a political reform just as the ‘Meiji Restoration’ of Japan did. As Liang Qichao, a prominent Chinese political reformer and an excellent man of letters, stated in his ‘Postscript’ of *One Hundred Days Reform*,

Prior to the First Sino-Japanese War, the West was seen to be advanced only for its powerful weaponry and excellent machinery that was what we learned in the past. This thinking resulted in our nation’s defeat. After the agreement in 1895, the scholar-officials came to recognise that it is the ideology that made the West European countries powerful.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, the focus of translation work on the Western natural science and technology turned to the Western disciplines such as economics, philosophy, laws and sociology,

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<sup>65</sup> Ma, p.342.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted. Wang Kefei, *On the History of Translation Culture*, p.70.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted. Ma, p.365.

particularly politics, as Wang Kefei remarked that the translations were more ‘grounded’<sup>68</sup> than in the previous stage.

A renowned translation approach during this period, ‘Faithfulness, Expressiveness and Elegance’, was presented by Yan Fu, an influential thinker, translator and educator. In 1898, Yan accounted his translation theory in the ‘Preface’ to his translation of Thomas H. Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* (1893), an influential criticism in the history of Chinese translation literature,

There are three difficulties in translation: faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance (Xin Da Ya). Faithfulness is difficult enough to attain but a translation that is faithful without expressiveness is not a translation at all. Expressiveness is therefore of prime importance. [...] When the translator has mastered thoroughly and digested the essence of the full source text in his mind, then spontaneously he will be able to rewrite it in an appropriate manner possible. In relation to the abstruse words and thoughts in the original text, difficult to understand, the translator should correlate what precedes and what follows to bring out the theme. All the efforts can be seen as expressiveness, for only when a piece of translation is expressive can it be seen as faithful.

[...]

*Zhou Yi*<sup>69</sup> states, ‘Fidelity is the basis of writing’. Confucius said, ‘Writing should be expressiveness’. Besides, Confucius said, ‘Where the language has no refinement, the text will be unable to go far’. The three dicta set the right course for literature as well as the guidelines for the translation. In addition to faithfulness and expressiveness, translators should strive for elegance in translating.<sup>70</sup>

‘Faithfulness’ refers to the translation being equivalent to the original; ‘Expressiveness’ the fluency of language in translation to make the reader understand. ‘Elegance’, the most complex and significant of the three, is quoted from ‘Shu Er’ of *The Analects of*

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<sup>68</sup> Wang Kefei, *On the History of Translation Culture*, p.71.

<sup>69</sup> *Zhou Yi*, known as *The Book of Change*, is an ancient philosophical book of China, the philosophical basis of Chinese traditional culture, taking the nature as its object.

<sup>70</sup> Yan Fu, ‘Preface of the Translation’, in *The Complete Works of Yan Fu [Yan Fu quan ji]*, Vol. I, 11 Vols, ed. Wang Zhenglu, Fang Baochuan, and Ma Yong (Fuzhou: Fujian Education Press, 2014), pp.78-9 (78). [Originally in Chinese]

*Confucius*, ‘The elegant language Confucius refers to is the language of *Book of Songs* and *Book of Documents* (around tenth century BC), and he offers the sacrifice to God and ancestors’,<sup>71</sup> denoting that the language what Confucius has used is proper and normative at any time. It is noted that Yan’s preference was ‘Elegance’, referring to the use of the archaic discourse in Yan’s eyes. Yan rejected the popular and spoken language, arguing that only the archaic language before the Han Dynasty (202 BC – 220) could make the translation elegant.

In terms of literary heritage, for China’s intellectuals strongly supported archaism, upper class official-scholars were keen on writing in an archaic style, while the vernacular writing attained scant attention for the vernacular was seen as vulgar and uncouth used by the lower class. Translators tended to employ the archaic to obtain the affirmation and the appeal of their renditions. If Yan intended to make his translations valued by society particularly the intellectuals, to spread Western thoughts and cultures, it is unlikely for his translations to be proceeded without the use of the archaic. Yan’s translation principles of ‘Faithfulness, Expressiveness and Elegance’ has strongly impacted the contemporary translators, including Su Manshu, the earliest Burns translator in China, in his translation of Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’, to be discussed in detail later. Yan’s principles have become a universally influential norm as a ‘golden rule’<sup>72</sup> in translation field and academia in China to the present day, resulting in China’s current translation translators’ following them.

While earlier in Britain, Alexander Tytler (1747-1813), in his systematic *Essay on the Principle of Translation* (1791), presented his laws on translation:

I. THAT the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.

II. THAT the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.

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<sup>71</sup> Li Sheng, *The Complete Translation of Annotations of Four Books [si shu jiz hu quan yi]* (Chengdu: Bashu Publishing House, 2011), p.187. [Original in Chinese]

<sup>72</sup> Quoted, Guo Yanli, *A Series of Translation Studies in China [zhong guo jin dai fan yi wen xue gai lun]*, (Wuhan: Hubei Education Publishing House, 1997), p.246. [Originally in Chinese]

III. THAT the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.<sup>73</sup>

It can be seen that Tytler's law I is roughly equivalent to Yan's 'Faithfulness', II Yan's 'Expressiveness' and III 'Elegance'. Yet, Yan stressed 'Elegance' of the three principles while Tytler criticized Dryden's confidence in translations in the danger of 'licentiousness',<sup>74</sup> emphasizing more the literal fidelity. Certainly, the context of Tytler's translations is to transfer European languages to English, while Yan's context was English into Chinese, which clearly is a gap larger than Tytler's. Furthermore, John Hookham Frere (1769-1846) advocated the fluency strategy in translation should be 'a pure, impalpable, and invisible element',<sup>75</sup> as Yan's 'Expressiveness'. Likewise, George Lamb (1784-1834) insisted 'the natural course of translation is, first to secure its fidelity, and then to attempt to polish of elegance and freedom'<sup>76</sup> which could be seen as Yan's claims on 'Faithfulness' and 'Elegance', while Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) also argued that translators should aim for 'dynamic equivalence' or 'equivalence of affect'.<sup>77</sup>

In 1911, the Xinhai Revolution, led by Sun Zhongshan, overthrew the reign of Qing dynasty of the Manchus and established the Republic of China, yet it failed in the goal of being a powerful country. In addition to the previous failure of the Hundred Days Reform in 1898, it allowed the official-scholars to contemplate that the political reforms were unable to lead the nation to set foot on the road of prosperity. They turned to awakening the understanding of people and opening their minds, as Liang Qichao claimed that 'unlocking the wisdom of people is the urgent task of the foundation of a powerful country'.<sup>78</sup> To enlighten the public became the priority of translation work, making its aim calibrate to Western literary works as Liang claimed that 'to innovate the people of

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<sup>73</sup> Matthew Reynolds, 'Principles and Norms of Translation', in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English. Vol. 4, 1790-1900*, ed. Peter France and Kenneth Haynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.59-84(63).

<sup>74</sup> Matthew Reynolds, 'Principles and Norms of Translation', p.63.

<sup>75</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.65.

<sup>76</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, p.72.

<sup>77</sup> Reynolds, p.69.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted. Ma, p.407.



a nation has to innovate novels of the nation’.<sup>79</sup> Particularly after the MFM in 1919, the New Culture Movement<sup>80</sup> saw a wave of translations of Western literary works. For instance, from its first volume to its last volume in 1925, *La Jeunesse*, an influential magazine in the New Culture Movement<sup>81</sup> in 1915, published 144 translation pieces from seventeen countries, and another influential magazine, *Novel Monthly*, published 649 from twenty-two countries from 1921 to 1925.<sup>82</sup> The first wave of Burns translation took place during this period after the MFM, which it will be elaborated on in chapter two.

In terms of translation practice, Liang’s serialized translations of a Japanese political novel, *The Stories of the Nations* (Jing Guo Mei Tan), published in the newspaper *Qingyi Bao*, were described as ‘inspiring a sense of national unity’.<sup>83</sup> After this, the translation of foreign literature in China continued to appear. Liang’s thought of ‘saving the nation by literature’ made the translation course of Western literary works shoulder the task of enlightening and educating the Chinese readers. Since Liang, literary translation came to serve politics as a tendency in China.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Liang Qichao, ‘On the Relationship Between Novel and the Public [lun xiao shuo yu qun zhi guan xi]’, in *The Anthology of Liang Qichao [liang qichao wen ji]*, ed. Chen Shuliang (Beijing: Yanshan Press, 2009), pp.273-8(273). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>80</sup> New Culture Movement refers to the anti-tradition, anti-Confucianism and anti-classical Chinese ideological and cultural innovation, literary revolution movement initiated by Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu (1879-1924), Lu Xun, Qian Xuantong (1887-1939) and some other people who received the Western education in 1917 to 1919.

<sup>81</sup> The New Culture Movement was a progressive ideological campaign initiated by forward-thinking intellectuals in China during the early 20th century to challenge feudalistic ideologies. Its fundamental principles centered around the promotion of ‘Democracy’ and ‘Science’, advocating for democratic governance and the advancement of scientific knowledge. Advocates of the movement, armed with theories of evolution and the concept of individualistic liberation of thought, criticized the traditional authority embodied by figures like Confucius. They vigorously promoted new moral values while rejecting traditional moral norms and championed modern literature while challenging the dominance of classical Chinese literature.

<sup>82</sup> Wang Juchuan, ‘The Translating Activities During the Period of May Fourth Movement and Anti-colony Consciousness [wu si shi qi de fan yi huo dong he fan zhi ming yi shi]’, *Literary Review*, 2 (2010), pp.146-51(149). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>83</sup> Luo Xuanmin, ‘Ideology and Literary Translation: Liang Qichao [yi shi xing tai he wen xue fan yi: liang qichao]’, *Perspective: Studies in Translatology*, 13:3 (2005), pp.178-87(183). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>84</sup> Chen, p.44.

Many renowned writers and scholars have been influenced by Liang's rendition, such as Hu Shi (1891-1962), Zhou Zuoren (1885-1967), Guo Moruo (1892-1976), Li Jianwu (1906-1982) and a number of others.<sup>85</sup> Through Liang's advocacy a number of foreign literary translations were published more than the domestic novels during the period of the late Qing dynasty and the early Republic. According to statistics, 'the number of translations accounted for two thirds of the whole publications'.<sup>86</sup> Between 1882 and 1913, 609 foreign novels were published, mostly in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, it was during the beginning of twentieth century that a wave of numerous Western literary works were firstly introduced into China. For instance, in 1899, the year after Liang's 'Preface to Translating Political Novels', Lin Shu (1852-1924) recorded by the dictation of Wang Shouchang (1864-1926) to collaboratively translate a Western novel at the first time, *La Traviata*, as *The Death of the Lady of Camellia in Paris* (bali Chahua nv yishi). In 1902, the first English novel introduced to China was D. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* translated by Lamboy (Shen Zufen (fl.1880 - 1950)) into *Drifting on Islands* (jue dao piao liu ji). In 1905, by Lin Shu as well by the same approach, Scott's *Ivanhoe* was translated as *The Hero after Saxon's Disaster* (sa ke xun jie hou ying xiong zhuan), *Talisman* as *The Crusader Heroes* (shi zi jun ying xiong ji) in 1907, *The Betrothed* into *The Couples in the World* (jian di yuan yang) in 1907. In 1903, Shanghai Dashu Press published *Tales from Shakespeare*, a collection of ten stories rewritten by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb, and translated it anonymously as *Stories from Overseas* (xie wai qi tan). In 1908, students at St. John's College in Shanghai played *The Merchant of Venice* for the first time in English, and eleven years later in 1913, students of Shanghai Chengdong Girl's High School performed *Female Lawyer* adapted from *The Merchant of Venice* in Chinese.<sup>88</sup>

Lin significantly altered the perception of Western literature among the Chinese official scholars. As aforementioned, the first Western literary novel in China, Lin's *The Death of the Lady of Camellia in Paris* achieved a considerable success, as Yan put it, 'a

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<sup>85</sup> Zou Zhenhuan, 'The Chinese Translation of The Stories of the Nations and Its Influence in the Late Qing and Early Republic [《jing guo mei tan》 de han yi ji qi zai ming mo qing chu de ying xiang]', *Oriental Translation*, 10 (2013), pp.43-51(51). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>86</sup> A Ying, *The History of Novels in Late Qing Dynasty*, p.184.

<sup>87</sup> A Ying, *The List of Drama and Novel in Late Qing Dynasty*, pp.109-72.

<sup>88</sup> Cao Shujun and Sun Fuquan, *Shakespeare on the China's Stage [sha shi bi ya zai zhong guo wu tai]* (Haerbin: Haerbin Press, 1989), pp.73,80. [Originally in Chinese]

volume of *The Lady of Camellia* has broken each Chinese man’s heart’.<sup>89</sup> Lin translated more than two hundred Western literary works into archaic Chinese, including various dozens of writers from more than a dozen countries such as Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, Greece, Switzerland and Norway, with more than twelve million words translated with unsurpassed to the present day. Despite lacking proficiency in any foreign languages, Lin demonstrated remarkable skills in recording and refining translations based on dictations from others. Lin’s early translations, characterized by his amazing archaic Chinese, grasped the essence of the originals to win its universal appeal in China at the time such as his rendition of Scott’s *Ivanhoe* as *The Saxon Hero after Sufferings* (sa ke xun jie hou ying xiong zhuan) in 1905. Lin’s translations of novels played a pivotal role in granting Chinese readers access to a diverse array of foreign literary works, broadening their intellectual horizon, enriching their knowledge and eventually demolishing their prejudice against novels and foreign literature.<sup>90</sup> Prior to Lin, despite the Qing government’s defeats in the Opium Wars and the first Sino-Japanese War, the official-scholars persisted in reluctance to recognize Western literature as possessing comparable merits to traditional Chinese literature. They primarily acknowledged Western advancements in weaponry and industry. This attitude was not changed until Lin’s translation, *The Death of the Lady of Camillia in Paris*, which marked the beginning of a shift in the prejudices held by the official-scholars towards Western literature.

Under the impact of Liang’s view that ‘novels are the top in literature’ and Lin’s huge success in the translation of *La Traviata*, the translation of Western novels became a popular trend in the beginning of twentieth century in China. Likewise Western poetry was introduced to China along with the wave of translation. The earliest record in the translation of poetry is ‘A Psalm of Life’ of Henry Longfellow (1807-1882) translated by Thomas Francis Wade (1818-1895), a British envoy, into Chinese in 1864, and Wade passed his rendition on to Dong Xun (1807-1892), a minister of Qing, for polishing.<sup>91</sup> It is interesting to note that Burns’s poetry’s democratic tone attracted American great poets

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<sup>89</sup> Yan Fu, ‘Go Outside of Beijing with Friends in 1904 [jia cheng chu du cheng tong li zhu gong]’, in *The Works of Yan Fu*, Vol. II, 5 Vols, ed. Wang Shi (Beijing: Zhonghua Books House, 1986), p.365(365). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>90</sup> Zheng Boqi, *The Amphibious Collection [liang qi ji]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Liangyou Books Printing Company, 1937), p.116. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>91</sup> Guo Yanli, p.79.

such as Longfellow.<sup>92</sup> Of the translated poetry during the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, British poetry was the most extensively translated, with Byron's works being the most prominent among them in terms of quantity.<sup>93</sup> One of the most extensively translated works among Byron's oeuvre is 'The Isles of Greece' in *Don Juan*, with Su Manshu being an influential translator, notably recognized as the first translator of Burns. At the time, poetry translation was largely haphazard, with many translators undertaking the task opportunistically rather than intentionally. However, Su's poetry collection, *Chao Yin*,<sup>94</sup> stood out as a translated poetry collection that wielded significant social influence.<sup>95</sup> *Chao Yin* is China's earliest anthology of foreign poetry, featuring works not only by Burns but also Byron, Shelley, Howitt, Goethe, and the Indian poet Aru Dutt. Su's translation of 'A red red Rose' will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The first discovery of Burns by the Chinese can be traced back to a significant diplomatic mission led by the Qing's envoys Guo Songtao (1818-1891) and his deputy Liu Xihong (? – 1891). Commencing their journey on 2 December 1876, they embarked on a visit to the United Kingdom, arriving in London on 21 January 1877. During their stay of over nine months, according to the requirements of the General Administration of Customs of Qing to ministers, 'Ministers must record all negotiation time, national

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<sup>92</sup> Robert Crawford, 'Introduction', in *The Bard: Robert Burns, A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2009), pp.3-14(6).

<sup>93</sup> Zha Mingjian and Xie Tianzheng, *A Translation History of Foreign Literature in the 20th Century China*[20 shi ji wai guo wen xue fan yi shi], Vol. I, 2 Vols (Wuhan: Hubei Education Press, 2007), p.42. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>94</sup> *Chao Yin* is Su Manshu's poetry collection. *Chao Yin* is divided into two parts, the first part is the translation of English and Chinese poetry, the second part is the selection of English women's poetry. Su Manshu compiled his *The Selected Poems of Byron* into the first part, thus Byron's works are the main body. Su also selected some English translations from Chinese poetry, such as 'A Dream' [jing meng wen] of *The Romance of the West Chamber*, two poems from *The Book of Songs*, 'A Song on the River' [he shang ge] by Wu Zixu (559–484 BC.), and 'A Song of Water Dragon' (shuilong yin) by Shen Sujia (fl. 1660-1700). The second part selected English women's poetry, a total of 42 selected. Therefore, *Chao Yin* is a collection of Chinese and English poems, Manch's own poems and his translations, as well as poems translated by other Chinese translators and foreign translators.

<sup>95</sup> Zha Mingjian and Xie Tianzheng, *A Translation History of Foreign Literature in the 20th Century China*, p.43.

customs in detail for submission at any time’<sup>96</sup>, Liu Xihong left his private diary entitled ‘Diary of Britain Journey’ (ying yao si ji), composing 136 records. It chronicled various aspects of their journey, including their first reception of the diplomatic orders, departures, arrivals, visits, daily routines in Britain, British perceptions of China, and Liu’s first-hand observations and experiences in the United Kingdom. Notably, the diary documents their participation in cultural activities such as dances hosted by the Scottish Episcopalian Church, as well as tours of Ireland and Scotland, among other engagements encountered during their stay.

As recorded in No.125, ‘From Birmingham to Dublin’, Liu stated,

Upon receiving the order to visit Germany, if I do not travel around Ireland or Scotland, it is my regret that I could not personally explore the landscapes, customs or the local conditions. Liu Fuyi and Bo Lang discussed, and both agreed that is better to travel to Birmingham first, to Scotland through Ireland, then back to Liverpool, and return to London.<sup>97</sup>

On 10 August 1897, Liu and his colleagues travelled from Larne to Stranraer by ship, followed by a carriage journey to Dumfries, where they arrived on 12 August. Spending a single day touring in Dumfries on 13 August, they returned to Liverpool on 14th August by train. Liu and his three colleagues in effect spent only one day in Dumfries, and their originally planned trip to Edinburgh was abandoned after receiving a telegram from home urging them immediately return to London. Liu recorded the scenery and cultural observations during their visit to Scotland. In the diary, No. 130, ‘British Funeral Rituals’, Liu documented their visit to Burns’s tomb,

Robert Burns, referred as a poet by British, is commemorated above his gravesite by a house with his statue and a stone-carved plough inside like a temple attendant in charge of incense and religious service. Surrounding the small temple is a burial ground for individuals other Burns himself.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Liu Xihong, *Diary of Britain Journey [ying yao si ji]* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1986), p.192. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>97</sup> Liu Xihong, *Diary of Britain Journey*, p.192.

<sup>98</sup> Liu Xihong, p. 202.

It is noteworthy that Liu's visit to Burns's tomb was not initially motivated by a deliberate desire to pay homage to the poet, but rather to explore the different funeral customs in Britain. This visit marked the earliest recorded encounter with Burns's legacy in China. In traditional Chinese funeral practices, cemetery graves typically feature a single tombstone engraved with names and dates without statues above them. Statues are more commonly found within temple settings rather than at burial sites. Hence Liu's description of Burns's tomb as resembling a small temple and the poet's sculpture as akin to a temple attendant reflects the unique visual impression experienced by a traditional Chinese official-scholar encountering such a burial site for the first time.

It is notable that Liu Xihong, the deputy envoy to the United Kingdom, was a well-known conservative official-scholar against the Westernization Movement (c. 1860-90). Despite his anti-Westernization stance, Liu's interest in visiting Burns's tomb during his time in Britain raises intriguing implications. Firstly, it underscores Burns's appeal in Britain at the time, that even a conservative Chinese scholar-official like Liu could be aware of his significance. Liu's diary entries reflect his engagement with various aspects of British social life, including churches, agricultural machinery, electrical technology, chemical demonstrations, social dances, tea parties, horse racing, and railway transportation, all of which did not exist in China at the time. Secondly, Liu's decision to visit to Burns's tomb may suggest a particular interest in Burns's Scottish identity rather than his British heritage. This is supported by Liu's detailed observations regarding Scottish customs, such as traditional attire and dances as recorded in No. 89 of the diary, 'The Scottish Dance', where he distinguished between Scottish and English cultural practices. Liu noted, 'the Scottish clothing is different from London. Both men and women have a red chessboard velvet on the left shoulder and tie it around the waist. Men wear boots without trousers, but with red long stockings below the knee',<sup>99</sup> indicating his recognition of Scotland as a distinct nation from English.

Regrettably, despite its crucial records of Burns, Liu's private diary remained obscure for nearly twenty years. It was initially printed by Jiangshi in Changsha in a limited edition of only 48 copies, but the diary failed to disseminate Burns's significance to China during the nineteenth century. Consequently, 'Burns power as an emblem of

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<sup>99</sup> Liu Xihong, p.153.

Scottish identity in the nineteenth century’<sup>100</sup> in Scotland did not reach Chinese audiences at that time. It was not until a century later that these invaluable materials on Burns were brought to light. In 1981, the diary was republished by Hunan People’s Publishing House, followed by reprints by Zhonghua Publishing House in 1985 and Yuelu Publishing House in 1986. However, despite these efforts, during the 1980s when China was undergoing a period of modernistic translation, the impact of the first book referencing Burns was relatively minimal.

Burns was not mentioned until in 1908, in an influential literary criticism by Lu Xun (1881-1936), a writer, critic, translator and one of the founders of modern Chinese literature, ‘On the Power of Mara Poetry’ (mo luo shi li shuo) (hereinafter Mara Poetry), albeit no translations of Burns in China at the time. In this article, Lu introduced several romantic patriotic poets such as Byron, Shelley, Pushkin, Adam Mickiewicz of Poland, and Hungary’s national poet Sandor Petofi. He referred these poets as ‘Mara’ (Satan) poets with the revolutionary spirit by showing ‘revolt in intentions and actions’<sup>101</sup> within their works. Lu had studied in medicine in Japan from 1902 to 1909 where he wrote and published ‘Mara Poetry’. The reception of Burns in Japan was much earlier than in China, for instance, ‘Auld lang syne’, as the first translation piece, was introduced into Japan as early as 1881. In 1906, Mugen Ohara published *Poems from Burns*, the first book-length translation of the Scottish poet, containing thirty-two poems with 160 pages with the original texts and the translations. And in 1895, there already was an earliest criticism on Burns by Masahisa Uemura’s ‘The Peasant Poet Robert Burns’ in *Japan Review*.<sup>102</sup> By 1908, when Lu wrote ‘Mara Poetry’ in Japan, there were already published literary criticisms of Burns and a translation collection of Burns’s works, providing Lu with access to Burns and his works despite the absence of Chinese translations of Burns’s works before 1908. In ‘Mara Poetry’, when discussing Burns, Lu remarked,

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<sup>100</sup> Richard J. Finley, ‘The Burns Cult and Scottish Identity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, in *Love and Liberty: Robert Burns: A Bicentenary Celebration*, ed. Kenneth Simpson (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), pp.69-79 (69).

<sup>101</sup> Lu Xun, ‘On the Power of Mara Poetry [mo luo shi li shuo]’, in *The Complete Works of Lu Xun*, Vol. I, 18 Vols, ed. Lin Fei (Beijing: People’s Literature Press, 2005), pp.65-120(68). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>102</sup> Toshio Namba, ‘Robert Burns in Japan’, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Vol. 1: Iss.4, 4-1 (1964), pp.253-8(253-4).

In the eighteenth century, the society was permeated with hypocrisy, and the churches were not improved in Britain. Hence, the writings at the time also imitated the predecessors on the surface deviating from their cores. Consequently, the philosopher, John Locke, came out first to discharge the accumulated malpractices of politics and religion, and speak out the thought of freedom, which was like a seed. While, within the field of literature, Robert Burns, a farmer, born in Scotland, put all his efforts into fighting against the society and advocating the communal egalitarianism. He was in no fear for the authority, no fear of the rich, to enthusiastically sing his songs and address his poems with his whole life. For he is a great man in spirit, he is still a great genius among people in spite of his failure and ending up with an early death.<sup>103</sup>

Lu's comments are far from the situation of the eighteenth-century Britain. As a matter of fact, before the end of the eighteenth century, Britain had experienced the Scottish Enlightenment, and industrial revolution and the rise of one of the most powerful literary traditions within European Romanticism. It is not 'permeated with hypocrisy', and 'not improved' as Lu stated. Yet it is unusual that Lu made such an ambitious statement about Burns, recognising the greatness of the Scottish bard and elevating him to a high position. This laid the groundwork for the subsequent translations of Burns's works.

During the wave of translation of British literary novels in the beginning of twentieth century, British poetry was also introduced into China. As aforementioned, the first Burns translation, 'A red red Rose', was compiled into the foreign poetry collection, *Chao Yin*, by Su Manshu in 1908 and published in Tokyo in 1911. Songs have been seen 'the beginning of Burns's fame' and 'love songs are among his most famous',<sup>104</sup> which is likely that Su noticed the love song 'A red red Rose'. Su Manshu was born in Tokyo, and became a monk, writer, poet and an influential translator of English poetry, who notably became the first translator in the works of Byron and Shelley. Furthermore, as Su returned to Tokyo in May 1911, where he wrote 'A red red Rose' in English and Chinese translations in his own handwriting as a gift for his old friend, Fei Gongzhi (1879-1952), who was studying medicine in Japan.<sup>105</sup> This gesture was a token of Su's appreciation for

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<sup>103</sup> Lu Xun, 'On the Power of Mara Poetry', p.102.

<sup>104</sup> Raymond Bentman, *Robert Burns* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), pp.69,78.

<sup>105</sup> *The Chronology of Su Manshu [Su Manshu nian pu ji qi ta]*, ed. Liu Yazhi and Liu Wuji (Shanghai: Beixin Book House, 1927), p.281. [Originally in Chinese]



Fei’s participation in the assassination of Duan Fang (1861-1911), the Qing’s governor of Liangjiang, reflecting Su’s love for the piece and his satisfaction for his translation, as well as his respect for Fei’s actions.

As a forerunner in the translation of Western poetry, Su’s notable contribution lies in his translation of works of Byron and Shelley, particularly his ground-breaking publication of the first Western poetry collection, *The Selected Poems of Byron* (1908). Although the piece of translation ‘A red red Rose’ may not have occupied a significant position in Su’s literary endeavours, its significance is in initiating Burns’s reception in China and extending its influence in Burns’s translation to the present day. This love poem and Su’s rendition has been seen as a representative of Western love poetry in the field of Chinese literary criticism.<sup>106</sup> In the subsequent retranslations of this piece, Su’s translation was reiterated, for instance, in the later influential translations of Zhou Shoujuan in 1921 and Wu Fangji (1896-1932) in 1926, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Su’s rendition served as a foundation upon which later translators built, underscoring the enduring impact of his work on the reception and understanding of Burns’s poetry in China.

The origin of Su’s awareness and his decision to translate this piece remains elusive. However, it is intriguing to note the striking parallels between the lives and characters of these two poets, despite their differing temporal and geographical contexts. Both Burns and Su died early, with Burns at age of 37 and Su 34. The exact causes of their deaths remain uncertain, with speculation ranging from ‘intoxicated’, poverty,

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<sup>106</sup> For instance, Zeng Tao, ‘On Factors Influencing Chinese and Western Love Poetics [shi xi ying xiang zhong xi ai qing shi xue zhi zhu yin su, *Journal of Hunan University (Social Science Edition)*, Vol. 13, 2 (1999), pp.100-5(101). [Originally in Chinese]; Feng Hongbian, ‘A Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Love Poetry [zhong xi ai qing shi ge bi jiao yan jiu]’, *Interlingual Cultural Studies*, 00 (2019), pp.76-87(78). [Originally in Chinese]

exhaustion, ‘rheumatic fever’ to ‘putrid fever’ in Burns’s case<sup>107</sup> and perhaps ‘diarrhoea’, ‘gluttony’ or ‘gastrointestinal disease’<sup>108</sup> for Su. Both poets were known for their patriotism. Su joined the Chinese Anti-Russian Army of Volunteers in 1903 when he studied in Japan serving as a testament to his nationalist sentiments. Furthermore, both Burns and Su were celebrated as ‘genius’ during their lifetime. Burns was seen as a ‘heaven-taught ploughman’,<sup>109</sup> and Su was hailed as ‘a genius universally acknowledged’<sup>110</sup> as well as ‘a Sino-Japanese genius’.<sup>111</sup> Additionally, both poets were renowned for their romantic pursuits and were prolific in their expressions of love through their literary works. Despite being a monk, Su earned a reputation as ‘love monk’ due to his love stories, as Liu Yazhi summarized Su’s life as being ‘full of affection’.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, Su’s literary oeuvre, including his acclaimed fiction *Lone Swan Goose* (duan hong ling yan ji) (1912), predominantly revolves around the theme of love, while a significant portion of his poetry similarly explores the subject of love for Su’s ‘being good at love’.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> James Currie, ‘Life of Burns’, in *The Works of Robert Burns*; with an account of his life, and a criticism on his writings, to which are prefixed, some observations on the character and condition of the Scottish Peasantry by James Currie, Robert Burns, Vol. I, 4 Vols (Liverpool, London and Edinburgh: J. M’CCreery, T.Cadell, W. Davies and W.Creech, 1800), pp.33-253(222); Allan Cunningham, ‘The Life of Robert Burns’, in *The Poems, Letters, and land of Robert Burns*, Robert Burns, Allan Cunningham (London: George Virtue, 1838), pp.i-xlvi(xlii); John Lockhart, *The Life of Robert Burns*, Vol. II, 2 Vols. (Liverpool: Henry Young & Sons, Limited, 1914 [1828], p.161; Franklyn Snyder, *The Life of Robert Burns*, Vol.1, 2 Vols (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), p.429; Mauric Lindsay, *The Burns Encyclopaedia* (London: Robert Hale, 1995), p.58.

<sup>108</sup> Sun Yixue, ‘The Sentimental Journey of Su Manshu [duan hong ling yan Su Manshu de gan shang zhi lv]’, *Research on Chinese Literature*, 010,02 (1992), pp.44-9(46). [Originally in Chinese]; Liu Yazhi and Liu Wuji, *The Chronology of Su Manshu*, p.32.

<sup>109</sup> Henry Mackenzie, ‘Unsigned essay in *Lounger*’, in *Robert Burns: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Donald A. Low (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp.67-71(70).

<sup>110</sup> Ma Yijun, ‘Preface’, in *The Works of Su Manshu [Su Manshu wen ji]*, Vol. I, 2 Vols, ed. Ma Yijun (Guangzhou: Huacheng Press, 1991), pp.26-52(33). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>111</sup> Yin C. Liu, ‘Henry McAleavy: A Memorial’, *The China Quarterly*, No.36 (1968). pp.138-9 (138).

<sup>112</sup> Liu Yazhi, ‘On Monk Su Manshu [Su he shang za tan]’, in *The Complete Works of Su Manshu [Su Manshu quan ji]*, Vol. V, 5 Vols, ed. Liu Yazhi (Beijing: Beijing China Book Company, 1985), pp.130-231(209). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>113</sup> Liu Wuji, ‘Three Stages of Su Manshu Studies [Su Manshu yan jiu de san ge jie duan]’, in *The Anthology of Su Manshu* (Su Manshu wen ji), Vol. I, 2 Vols, ed. Ma Yijun, (Guangzhou: Huacheng Press, 1991), pp.3-25(21). [Originally in Chinese]

In his English preface<sup>114</sup> to *Chao Yin* (1911), Su commented that Shelley and Byron both had ‘the lofty ideas of love and liberty’,<sup>115</sup> suggesting a sense of identification with these Romantic poets and their themes.

Su’s poetic sensibilities probably enabled him to resonate with the bold passion in Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’. In Su’s views, Burns’s unfettered pursuit of romantic love may have symbolized an inspiration for people’s understanding of freedom and love. In his 1910 correspondence addressed to Gao Tianmei, Su voiced disapproval of the translation conducted by the esteemed scholar Gu Hongming (1857-1928) of William Cowper’s ‘The Diverting History of John Gilpin, Linen Draper’, asserting that such a translation bore minimal relevance to the prevailing socio-cultural milieu in China at that juncture.

Gu’s translation of ‘The Diverting History of John Gilpin, Linen Draper’ can be said perfect in terms of rhetoric and style. Yet the original text gained popularity for its perceived to be written overnight, and its praise of the king, contributing to its appeal among people. Can it be compared to Robert Burns who exclusively served the common people?<sup>116</sup>

Su’s perception of translation works suggests a positive political inclination, where he viewed translation works as a political function for serving the society and the common people. It is not unusual at the time for translators to prioritize the political utility of their translations over a deep understanding of the original cultural nuances. As Chen Yugang put it, Su possessed a conspicuous intention to employ foreign literature as a tool to educate readers and shed light on societal issues – an avant-garde thought in translating but also a good tradition in modern translation literature.<sup>117</sup> In this sense, Su’s decision to translate Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’ likely stemmed from a deliberate choice rather than

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<sup>114</sup> *Chao Yin* has two prefaces, one written in English, and the other in Chinese. Both are written by Su Manshu.

<sup>115</sup> Su Manshu, ‘Preface in English’, in *The Anthology of Su Manshu*, Vol. I, pp.304-6(306).

<sup>116</sup> Su Manshu, ‘The Letter to Gao Tianmei’, in *The Complete Works of Su Manshu*, Vol. II, pp.516-7(516-7).

<sup>117</sup> Chen, p.79.

being seized by a whim. Despite being a monk, Su often attempted to convey the ‘eternal spirit of love and freedom’<sup>118</sup> in his works, resonating with Burns.

It is plausible that Su’s involvement in translating Byron’s works led to his awareness of Burns and subsequently initiated the first translation of Burns’s piece. At the time, the absence of modern new-style necessitated translators to adopt the archaic style when translating Western poetry. This approach was under the impact of the translation thoughts of Yan Fu’s ‘Elegance’ and Lin Shu’s success whereby classical translation as aforementioned, making the archaic style the preferred register for translators. Furthermore, the longstanding prestige and antiquity of Chinese poetry, which had evolved over thousands of years, also contributed to the adoption of archaic forms in translations from very disparate cultures and societies. Within the realm of archaic poetry, two predominant forms existed: the five-character poem (wu yan shi) and seven-character poem (qi yan shi). In term of length, there are two distinct forms in archaic poetry: the quatrain (jue ju) and the long poem. The long poem, while unrestricted in length, must consist of an even number of lines. In archaic poetry, rhyming conventions differ from those in English poetry. Specifically, the first line must rhyme with every even line throughout the poem as ‘aa×a×a’ (in a quatrain, the rhyme must be ‘aa×a’), while English poems often employ various rhyme schemes such as ‘ababcc’. Some poets have even managed to achieve rhyming consistency across every line. In his translation of ‘A red red Rose’, Su adopted the form of archaism, which is a five-character form rhyming in every even line without the first line included, as follows,

O MY Luve’s like a Red, Red rose,

That’s newly sprung in June;

O my Luve’s like the melodie

That’s sweetly play’d in tune.—

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,

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<sup>118</sup> Liao Qiyi, *The Changes of Modern Translation Thoughts in China – The Studies on Norms of Literary Translation Before and After the May Fourth Movement* [zhong guo jin dai fan yi si xiang de shan bian – wu si qian hou wen xue fan yi gui fan de yan jiu] (Tianjin: Nankai University Press, 2010), p.59. [Originally in Chinese]

So deep in luvè am I;  
And I will love thee still, my Dear  
Till a’ the seas gang dry.—  
  
Till a’ the seas gang dry, my Dear,  
And the rocks melt wi’ the sun:  
I will love thee still, my Dear,  
While the sands o’ life shall run.—  
  
And fare thee weel, my only Luvè!  
And fare thee weel, a while!  
And I will come again, my Luvè,  
Tho’ it were ten thousand mile!—<sup>119</sup>

穎穎赤薔靡	Bonnie Bonnie the Red Rose
穎穎赤薔靡，(i)	Bonnie bonnie the red rose,
首夏發初苞。(ao)	First budding in the early summer,
惻惻清商曲，	The beautiful melody,
眇音何遠姚。(ao)	Spreading far and further.
予美涼天紹，	My love is indeed beautiful,
幽情中自持。(i)	My love is self-controlled,
滄海會流枯，	The seas would go dry,
相愛無絕情。(ing)	Our love shall never die.

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<sup>119</sup> Kinsley, No. 453. pp.734-5.

沧海会流枯，	The seas would go dry,
顽石烂炎熹。(i)	Hard rocks will be melted in the hot sun.
微命属如缕，	My humble life is like continuous thread,
相爱无绝期。(i)	Our love shall never die.
掺袂别予美，	Holding sleeves and hands to say goodbye to my lover,
离隔在须臾。(u)	Departure at this moment.
阿阳早日归，	I, A Yang, will be back early,
万里莫踟蹰！(u) <sup>120</sup>	Never wandering though ten thousand miles away!

Essentially, English and Chinese employ distinct character representation systems, particularly evident in poetry. English is a phonographic language based on the sense of rhythm, with metrical patterns determined by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables. In contrast, archaic Chinese is ideographic, with each character representing a syllable and featuring four tones, stressing the melodic aspect of Chinese poetry. Translating the rhythmic nuances of an English poem into archaic Chinese, while adhering to the constraints of melodic expression, presents a considerable challenge. This transition between two vastly different poetic representation systems demands precision and skill to accurately capture the essence of the original while conforming to the musicality inherent in Chinese poetry.

‘A red red Rose’ followed a ballad meter, characterized by four-line stanzas alternating between iambic tetrameter and trochee trimeter, with rhyming in the second and fourth line of each stanza. Su’s rendition maintained a similar rhyming scheme to the original, although it did not strictly adhere to the conventions of rhyme of Chinese classical poetry. Chinese language consists of four main tones, the first tone (–) - dark level (yin ping), the second tone (/) - light level (yang ping), the third tone (V) – rising (shang shen) and the fourth tone (\) – departing (qu shen). In simple terms, the first and second tones are entitled level tones (平 ping), while the third and fourth are oblique tones

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<sup>120</sup> Su Manshu, *The Complete Works of Su Manshu*, Vol. I, p.87(87).

(仄 ze). Generally, the level rhyme conveys more light and implicit implication, while oblique rhyme is more readable and catchier. In this translation, Su employed the level rhyme to evoke a sense of distance and tranquillity, reflecting the mood of the original and creating a serene ambiance across time and space.

Furthermore, Su employed elements of the ancient folksong style from ‘National Customs’ in *Book of Songs* (*shi jing*, 11th -7th Centuries BC) and *Nineteen Ancient Poems* (around 100 AD) of Han dynasty (202 BC – 220). This choice echoed the ballad form in the original and enriched the imagery, such as 清商曲(*qing shang qu*) – denoting beautiful music, 掺袂(*can qu*) – a gesture of holding sleeves and hands to say goodbye, 予美(*yu mei*) – referring to the beloved, 夭绍(*yao shao*) – indicating lightness and colourfulness, and 阿阳(*a yang*) – signifying ‘I’. These additions contributed to the elegance and delicacy of the translation yet may raise challenges for comprehension. Hu Shi criticized Su’s poetry translation as ‘obscure’.<sup>121</sup> Subsequent critics, such as Lu Xun, echoed Hu’s sentiment, remarking Su’s translations as ‘extremely ancient and obscure [...] resulting in no wide influence’.<sup>122</sup> Su’s use of archaic language was influenced by his teacher, Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936), a prominent scholar of traditional Chinese literature who highly valued the archaic style.<sup>123</sup> Su’s archaic rendition in the traditional five-characters form deviated from the vernacular and folk-song flavour of the original, altering its emotional texture from a passionate and rustic love song aimed at common people to an elegant portrayal intended for the literati, featuring a sense of ‘remote charm and deep sorrow beyond the ordinary individuals’.<sup>124</sup> Notably, Su’s translation followed the principle of Yan Fu’s ‘Elegance’ as mentioned above, reflecting the prevailing translation philosophy of the time. During this very beginning period of Burns’s translation, the translator’s approach was preliminary and exploratory, blurring the lines

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<sup>121</sup> Liao Qiyi, *The Changes of Modern Translation Thoughts in China – The Studies on Norms of Literary Translation Before and After the May Fourth Movement*, p.50.

<sup>122</sup> Lu Xun, ‘Memory [za yi]’, in *The Selected Proses of Lu Xun [Lu Xun san wen ji]*, ed. People’s Literature Publishing House (Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1993), pp.144-9(144). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>123</sup> Liu Wuji, ‘Su Manshu and Byron’s ‘The Isle of Greece’ – On the Various Chinese Renditions [Su Manshu he ai xi la – jian lun ge jia zhong wen yi ben]’, *The Journal of Foshan Normal University*, 01 (1985), pp.8-36(10). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>124</sup> Gao Xu, ‘The Poetry of Yuan Wu Jin Lu [yuan wu jin lu shi hua]’, in *The Complete Works of Su Manshu*, Vol. V, pp.232-4(232).

between translation and creation. Their translation often deviated from literal translation, instead adopting a form of free translation or even complete re-creation based on original. This approach was associated with the external translation environment and the theory at the time. The pragmatic view of translation focusing on enlightening and educating people was common in the field of literary translation during the period. Translators may not have fully grasped the unique connotation of national culture within the original works, focusing instead on the broader political function of their translation.

In 1913/1914, Lu Zhiwei (1894-1970), who was preparing to study for a doctorate in psychology in the United States, published a poem in *Ci*<sup>125</sup> related to Burns after reading Burns's pieces as follows,

译彭斯诗	On Translating Burns's Poetry
调记虞美人	In the tune of Yumeiren
匿斯河上延空翠，	The emerald green stretches above the Loch Ness,
颇颌心头事，	I have things to ponder,
思量到此强开眉，	I'm reluctant to be happy thinking of this,
忽忆桃花流水赏心时。	Suddenly recalling the happy moments when seeing the peach blossom and flowing water.
淡山窃宛连江绣，	Distant hills and rivers meander like an embroidery,
忍感春怀旧。	Cannot help being nostalgia for the past in spring.
几寻踪迹曲江滨，	A few traces along the riverside,
争奈素心难遇素人心。 <sup>126</sup>	But regrettably, the plain heart hardly encounters another simple heart.

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<sup>125</sup> *Ci* refers to a form of archaic Chinese poetry, reaching its peak in Song Dynasty (960-1279).

<sup>126</sup> Lu Zhiwei, 'On Translating Burns's Poetry [yi Peng Si shi]', *Dongwu*, Vol. 1, Issu. 2 (1914). No page numbers. [Originally in Chinese]



Although Lu did not formally publish his translation of Burns’s works, his endeavour suggests Burns’s appeal among Chinese intellectuals at the time. Subsequently, in 1918, Yu Lu (fl.1890-1950) contributed to this trend by publishing his translation of ‘My bony Mary’ into ‘Soldier Husband’s Farewell’ (zheng fu bie) in archaic form, making the final piece in archaic style in Burns’s translation.

After the MFM in 1919, Burns’s reputation was gradually positioned as a lyric poet and a love poet. After Su, there were thirteen versions of ‘A red red Rose’, from 1919 to 1937 before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (hereafter SSJW) (1937-45). The constant retranslation and widespread dissemination of this love song contributed to Burns’s recognition primarily as a love poet among Chinese readership. Notably, Zhou Shoujuan and Wu Fangji exerted a significant influence on shaping Burns’s image. In 1921, Zhou Shoujuan published ‘A Love Poem of Robert Burns’ in *Saturday*, putting Su’s archaic translation before his own vernacular translation of ‘A Red, Red Rose’. Zhou also offered a short introduction to Burns, marking the initial presentation of the poet, and included a picture of Burns’s handwritten manuscript of this song. Zhou stated,

Robert Burns, a great poet of Britain, stood on par with Byron in terms of fame. Proficient in love poetry, he mastered well the affection between men and women within his lyrics. The emotions, like weeping, adoration, complaint and delight, were delicate and perfect in his verses. The best parts were like the endless silk from silkworm cocoons. His masterpiece, ‘A Red, Red Rose’, is brimming with profound affection, evoking strong emotions as I read. I present this love song here to share it with all those who harbour love within.<sup>127</sup>

Zhou thus reinforced the prevailing view that Burns was, above all, a poet of love. He was joined in this by a fellow commentator, Wu Fangji.

In 1926, Wu published ‘Robert Burns’ in *Xueheng*, presenting thirteen pieces translated by Chen Quan (1903-1969), Su Manshu, Liu Pu (fl.1920-1950), and Wu

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<sup>127</sup> Zhou Shoujuan, ‘A Love Poem of Robert Burns [Peng Si qing shi]’, *Saturday*, 102 (1921), pp.52-4(52). [Originally in Chinese]

himself. It was later republished as a monograph in 2010 in Edinburgh.<sup>128</sup> It included the earliest extended literary criticism of Burns, albeit primarily a concise biography. Prefacing Wu's critical essay was a portrait of Burns, which was based on the Swinton portrait that was bequeathed to the University of Edinburgh, this was the earliest image of Burns available in a Chinese translation.

At the start of his essay, Wu stated, 'As I read Burns's poetry, I love its simplicity and genuineness, akin to the elegance, affection and sentiment found in *Li Sao*.'<sup>129</sup> It is a remarkably high commendation for Burns's works to be likened to *Li Sao*.<sup>130</sup> Wu drew a comparison between Burns's works and *Li Sao*, alluding to his enormous admiration and appreciation for Burns, along with his insights into Burns and his works. Given that Qu Yuan (fl. BC 340- BC 278) was a great lyric poet and *Li Sao* held a significant place in China's literary history, Wu asserted that Burns was first and foremost a lyric poet. He concluded,

Although Burns is a drunkard without control, his poetry exhibits meticulous craftsmanship down to the level of the word. I particularly love the down-to-earth quality within his poetry, without the sense of vanity. He is able to inherit the poetics of his predecessors with no recklessness or arrogance. His works advocate feelings. [...] Oh, if only we could have had Burns born in China, his way of words with deeds would have propelled literature and morality forward to save the tedious and irrational state of modern poetry.<sup>131</sup>

Unlike Zhou, who mainly identified Burns as 'proficient in love poetry', Wu further observed that Burns's poetry was 'grounded in reality',<sup>132</sup> indicating that his works are deeply embedded in common people's daily life and natural world. However, Wu's

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<sup>128</sup> *Selected Poems of Robert Burns in Chinese Translation*, ed. Natascha Gentz, tr. Wu Fangji et al, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010). [Originally in English and Chinese]

<sup>129</sup> Wu Fangji, 'Robert Burns [Peng Si zhuan]', *Xueheng*, 57 (1926), pp.9-19 (10). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>130</sup> *Li Sao*: a romantic political lyric poem written by Qu Yuan (BC. 340-BC.278), a great patriotic poet in the Warring States Period (BC.475-BC.221). *Li Sao* is the longest lyric poem in ancient China, inaugurating the style of 'Sao' lyrics in Chinese literature. *Li Sao* has exerted a tremendous impact on Chinese literature and Chinese literati for more than 2,000 years, so much so that Chinese literati have been referred as 'Sao ke'.

<sup>131</sup> Wu Fangji, 'Robert Burns', p.13.

<sup>132</sup> Wu Fangji, 'Robert Burns', p.10.

understanding of Burns and his poetry remains in the lyrical sphere, and he did address Burns’s other genres such as his political poems and satires. Burns’s love and lyric pieces thus continue to take precedence and are the focal point in Wu’s selection. Among the eleven translations of Burns, the love poems account for a half. Three translations of ‘A red red Rose’ by Su Manshu, Chen Quan and Wu Fangji respectively; ‘To Jean (Of a’ the airts the wind can blow)’, two translations of ‘John Anderson, My Jo’ by Liu Pu and Wu Fangji respectively, ‘Highland Mary (Ye banks, and Braes, etc.)’, and ‘Coming thro’ the rye’ followed by lyric poems, such as ‘McPherson’s Farewell’, ‘My heart is in the highlands’, ‘Auld Lang Syne’, ‘Wilie brew’d a peck o’maut,’ ‘Ca’ the youwes to the know’.<sup>133</sup> Before Yuan Shuipai published the first full collection of Burns’s translations in 1944, Wu’s translation remained the most substantial and influential in China. It significantly contributed to Burns’s reputation as a love and lyric poet among Chinese readership in the 1920s and 1930s.

The widespread appeal of the song, ‘A red red Rose’, among translators and readers in China can be attributed to the significant contrast between Chinese and Western poetry in their portrayal and interpretation of love. This disparity creates a sense of novelty and leaves a profound impression on Chinese readers, offering them a distinct perspective on the perception and conceptualization of love. Liang Qichao observed that Chinese verses adhere to the principle of ‘implicative implication’<sup>134</sup> in conveying emotions, while the Western love poetry tends to express feelings directly and ardently. Zhu Guangqian (1897-1986), an influential aesthetician and critic, remarked that ‘Western poetry has the advantage of frankness, while Chinese poetry has euphemism; Western profound, while Chinese subtle; Western flowery, while Chinese plain’.<sup>135</sup> This dichotomy is particularly evident in the depiction of love, where Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’ stands in stark contrast

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<sup>133</sup> The title of Chinese translation of each poem was followed by its original English one in Wu Fangji’s publication. In this chapter, the English titles quoted are from Wu’s publication, and the case is consistent with his as well.

<sup>134</sup> Liang Qichao, ‘Emotion in Chinese Verses [zhong guo yun wen li tou suo biao xian chu lai de qing gan]’, in *The Anthology of China’s Modern Aesthetics: Liang Qichao [zhong guo xian dai mei xue min jia wen cong: Liang Qichao juan]*, ed. Jin Ya (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2009), pp.101-57(103). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>135</sup> Zhu Guangqian, *On Poetry [shi lun]* (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2008), p.56.[Originally in Chinese]

to traditional Chinese love poetry for its unabashedly passionate confession, a feature seldom found in the latter.

The emotional tone of Western love poetry predominantly expresses ‘admiration’, whereas Chinese love poetry is often characterized by a sense of ‘grievance’.<sup>136</sup> Western love poetry tends to show courtship love with ardent and unrestrained feelings before marriage, usually comparing women to angels, goddesses, stars, moon and sun as Romeo sings for Juliet,<sup>137</sup> while Chinese love poetry demonstrate marital love after marriage to show the lovesickness and separation. Confucian culture, which dominated for more than two thousand years in China, does not encourage the romantic relationship between men and women but the relationships between family members. In *The Analects of Confucius*, it discusses all other aspects of society and life, yet not the romantic relationship at all. Influenced by the Confucian culture, traditional Chinese society values that the purpose and significance of individuals lie entirely in serving their family and nation. The desire of personal love based on sexual instinct, seen as a potential destructive force for social order, should be excluded from social value system and therefore must be strictly suppressed by ethical norms in traditional Chinese society. Ethical norms rigorously enforce the suppression of such desires, with no distinct notion of romantic relationship between men and women until ‘ai qing’ (the romantic love between men and women) was introduced to China in the early twentieth century under the influence of Western culture. Furthermore, the institution of marriage must be arranged only by parents and matchmakers. The notion of free choice in marriage, both for women and men, did not exist at all, and couples were not allowed to meet or know each other before their wedding day, a practice the persisted into the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>138</sup> The absence of pre-marital love pursuits resulted in a scarcity of courtship-themed lyrics in traditional Chinese love poetry.

Therefore, *gui yuan shi* (poetry of boudoirs), *gong yuan shi* (poetry of concubines living in palaces), *zeng nei shi* (poetry of addressing wives), *dao wang shi* (poetry of mourning dead wives), and *qi fu shi* (poetry of abandoned women) constituted a

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<sup>136</sup> Zhu Guangqian, *On Poetry*, pp.55–6.

<sup>137</sup> William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. James N. Loehlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 133,134, 138.

<sup>138</sup> Feng Huazhan, *Comparisons Between Chinese and Western Poetry [zhong xi shi ge bi jiao]* (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1987), p.24. [Originally in Chinese]

considerable proportion in traditional Chinese love poetry. In the framework of traditional Confucian culture, where success and reputation were stressed, it was seen as a shame for a married man to remain at home with his wife. Instead, it was encouraged that men should pursue careers serving the government, engaging in business in ventures for family across the nation, or joining the army for national defence. Consequently, numerous poems in Chinese literature reflect themes of loneliness and separation resulting from such societal norms.

While, in the West, Denis De Rougemont asserted that ‘the whole of European poetry has come out of courtly love’.<sup>139</sup> The courtly love tradition such Yeats’s poetry dedicated to Maud Gonne,<sup>140</sup> has been notably absent in China’s love poetry. Western poets often explore a higher spiritual pursuit through romantic love for a woman, such as agape, the unity of soul or the love of God, which never appeared in Chinese love poetry. In contrast, in Chinese love poetry, what the poet expected was only the woman without a higher spiritual sublimation. In Chinese traditional patriarchal society, the status of women was lower than of men along with numerous physical and mental requirements like ‘foot-binding’,<sup>141</sup> ‘Three Obediences and Four Virtues’,<sup>142</sup> ‘Lack of talents in a woman is a virtue’ and a number of rules. It resulted in women’s dependence on men. Women even could not have their own names, not to mention the equal political, economic or educational status to men. These societal dynamics constrained marital love within ethical boundaries, with little room for spiritual love between the couple. As Zhu Guangqian pointed out that ‘Western poets realize their lives in love, while Chinese poets only seek to entertain their lives in love’,<sup>143</sup> suggesting that Western love tends to reach the spiritual sublime through love whereas Chinese stay in the secular.

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<sup>139</sup> Denis De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, tr. Montgomery Belgion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p.151.

<sup>140</sup> Bernard O’Donoghue, ‘Yeats the Love Poet’, *Essays in Honour of Eamonn Cantwell, Yeats Annual*, No.20. ed. Warwick Gould. 2016. pp.97-117. <<https://books.openedition.org/obp/3451#authors>>, accessed on 15 March, 2021.

<sup>141</sup> Foot-binding is a vile patriarchy practice in ancient China which crippled women since their childhood both physically and spiritually.

<sup>142</sup> According to Confucianism, ‘Three Obediences’ refer to that a woman must obey her father before marriage, obey her husband after marriage, and obey her son after her husband death. Four Virtues refer to that a woman must have her morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent work.

<sup>143</sup> Zhu Guangqian, p.55.

Under such restrictions of Confucian cultural norms, it was discouraged to freely convey romantic love between men and women. Despite occasional instances of love poetry, there existed a pervasive undercurrent of anti-love-poetry thoughts, constantly overtly claiming their contempt, hatred and exclusion toward love poetry and poets. Orthodox literati often harboured prejudice and misconceptions when evaluating love poetry. For instance, Huang Ziyun<sup>144</sup> (1691-1754) criticized a renowned poet, Li Shangyin<sup>145</sup> (813-858), for his poetry filled with ‘the verses of immoral and licentious spirits’.<sup>146</sup> Zhu Ziqing (1891-1948) claimed that ‘China lacks love poetry, only the pieces of ‘Yi Nei’ (recalling the wife), or ‘Ji Nei’ (addressing the wife), or of allusions. There are extremely few which bluntly expressed love, and no poems for singing love at all’.<sup>147</sup> Zhu’s critique of China’s love poetry, though potentially seen as radical, suggests that love poetry has traditionally been undervalued in Chinese literary tradition and regarded as less significant by the scholarly community.

It might be argued that traditional Chinese love poetry predominantly conveys a sense of ‘bitterness’. The lovesickness is bitter, the separation is bitter and the being abandoned is bitter, as Zhu Ziqing argued that there is no true sense of love poetry in China. In contrast, Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’ ‘sweetly play’d in tune’ for love is rarely visible in Chinese love poetry. Burns’s bold and blazing expression allows Chinese readers to sense a completely different emotional impact and the thrill of the soul for love. Unlike the nuanced interpretation required for Chinese love poems, the reader is able to clearly and directly feel the poet’s heartfelt emotions from his depiction. Further to this, the passionate plea for love and freedom in this piece resonated with the spiritual aspirations of Chinese people amidst the societal upheavals of the time. After the MFM, under the impact of Western culture, the rock of traditional culture repressing the growth of the Chinese love poetry was gradually smashed by the unprecedented New Culture Movement. The enthusiastic reception of Burns’s fervent and passionate depiction of love in ‘A red red Rose’ among Chinese readers reflected their longing for personal freedom

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<sup>144</sup> Huang Ziyun: a poet and poetic theorist in the early and middle periods of Qing Dynasty.

<sup>145</sup> Li Shangyin, an influential poet in the late Tang Dynasty, well-known for his love poems.

<sup>146</sup> Huang Ziyun, ‘On Poetry [lun shi]’, in *The Poetics of Qing Dynasty [qing shi hua]*, ed. Ding Fubao (Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Publishing House, 1978), pp.847-67(852). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>147</sup> Zhu Ziqing, ‘Preface of Poetry Collection [shi ji xu]’, in *1917-1927 The Collection of Chinese New Literature: The Collection of Prefaces [1917-1927 zhong guo xin wen xue da xi: dao yan ji]*, ed. Liu Yunfeng (Tianjin: Tianjin People’s Press, 2009), pp.146-151(148). [Originally in Chinese]

and liberation from the constraints of traditional values that had suppressed such aspirations for centuries. This fervour is indicative of Chinese readers’ desire for individual autonomy, the freedom to choose one’s own path in matters of love and marriage, and a rejection of entrenched societal norms and customs.

In addition to the gargantuan difference between Chinese and Western love poetry, another reason for the gradually wide acceptance of Burns’s works during this period is the reform in language, advocating *bai hua wen* (vernacular Chinese) to replace *wen yan wen* (classical Chinese). Before the MFM, the classical Chinese was a formal written language used by traditional upper-class scholar-officials as a carrier of traditional Chinese thoughts and culture, while vernacular Chinese was informal between classical Chinese and colloquial folk language often used by common people for entertainment. The vernacular Chinese can be traced back to the period of Tang Dynasty (618–907) and Song Dynasty (960–1279) for popular literature like novels, legends and story-telling, formed on the basis of colloquial language, resulting in that scholar-officials despised novels and did not see novels included within the category of literature.

In 1917, the publication of Hu Shi’s ‘A Preliminary Discussion of on Literary Reform’ and Chen Duxiu’s ‘On Literary Revolution’ marked the formal inauguration of New Literary Movement, also known as *Bai hua wen* Movement (vernacular movement). This movement claimed that the dissemination of modern thought to the common people could only be achieved through the use of vernacular language, necessitating the abandonment of classical language. As Hu Shi put it, ‘we have to admit that we are falling behind the West in everything, not only in nature, in mechanics, but also in politics, society and morality’.<sup>148</sup> Under such an ideological concept of the total denial of traditional Chinese culture, the vernacular as the preferred medium for reaching the masses became the vehicle of new literature. Essentially, the New Literature Movement during the MFM was a language reform movement.<sup>149</sup> Subsequently, literary works, including the translations, came to use vernacular Chinese. Due to the vigorous promotion of the vernacular movement and its increasing acceptance among intellectuals and

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<sup>148</sup> Hu Shi, ‘Let’s Take a Look in a Mirror [da jia lai zhao zhao jin zi]’, in *Collected Essays of Hu Shi [Hu Shi wen cun]*, Vol. III, 4 Vols, Hu Shi (Beijing: Huawen Press, 2013), pp.14-9(18). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>149</sup> Yu Gao, *The Birth of Twentieth Century Chinese Literature: Revolution in Language, History and Culture*, tr. Guicang Li (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p.4.

readers, translators increasingly adopted vernacular Chinese over classical Chinese as their language of translation.

The *Bai hua wen* Movement, which began with poetry reform, marked the inception of new literature in China, with poetry traditionally revered as the pinnacle of literature. In *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*wen xin diao long*) (AD.501-2), the earliest well-structured and systematic treatise on literary theory in China literary heritage, Liu Xie (465-521) elaborated twenty various literary genres in detail respectively. Of them, the first chapter on poetry, ‘Ming Shi’, demonstrating the supreme status of poetry in Chinese literature. The other literary genres would be done as well if poetry could be reformed successfully. Prior to the MFM, poetry was composed only in traditional archaic style, generally in five characters or seven characters, contributing to Western poetry translation as well as discussed earlier in this chapter. For instance, Byron’s ‘The Isle of Greece’ was translated by Ma Junwu (1881-1940) and Su Manshu in archaic style respectively, resulting in a limited influence, particularly on the development of subsequent new poetry.<sup>150</sup> After the MFM, Chinese poets came to adopt vernacular language and explore new forms inspired by Western poetry such as blank verse, to break the traditional constraints of poetic meter for free expressing their thoughts, which was entitled ‘new poetry’. In the translation of Burns’s works, the register was transited from Su’s archaic style to Zhou’s form of new poetry in vernacular Chinese in 1920s made the translations more accessible to readers. Furthermore, the use of vernacular allowed Burns’s translation to capture the linguistic essence of the original more accurately. Vernacular Chinese proved to be a more suitable medium for conveying the ballad/folksong essence inherent in Burns’s works compared to the archaic style.

In the translation landscape, the free translation prevailing in the late Qing Dynasty was constantly reflecting and questioning, and ‘Faithfulness’ instead of ‘Elegance’ became the focus after the MFM, shifting from ‘the old style containing new artistic conceptions’ to ‘the original cannot be changed, or the Chinese meaning can be added’.<sup>151</sup> Translation efforts were expected to closely adhere to the original, and the style of translation achieved by deleting and changing was not acceptable. As noted by Shen Yanbing (penname Mao Dun) (1896-1981), an influential writer and critic, in 1935,

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<sup>150</sup> Wang Kefei, p.207.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted. Chen Fukang, *Historical Manuscripts of Chinese Translation Theory [Zhon gguo yi xue li lun shi gao]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Teaching Press, 1992), p.216. [Originally in Chinese]



any modified rendition is the most unreliable, which is the most easily way to lose the spirit of the original. [...] According to the translators’ own intentions, the original texts are cut and deleted. How can the original intentions of the author be seen in the rendition? Such a translation attitude is absolutely undesirable.<sup>152</sup>

The practice of literal translation gained acceptance as it was perceived to preserve the essence of the original text effectively. Consequently, it was viewed as a means to discern and incorporate new ideas from foreign cultures, thereby compensating for the deficiencies in Chinese culture, a crucial aspect for writers of the new era to glean from foreign literature.<sup>153</sup> Faithfulness to the source text emerged as a fundamental principle unanimously endorsed by translators during this period.

Furthermore, *Bai hua wen* Movement and the shift of translation methodology from ‘Elegance’ to ‘Faithfulness’ are conspicuously reflected in Zhou’s vernacular translation in ‘A red red Rose’. Compared to Su’s archaic five-character translation, Zhou’s version was colloquial and plain, aligning with the objectives of *Bai hua wen* Movement. This approach rendered Burns’s work more widely acceptable by common people compared to Su’s translation. Zhou adopted literal translation rather than Su’s free translation, endeavouring to be equivalent to the original in terms of the emotion and rhetorical nuances, despite some minor inaccuracies observed as follows in the first stanza and the third:

O MY Luve’s like a red, red rose,  
That’s newly sprung in June;  
O my Luve’s like the melodie  
That’s sweetly play’d in tune. —

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<sup>152</sup> Quoted. Wang Jiankai, *A History of Translation in Anglo-American Literature Since the May Fourth Movement: 1919-1949* [*wu si yi lai wo guo ying mei wen xue zuo ping yi jie shi 1919-19149*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Teaching Press, 2003), p.14. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>153</sup> Quoted, Mao Dun. Wang Jiankai, *A History of Translation in Anglo-American Literature Since the May Fourth Movement: 1919-1949*, p.142.



instead adopts a more flexible structure reminiscent of free verse in vernacular, consistent with the stylistic preferences advocated by Hu Shi during the New Culture Movement.

Zhou’s vernacular translation marked a significant departure from the archaic style previously employed in Burns’s translations, heralding a progressive shift towards vernacular renditions of Burns’s works. This transition initiated by Zhou laid the groundwork for Burns’s broader dissemination and acceptance among Chinese readers. Inspired by Zhou’s influential vernacular retranslation of ‘A red red Rose’, numerous translators subsequently engaged in retranslating the piece, including Wu Fangji in 1926, Liu Pu (1894-?) in 1926, Luo Houan (fl.1900-1950) in 1927, Zhong Dasheng (fl.1900-1950) in 1927, He Xi(1908-1999) in 1928, Tong Jun (fl.1900-1960) in 1929, He Deming (fl.1910-1980) in 1931, Jiang Muhui (fl.1910-1970) in 1934, Gu Wenying (fl.1920-1980) in 1935, and Gan Yunheng (fl.1910-1980) in 1936, and at least 11 versions of ‘A red red Rose’ before the SSJW, significantly contributing to Burns’s reputation as a love poet before the war.

Furthermore, Burns’s reputation as a love poet was embodied in Chinese studies of British literary history at the time. In *The History of British Literature* (1920), the inaugural monograph of British literary history written by Chinese scholar, Wang Jin (fl.1910-1940) said of Burns,

A flower, a tree, a beast and a bird are all sufficient to benefit his poetry. Therefore, the pieces related to romance and scenery are abundant. Its feelings are lingering; spirits are crystal; emotions are sentimental. Only simple lines can fully convey his passion or sorrow, such as, ‘To Mary in Heaven’, ‘Ae Fond Kiss’, and ‘My Luve is like a red, red Rose’. All these pieces are associated with romance and love.<sup>156</sup>

Wang Jin’s perception of Burns’s works highlighted the sentimental features within Burns’s lyrics. It is noted that Burns’s political satires and revolutionary lyrics have not been translated by the 1920s. ‘A red red Rose’ was the most acceptable piece in Burns’s readership at the time.

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<sup>156</sup> Wang Jing, *History of British Literature [Ying guo wen xue shi]* (Shanghai: Taidong Book House, 1920), p.51. [Originally in Chinese]

Burns was predominantly celebrated as a love poet during the 1920s before the SSJW, for his 'A red red Rose' garnered consistent attention from various translators and the calls at the time for free choice of romantic love instead of the arranged marriage. Burns's other types of poetry, such as politics and satire, were ignored by translators, further contributing to his reputation as a love poet. Despite the limited availability of Burns's works in translation, it is notable that several translators were actively involved in rendering his poetry into Chinese during this time.

### 3 A PATRIOTIC POET AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LITERATURE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES: 1930 - 1949

This chapter delves into the reception of Burns in China from 1930 to 1949, a significant period marked by notable historical events. Over the course of two decades, China witnessed significant turmoil, including involvement in two major wars: the SSJW and the Civil War (1945-1949), culminating in the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (hereafter PRC) in 1949. These wars, particularly the SSJW, had a profound impact on Burns’s reception in China, leading to a transformation of his reputation from a love poet in the 1920s to that of a patriotic poet and a representative of literature from minority ethnic groups.

The wars not only disrupted the course of Chinese modern literature and foreign literary translations, but also ushered in a new trend. As Kuang Xinnian pointed out, ‘The war [...] enabled China to enter a comprehensively political, economic, military, and cultural mobilization in order to resist Japanese aggression’.<sup>157</sup> ‘Resistance against Japanese aggression and saving the nation’ (kang ri jiu guo) became the main theme in the field of literature and arts at the time. Guo Moruo (1892-1978), an influential writer and historian, even radically presented that ‘all culture should be focused on the point of

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<sup>157</sup> Kuang Xinnian, ‘Ethnic Anti-Japanese War and Literature [min zu kang zhan yu wen xue]’, in *Twentieth-Century Academics and Society of China: Volume Literature [er shi shi ji zhong guo de xue shu yu she hui: wen xue juan]*, ed. Han Yuhai (Jinan: Shandong People Press, 2001), pp.207-30(207). [Originally in Chinese]

being beneficial for resistance against Japanese aggression'.<sup>158</sup> 'Resisting and saving' became the paramount focus for China's literary landscape.

Between the 1930s and the late 1940s, for the ongoing wars, there was a significant decline in the translation and publication of literary works, particularly in the early phase of the wars. Amid the anti-aggression war, translation efforts shifted towards Soviet literary works, resulting in a diminished focus on translating British literature. As far as poetry was concerned, despite its reduction, the translation of British poetry was demonstrated as 'a dazzling landscape in wartime'<sup>159</sup>. In terms of translation sources, prior to the SSJW, the translation of British poetry primarily focused on classical and romantic poetry such as Wordsworth's, while after the war, the translators preferred those with revolutionary ideals, such as Byron's 'Don Juan', Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound' and 'Ode to the West Wind'.<sup>160</sup> As a result, the translation of British romantic poetry reached 'a prosperous situation as never before'<sup>161</sup>. Notably three collections of British romantic poetry translated by Yuan Shuipai and Xu Chi (1914-1996) were published, including Yuan's *My heart* (1944). As Wang Zuoliang pointed out, 'it (British Romanticism poetry) was shaped and growing within the context of ideology and emotion of the French Revolution. Never before have literature and politics, poetry and revolution been so closely linked'<sup>162</sup>. This perception mirrored a prevailing sentiment among translators of the time. The translation of British Romantic poetry was indeed associated with the spirit of revolutionary resistance, embodied within the selection of the poets and their pieces. Likewise, the spirit of revolutionary resistance was seen in the choice of Burns for translation as well during this period.

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<sup>158</sup>Quoted. Zhang Yong, 'Review on Guo Moruo's Thoughts of Cultural Resistance Against Japanese Aggression [Guo Moruo wen hua kang zhan si xiang shu lun]', *Journal of Guo Moruo*, 2 (2018), pp.16-21(17). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>159</sup> Xiong Hui, *On the History of Translated Literature in the Rear of Anti-Japanese War [kangzhan da houfang fan yi wen xue shi lun]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press, 2018), p.196. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>160</sup> Zha Mingjian and Xie Tianzheng, pp.310-25.

<sup>161</sup> Lv Jin, *Studies on Resisting-Japanese-Aggression Poems of the Rear Areas [da houfang kang zhan shi ge yan jiu]* (Chongqing: Chongqing Press, 2015), p.326.[Originally in Chinese]

<sup>162</sup> Wang Zuoliang, *The History of British Poetry [ying guo shi shi]* (Nanjing: Yiling Press, 1997), p.211. [Originally in Chinese]

The trajectory of Burns’s translation was calibrated by the prevailing context of the wars. As previously mentioned in chapter one in the 1920s, before the SSJW, Burns’s translation was mainly focused on ‘A red red Rose’. The gargantuan impact of the SSJW shifted the focus of China’s literature and transformed Burns’s reputation via the translation by Sun Yong (1902-1983)<sup>163</sup> and Yuan Shuipai, particularly Yuan’s *My heart* in 1944. Burns was transformed from a love poet into a Scottish patriotic poet who craved independence and freedom against English invasion, aligning with the need of national struggle against Japanese aggression. This transformation bore resemblance to Burns’s portrayal in the Soviet Union, where he was shaped as ‘a communist poet’ with ‘democratic spirit’<sup>164</sup> in the translation of Samuil Marshak (1887-1964). However Sun and Yuan attempted to translate Burns by this approach out of their own sense of national crisis to inspire Chinese readers for ‘saving the nation and saving the people’, while Marshak addressed the authorities’ ‘ideological power’ as ‘the only official translator of Burns in the Soviet Union’.<sup>165</sup>

For the SSJW, there was a decline in the translation of Burns’s works compared to the numerous engagements in the translation of his works in the previous 1920s. From 1937 to 1949, only five translators contributed a total of forty-eight Burns’s pieces in periodicals or newspapers. Of them, forty-four were attributed to Yuan Shuipai. Despite the reduced number of translators, Burns’s translation experienced a significant progress in the late period of the war, largely due to Yuan. In 1944, Yuan published the first collection of Burns’s translation, *My heart*, with a total of thirty pieces of Burns included. After the MFM, there were numerous scattered translations of British poetry mostly published in periodicals, yet very few poetry collections.<sup>166</sup> Yuan’s *My heart* was very

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<sup>163</sup> The Hungarian government established a statue park in the poet’s hometown to commemorate the writers and translators who translated Petofi in various ethnic languages across the world. Of them, Lu Xun and Sun Yong, as the representatives of Chinese writers and translators, were set up bronze statues in this park for Sun Yong’s outstanding contribution to translation in Petofi. See ‘The Hometown of Hungarian Poet, Petofi, Will Set up the Bronze Statues of Lu Xun and Sun Yong [xiong ya li zhu ming shi ren pei duo fei de jia xiang jiang jian Lu Xun he Sun Yong de tong xiang]’, *The Historical Materials of Modern Chinese Literature*, 03(1987), p.96(96). [Originally in Chinese] The original article has no authorship.

<sup>164</sup> Natalia Kaloh Vid, ‘Political-Ideological Translations of Robert Burns’ Poetry in the Soviet Union’, *British and American Studies*, 14 (2008), pp.343-51(344).

<sup>165</sup> Natalia Kaloh Vid, *Ideological Translations of Robert Burns’s Poetry in Russia and in the Soviet Union* (Maribor: Filozofska fakulteta, 2011). p.121.

<sup>166</sup> Wang Jiankai, p.260.

one of the ‘very few poetry collections’<sup>167</sup> at the time, representing a huge breakthrough compared with the previous scattered translation in the 1920s. It is noteworthy that Yuan Shuipai held the position of Director of the Literature and Art Department within the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee in 1961, and subsequently served as Vice Minister of Culture of the PRC from 1976 to 1978. Yuan Shuipai’s position of considerable political prominence and notable reputation allude that Yuan’s translation of Burns was successful at that time and was highly recognized by the authorities.

Following the SSJW and Yuan’s *My heart*, it was noteworthy that in April 1948, the tenth issue of *Shichuangzao* (The Creation of Poetry), a translation special issue, was named after Burns’s ‘The Banks o’ Doon’ translated by He Kewan (1899-1955) with the portrait of Burns as the cover and the Chinese translation of ‘The Banks o’ Doon’ marked in large font in the lower half of the cover. *Shichuangzao*, an influential and progressive periodical in poetry, was founded in Shanghai in July 1947. Despite its relatively short publication span of less than two years, *Shichuangzao* was one of the very few poetry periodicals during the Civil War remaining for a long time in the late 1940s. Yet, *Shichuangzao* was surprisingly ‘distributed throughout the country, Hongkong, Singapore and the whole Southeast Asia’ for its ‘numerous stable writers, high-quality poems, a variety of styles, and an elegant design of the cover and illustrations as well as layout’<sup>168</sup>. By June 1949, *Shichuangzao* had published twelve issues in total, of which the tenth was serving as an exclusive translation edition featuring a significant portion of translations from British and American poets.

In 1948, the second year of *Shichuangzao*’s publication, in the first issue of the year, ‘First Thunder’, Lin Hong (fl.1940-1990), one of the chief editors, published an article ‘A New Beginning’. He articulated the ideological guidance in terms of their selection of poems:

We must break through the suffocating atmosphere around us. We must confront the solemn and bloody battle. We must shine on life with the light of art. [...] We will publish at the greatest length works that strongly reflect reality. We will breathe with the pain and

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<sup>167</sup> Wang Jiankai, p.260.

<sup>168</sup> Lin Hong and Hao Tianhang, ‘On Xingqun Press and *Shichuangzao* [guan yu xing qun chu ban she he shi chuang zao shi mo]’, *The Historical Materials of Modern Chinese Literature*, 03 (1991), pp.134-9, 203(137). [Originally in Chinese]



joy of people. Here we have people painful cries and struggles, or loud laughter after fighting. [...] Our requirements for arts are lively, simple, healthy and powerful. We need poems from the reality and sensation of life, rather than from individual’s sentiments and decadence, or some mysterious and profound. We advocate expressions and forms that can be easily understood and accepted by common readers.<sup>169</sup>

Lin’s claim fully embodied the guiding thoughts of Chinese translators during the cruel wartime. It should publish such works with strong fighting spirits and close connections to the people’s lives in order to arouse the Chinese people’s revolutionary thoughts, instead of allowing some obscure Western modern poetry to fill with people’s visions. The selection of Burns’s ‘The Banks o’ Doon’ should be understood in this context. Burns’s poems and songs, originated from the genuine everyday feelings of people’s lives, were seen as inspiring, passionate and positive, demonstrating the reality. Moreover, the motif of the river will have resonated with Chinese readers, since, in Chinese poetry, this motif was frequently employed to convey an emotional attachment to the motherland. For instance, the Yellow River, as ‘a mother river’ for Chinese people, has been repeatedly praised and sung by poets for thousands of years, such as Li Bai’s ‘Bringing in the Wine’ (jiang jin jiu). The translation of ‘The Banks o’ Doon’ presented in this periodical could have been open to a reading as a patriotic song expressing the exile’s love for his homeland.

In the process of the shift of Burns’s reputation, in addition to Yuan’s significant contribution, another translator worth mentioning is Sun Yong. Sun translated two pieces of Burns, ‘A Man’s a Man’<sup>170</sup> in 1935 and ‘Scots Wha Hae’ in 1939. While earlier translations of the 1920s labelled the poet’s nationality as British, Sun marked Burns as coming from Scotland, a practice adopted by the subsequent translators. Sun is renowned for his lifelong translation work for Hungarian patriotic poet Petofi as an influential translator of ‘literature of ethnic minorities’ in the history of Chinese modern literary translation.

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<sup>169</sup> Lin Hong and Hao Tianhang, ‘On Xingqun Press and *Shichuangzao*’, p.139.

<sup>170</sup> This poem was translated into Chinese by Sun Yong from an Esperanto version. In his endnote, Sun expounded, ‘the original poem was in Scots, which was very difficult for me to translate, thus I chose the Esperanto version to translate’. (Sun Yong, ‘A Man’s a Man [zhen zheng de ren]’, *Huang Zhong*, Vol. VII, 1 (1935), pp.15-6 (16). [Originally in Chinese].

The term ‘literature of ethnic minorities’ (ruo xiao min zu wen xue) represents a distinctive conception within foreign literary translation in the history of Chinese modern literature, and it has a strong involvement with Burns’s reception at the time. The notion of minority is a relative concept to the majority and the ‘literature of ethnic minorities’ emerges in contrast to the Western literature. It generally refers to the literature of subaltern ethnic groups in the colonial state or suppressed by the Western powers in the first half of the twentieth century. This concept reflects a worldview from the perspective of the nation as a whole in the modern Chinese intellectual circle, associated with the rise of national thought for the awakening of China’s modern national consciousness.<sup>171</sup> The sympathy towards the ‘literature of ethnic minorities’ within the context of history is also a sense of being out of the national independence call of the Chinese people who longed for ending the situation of being invaded and oppressed. The use of this epithet indicates a sense of a community of common destiny towards the minor nations.

From the First Opium War, through the Second Opium War, the First Sino-Japanese War, the Siege of International Legations (1900), to the end of the SSJW in 1945, China endured a series of disastrous defeats in international conflicts, culminating in the signing treaties of concession for lands and payment of reparations. These conflicts involved powerful nations such as Britain, Russia and Japan, leading to profound crises for the Chinese nation. Faced with existential threats, China inevitably evaluated its own circumstance from a national perspective. This evaluation was influenced by the power dynamics and historical relationships between China and other nations, inevitably coloured by emotional responses stemming from these interactions.

The Chinese nation harboured complex sentiments towards Western powers, enduring the humiliation under their power but admiring their advanced weaponry, political system and progressive culture. On the other hand, when observing those weaker nations like Poland or India, Chinese nation had a mixture of a deep fear in sympathy and an inspiration and encouragement from their efforts of their revolutionaries who fought against oppression and achieved independence. And in between there existed a complex blend of both admiration and unwillingness towards the nations like Tsarist Russia and Japan, which had previously lagged behind but eventually surpassed and invaded

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<sup>171</sup> Song Binghui, ‘The Translation of Literature of Ethnic Minorities and the Modernization of Chinese Literature [ruo xiao min zu wen xue de yi jie yu zhong guo wen xue de xian dai xing]’, *The Comparative Literature of China*, 02 (2002), pp. 54-70(55). [Originally in Chinese]

China.<sup>172</sup> Such a world view, certainly, would be embodied in the literary endeavours, particularly in the treatment of foreign literature, such as the attitudes, introductions and translations of national literary works. Likewise, China’s own literary movements and creations often focused on themes related to the nation’s destiny and struggle.<sup>173</sup>

Making through nearly a hundred years of oppression and exploitation, the Chinese people developed a strong collective sense of ‘children of a weak nation’ (ruo guo zi min). Since the First Opium War, ‘saving the nation and saving the people’ became the predominant motif in society. Likewise, the translation of literary works shouldered such a significant responsibility. Chinese translators looked to other subaltern nations to seek a resonance in spirit and fighting. Intellectuals had been shown a heightened interest in the ‘literature of ethnic minorities’, enabling Chinese nation to perceive that they were not alone in their struggle in the world. By delving into the life and struggle of other nations, this literature aimed to promote the conscious awakening of Chinese people and encourage them to strive for national independence and resist the aggression.

The literature of ethnic minorities can be traced back to Lu Xun’s influential literary criticism, ‘Mara Poetry’ in 1908 as discussed in previous chapter one, which also served as an early introduction to the literature of ethnic minorities of Europe. In ‘Mara Poetry’, Lu grouped Burns with the poets from ethnic minority nations, such as Byron, Shelley, Adam Mickiewicz, Jiliusz Slowacki, Zygmunt Skrasinski and Petofi, collectively referred as ‘Mara Poets’. These poets were characterized by their revolutionary spirit who were ‘resolved to be rebels, whose themes agitate (their readers) to action’ and ‘warriors of the spiritual world’.<sup>174</sup> In this criticism, Burns was seen by Lu as a revolutionary poet with rebellious spirit in the same way Marshak’s translations of Burns advocated ‘the importance of proletarian revolution’<sup>175</sup> in the Soviet Union in the middle of twentieth century. Lu’s initial connection of Burns with poets from other ethnic minority nations

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<sup>172</sup> Song Binghui, ‘The Translation of Literature of Ethnic Minorities and the Modernization of Chinese Literature’, p.55.

<sup>173</sup> Yin Hui, *A Study on the Translation of Literature of Ethnic Minorities Before/After the May Fourth Movement [wu si qian hou ruo xiao min zu wen xue yan jiu]*, Doctoral Thesis, Shandong University, 2019, p.3. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>174</sup> Lu Xun, ‘On the Power of Mara Poetry’, pp.68, 102.

<sup>175</sup> Natalia Kaloh Vid, *Ideological Translations of Robert Burns’s Poetry in Russia and in the Soviet Union*, p.122.

foreshadows Burns's later recognition as a representative figure in the literature of ethnic minorities.

Lu stated, ‘‘Hungary, Finland, Poland, Bulgaria, Czech, Serbia, Greece’ and among others in Eastern Europe, were all minor nations, struggling against the shackles of imperialism due to their colonial status’.<sup>176</sup> This classification by Lu led to the Eastern European nations as ‘ethnic minorities’ resulting in Chinese translating literature for a long period of time. Despite the fact that Burns’s homeland was not being conquered or invaded as Eastern European nations, the themes of patriotism and resistance against English rulers permeated in Burns poetry resonated with the demands and definition of Chinese literary circles for the literature of ethnic minorities. As a result of Lu’s influence, via Sun Yong, Burns’s poetry came to be included into the literature of ethnic minorities by subsequent translators since the SSJW.

In addition to Lu Xun, in *Dictionary of New Literature and Arts* in 1931, Qiu Wendu (?–?) and Wu Menghui (?–?) asserted that Burns was a poet with ‘revolutionary ideas’:

He (Burns) was born in poverty and died in poverty, a forerunner of revolutionary ideas. With his pungent writing, he launched fierce attacks on the politics, religion, and society structure of the time. He did not receive a formal education; however he single-handedly turned the trend of British literature.<sup>177</sup>

As mentioned in chapter one Burns was couched in term of a love and lyric poet in the 1920s. Yet Lu’s ‘Mara Poetry’ and Qiu and Wu presented an alternative perspective, portraying Burns as a revolutionary poet. This alternative view hinted at the possibility of Burns being perceived as a patriotic poet and a representative of the literature of ethnic minorities by subsequent translators.

In the literary landscape of the time, Burns and his works were pushed on the stage of the literature of ethnic minorities as the representative of a minor nation – Scottish. In

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<sup>176</sup> Zhou Qiming, *Lu Xun's Youth Age [lu xun de qing nian shi dai]* (Beijing: China Youth Press, 1957), p.42. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>177</sup> Qiu Wendu and Wu Menghui, *Dictionary of New Literature and Arts [xin wen yi ci dian]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guanhua Press, 1931), p.293-4 (293-4). [Originally in Chinese]

his translations, Sun deliberately selected Burns’s pieces in relation to fighting and identified Burns as a Scottish poet. Notably, in his translation of ‘What Scots Hae’, Sun placed the nationality – making Scotland before Burns’s name, a departure from the previous perception of Burns primarily as a British poet. Sun’s translation included footnotes to highlight Burns’s Scottish nationality, in references to the historical figures like Wallace and Bruce in the piece, underlining their significance as Scottish ‘heroes’ and ‘patriots’ against the English army.<sup>178</sup> In contrast, Marshak, the contemporary Soviet Burns translator, purposefully omitted Burns’s Scottish identity to enable Burns to a ‘world’ poet in his translations.<sup>179</sup> *Dafeng*, the journal that published Sun’s translation, was an anti-Japanese publication focused on topic such as resistance against Japanese aggression, casualty statistics, martyrs and their families. Sun’s translation stressed Burns’s Scottish nationality, thereby highlighting his identity as a representative of the literature of ethnic minorities, contributing to Yuan’s subsequent *My heart* to define Burns as a Scottish patriotic poet who fought for independence and freedom.

After 1943, further to Gong Langu<sup>180</sup> (1919-1980), Yuan Shuipai was the only translator of Burns’s works. After Shanghai’s occupation by Japanese in 1937, Yuan came to Hongkong and then to Chongqing. During this period, he was obsessed with the poetry of Burns and obtained ‘comfort in spirit’<sup>181</sup> from Burns’s works. In respect to compiling the two poets into the collection, Yuan accounted, ‘I really have no reason to put a Scottish poet and English poet of various times together’,<sup>182</sup> However he described Burns and Housman as ‘minor poets’ compared to other great poets, and his translated collection was ‘a small bundle of flower but aromatic and adorable’.<sup>183</sup> The conception of ‘minor poets’ was likely the intention of Yuan’s compiling them together. In the postscript, Xu Chi (1914-1996), a poet, translator, and critic, offered a poetic account in relation to the compilation, ‘no matter the eighteenth or twentieth century they (Burns

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<sup>178</sup> Sun Yong, ‘Scots Wha Hae’, *Da Feng*, 78 (1939), pp.7-8(8). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>179</sup> Natalie Vid, ‘Political-Ideological Translation of Robert Burns’ Poetry in the Soviet Union’, 2008, p.349.

<sup>180</sup> Gong Langu published his translation of ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’ in *Shicong* in 1944.

<sup>181</sup> Xu Chi, p.148.

<sup>182</sup> Yuan Shuipai, ‘Preface’, in *My heart’s in the Highlands: Robert Burns and A. E. Housman [wo de xin zai gao yuan: Peng Si, huo si man]*, Robert Burns and A.E. Housman, tr. Yuan Shuipai (Chongqing: Xinqun Press, 1944), pp.1-14(12). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>183</sup> Yuan Shuipai, ‘Preface’, p.5.

and Housman) belonged to, they encountered within the heart of the translator'.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, Xu Chi shed light on why Yuan Shuipai became the sole translator for Burns's works and his capacity to publish Burns's translation,

I'm very fond of Burns. [...] Dai Wangshu (1905-1950) (a poet and translator) gave him (Yuan Shuipai) a copy of the complete works of Burns published in 1885 and the correspondences of Burns. So, we both urged him to translate Burns. [...] Later, I again found him a book of Lockhart's biography of Burns.<sup>185</sup>

Interestingly, Yuan's translation of Burns was derived from Xu's personal preference for Burns.

Neither Yuan nor Xu expounded on the choice 'My heart's in the Highlands' as the title for the collection. Prior to *My heart*, 'A red red Rose' was the most frequently translated and widespread piece of Burns, contributing to Burns's reputation as a love poet which was not suitable for publication during the SSJW for Chinese people were focused on resisting Japanese aggression. Instead, 'My heart's in the Highlands' was a song of nostalgia for singing the beauty of the rivers and mountains of the poet's homeland Scotland. Compared with 'A red red Rose', 'My heart's in the Highlands' would be a better title for the collection. Given the pieces that Burns's works outnumbered Housman's, it is logical to feature Burns's piece as the title, a decision likely aimed at enhancing the collection's marketability. 'My heart's in the Highlands' was laid on the first one in this collection as well. The choice of 'My heart's in the Highlands' as the title proved successful, leading to positive reception among readers. The collection was republished in 1947, 1950 and 1951. In 1959 it was republished with Housman's works removed, making it into an exclusive selection of Burns's poetry. Throughout these editions, the title 'My heart's in the Highlands', had been unchanged.

In this collection, Yuan's selection of Burns's pieces further solidified Burns's identity as a Scottish patriotic poet advocating for independence and freedom. In the preface, Yuan stated,

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<sup>184</sup> Xu Chi, 'Postscript', p.152.

<sup>185</sup> Xu Chi, 'Postscript', pp.152-3.

the thirty poems I have translated here do not represent Burns’s oeuvre, [...] but whereby it is able to see the poet’s hatred for the dark, sorrow for the poor, and his jubilant praise of the American Revolution and the French Revolution.<sup>186</sup>

Likewise, Xu stated in the postscript,

The translator (Yuan Shuipai) brought a broken heart as the same as the broken country and broken homeland, but the poetry of Robert Burns, a peasant poet! If one can obtain comfort from Burns, the others must obtain it as well. Certainly, sometimes people cannot obtain it from Burns for the different roads people walk on. [...] Yet finally I found that Burns was comforting me. Because Burns is a comforter. [...] The things that Burns looked forward to are what we are still looking forward to today. [...] Who across this world does not pursue freedom as he does?<sup>187</sup>

Burns was seen by Xu as a ‘comforter’ bringing the spiritual comfort by his poetry to sorrowful Chinese populace suffering deeply from Japanese invasion.

In this collection, Yuan included ‘Bruce’s Address to Bannockburn’, ‘The Tree of Liberty’, ‘John Barleycorn’, ‘A Vision’, and ‘Ode for General Washington’s Birthday’, embodying themes of independence and rebellion. Notably, ‘The Tree of Liberty’, previously published in *Zhongyuan* in March 1944 by Yuan, was directly compiled into the collection without explanatory notes. Despite its uncertain authorship as ‘dubia’<sup>188</sup> in Anglo-American academia, the ‘genuine revolutionary song’<sup>189</sup> resonated deeply with the fervent desire for independence during the war. Yuan’s inclusion of this song marked the beginning of its consistent incorporation into Burns’s translations in China, albeit some offering footnotes addressing its authorship, as seen in Wang Zuoliang’s *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* in 1985, to be discussed in chapter four.

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<sup>186</sup> Yuan Shuipai, ‘Preface’, 1944, p.10.

<sup>187</sup> Xu Chi, ‘Postscript’, 1944, p.148.

<sup>188</sup> Kinsley, p. xxviii.

<sup>189</sup> Quoted. Thomas Crawford, *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), p.250.

During the period characterized by the SSJW, a notable feature of translation practices was ‘literary translation serves the current reality’.<sup>190</sup> As Qing Gong put it, the SSJW impacted ‘writers’ living state, psychological state, creative state, literary genre, literary style, aesthetic style, readjustment of literary centre, and the change of the way of literary communication’.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, the selection of source works, the style and value orientation of the source authors, as well as the translator’s introductory articles on foreign writers and their works were all also inevitably affected by the wartime context. The evolution of translation style during this period saw a significant departure from the tradition of liberal translation practices prevalent in the early twentieth century towards a more fidelity-focused approach aligned with modern translation norms. The liberal translation practices characterized by relatively relaxed standards that dominated in the early twentieth century gradually lost prominence within the mainstream of translation. Instead, translation norms shifted towards prioritizing faithfulness to the original rendered in vernacular language, emphasizing both artistic expression and adherence to the original.

The convergence of two imperatives – stressing the political function of translation in current circumstances while maintaining fidelity to the original – reached a distinct fusion in the context of the resistance against Japanese aggression. This fusion was evident in Yuan’s translation, such as his political stances, aesthetic appreciation, and his being faithfulness to the original in vernacular language. However, politics and aesthetics were somewhat at odds. Given the situation, the translator must highlight the themes of fighting and resistance in their translation practices, often necessitating alternations or adaptations to align with the prevailing theme. As previous literary translation undertook the political function of enlightening the people, in this period it also shouldered the practical function of inspiring Chinese people to fight.

In *My heart*, Yuan stressed that the Scottish dialect in Burns poetry, claiming that Burns’s poetic style of ‘an intelligible ballad’ and Burns’s ‘rustic and passionate poems are increasingly popular in the (Chinese) public’.<sup>192</sup> Yuan published a translation of ten

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<sup>190</sup> Liao Qiyi, p.133.

<sup>191</sup> Qing Gong, ‘The Situation and Issues of the Literary Studies on Resistance Against Japanese Aggression [kang zhan wen xue yan jiu de gai kuang yu wen t]’, *Studies on the Second Sino-Japanese War*, 4 (2007), pp.133-49 (133). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>192</sup> Yuan Shuipai, ‘Preface’, 1944, p.10.



Burns’s pieces<sup>193</sup> under the title of ‘Burns’s Ballad’ (pengsi de min yao) in 1943, remarking that Burns’s lyrics was ‘a simple and straightforward love among peasants and common people’.<sup>194</sup> However, he did not render the Scottish dialect into his translations. The folksong quality inherent in Burns’s works was not captured in Yuan’s translation. From a linguistic perspective, Yuan’s translation can be regarded as being in its preliminary stages and requiring further refinement.

Unlike earlier translations by a free translation and classic language, Yuan’s translation generally maintained faithful to the original in vernacular Chinese. Nonetheless, Yuan made alternations to accommodate the wartime context. For instance, in ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’, the second line in the stanza two, ‘The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth’ was translated as ‘The birth-place of hero, the country of respect’ (英雄之所诞生, 四海之所尊敬),<sup>195</sup> which apparently resonated with Chinese sentiments of love for their motherland. Likewise, in the fifth line of stanza four in ‘Ode [For General Washington’s Birthday]’, ‘The Mighty Dead’ was translated as ‘the corpse of a hero’ (英雄的遗体),<sup>196</sup> stressing the reverence for fallen heroes. In the final stanza of this poem, Yuan’s rendition changed significantly from the original lines as follows,

Is this the ancient Caledonian form,  
Firm as her rock, resistless as her storm?  
Shew me that eye which shot immortal hate,  
Blasting the Despot’s proudest bearing:  
Shew me that arm which, nerved with thundering fate,  
Braved Usurpation’s boldest daring!  
Dark-quenched as yonder sinking star,  
No more that glance lightness afar;

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<sup>193</sup> The ten Burns’s pieces are ‘The Tree of Liberty’, ‘A red red Rose’, ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’, ‘Jean’, ‘Your Friendship’, ‘The Belles of Mauchline’, ‘The Lovely Lass o’ Inverness’, ‘O Whistle, and I’ll Come to Ye, My Lad’, ‘Sonnet on Hearing a Thrush Sing’ and ‘Damon and Sylvia: Fragment’.

<sup>194</sup> Yuan Shuipai, ‘Preface’, 1944, pp.10, 7, 13.

<sup>195</sup> Yuan Shuipai, ‘Preface’, 1944, p.1.

<sup>196</sup> Yuan Shuipai, *My heart*, p.98.

That palsied arm no more whirls on the waste of war.<sup>197</sup>

那惯战善斗的力量	Whether the power of being good at fighting
是否能够参加这自由的斗争?	Can take part in the battle of freedom?
看这双发射出永恒的愤怒的眼睛,	Look at the eye which shot eternal hate,
它摧毁那专制者的傲慢无礼,	Blasting the despot's proudest bearing,
看这坚强的手臂, 激动着风云雷电,	Look at the strong arm, which nerved with wind, cloud, thunder and lightening,
向最大胆的篡窃者反抗!	Fought against the boldest usurper!
看他熄灭在黑暗之中, 像一颗陨星,	Looked at him quenched in the darkness, like a sinking star,
这个摇摇欲坠的麻痹的无力的衰年。 <sup>198</sup>	This shaken palsied feeble and bad year.

The first two lines were doctored into 'the power of being good at fighting, / could take part in the battle of liberty?', being filled with the consciousness of fighting spiritedly. The word 'arm' was embellished to 'the strong arm', and the line 'No more that glance lightness afar' was deleted. The final line was oddly translated into 'This shaken palsied feeble and bad year', which may confuse the reader for its ambiguity. In his translation, Yuan added extra positive and encouraging vocabulary not presented in the original, such as 'hero', 'strong', 'freedom', and 'fighting', aiming to evoke a powerful emotion to inspire the national struggle as Marshak 'overstressed'<sup>199</sup> the national spirit in his translation of Burns's poetry.

Yuan's translation style is characterized by concise and impactful lines, resulting in an overall rendition that is attention-grabbing, authoritative, and emotionally evocative. Such additions are evident throughout his translations. While Yuan remains faithful to the original at the sentence level, he introduces numerous changes in specific, nuanced

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<sup>197</sup> Kinsley, No. 451, pp.733-4.

<sup>198</sup> Yuan Shuipai, 1944, p.99

<sup>199</sup> Vid, 2011, p.129.

words, word expressions, and word order, deviating from complete fidelity to the original. Nonetheless, Yuan’s translation represents a significant improvement over previous translators’ efforts, which were often sporadic and limited to Burns’s love and lyric poems. With *My heart* publication, Chinese readers gained access to more of Burns’s work, fostering a multifaceted and comprehensive understanding of the Scottish poet.

Reflecting on Burns’s reception between 1930 to 1949, it is evident that the focus on his work shifted from his lyrical poetry to his patriotic pieces. This shift in emphasis transformed his reputation from that of a love poet to a patriotic figure and a representative of the literature of ethnic minorities. However, Burns’s translations remain confined in these two categories of lyrical and patriotic works. Nonetheless Luo Houan and Liang Shiqiu (1903-1987) published ‘Scot Wha Hae’, ‘Pool Mailie’s Elegy’ and ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ in 1926, 1927 and 1929 respectively, subsequent translators before 1949 did not deviate from this trend. Even Yuan’s collection *My Heart* also largely selected only the two types of Burns’s works. Burns’s influential works of politics and satires were ignorant, not to mention the other types, like the poems or songs for animals, food and wine. This may contribute to Burn’s transition from a love poet into a patriotic poet.

During this period, Burns’s translation expanded to a wider readership in China, yet formal literary criticism of Burns’s work was notably absent. While Wu Fangji’s ‘Robert Burns’ in 1926 might be seen as a brief introduction to Burns, discussions regarding the conflicts between his genius and moral characters, as well as the reasons for his early death – topics that were focused in Anglo-American academia in the nineteenth century – were not part of Burns reception in China before 1949. Chinese translators were more concerned with if the spirits of patriotism within Burns’s works were able to educate or inspire Chinese people to resist the aggression. The poet’s life and moral character, where were of interest to Western scholars, were not a focus for both Chinese translators and readers. Instead, they sought a sinicized version of Burns that aligned with their own cultural context, perhaps finding it easier to relate to a ‘Chinese’ Burns rather than a poet from the remote eighteenth-century Scotland.

# 4 ‘A GREAT POET OF THE PEOPLE’: IDEOLOGICAL TRANSLATION AND RECEPTION OF BURNS IN ‘THE SEVENTEEN YEARS’<sup>200</sup>: 1949 - 1966

This chapter focuses on the seventeen years from 1949 to 1966, when the PRC was founded to the year when the Cultural Revolution onset. During the seventeen years, Burns’s reception in China reached a zenith particularly in 1959 for the ideological NFM in 1958-9 along with the bicentennial of Burns’s birth. While, since the 1930s, in Anglo-American criticism, approximately sixty years of scholarly neglect and marginalization occurred in Burns’s literary reputation mainly for Burns’s difficult language.<sup>201</sup> In regards to Burns’s translation, two most influential book-length collections, *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* by Yuan Kejia (1921-2008) and *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* by Wang Zuoliang (1916-1995), were both published in 1959, resulting in Wang and Yuan’s

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<sup>200</sup> The period from the founding of the PRC in 1949 to the launch of Cultural Revolution in 1966 is known as ‘The Seventeen Years’ in China, and the literature during the course is also referred to as ‘The-Seventeen-Year Literature’.

<sup>201</sup> See Murray Pittock, ‘“A Long Farewell to All My Greatness’: The History of the Reputation of Robert Burns’, in *Robert Burns in Global Culture*, ed. Murray Pittock (Lewisburg PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011), pp. 21-38; Robert Burns and British Poetry, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 121(2003), pp.191-211; Rayman Bentman, ‘Robert Burns’s Declining Fame’, *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 11, 3 (1972), pp.207-24.

becoming the most influential translators of Burns’s works in China. In particular, Wang’s translation won a wide appeal, which was not only highly accepted by Chinese readers and scholars, but also had a great influence on the subsequent Burns’s translators. It will be elaborated in detail later in chapter five. Likewise, a milestone of Burns’s criticism, ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’, was published in 1959 by Yuan Kejia, which will be discussed in this chapter. In the meantime, a commemoration of Burns’s bicentennial was held in Shanghai, and it will be discussed in detail in chapter six.

During the decade of Cultural Revolution, China implemented a policy of isolation, cutting off connections and communications with the West and resulting in nearly no published translations of Western literary works.<sup>202</sup> Prior to the radical Cultural Revolution on the far left of the political spectrum, the seventeen-year period experienced several ideological campaigns which demanded literary creations to align with political ideologies, leading to the complete integration of literary pieces, particularly the translated Western literary works. Likewise, Burns’s heightened appeal over the course of those seventeen years was inseparable from the political ideology at the time.

The year 1949, marking the establishment of a new government, signalled the emergence of a strong political ideology in discourse, characterized particularly by the close intertwining of literature and politics. Such a doctrine might be traced back to the end of the Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China (d. 1900) mentioned in previous chapter one. The reformists and revolutionaries in modern China saw literature as means of social and political reform. As discussed in chapter one, in his ‘Preface to Translating Political Novels’ (yi yin zheng zhi xiao shuo xu) (1898) and ‘On the Relationship Between Fictions and the Government of the People’ (xiao shuo yu qun zhi guan xi) (1902), Liang Qichao clearly claimed the significance of literature in social reform, stressing the social utilitarian function of literature as ‘saving the nation and saving the people’.<sup>203</sup> It became a mainstream view in the twentieth-century China that literature

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<sup>202</sup> Xie Tianzhen, ‘Particular Translation in Particular Times – On Literary Translation During the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China [fei chang shi qi de fei chang fan yi – guan yu zhong guo da lu shi qi de wen xue fan yi, *China’s Comparative Literature*, 02 (2009), pp.23-35(24). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>203</sup> Liang Qichao, ‘Preface to Translating Political Novels [yi yin zheng zhi xiao shuo]’, ‘On the Relationship Between Fictions and the Government of the People [xiao shuo yu qun zhi guan xi]’, Vol. I, Vol. IV, *The Complete Works of Liang Qichao [Liang Qichao quan ji]*, 10 Vols, ed. Zhang Pingxing (Beijing: Beijing Press, 1999), p.172, pp.884-6. [Originally in Chinese]

must serve politics in reality. The same was true of literary translation. There are two value orientations in the field of the twentieth-century China's literary translation: to serve the social reality, or the development of literary *per se*. On the whole, the twentieth-century China's literary translation was to meet the demands of politics of the time.<sup>204</sup> Furthermore, Mao Zedong, in his 'Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art' (hereafter 'Yanan Talks') in 1942, presented the criteria of 'proletarian literature and art' and 'political criteria come first, artistic criteria second'<sup>205</sup> for literature, making subsequent China's literature of 1950s and 1960s tinged by strongly political ideology.

In the meantime, the 'big brother',<sup>206</sup> the Soviet Union had Stalinism in literature to dictate its primary themes and topics and closely monitoring its ideological content, of which the chief ingredients were 'chauvinism', animosity towards foreign entities, particularly the Western nations, commendation of the superior 'new Soviet man' and 'glorification of Stalin'.<sup>207</sup> Literature cannot focus on immorality or dispute as these aspects are vanishing from the Communist society and fiction ought to only depict the optimistic facets of life, the productive endeavours of Soviet citizens, and should present 'the New Hero' of the time as 'a rational, active, and energetic member of the collective'.<sup>208</sup> This literary attitude greatly impacted the Chinese academia under the situation that the young PRC was fully emulating the Soviet Union at the time. For his part Mao presented that 'realpolitik is the goal of literature, and literature is one of the

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<sup>204</sup> Xie Tiazhen and Zha Minjian, 'From Political Needs to Literary Pursuance—On Fiction Translation in the Context of Chinese Culture in the Twentieth Century [cong zheng zhi de xu qiu dao wen xue de xu qiu - lv lun 20 shi ji zhong guo wen hua yu jing zhong de xiao shuo fan yi]', *Translation Quarterly*, 18,19 (2000), pp.48-73. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>205</sup> Mao Zedong, 'Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art [yan an wen yi zuo tan gong zuo jiang hua]', *Collected Essays on Literature and Art of Mao Zedong*, ed. Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee, (Beijing: Literature Publishing House of the CPC, 2002), pp.48-97(62,73). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>206</sup> During the amicable phase of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1950s and 1960s, Chinese domestic media and the populace commonly referred to the Soviet Union as the 'big brother'.

<sup>207</sup> Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p.2.

<sup>208</sup> Marc Slonim, *Soviet Russian Literature: Writers and Problems 1917-1977* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.241.

means that political forces must choose to achieve their goals’.<sup>209</sup> Operating within the framework of this guiding principle, post-1949 China’s literature fell under the purview of the authorities of the Communist Party of People (hereafter CPC). Ideology dominated the trajectory of literary development, reducing literary works to a mere link in comprehensive production chain of the political ideological discourse. Since the inception of the CPC government in 1949, Mao, positioned as the paramount leader, progressively ascended to the altar, and worshiped as a god-like figure particularly during the decade of the Cultural Revolution. During this period, Mao’s evaluation and guidelines regarding literature and arts wielded unparalleled influence over the course of China’s literature, including translated literature. Likewise, Burns’s translation and studies were carried out and conducted under the dictum of Mao’s ‘political principle comes first and artistic criterion second’. Both literary writing and criticism must abide by the norms of the political censorship, with deviations rendering them susceptible to political censure or persecution. In such a political milieu, literature and arts functioned as instrumental tools in the service of political ideology and power. The most pronounced instances of ideology constraining and manipulating literary translation occurred during the period spanning from the 1950s to the 1970s in China.<sup>210</sup>

In particular, Mao Dun<sup>211</sup> (1896-1981), in the national work conference on literary translation in 1954, claimed that ‘during the great cause of further international detente and fostering collective security and peaceful coexistence globally and in Asia, cultural interchange between nations is an important factor, and literary translation work is a crucial part of the cultural interchange’.<sup>212</sup> The translation of foreign literary works was motivated not solely from the imperatives of China’s artistic development but also by the

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<sup>209</sup> Hong Zicheng, *History of Contemporary Chinese Literature [dang dai zhong guo wen xue shi]*, (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2010), p.10. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>210</sup> Zha Mingjian, ‘Cultural Manipulation and Utilization: Ideology and the Construction of Translated Literary Classics—Focusing on Translated Literature in China in the 1950s and 1960s [wen hua de cao zong he li yong: yi shi xing tai he fan yi jing dian wen xue de jian gou – yi er shi shi ji wu liu shi nian dai zhong guo de fan yi wen xue wei yan jiu zhong xin]’, *Chinese Comparative Literature*, 02 (2004), pp.86-102(98). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>211</sup> Mao Dun (Shen Dehong), a writer and critic, was the Minister of Cultural Ministry from 1949 to 1964 and the president of Chinese Writers Association from 1949 to 1981.

<sup>212</sup> Mao Dun, ‘Struggling for the Development of Literary Translation and Improvement of Translation Quality [wei fa zhan wen xue fan yi shi ye he ti gao fan yi zhi liang er fen dou]’, *Translation*, 10 (1954), pp.222-5(223). [Originally in Chinese]

ideological consideration. It aimed to delineate the ideal literary paradigm befitting the new socialist authority in China, safeguarding and reinforcing the status and authority of the national discourse and mainstream ideology. During the seventeen years, the composition of the primary framework of translated literature not only conveyed purely spiritual implications but also functioned as a manifestation of celebration of a specific society and nation. The distinctive expression of literary discourse derived its character from the prevailing political context, converging the realms of politics and art into an ideological manifestation of discourse.

In the year 1949, the international landscape, along with the urgent situation of full construction for a new country, compelled the newly formed PRC to adopt assertive measures to consolidate its political standing. This period witnessed the emergence of a polarised global scenario, characterized by the dominance of two major powers: the United States and the Soviet Union. One document of the CPC ideologically described that the former represented 'imperialism camp against democracy, whose fundamental purpose is to build a United States' imperialism hegemony world and destroy democracy', and the latter constituted 'an anti-imperialist democratic camp, whose fundamental purpose is to destroy imperialism to consolidate democracy and eradicate the remnants of fascism'.<sup>213</sup>

According to Paul Kennedy, 'One was either in the American-led bloc or the Soviet one. There was to be no middle way; in an age of Stalin and Joe McCarthy, it was imprudent to think that there could be'.<sup>214</sup> In this arrangement, it is unlikely that China is able to stand in the middle. In consideration of historical, economic, geographical and political factors, the CPC chose to be an alliance with the communist bloc led by the Soviet Union. Consequently, the diplomatic policy of 'Leaning to One Side' towards the Soviet Union became an inevitable action within the intricate international landscape. This alignment extended to the realm of literature, as Mao stressed that 'the new culture created by the Soviet Union should be served as a model role for us to shape people's

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<sup>213</sup> *Conference Documents of the Communist Intelligence Bureau [gong chan dang qing bao ju hui yi wen jian]*, ed. The Communist Intelligence Bureau (Beijing: The People's Publishing House, 1954), pp.5-6. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>214</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), p.480.



culture’.<sup>215</sup> The circles of literature and arts (wen yi quan)<sup>216</sup> swiftly turned to the studies of the Soviet Union’s literary works. In summarizing the translation achievements in the initiate decade after 1949, Bian Zhilin and his contemporaries observed the profound influence of this literary leaning-to-one-side emulation,

The literature of the Soviet Union was particularly needed by Chinese people before/after 1949. Over the preceding decade, we underwent many great political movements and ideological campaigns while doing ambitious socialist constructions. And the most advanced socialist literature of the Soviet Union in particular aligned closely with the expanding need for ideological education and served as a valuable artistic reference.<sup>217</sup>

China’s circles of literature and arts not only embraced the literature of the Soviet but also incorporated its literary critical theories, adhering to the principles of ideological discourses within literature. According to the statistics data from Archival Library of Chinese Publications, prior to the deterioration coming to Sino-Soviet relations in 1957, China had translated and published 118 types of books on Soviet literary criticism theory, and even after 1957, still 38 from 1958 to 1965.<sup>218</sup> As Wu Yan (1918-2010), an influential translator and particularly his contributions to Rabindranath Tagore’s translation, recalled,

At that time, the influence of the Soviet Union wielded profound impact. Whether the literary works of Western Europe and other countries were introduced or not, hinged on whether the Soviet Union had undertaken the translation and how the critics of the Soviet. The permissible boundaries extended no further than those delineated by Andrei Zhdanov,

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<sup>215</sup> Mao Zedong, ‘Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Arts’, p.73.

<sup>216</sup> The literary and arts circles is a term referring to the community of writers, artists, and intellectuals involved in literature and the arts in China.

<sup>217</sup> Bian Zhilin, Ye Shuifu, Yuan Kejia and Chen Shen, ‘On Ten Years of Foreign Literary Translation and Research [hi nian lai de wai guo wen xue fanyi he yan jiu gong zuo]’, *Literary Review*, 05 (1959), pp.41-77(42). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>218</sup> *Catalogue and Abstract of Translation and Publication of Foreign Literary Works from 1949 to 1979 [1949-1979 fan yi chu ban wai guo wen xue zhu zuo he ti yao]*, ed. Archival Library of Chinese Publications (Nanjing: Jiangsu People’s Press, 1986), pp.898-930. [Originally in Chinese]

with the authors and works beyond those acknowledged by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin subject to scrutiny. In a broad context, it was nothing more than referring to the arguments often cited by Soviet critics like Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dubroyubov. Consequently, the assessment of literary works from Europe and America was inevitably shaped by Russian literary tastes.<sup>219</sup>

This observation provides an accurate depiction of the circumstances during the course of the seventeen years. For instance, Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge, the representatives of English Romantic poets, were denounced as 'non-revolutionary Romantic poets' by Soviet critics according to the standard of being revolutionary, resulting in none of their pieces translated in China during the seventeen years, while the works of Byron, Shelley and Keats referred as 'revolutionary Romantic poets',<sup>220</sup> were widely translated. Likewise, Burns was included as 'a positive revolutionary hero'<sup>221</sup> in the eyes of Soviet critics, partly contributing to Burns's appeal of the seventeen years, 1949-66.

In a stark contrast to the elevated status given to the Soviet literature in China during the seventeen years, Western literary works, particularly those of Anglo-American origin, faced suppression and criticism. Emphasis was placed on emulating the Soviet literature in the early years of the PRC, accompanied by censure of bourgeois culture associated with European nations and the America.<sup>222</sup> Guided by the policy of 'taking class struggle as the principle', the domain of literary translation unavoidably become a barometer of ideological class conflict. This transformation occurred under the

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<sup>219</sup> Wu Yan, 'A Vision to Take [fang chu yan guang lai na]', *Reading*, 07(1979), pp.6-11(6-7). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>220</sup> Y. Konratyev, 'The Soviet Union's Discussion on the History of British Literature [su lian guan yu ying guo wen xue shi de lun zhu]', tr. by Huang Jiade, *Literature, History and Philosophy*, 03 (1954), pp.17-9(18). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>221</sup> Natalia Kaloh Vid, 'The Reception of Robert Burns in Russia', in *The Reception of Robert Burns in Europe*, ed. Murray Pittock (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp.155-78(160).

<sup>222</sup> For stance, in the early years of the founding of PRC, *Wenyi Bao* (Literature and Art Newspapers) published a series of articles of the Soviets scholars criticizing American literature, such as, 'American Literature – Serving the Reactionaries' by Anisimov in 1949, 'Corruptive Literature' by Zaslavsky in 1950,' and a number of others. China's scholars immediately echoed with articles in *Wenyi Bao* as well like 'Is There Culture in the United States?' by Luo Sun in 1950.

unwavering supervision and meticulous scrutiny of the CPC, extending from the politburo down to local party entities. As a result, it emerged as a significant component of the national agenda. The overall translation principles and policies, the proportion of subjects to the concrete translation, and even the approaches, organizational structures, publishing processes and distributions were intricately orbited into the national plans. This set up into a comprehensive network from production to consumption, facilitating the overall control of socialist ideals across all aspects of literary translations and disseminations.

In the midst of the pronounced emulation of Soviet literature and stringent critique of Anglo-American literary works, the translation of such Anglo-American literary works underwent a substantial decline. Between 1949 and 1966, a total of 244 translations of British literary works were recorded, constituting a mere 4.1% of the entire numbers of translated foreign literary works.<sup>223</sup> This starkly contrasted with the 3,218 translations (57.7%) of literature originating from Russia and the Soviet Union during the same period.<sup>224</sup> Notably, of the total of 244 translations of British literary works, thirty two comprised poetry, while the remaining 212 novels, plays and prose.<sup>225</sup> As a result, during the period from 1949 to 1958, prior to the NFM, the production of new translations of Burns’s works came to a halt. From 1949 to 1966, only three poetry collections of various poets combination saw publication as Yuan Shuipai’s *My heart* (1944), discussed

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<sup>223</sup> Wu Yun, *Literary Manipulation and the Time Interpretation: A Study on the Translation of Anglo-American Poetry in China from 1949 to 1966* [wen xue cao zong he shi dai chan shi: 1949-1966 shi qi nian jian ying mei shi ge zai zhong guo de yi jie yan jiu] (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2011), pp.31-2. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>224</sup> Lu Yuling, *Literary Translation and Reconstruction of the Map of World Literature: Studies of Anglo-American Literary Translation During the Period of The Seventeen Years* [wen xue fan yi yu shi jie wen xue di tu de chong su – shi qi nian jian ying mei wen xue fan yi yan jiu], Doctoral Dissertation of Fudan University, Shanghai, 2007, p.34. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>225</sup> The 32 translations of poetry are the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, William Blake, Robert Burns, Byron, Shelley, John Keats, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning, the ten poets. According to Sun Zhili, *proses*, in a broad sense, refers to works other than poetry, fiction, drama and film literature, including travel notes, reportage, biography, memoir, folk literature, children’s literature, literary theory series and adaptations. Sun Zhili, *1949-1966: On Translations of British and American Literatures of the PRC* [1949-1966: zhong guo ying mei wen xue fan yi ga ilun], (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 1996), pp.11-41. [Originally in Chinese]

previously in chapter two, was republished in 1950 and 1951 as one of the three.<sup>226</sup> The rarity of the republication of Burns's translations in the face of the suppression of Anglo-American literature subtly hinted at Burns's enduring appeal, even within the intensified ideological climate in China, foreshadowing his subsequent widespread acceptance.

Over the course of the seventeen years, the translation of Anglo-American literary works in China was subject to the political agenda and the hegemonic discourse of the Soviet Union, rather than reflecting the original intentions of the authors. The literary aesthetics of the Soviet Union exerted a profound impact on Chinese scholars' perceptions and studies of Anglo-American literary works. Chinese scholars of Anglo-American literature lacked their own independent thinking and judgement. China translated a significant amount of Soviet literary criticisms of socialist realism, including the works of Gorky, Stalin and Zhdanov, Marxist-Leninist literary theories and the aesthetic criticisms of the nineteenth century Russian revolutionary democrats such as Bellinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dopolyubov. Particularly during the 1950s, prior to the alteration in Sino-Soviet relations, Soviet literary criticism profoundly impacted on China's literary sphere by the principles of dialectical materialism. The development of literary criticism within the PRC had its roots in the examination and adoption of Soviet literary principles and theories.<sup>227</sup> This influence from the Soviet literary criticism had a constructive impact on the evolution of Chinese literary criticism, as Wu Yuanmai asserted, it 'established the direction of literature serving socialism and the working people, and delineated the relations between the superstructure and ideology, as well as how to see the classical literary heritage and the literature of the rising bourgeoisie period'<sup>228</sup>.

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<sup>226</sup> The other two poetry collections of various poets combinations refer to: *Serenade: The Selected Poems of Shelley and Byron*, tr. Li Yuenan, (Guangzhou: Zhengfeng Press, 1950) and *Selected Poems of the British Charter School*, ed. Yuan Kejia, (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Press, 1960). Sun Zhili, *1949-1966: On Translations of British and American Literatures of the PRC*, p.15.

<sup>227</sup> Chen Nanxian, *The Literature of Russia and the Soviet Union and the Seventeen Years of Chinese Literature [e su wen xue he shi qi nian zhong guo wen xue]*, Doctoral Dissertation of Suzhou University, 2004, p.4. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>228</sup> Wu Yuanmai, 'Returning History to History – The Historical Fate of Soviet Literary Criticism in CPC [ba li shi huan gei li shi – su lian wen lun zai xin zhong guo de li shi ming yun]', *Literature and Art Studies*, 04 (2000), pp.21-4(22). [Originally in Chinese]

Nonetheless, the uncritical adoption of Soviet literary criticism also entailed its drawbacks – the inclination towards simplistic sociology and mechanical materialism, resulting in a comparable tendency of oversimplification, dogmatism and vulgarization within Chinese literary criticism. It was manifested in various aspects: firstly, the overarching politicization of literary discourse overshadowed the inherent aesthetic objectives of literature; secondly, a broad philosophical lens was applied to literary discussions, often utilizing Lenin’s reflection theory from dialectical materialism to expound on literary phenomena, ultimately resulting in superficial literary critiques; and thirdly, a binary and uncomplicated approach to thinking emerged, characterized by dichotomous classifications such as materialist versus idealist perspective, revolutionary or reactionary stance, which fostered an excessive focus on class struggle within literary criticism.

In 1958, Mao proposed the principle of ‘combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism’ (hereafter ‘Two Combinations’), which was essentially a modified iteration of the Soviet socialist realism. In practical literary applications, Mao’s emphasis on ‘political standards come first, and artistic second’ lowered literature to a political device. This approach echoed the sentiment of ‘literature is subordinate to politics’ in Soviet literary criticism. In comparison to the Soviet literary criticism, Mao’s literary policy of ‘Two Combinations’ elevated the conveyance of ideals while diminish the depiction of reality, deviating literary creation from reality and overstressing the educational and cognitive roles of literature while neglecting its aesthetic functions.

The seventeen years did not see a comprehensive historical monograph on British literature by Chinese scholars. The only authoritative work on the history of British literature in China was *A History of British Literature*<sup>229</sup> by the Soviet scholar Alexander Anikst which was originally published in 1956 and later translated into Chinese in 1959. It mirrored the prevalent and simplistic sociological perspective on the British literary history in the Soviet and significantly shaped the field of Anglo-American literary studies

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<sup>229</sup> Aleksandr Anikst, *History of English Literature* (история английской литературы istoriya angliyskooy literatury) (Moscow: Uchpedgiz Publishing House, 1956). [Originally in Russian]

in China for a long period before China had its British literary historical books by Chinese scholars in 1980s.<sup>230</sup> As Zhang Longxi put it, it had

a wide influence [...] and was unique. [...] (It is) not only widespread among common readership, but served as a crucial reference book for postgraduates in British literature in universities, providing a valuable guidance for teaching and researching in the field.<sup>231</sup>

Anikst saw literature as 'an entire vassal of politics' and 'measured everything by political standards', simply evaluating writers in a binary framework of 'positive and negative' or 'revolutionary and reactionary', which were uncritically 'copied and accepted without self-thinking' by Chinese critics at the time.<sup>232</sup> In 1983, Zhang criticized Anikst's approach for reducing literature to a mere political appendage, neglecting its inherent complexities and failing to provide new insights into literary analysis.

Furthermore, the works of Soviet scholars such as C. D. Artamonov's *A History of Foreign Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (1958), Muravieva and Turlyayev's *A Brief History of Western European Literature* (1957) played a significant role in shaping the perceptions of Anglo-American literature among Chinese scholars. In the postscript of *Classic Writers and Works of Western Europe* (1957), Zhang Yuechao (1911-1989) acknowledged that the most significant contributions to his book stemmed from 'certain works of progressive Soviet scholars published this year in relation to the Western literature, such as Anikst's *A History of British Literature*, Yeristratova's *Byron*, and Altemolov and Gracintanskaya's *Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*'.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> *Brief History of British Literature [ying guo wen xue jian shi]*, ed. Liu Bingshan (Zhengzhou: Henan University Press, 1981) and *History of British Literature [ying guo wen xue shi]*, 4 Vols. ed. Chen Jia (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1982). [Both originally in Chinese]

<sup>231</sup> Zhang Longxi, 'On *A History of British Literature* [ping ying guo wen xue shi gang]', *Reading*, 09 (1982), pp.33-37(33). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>232</sup> Zhang Longxi, 'On *A History of British Literature*', pp.36, 37.

<sup>233</sup> Zhang Yuechao, 'Postscript', in *Classical Writers and Works of Western Europe [xiou jing dian zuo jia yu zuo ping]* (Wuhan: Changjiang Literature and Art Publishing House, 1957). pp.264-5(264). [Originally in Chinese]

Regarding the fundamental issue of how to view and evaluate literature, Anikst asserted that the writers and their works should be assessed on the principle of ‘the affinity to the people and artistry’, in terms of ‘their effects on the culture of the people’ and ‘objective significance of their works to the social contradictions of the time’.<sup>234</sup> However he did not provide evidence and displayed a distinct political bias. The bias is particularly evident in his introduction to Burns, where he consistently stressed Burns’s association with the common people:

Burns’s poetry [...] is the property of the people. [...] The fount of Burns’s poetry is the poetry of the people. He was born of the people and shared his destiny with the people all his life. [...] Burns’s poetry is people’s poetry both in its contents and forms.<sup>235</sup>

According to Anikst, many of Burns’s pieces conveyed common people’s feelings of ‘contempt’ and ‘ridicule’<sup>236</sup> towards the rich, church, and ruling class. While another Soviet critic, Artamonov, placed an emphasis on Burns’s ‘democratism’ and his ‘spontaneous, optimistic materialist worldview’.<sup>237</sup> Anikst’s view of Burns’s ‘association with people’ significantly influenced the studies of Burns in China at the time, suggesting widespread acceptance among Chinese scholars. Anikst’s politically binary discourse of ‘positive and negative’, ‘revolutionary and reactionary’, along with Mao’s guideline of ‘political standard comes first’, inclined Chinese scholars to lean towards the political ideology rather than conducting a detailed and in-depth literary criticism in Burns. Subsequently, this chapter will offer a thorough examination of Burns’s criticism during this period.

Moreover, the selection of translation of Anglo-American literary works by Chinese translators was influenced by the trends within the Soviet translation community.

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<sup>234</sup> Aleksandr Anikst, ‘The Introduction’, in *History of British Literature [ying guo wen xue shi gang]*, Aleksandr Abramovich Anikst, tr. Dai Liuling, Wu Zhiqian, Gui Shichun, Cai Wenxing, Zhou Qixun and Wang Wufeng (Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1959), pp.1-3(2). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>235</sup> Aleksandr Anikst, *History of British Literature*, pp.264,265,267.

<sup>236</sup> Anikst, pp.265, 266.

<sup>237</sup> C. D. Artamonov, *A History of Foreign Literature in the Eighteenth Century [shi ba shi ji wai guo wen xue shi]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 1958), pp.199, 202. [Originally in Chinese]. (The original book did not offer the translators’ names)

The most recent updates from Soviet scholars' selections of translations were regularly featured in China's literary journals. Columns like 'World Literature and Art Trends' in *Translation, Review of Foreign Literature Translation* and *Translation Bulletin* frequently published the Soviet translation plans in a timely manner.<sup>238</sup> Notably, after 1953, *Translation Bulletin* underwent a substantial adjustment in its content organization, including the publication of translation works recommended by Soviet scholars for consideration by Chinese translators. This practice instilled in Chinese translators a sense of political correctness and assurance since the Soviet scholars had previously translated the works. For instance, Tu An (1923-2017), the translator of *Selected Sonnets of Shakespeare* in 1950, recounted that the Russian translation of *Selected Sonnets of Shakespeare* by Samuil Marshak, which had been published in *Pravda* during the Great Patriotic War and subsequently as a collection after the war, suggested that his publication and translation would likely avoid censorship obstacles in China.<sup>239</sup> The influence of Soviet scholars' endorsement of Burns had a substantial effect on the evaluation of Burns by Chinese scholars, likely playing a crucial role in the marked rise in Burns's translations in 1959. For instance, Artamonov claimed that 'Burns was one of Karl Marx's favourite poets'.<sup>240</sup> The dogmatism engendered by 'Soviet centralism' within Chinese literary studies confined their independent thinking within the realm of studies of Anglo-American literature and choices of translation sources, aligning China's Anglo-American literary studies with the vision of the Soviet Union.

In 1956, the Ministry of Higher Education of the PRC (now the Ministry of Education) issued *The Draft Syllabus of British Literary History* (hereafter *Syllabus*) for undergraduates in English Language and Literature at universities, the only published guidebook of British literary history at the time. Regarding Robert Burns, the syllabus said,

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<sup>238</sup> Lu Yuling, *Literary Translation and Reconstruction of the Map of World Literature: Studies of Anglo-American Literary Translation During the Period of The Seventeen Years*, p.42.

<sup>239</sup> Tu An and Xu Jun, 'Faithfulness, Expressiveness and Elegance' and 'True, Good and Beautiful' ['xin da ya' he 'zhen shan mei'], *Yilin*, 04 (1999), pp.208-9. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>240</sup> C. D. Artamonov, *A History of Foreign Literature in the Eighteenth Century [shi ba shi ji wai guo wen xue shi]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Press, 1958), pp.199, 202. [Originally in Chinese]. (The original book does not offer the translators' names)



Robert Burns (1759-1796) represented a pre-Romanticism that reflected the sentiments of the oppressed people. The affinity to people and the basis of folklore of his lyric poetry. The Scottishness within his works. In his poetry, the criticizing English bourgeoisie, the pictures of the social contradictions, the praise of the working people, the love of his motherland, and the basic themes of freedom and equality of social labour. ‘The Jolly Beggars’ – the reflection of the working people at the end of the eighteenth century. Burns’s sympathy for the French bourgeois revolution. The richness and simplicity of his language. The realism within his descriptions of characters and nature. The comments of Russian critics of revolutionary democracy on Burns.<sup>241</sup> (Sic, sentences without verbs)

It is noteworthy that the *Syllabus* assessed Burns and his works through the lens of Soviet literary criticism, with ‘Russian critics of revolutionary democracy’ likely referring to figures like Anikst and Artamonov. Additionally, it stressed the concept of ‘the affinity to people’ within Burns’s writings, repeatedly highlighting the term ‘people’ in the guidelines. In light of the prevailing political standards of that era, Burns and his pieces were defined as aligning with the positive image of the people propagandized by the authority, ultimately contributing to Burns’s subsequent politically characterized as a poet of people during the bicentenary celebration of Burns’s birth in 1959. For instance, Marshak was referred as ‘the ‘Soviet’ father of Robert Burns’ and ‘the only official translator of Burns’ in the Soviet Union with his translations remaining as canonical for more than sixty years accepted by the authorities.<sup>242</sup> Marshak’s ideological strategies in the translations of Burns focused on advocating the main virtues of the official communist doctrine such as the criticism of the religion, rich and ruling class, promotion of democratic values like patriotism and proletarian revolution. Marshak did not translate those pieces which contained religious motifs (if they were not satirically coloured), poems with frivolous content and poems addressed to the poet’s friends, acquaintances and patrons if they belonged to aristocratic circles. Marshak often changed the original titles of the pieces, following ideological principles in some cases, for instance, ‘For a that and a that’ was translated into ‘Honest poverty’. Additionally, the national spirit in

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<sup>241</sup> *The Draft Syllabus for History of British Literature [ying guo wen xue shi jiao xue da gang cao an]*, ed. The Ministry of Higher Education of the PRC (Beijing: The Higher Education Press, 1956), p.17. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>242</sup> Vid, 2011, p.121.

Burns's works was overstressed in Marshak's translations.<sup>243</sup> It was always people, commoners and nations who enabled victory and freedom in Marshak's translations of Burns, thereby Marshak deleted the monarchy names in the original such as kings, dukes and the others in high society. For instance, Marshak expunged the 'king' in the translation of 'Scot Wha Hae'.<sup>244</sup>

In addition to the endorsement of Burns by Soviet scholars, the NFM launched in 1958, coupled with the bicentenary celebration of Burns's birth in 1959, propelled Burns's literary reputation to its peak in 1959 in China. The Shanghai Foreign Languages Society and Shanghai Branch of Chinese Writers' Association held Burns's commemorative meeting in Shanghai Hall of Science in late June 1959. The details of this commemoration will be demonstrated in chapter six, 'Burns's Reception Beyond Text'. *World Literature* published a briefing in the third issue of 1959 that the Communist Party of Britain held a grand commemorative party in London on January 25, featuring an address, 'Robert Burns', by William Gallacher, a chairman of British Communist Party. This address was translated and published in the first issue of *Western Languages* in the same year. *Literary Review* published the influential article 'Robert Burns and Folksong: The 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Robert Burns' by Yuan Kejia in 1959. And Wang Zuoliang published his first but strongly ideological Burns criticism: 'A Great Scottish People Poet: Robert Burns', which will be dwelt on later in this chapter.

The most immediate trigger for Burns's peak in 1959 is the launch of the NFM. The NFM was initiated by Mao Zedong in the context of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) as a means to stimulate cultural development by encouraging mass participation in literary creation with individuals from all regions of the country collecting, compiling and composing folk songs to propel the development of China's poetry heritage. Mao asserted that the superiority of socialism must manifest not only in the productive forces, but also in cultural domain, and the feature in cultural domain is the participation of the national people.<sup>245</sup> It commenced following Mao's proposal to promote nationwide creation of folk songs at the Central Working Conference in Chengdu (hereafter Chengdu

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<sup>243</sup> Vid, 2011, pp.121–9.

<sup>244</sup> Vid, 2011, pp.149.

<sup>245</sup> Xie Baojie, 'The Historical Description of 1958 NFM [1958 nian xin min ge yun dong de li shi miao shu]', *Modern Chinese Literary Studies*, 01 (2005), pp.24–45. [Originally in Chinese]

Conference) in March 1958, and lasted for approximately one year until Mao’s announcement of the disowning of New Folksong pieces at the Central Working Conference in Zhengzhou (hereafter Zhengzhou Conference) in February 1959.

The initiation of the NFM is intricately tied to the historical circumstances of the time. By the end of 1957, China had successfully exceeded the targets set in its first Five-Year Plan,<sup>246</sup> which had been modelled after the approach of the Soviet Union. This accomplishment ignited significant national enthusiasm for advanced socialism. Notably, the slogan of ‘catching up with and surpassing Britain in fifteen years’ (shi wu nian gan chao yin guo) spurred China into a fervent pursuit of rapid development across agriculture and industry sectors.

At the central working conference of the CPC in Nanning in 1958, a radical campaign, ‘The Great Leap Forward’, was presented by the CPC. The Great Leap Forward at the very beginning in effect embodied Mao’s impatience with the goal of rapidly catching up with the economic development of the United Kingdom and the United States. Subsequently, an editorial published in *People’s Daily* on 2nd February officially reiterated: ‘Our country is now facing a new situation of great leap forward in industrial construction and agricultural production, yet literature, education and health care must have a great leap forward as well’.<sup>247</sup> The Great Leap Forward was expected to accelerate all facets of society including culture. The NFM, in essence, represented a significant leap forward in the realm of literature and arts. After the Chengdu Conference, the nationwide top-down campaign to promote new folk songs was vigorously launched. During the peak of the NFM, a plethora of poets emerged from various regions of China, and folk song competitions were organized across urban and rural areas. Individuals ranging from teenagers to those in their 60s and 70s actively engaged in the creation of

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<sup>246</sup> The Five-Year Plan refers to ‘The Outline of The Five-year Plan’ for The National Economic and Social Development of The People’s Republic of China, which makes plans for major national construction projects, productivity sectors, and important proportion relations of the national economy, and sets goals and directions for the long-term development of the national economy. China began to draw up its first five-year plan in 1953 (except during the period of national economic adjustment from 1963 to 1965). ‘The Fourteenth Five-Year Plan’ (2021-2025) was adopted at the Fourth Session of the 13th National People’s Congress in March 2021.

<sup>247</sup> Quoted. Mao Zhixiong, ‘On the NFM During the Period of China’s Great Leap Forward [ping wo guo da yue jin shi qi de xin min ge yun dong]’, *Journal of Hunan Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, 08(1987), pp.73-7(73). [Originally in Chinese]

folk songs.<sup>248</sup> The number of poets in China, which was less than 1,000 in 1957, rapidly climbed up to 200,000 in 1958.<sup>249</sup> Akin to the Great Leap Forward in agriculture and industry, the NFM was becoming transformed into a phenomenon of 'over-poetry', for instance, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region has proposed to collect one million folk songs within three years.<sup>250</sup> The mania with numbers' growth of participants overshadowed Mao's original desire to enhance China's new poetry and culture through the movement. The obsession with numerical growth led to intense and competitive environments where the essence of folk songs, which initially expressed the aspirations of common working people, became distorted into insincere and crude renditions crafted solely to meet the demands set by higher-ranking leaders.

Mao's initial enthusiasm for the NFM dwindled when it became apparent that the movement was transformed into a phenomenon of grandiloquent over-poetry in every aspect in society over night and was falling short of his expectations in a way of developing China's new poetry and culture. In addition, the three years of famine from 1959 onward, along with the tangible failure of Great Leap Forward in 'serious destroying to the national economy, imbalance and setbacks, the subversion of social order and morality, the spread of man-made disasters and the widespread starvation',<sup>251</sup> further contributed to Mao's eventual decision to disown his proposal of the NFM. One year later, at the Zhengzhou Conference held in March 1959, Mao officially announced the discontinuation and abolition of the NFM.

Following its peak in 1959, Burns's literary reputation saw an abrupt halt. This sudden halt occurred as Chinese society transitioned into a preparatory stage of the subsequent Cultural Revolution in 1966 when there was 'a unprecedented period in human history' of 'reaching a climax that politics, ideology, national regime and party intervened

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<sup>248</sup> Tian Ying, *China's NFM of 1958 [1958 nian zhong guo xin min ge yun dong]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Press, 1959), pp.11-2. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>249</sup> Jiang Bo, 'The Journey of NFM of Great Leap Forward [da yue jin min ge yun dong de xing shuai li cheng]', *Historical Review of The Communist Party of China*, 03 (2007), pp.3-6. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>250</sup> Mao Zhixiong, 'On the NFM During the Period of China's Great Leap Forward', p.74.

<sup>251</sup> *History of the People's Republic of China [zhong hua ren min gong he guo shi]*, ed. Qi Pengfei (Beijing: Renmin University of China Press, 2009), p.125. [Originally in Chinese]

translations’.<sup>252</sup> This led to a stagnation in the translation and research of Burns immediately until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and the commencement of China’s reform and opening-up policy in 1978 that Burns returned to the attention of scholars and readers. It took place to the Western literary translations as well.

Let us look back to the NFM to see how the movement helped and propelled Burns’s reputation to a sublime position. Fundamentally, Mao Zedong introduced the NFM as a response to the deterioration between China and Soviet in the late 1950s. China started to reassess its earlier policy of ‘Leaning to One Side’ from the year 1949, prompting the leaders to reconsider their alignment and explore more independent or alternative approaches in their foreign and domestic policies. In 1956, Mao stressed this shift,

learning everything from Russia as a dogma will certainly result in a great failure. [...] We should make more Sinicization rather than the Westernization. [...] We should combine the content of socialism and the form of nation to create something with China’s own unique national style. [...] Therefore, [...] we will not lose national confidence.<sup>253</sup>

Mao’s concerns and reflections regarding literary discourse were reiterated by the authority of the circles of literature and arts. In an address to the Chinese Writers’ Association in 1956, Zhou Yang<sup>254</sup> (1908-1989), the Minister of Cultural Department, stated, ‘The things of the Soviet Union are not all but some we need to learn. We should learn from the fine traditions of our own nation, [...] from the literature across the world’.<sup>255</sup> After a decade of emulating Soviet in literature, China began to rediscover and prioritize its own cultural heritage.

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<sup>252</sup> Xie Tianzhen, ‘Particular Translation in Particular Times – On Literary Translation During the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China’, 2009, p.24.

<sup>253</sup> Mao Zedong, ‘Conversations with Musicians [tong yin yue gong zuo zhe de tan hua]’, in *Collected Essays of Mao Zedong on Literature and Art of Mao Zedong*, pp.48-97(73), pp.146-157(149,153,155).

<sup>254</sup> Zhou Yang was the Vice Minister of the Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee, Vice Minister of Culture Department, and Vice Chairman of the Chinese Writers Association in 1949-66.

<sup>255</sup> Zhou Yang, ‘On Several Issues of Current Literary and Art Creation [guan yu dang qian wen yi chang zuo shang de ji ge wen ti]’, *Chinese New Literature: Literature Theory Volume I*, ed. Feng Mu (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 1997), pp.254-76. [Originally in Chinese]

During the Chengdu Conference in 1958, Mao Zedong showed keen interest in the numerous new folk songs that emerged during farmland irrigation construction. He envisioned a comprehensive cultural movement aimed at fundamentally transforming Chinese culture by fostering a unified national cultural identity.<sup>256</sup> Mao advocated for literature to prioritize the service of the working class and peasants, acknowledging the potential of the masses. He anticipated that by mobilizing their collective power, particularly through folk songs, it would be feasible to cultivate an authentic proletarian culture that would enhance the growth of socialist literature.<sup>257</sup> From its inception, the NFM was inherently intertwined with politics, serving as a deliberate political campaign orchestrated from the top down by the CPC, rather than arising spontaneously from the masses. Its primary aim was to address China’s cultural backwardness and propel it towards the prosperity of socialist cultural ideals. In essence, the NFM can be seen as a literary component of the broader Great Leap Forward. As Tao Dongfeng observed, both endeavours shared a common feature of ‘surreal fantasy and uncontrollable impulse – the so-called ‘revolutionary romanticism’.<sup>258</sup> It could be argued that the NFM ultimately paved the way for the tumultuous and violent Cultural Revolution that ensued.

During the NFM, Chinese translators were actively encouraged by the authority to explore foreign poetry for literary inspirations and nutrition. In the discussion of new folk songs, Zhou Yang outlined three potential pathways for the development of poetry: Firstly, the development of new poetry rooted in folksong and ancient poetry; secondly, the cultivation of new folk songs; third, the exploration of innovative old-style poetry and *Ci*.<sup>259</sup> This perception of the evolution of Chinese poetry reflected the predominant

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<sup>256</sup> Tao Dongfeng, ‘Popularization and Reconstruction of Cultural Nationalization – Discussion on New Poetry in 1958-1959 from the Perspective of Social Theory [da zhong hua he wen hua min zu hua de chong jian – she hui li lun shi ye zhong de 1958-1959 nian xin shi tao lun]’, *Literature and Art Studies*, 03 (2002), pp.17-30(19). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>257</sup> Hao Muhuan, ‘1958 ‘NFM’ as Political Discourse [zuo wei zheng zhi hua yu de 1958 nian ‘xin min ge yun donng’]’, *Journal of Qiqihar University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 3 (2007), pp.91-3(92). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>258</sup> Tao Dongfeng, ‘Popularization and Reconstruction of Cultural Nationalization – Discussion on New Poetry in 1958-1959 from the Perspective of Social Theory’, pp.17-30 (19).

<sup>259</sup> Quoted. Fang Chanan, ‘The Nationality and Anti-Westerness of Literature in the Seventeen-Year Period’ shi qi wen xue de min zu xing he fan xi fang xing]’, *Review of Literature and Art*, 04 (2002), pp.46-8(48). [Originally in Chinese]

attitudes of the era. During this movement, folk songs were regarded as pivotal in the construction of modern national poetry, serving as a tacit and effective strategy for poets to counter the Western poetic style. The achievement of the NFM resulted in a significant repositioning of China’s folk songs within the poetry discourse, reversing the relationship between modern new poetry and folksong since the MFM, propelling Chinese folksong to move from the margin to the forefront, albeit with an element of overemphasis. The deliberate dismantling of Chinese new poetry in response to the influence of Western discourse since the MFM indicates Chinese poets’ acknowledgement of the overshadowing of their national tradition. The Western-influenced poetic styles were deemed inadequate in accurately and effectively conveying China’s rich and longstanding history and unique reality. In response, poets sought to address these deficiencies by revitalizing and innovating through the incorporation of folk songs. Within the context of new poetry development, this campaign’s underlying principle warrants acknowledgment and endorsement. During the period, the attempt to challenge the established framework was primarily motivated by political and ideological factors than pure poetic considerations. Consequently, poetry deviated from its artistic trajectory and veered towards an extreme due to overcorrection. There was an excessive emphasis on reverting to national tradition and a rejection of certain Western forms and techniques that had previously contributed to the development of new poetry. As the original binary opposition was deconstructed, a new and distorted binary opposition emerged. In this revised framework, the West was marginalized, while the national tradition, particularly the folk literary tradition, transitioned from a passive position to an active one. Concurrently, poetry became deeply entwined with political discourse, forfeiting its autonomy, and gradually succumbing to indiscriminate exclusion.<sup>260</sup>

Not surprisingly, Burns immediately came into the focus of Chinese translators. Born into a peasant family, Burns’s background resonated with the politically correct identity of that time in China, particularly given the PRC proclaimed commitment to representing the working and peasant classes. Burns’s extensive collection of Scottish folk songs and ballads within his works perfectly aligned with the objectives of the campaign. Furthermore, numerous Burns pieces contained satirical elements targeting the English rulers, the upper classes, the church and landlords, echoing with the ideological

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<sup>260</sup> Fang Changan, ‘The Nationality and Anti-Westernness of Literature in the Seventeen-Year Period’, p. 48.

and revolutionary sentiments prevailing at the time. With regard to authorship, poetic form and poetic content, Burns and his works aptly suited the needs of China's political ideology, thus indisputably making him an unquestionably favoured choice for Chinese translators. The emergence of the NFM swiftly sparked a surge in Burns's translations and studies, as Wang Zuoliang pointed out,

During the extensive NFM in the 1950s, the author and conservator (Burns) of Scottish folk songs were seen to be in harmony, coupled with his 200th anniversary's coming, making the condition available for his translation and research to reach a new zenith.<sup>261</sup>

It was noted by Yuan Kejia as well that,

Nowadays we extensively introduce Burns's works, in large part because the affinity between Burns and folk literature has naturally aroused the interest of China's circles of literature and art who are discussing the relationship between new poetry and folksong. It will be interesting and instructive to explore how Burns refined the best parts of ballads and enriched his own songs' writing, and how the best parts of these songs later returned to the folk, and enriched the ballad tradition.<sup>262</sup>

Burns's incorporation of traditional folksong elements into his numerous songs resonated well with Mao's envisioned direction for the future of Chinese new poetry.

Furthermore, the decision to translate a Western literary work was contingent upon the perceived qualifications of the author, a determination made solely based on the directives and requirements set forth by the authorities. During the seventeen years, the Chinese government underwent a restructuring of private publishing houses. This restructuring involved the introduction of public-private partnerships, the consolidation

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<sup>261</sup> Wang Zuoliang, *Anthology of Wang Zuoliang [Wang Zuoliang wen ji]* (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1997), p.761. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>262</sup> Yuan Kejia, 'Robert Burns and Folksong – The 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Robert Burns [Peng Si he min jian ge yao – Peng Si dan cheng liang bai zhou nian ji nian]', *World literature*, 09 (1959), pp.39-54(39). [Originally in Chinese]



of certain publishing companies, and the imposition of restrictions on the publication of translated literary works. As a result, the responsibility for publishing translated works primarily fell to newly established presses such as The People’s Literature Publishing House, Shanghai Literature and Art United Publishing House (later renamed Shanghai New Literature and Art Publishing House, Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House), China Drama Publishing House and the several others.<sup>263</sup> With the restructuring of translation publishing institutions, the sponsorship system for literary translation work underwent centralization under the control of the government, altering the previous landscape of ‘translation as their own private affairs’<sup>264</sup> in the first half of the twentieth century. Throughout the seventeen years, literature translation evolved into a state-sanctioned activity and was fully institutionalized, no longer the exclusive domain of individual translators. Consequently, the class and political background of Western writers became the primary criteria by political authorities to determine whether their works should be translated or not.

Therefore, translators typically began by scrutinizing the political affiliation of authors to secure permission for translating their works. The author who did not align with the desired political criteria were often excluded from consideration for translation from the outset. The political criteria includes the class stance and class consciousness of the author, their attitude towards the revolutionary movement and the leftist literary movement, and the potential political utility of their works for judgements in the realm of literature and translation communities.<sup>265</sup> According to these criteria, an author’s working-class background or membership in the Communist Party would enhance the perceived legitimacy and appropriateness of translating their works. For instance, Howard Melvin Fast (1914-2003), a former member of the Communist Party of the United States until 1957, was widely translated and highly canonized in China from 1950 to 1957, with a total of seventeen of his works were translated and published in China.<sup>266</sup> This earned

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<sup>263</sup> Sun Zhili, *Translations of Anglo-American Literature from 1949 to 1966 in China*, pp.185-9.

<sup>264</sup> Quoted. Shen Zhiyuan. Sun Zhili, p.185.

<sup>265</sup> Wu Yun, *Literary Manipulation and the Time Interpretation: A Study on the Translation of Anglo-American Poetry in China from 1949 to 1966*, 2011, p.19.

<sup>266</sup> Lu Yuling, ‘‘Imagining Community’’and the Betrayal of Translation – A Study of the Translation on Howard Fast in the Seventeen Years [‘xiang xiang de gong tong ti’ he fan yi de bei pan – shi qi nian huo hua de fa si te yan jiu’], *Review of Anglo-American Literature Studies*, 01 (2009), pp.226-38(230). [Originally in Chinese]

him the distinction of being recognized as 'the most-translated modern American writer in China in the 1950s'.<sup>267</sup> However, in 1957, as Fast publicly renounced his membership in the Communist Party, the Chinese translation community abruptly ended all translation work related to Fast, enabling Fast's translation from an upsurge into a precipitous decline to none at all, and published a number of articles denouncing Fast's betrayal of communism in journals.

These various factors led to a peak in the reception of Burns in China in 1959. Several notable translations of Burns's works were published, including Yuan Kijia's *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, Wang Zuolaing's *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* and Yuan Shuipai's fourth edition *My heart* without Housman. The previous chapter two examined Yuan Shuipai's joint anthology *My heart* which was republished in 1945 and 1951. In 1959, for the NFM, *My heart* removed Housman's poems, focusing solely on Burns's poetry. Remarkably, despite the political climate in China at the time where Anglo-American literature was under scrutiny, there was encouragement for the translation of Burns's works. In 1959, out of the 21 translated monographs of British literary works published,<sup>268</sup> three were dedicated to Burns, accounting for one-seventh of the total a somewhat unusual occurrence given the political atmosphere. Furthermore, in the same year, Wang Zuoliang and Yuan Kejia's translations of Burns's works were featured in influential journals such as *Poetry* and *World Literature*, receiving widespread acclaim from both readers and scholars. Wang's *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* has been republished five times with the recent edition in 2020, while Yuan Kejia's work four times with the most recent in 2008 (see Appendix I).

Likewise, there was a notable increase in Burns's literary criticism during this period. Prior to 1959, it can be said that there was a lack of substantial scholarly criticism of Burns's works. Earlier studies on Burns, such as Wu Fangji's 'Robert Burns' in 1926, as mentioned in chapter two, predominantly concentrated on Burns's biography. It is understandable that delving into the life of an author is often a necessary precursor to engaging with their works. In literary studies, a significant portion of research is driven by the availability of translations to a foreign writer's works. Without the translations, it

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<sup>267</sup> Zha Mingjian, 'Cultural Manipulation and Utilization: Ideology and the Construction of Translated Literary Classics – Focusing on Translated Literature in China in the 1950s and 1960s', pp.86-102(99).

<sup>268</sup> Lu Yuling, p.45.

can be challenging to generate the attention and conduct research on a foreign writer. In the 1920s, the Chinese literary community paid an intensive attention to Burns’s works, with a number of translators engaging in his poetry as discussed in the previous chapter two. However, the burgeoning interest in Burns’s studies was hindered by the disruption of the eight-year SSJW and the subsequent five-year Civil War. It was not until 1959, with a surge in translations of Burns’s works, that scholarly attention on Burns began to gain momentum once again. This renewed interest resulted in the publication of as many as ten articles in journals during that year.

Of them, Yuan Kejia’s ‘Robert Burns and Folksong – The 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Robert Burns’, and Wang Zuoliang’s ‘Robert Burns: The Great Scottish People’s Poet’ have had significant influences on Burns’s studies, particularly as Yuan’s continue to do. Additionally, a notable translation article, ‘Commemorating the Bicentenary of Birth of Scottish People’s Poet: Robert Burns’ by William Gallacher, also contributed to this discourse. Why did the translators choose Gallacher, a politician in the non-academic field, rather than some influential Burns scholars in Anglosphere academia at the time like David Daiches? The translator offered the reason as a footnote on the first page of the translation, ‘This year marks the bicentenary of the birth of Robert Burns, Scotland’s great people’s poet. William Gallacher (a Scot), the honorary chairman of the British Communist Party (hereafter BCP), published a commemorative article in the January issue of *Labour Monthly* in the United Kingdom, which we specifically translated and republished’.<sup>269</sup> The translator’s emphasis on Gallacher’s role as the chairman of BCP suggests that the translation was motivated by the author’s political affiliation rather than scholarly credentials.

In the context of a politicized society, the ideological discourse held sway over academic discourse, with political consideration often taking precedence over scholarly criteria. It is not unusual that prioritising an article commemorating Burns authored by an honorary chairman of the British Communist Party over an academic piece by a distinguished Burns’s scholar. This preference was rooted in the ideological framework of socialist China, which operated under the banner of ‘people’s democratic dictatorship

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<sup>269</sup> William Gallacher, ‘Robert Burns’, tr. Class Eight, Grade Two, English Department, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Zhuang Yichuan reviewed, *Western Language*, 01 (1959), pp.53-5,61(53). [Originally in Chinese]

William Gallaccher, ‘Robert Burns’, *Labour Monthly*, 01(1959), pp.20-1, 26-7.

based on the working and peasant classes'. Burns's peasant origin was considered as the ideal authorship for translation and publication, aligning with the narrative of 'revolutionary literature' of the time. Within this narrative, the term 'people' did not generally refer to all citizens but specifically encompassed the proletariat or workers, peasants and soldiers, excluding the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the intellectuals.<sup>270</sup>

In 1939, Soviet critic Alexander Anikst stressed how Burns's origins made his social status relatable to by the masses.<sup>271</sup> Likewise, Burns's peasant origin was stressed repeatedly by China's scholars. In Yuan Kejia's preface of his translation, 'Robert Burns – Scotland's Great Peasant Poet', Burns's rural upbringing and status as a peasant are evidences highlighted in the title. Furthermore, in the opening paragraph of the preface, his peasant background is prominently featured. Yuan remarked,

When we think of that, as an oppressed peasant poet, Burns died in a circumstance of being poor and sick, we cannot but feel strong sympathy and indignation. [...] Burns is not only Scotland's extraordinary peasant poet, but also Scotland's greatest people's poet.<sup>272</sup>

Yuan reiterated Burns's humble birth as a peasant from the outset and ultimately characterized him as a 'people's poet', a designation that aligned well with the political climate in China at the time. Likewise, in the preface of his collected translations of Burns, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', Wang Zuoliang consistently highlighted Burns's lower birth, portraying him as 'an authentic poet of working people

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<sup>270</sup> Tao, p.17. Tao went on to add that in the class-theory framework of 1958, 'the people' did not refer to the whole nation, nor a group with innate ethnic characteristics. In terms of the class scale, the people specifically referred to the revolutionary class; from the economic perspective, the people the proletarians (the opposite of the bourgeoisie), and from the cultural scale, the people the opposite of the 'intellectual class'. Tao, p.29.

<sup>271</sup> Vid, 'The Reception of Robert Burns in Russia', p.161.

<sup>272</sup> Yuan Kejia, 'Robert Burns – Scotland Greatest Peasant Poet [Peng Si – su ge lan zui wei da de nong min shi ren]', in *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, Robert Burns, tr. Yuan Kejia (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 1959), pp.I-X(I). [Originally in Chinese]

themselves’.<sup>273</sup> This terminology underlined Burns’s close association with the working class and reinforced his alignment with the prevailing political ideologies of the era.

In addition to Burns’s origin, it was the ideological content within his works that led Burns to be highly canonized. As Bian Zhilin and others put it, ‘the ideological quality of foreign literary works is an important principle for whether to translate them or not’.<sup>274</sup> This criterion might be regarded as the primary or sole condition in the selection process. This ideological assessment and categorization followed the views of Soviet literary critics, as previously mentioned. Only the works considered positive, revolutionary and progressive were deemed suitable for translation. Yet what are the positive, revolutionary, progressive works? These categories were contingent upon the political standards of the time and included the pieces that praised revolutionary heroism and working people while critiquing the degeneration and corruption of the bourgeoisie.

Mao, in ‘Yanan Talks’ in 1942, asserted that ‘the life reflected in literary works may and should be more elevated, more intensified, more concentrated, more typical and more idealized than common real life, thereby making it more universal. Revolutionary literature should present various characters inspired by real life to help the masses propel history forward’.<sup>275</sup> This signifies a departure from the traditional function of literature that faithfully mirrors reality or provides an objective representation of it. Instead, literature is tasked with creating a more heightened, potent, concentrated and idealized portrayal of life, aligned closely with the revolutionary ideals and aspirations of the time. This sentiment was further developed by Mao at the Chengdu Conference in 1958, where he proposed, ‘The content of Chinese poetry [...] should be the unity of the opposition between realism and romanticism. It is unable to write poems if too realistic’.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘The Achievements of Robert Burns [Peng Si de cheng jiu]’, in *Robert Burns: Selected Poems*, Robert Burns, tr. Wang Zuoliang (Beijing: The People’s Literature Publishing House, 1959). pp.1-23(1). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>274</sup> Bian Zhilin, Ye Shuifu, Yuan Kejia and Chen Sheng, ‘On Ten Years of Foreign Literary Translation and Research’, p.42.

<sup>275</sup> Mao Zedong, ‘Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art’, p.64.

<sup>276</sup> Mao Zedong, ‘The Speech Outline at Chengdu Conference [zai cheng du hui yi shang de jiang hua ti gang]’, in *Mao Zdedong’s Essays Since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China [jian guo yi lai Mao Zedong wen gao]*, Vol. VII, ed. Literature Research Office of the CPC Central Committee (Beijing: Literature Publishing House of the CPC,1987), p.124. [Originally in Chinese]

The NFM promoted Mao's literary policy 'Two Combinations', marking a significant shift in China's literary approach, from the wholesale acceptance of the Soviet Union's doctrine 'socialist realism' to Mao's 'Two Combinations'.<sup>277</sup> Mao's 'Two Combinations' became the guiding principle for Anglo-American poetry translation during the seventeen years.<sup>278</sup> Yet it was a bit notable emphasis on revolutionary romanticism, placing significant importance on describing reality in the context of the historical development of the revolution.<sup>279</sup> In poetry, this principle was embodied that it required the text to have the dialectical unity between ideal and reality, combining the truthful description of reality with rich imagination and bold exaggeration, celebrating the progressive revolutionary figures and things, while attacking various negative obstacles to social progress. In effect, in the real literary works, Chinese authors, with a blind optimism by an overexaggerated heroic spirit, often approached revolutionary romanticism with excessive zeal, as Tao Dongfeng criticized that the revolutionary romanticism was an 'unrealistic fantasy and uncontrollable impulse'.<sup>280</sup>

In their prefaces and criticisms, scholars warmly affirmed the positive style and the 'Two Combinations' evident in Burns's works. In the synopses of Yuan Kejia's *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, it was described,

His poems strongly attacked the aristocracy, the landlord class and the bourgeoisie, and, deeply exposed and condemning the church. His verses provided vivid portrayals of lives, customs, beliefs and feelings of Scottish peasants. He offered praise for the French Revolution and celebrated the heroic actions of the Scottish people in their resistance against foreign invaders.<sup>281</sup>

Likewise, Wang Zuoliang stated,

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<sup>277</sup> Wu Yun, *Political Passion and Metaphor: A Study on the Translation of Anglo-American Poetry in China from 1949 to 1966*, p.20.

<sup>278</sup> Wu Yun, p.79.

<sup>279</sup> Jin Cien, *Studies on Folksongs in the Great Leap Forward [da yue jin zhong de min ge yan jiu]*, Doctoral Thesis, Capital Normal University, 2008, p.81. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>280</sup> Tao Dongfeng, p.19.

<sup>281</sup> 'The Synopses', in *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, Robert Burns, tr. Yuan Kejia (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1959). No page numbers in the original text.

Burns remained dedicated to the revolutionary ideals. The poem, ‘A Man’s A Man for a’ that’, [...] demonstrated the poet’s democratic thoughts, mockery of the ruling class and the firm faith in the future world. [...] And all these themes were effectively conveyed through what a vivid, robust, and lively language, and what a complete form (with a mixture of substance and fiction, rising to a climax)! [...] In particular, the repetition of ‘a man’s a man for a’ that’ served to reinforce the optimistic and bold tone of the fearless revolutionary spirit!<sup>282</sup>

The translators adeptly directed the reader to grasp and comprehend the essence of Burns’s pieces in accordance with Mao’s ‘Two Combinations’ guiding the selecting of translated works. The translators stressed both the spirits of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism in Burns’s works. In their comments, Burns’s attacking of the rich, the church and the ruling class was the facet of revolutionary realism while Burns’s celebration for working people was the best song for revolutionary romanticism. Simultaneously, in their translations were tailored to fulfil their intended purpose while adhering closely to the political aesthetics and context of the era, which this chapter will examine later.

Burns’s literary works possessed a distinctive quality that set them apart. Despite belonging to the realm of Anglo-American literature, which was marginalized by China’s ideological authority during the seventeen years, Burns’s compositions exhibited unique characteristics that resonated from his peasant background and his poetic style of revolutionary romanticism. The pivotal aspect of Burns’s works was his compilation and incorporation of traditional Scottish folksongs and ballads, a feature that coincided seamlessly with the ongoing NFM in China at the time. Burns’s translations were perceived as offering an external inspiration and nourishment for the creation of Chinese new poetry. The presence of folk songs and ballads within Burns’s works was a point that has been repeatedly stressed by Chinese scholars. In the preface of *Robert Burns: Selected Poems*, ‘Achievements of Robert Burns’, Wang Zuoliang accounted,

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<sup>282</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘The Great Scottish People’s Poet Robert Burns [wei da de su ge lan ren min shi ren Peng Si]’, *World Literature*, 01 (1959), pp.144-52(146). [Originally in Chinese]

Burns's poems were not the poems of literati, or even 'written' to some extent, but were compiled and rewritten from folk songs that had long been sung orally. [...] In respect to folksongs, Burns used the forms of folksongs to delineate his contemporary life and people's alive thoughts and feelings. [...] Folksongs have always been existing, but at this time was suddenly 'discovered' by people. In Scotland, [...] the folksong was arisen in the first half of the eighteenth century, reflecting the deep hatred of the peasants, who were exploited and oppressed, to the civilization that the bourgeoisie boasted during the brutal process of capitalist industrialization. [...] It expressed the bankruptcy of the literati poetry that served the ruling class at that time and the people's desire for a new poetry. [...] In Scotland, being slowly capitalist development, the basis of folksong was in deep rooted and destroyed less. Along with a result of politically ethnic oppression, the people intensely hated the English poems and songs by the literati serving the ruling class. Now a peasant poet came, so the Scottish literature glowed out an extraordinary splendour at that time English literature did not have, producing a new poetry which was rooted in the working people, absorbed from the wisdom and enthusiasm of countless generations of the masses, and expressed the thoughts and feelings of the contemporary working people.<sup>283</sup>

In Wang's ideological commentary, translator demonstrates a meticulous approach to the subject matter. Wang elaborated how Burns's utilized Scottish folk songs and ballads for political ends, highlighting Burns's initial inspiration drawn from the creations by ordinary people and his ultimate contribution to 'a new poetry' for his folk people. This parallel was precisely in line with Mao's vision for the NFM, which aimed to harness resources from people, incorporate their folk songs, and cultivate China's own distinct new poetry. Through this political interpretation, Burns was effectively assumed as the role of a representative 'people's poet'.

Furthermore, it is important to mention the interpretation of Burns's love poetry within the highly politicized social environment and the prevalent political discourse during the course of the seventeen years. This aspect significantly influenced the reception of Burns's works in translations and studies during this era. In contrast to the 1920s, when Burns was perceived primarily as a love poet due to the numerous translations of his 'A red red Rose', his love poetry in the seventeen-year period was viewed through a wholly political lens. The universal appeal of Burns's love poetry was

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<sup>283</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', pp.15-6.



once regarded as a reflection of the Chinese readers’ desire for freedom of choice in marriage, love and the expression of human nature. However, during the seventeen years, Burns’s love poetry was highlighted from an entirely political perspective.

In the seventeen years, a particular revolutionary ideology dominated, prioritizing class struggle over all other considerations. The discourse of class struggle at the time rigidly suppressed expressions of human affection, particularly the romantic love between men and women. Compared with the national and revolutionary causes of class struggle, the portrayal of individualized romantic love was largely overlooked and ruthlessly criticized. In literary translation, the primary focus was on source texts that ‘revealed the reactionary social system, reflected the reality of the underclass society, eulogize the labouring people and heroes, and advocated for freedom’.<sup>284</sup> The narrative of revolution was highlighted, while the theme of love became a sensitive minefield in the translation of poetry. The romantic love between men and a women was often considered a matter of personal affair. However, if it failed to align with the collective interests or ideologies of a social class or nation, it might be deemed as detrimental bourgeois influence. Consequently, such a description of love was marginalized and scrutinized within revolutionary rhetoric, subject to critique and exclusion from national political discourse.

For instance, Fang Ping (1921-2008) altered the title of his translation of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Sonnets from the Portuguese* into *Lyrical Sonnets* in 1955, for he was ‘scared to express love publicly’.<sup>285</sup> Despite the popularity of the collection, Fang felt increasing pressure and eventually asked the publisher to cease publishing it after the fourth edition was prepared in 1958.<sup>286</sup> Love was viewed with suspicion if it could not be connected with the revolutionary cause and often seen as an expression of decadent bourgeois emotions. For instance, *Gone with the Wind* was criticized to be ‘reactionary

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<sup>284</sup> Wu Yun, ‘Literature Manipulation: ‘A Special Era of Literary Translation – A Review of the Translation of Anglo-American Love Poetry During the Seventeen Years [wen xue yi jie de yi ge te shu shi dai – shi qi nian jian ying mei ai qing shi ge yi jie ping shu]’, *Academic Forum*, 9 (2011), pp.69-73(70). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>285</sup> Fang Ping, *on European and American Literature Studies [ou mei wen xue yan jiu shi lun]*, (Shanghai: Fudan Press, 2005), p.101. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>286</sup> Fang Ping, ‘Postscript’, in *Sonnets from the Portuguese of Mrs. Browning*, Elizabeth Barret Browning, tr. Fang Ping (Chengdu: Sichuan People’s Publishing House, 1982). No page numbers. [Originally in Chinese]

and depraved'.<sup>287</sup> A not dissimilar view can be found in the Anglosphere today. In a review of 'Don Juan', Fang Yu commented that 'in the poem, even when it is written related to love, it mercilessly exposes the sexual and shameless love life of the European upper class at the time'.<sup>288</sup> The bourgeois narration of love was considered depraved for 'bourgeois views of love are essentially individualistic'.<sup>289</sup>

On the other hand, there was a fervent advocacy for celebrating the discourse of love within the working class and among the proletariat.<sup>290</sup> The romantic compositions of Burns, specifically, garnered substantial acclaim and endorsement for their portrayal of love within the context of commoners, as articulated by Wang Zuoliang in his preface of the translation,

Burns is a poet who is adept at portraying the love and friendship of working people; Various facets of love were explored, ranging from the warm and affectionate singing in 'A red red Rose', [...] to the sombre and mournful lament in 'Highland Mary'. Burns's love poetry encompassed not only the passion of youth (which anyone is able to depict), but also the enduring affection of mature couples as depicted in 'John Anderson, my Jo'(which is not easy to delineate). Their love as portrayed as fresh, vibrant and deep, reflecting the genuine love of the working class. In contrast, how did the literati poetry of the time describe love? Coy men and women, pretending to be the idyllic shepherd boys and girls with archaic names, chased each other in the lounge rooms, in the guise of the idealized pastoral settings in Latin poetry. Despite the elegant façade, it could not disguise the fact that their love was only a transaction in nature! By contrast, we deem that Burns's love poetry is more noble and healthy. As a peasant, Burns embodied the healthy attitude towards love that the working people had always held.<sup>291</sup>

In contrast to the coquettish love often associated with the bourgeois, Burns's depiction of love of labouring people is seen as natural, 'noble' and 'healthy'. Within the realm of

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<sup>287</sup> Bian Zhilin, Ye Shuifu, Yuan Kejia and Chen Shen, p.53.

<sup>288</sup> Fang Yu, 'Don Juan [Tang Huang]', *Poetry*, 03 (1957), pp.98-100(100). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>289</sup> Bian Zhilin, Ye Shuifu, Yuan Kejia, Chen Shen, p. 65.

<sup>290</sup> Wu Yun, *Political Passion and Metaphor: A Study on the Translation of Anglo-American Poetry in China from 1949 to 1966*, p.94.

<sup>291</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', pp.16-7.

love poetry, the emphasis was on reflecting the affinity to the common people, imbuing their love with revolutionary significance. Romantic love was deemed virtuous only when it intertwined with the revolutionary halo, and it became politically expedient to engage in relationships associated with the working class and revolutionary causes. In the context of class consciousness, the ethical dimensions of love were reinterpreted to be political ethics by translators. The inherent yearning, pursuit and praise for love of the labouring people had been diluted and avoided as much as possible but moved into eulogizing of political ideology. Romantic love, attributed to bourgeois origins, had been marginalized and denied.

Likewise, in the milestone of Burns’s studies, Yuan Kejia’s ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’ in 1959, Yuan mentioned the fighting spirit in Burns’s love pieces as means of resistance and voicing their grievances against the ruling class, making his love works have ‘discernible tendentiousness and fightingness’.<sup>292</sup> Yuan took the piece, ‘To daunt me’, as an example, arguing that ‘it was a good description of a countryside girl’s determination against the capitalist marriage system’.<sup>293</sup> Yuan offered Burns’s versions of ‘To daunt me’ and the old version of *Motherwell Collection*, which was an approach not previously seen in Burns’s studies. Throughout the history and across nations, it has not been uncommon for a wealthy older man seeking marriage with a young woman, a phenomenon also observed in China.

Only the love emanating from the working class could be heralded as a potent catalyst and weapon for the revolutionary fervour, igniting people’s fighting spirit to participate in the construction of socialism and create a new era. Burns’s love poems also perfectly accord with Mao’s literary policy of the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism at this stage. In the eyes of translators, Burns’s love pieces, rooting in the daily lives and scenes of Scottish labourers, as authentic representations of the vulgar and natural expression of love of Scottish people, which was the healthy and natural view of love of the working people needed by the socialist new China. Through translators’ political framing of Burns’s love poetry, despite the overall rejection of Western love poetry during this era, Burns’s love poetry was not only permitted but rather encouraged to be translated and compiled in their collections of Wang Zuoliang and Yuan Kejia. This fortuitous circumstance provided an exceptional opportunity for the

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<sup>292</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’, pp.45-6.

<sup>293</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’, p.46.

translation and dissemination of Burns's works, noteworthy given the prevailing dominance of revolutionary political discourse at the time. It might be said that the CCP was rather puritanical, and Burns is anything but—also many of these poems, including the violation of the Queen in the *Merry Muses of Caledonia*, were not published.

In respect to the case study of Burns's translation, the chapter will focus on Yuan Kejia's rendition in 1959. Wang Zuoliang's translations and the comparison of different periods of renditions will be elaborated in detail later in chapter four. In total, eighty-nine poems and songs of Burns were compiled in Yuan's collection of 1959, while thirty-seven in Wang's of 1959. In relation to the editions, he adopted for his translation, Yuan elaborated,

The anthology was translated from more than two editions. Most of the works were translated from *Robert Burns: Selected Poems and Songs* in the Oxford World's Classics series. Some poems are from the four-volume *The Poetry of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh edition) compiled by W. E. Henley and T. F. Henderson and a one-volume Cambridge edition, and a few are from the *Burns: Poems* of the Everyman's Library pocket poets Series. It was intended to be revised in full according to the Edinburgh edition, yet as the translation was ready to be printed when I accessed the edition, therefore it was not appropriate to make any further changes. Future reprints will be updated to align with the Edinburgh edition for consistency. Most of the annotations in the collection refer to the Edinburgh edition.<sup>294</sup>

Yuan's collection was an extensive compilation of Burns's works up to 195 yet he did not specify the editions he used as sources for his translations. Yuan's collection, being an extensive compilation of Burns's works up to 195, is significant for it reflects a substantial effort to bring Burns's poetry to a wider audience. However, the lack of specification regarding the editions used as sources for his translations presents a critical issue. Without this information, it becomes challenging to assess the accuracy and faithfulness of Yuan's translations to the original texts. This omission could lead to variations in interpretation and understanding of Burns's work, potentially affecting the reception and scholarly analysis of Burns in the context of Yuan's translations.

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<sup>294</sup> Yuan Kejia, 'Postscript', 1959, p.196.

The sequences of the poems and songs in Yuan’s collection were not organized chronologically based on their writing dates. Yuan stated,

this collection, according to the thematic styles as outlined in the prologue, generally was divided into four categories in order: political poems of freedom and equality, poems of rural life, satirical pieces criticizing the ruling class and church, and lyrics reflecting peasants’ views of love.<sup>295</sup>

During this ideological period, although Yuan seemingly had the autonomy to select the resources, his choices were subtly guided by an underlying influence - ideology. Notably, this arrangement was shaped by the ideological currents of the time. Despite celebrating the love of the working people, love poetry was not considered as the most potent instruments for promoting political ideology or embodying revolutionary fervour with fighting spirits. The political compositions stressing themes of freedom and equality were strategically positioned at the forefront of the collection, while Burns’s love pieces were relegated to the end. This organizational framework, driven by ideological considerations, aimed to reinforce the primacy of revolutionary principles and fulfil the solemn mission of literary translation.

The initial placement of the poems in the translation collection, ‘The Tree of Liberty’, ‘Ode [For General Washington’s Birthday]’ and ‘Scots Wha Hae’, was a deliberate arrangement made by the translator. The three pieces unequivocally espoused revolutionary ideals, fervently advocating for concepts of freedom and equality in terms of the ideology of the time. In this context, Yuan’s personal motivations and literary preferences took a backseat to external political considerations, which dictated the selection of sources. The translation process was thus driven not solely by the translator’s intentions or preferences, but rather by the imperative to adhere to the external political factors, as Yuan Kejia and the other scholars put it,

It is not hard to identify the ideological ideas within contemporary foreign literary works, yet it is likely to require more effort when dealing with the works of the past. From the

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<sup>295</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Postscript’, 1959, p.197.

perspectives of the present, we look at these works, prioritizing the principle of 'political standard comes first', to analysis the thought tendency, which becomes our urgent task.<sup>296</sup>

Adapting the centuries-old works of an eighteenth-century poet like Burns to resonate with the requirements of contemporary Chinese ideology posed a considerable challenge for translators. Prioritizing sources that conformed to the dominant ideolog emerged as the principal criterion for source selection within Yuan's collection. Given this context, the arrangement in Yuan's translation becomes comprehensible and justified.

It is noteworthy that Yuan's deliberate selection to position 'The Tree of Liberty' as the opening piece in his translation likely stemmed from its overtly political intention and positive tonality. Yet, the attribution of 'The Tree of Liberty' to Burns remains contested, with some scholars arguing Alexander Geddes as the potential author.<sup>297</sup> In James Kinsley's influential scholarly work, *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* (1968), the piece was categorized under 'Dubia',<sup>298</sup> indicating its uncertain authorship. Interestingly, despite its uncertainty, Soviet scholars who wrote monographs on the history of Anglo-American literature in the 1950s and whose works were translated into China did not question Burns's authorship of the piece. They claimed that 'The Tree of Liberty' was indeed authored by Burns and stressed its themes of faith in the future of humanity, equality, and justice, particularly in the context of the French Revolution.

For instance, Anikst stated, 'Burns conveys his faith in the glorious future of human being, envisioning a time when the principles of great equality and justice will triumph. [...] The same ideal is revealed in Burns's work dedicated to the French revolution, 'The Tree of Liberty''.<sup>299</sup> Artamonov likewise asserted Burns's authorship of 'The Tree of Liberty', describing it as a poem dedicated to the French Revolution and

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<sup>296</sup> Bian Zhilin, Ye Shuifu, Yuan Kejia and Chen Shen, p. 43.

<sup>297</sup> For contrasting arguments on the attribution, see *The Canongate Burns*, ed. Andrew Noble and Patrick Scott Hogg (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2003), pp. 847-851, Gerard Carruthers and Norman R. Paton, 'Did Robert Burns Write 'The Tree of Liberty?''', in *Fickle Man: Robert Burns in the 21st Century*, ed. Johnny Rodger and Gerard Carruthers (Dingwall: Sandstone Press, 2009), pp. 242-256, and Corey E. Andrews, 'Radical Attribution: Robert Burns and 'The Liberty Tree'', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 2015, Vol. 4, Iss.1, pp.174-90.

<sup>298</sup> Kinsley, I, p.xxix.

<sup>299</sup> Anikst, p.265-6.

published forty years after Burns’s death. Artamonov highlighted that Burns conveyed the hope that ‘one day the leaves of the liberty tree would fall on Britain’,<sup>300</sup> symbolizing the influence of the French Revolution on Britain. Certainly, the left wing commentators in Anglosphere academia such as Thomas Crawford can tend to be more sympathetic in attributing the piece to Burns as well. Once again, ideology is in play.

In the context of Chinese translation, ‘The Tree of Liberty’ was initially translated in *My Heart* by Yuan Shuipai in 1944 as mentioned in the previous chapter. Remarkably, this piece retained its original attribution without a modification or reference for its authorship when it was republished in 1947, 1950, 1951 and 1959. In 1959, Chinese translators tacitly accepted Burns’s authorship of ‘The Tree of Liberty’ for several factors: the endorsement of Burns’s authorship by Soviet scholars, the piece’s inclusion in previous selections by Yuan Shuipai, the cautious stance of Anglo-American bourgeois scholars, and the fighting spirit against the English invaders. As Yuan Kejia pointed out in the preface of his translation,

The French Revolution of 1789 was a huge event that shook Europe in the eighteenth century. Burns sang it passionately as a revolutionary. The renowned ‘The Tree of Liberty’ is a direct tribute to the French Revolution. The poet assumed that with this tree, the tree of France, there are liberty, equality, fraternity and peace in the world. He plainly pointed out that he could not find such a tree in England and prayed that ‘auld England may sure plant this far-famed tree’.<sup>301</sup>

In Yuan’s translation, he introduced Roman numerals before each stanza, a departure from the original formatting. This addition serves to impart a sense of formality and facilitates the reader’s identification of individual stanzas. Yuan incorporated seven exclamation points not present in the original, contributing to a more provocative and enthusiastic tone in his translation. Through these alterations in formatting and punctuation, the overall mood of the translation takes on a positive and spirited quality, resonant revolutionary romanticism and spirit of upward struggle characteristic of the ideology needed at the time. Inevitably, Yuan’s translation reflects a deliberate selection

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<sup>300</sup> Artamonov, pp.196-7.

<sup>301</sup> Yuan Kejia, 1959, pp. III-IV.

of phrases and diction with the ideological imperatives. As an example, the stanza seven underwent the changes that tailored its content to fit the ideological context.

For Freedom, standing by the tree,  
[...]  
By her inspired, the new-born race,  
Soon drew the avenging steel, man;  
The hirelings ran—her foes gied chase,  
And banged the despot weel, man.<sup>302</sup>

美丽的自由神站在大树之旁	<i>Beautiful god of freedom</i> <sup>303</sup> standing by the big tree
[...]	[...]
由于她的鼓舞，新生的民族	For her inspiration, the new-born <i>nation</i>
马上拔出了复仇之剑啊，	Quickly drew the <i>avenging sword</i> ,
那些走狗逃了——她的敌人追逐，	The <i>running dogs</i> ran—her foes chased,
暴君被痛打了一顿啊。 <sup>304</sup>	And the despot’s <i>well beaten up</i> .

Yuan Kejia endeavoured to intensify the contrast in his translation, evident from the highlighted italics. He added to augment the contrast by introducing the descriptor ‘beautiful’ before ‘freedom’, substituting ‘hirelings’ with ‘running dogs’, ‘avenging steel’ with ‘avenging sword’, and replacing ‘race’ with ‘nation’, imbuing his translation with a heightened sense of tension.

Likewise, in the opening stanza of ‘Ode [For General Washington’s Birthday]’, Yuan did alternations as follows:

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<sup>302</sup> Kinsley, No. 625, pp.910-13(912).

<sup>303</sup> Italics are given by the author for emphasis.

<sup>304</sup> Yuan Kejia, 1959, p.3–4.



No Spartan tube, no Attic shell,  
No lyre Eolian I awake,  
‘Tis Liberty’s bold note I swell,  
Thy harp, Columbia, let me take,  
See gathering thousands, while I sing,  
A broken chain, exulting, bring,  
And dash it in a tyrant’s face!  
And dare him to his very beard,  
And tell him, he no more is feared,  
No more the Despot of Columbia’s race,  
A tyrant’s proudest insults braved,  
They shout, a People freed! They hail an Empire saved.<sup>305</sup>

我吹的不是斯巴达的军笛，	I played not Spartan military fife,
不是雅典的海螺，	No Athens’ seashell,
我弹的也不是风吹自鸣琴。	No Eolian lyre.
我拨响的是自由神的英勇乐曲，	I played the heroic tune of the god of liberty
哥伦比亚，让我弹奏你的竖琴！	Columbia, let me play your harp!
你瞧，我一唱，千万人民拥护，	See, I sing, <i>thousands of people</i> gathering,
带来一根打断的锁链，兴高采烈，	Bring a broken chain, exulting,
把它掷在暴君的面前，	Throw it before tyrant’s face!
当着他的面向他挑战，	Challenge him in his face,
告诉他人民已不再怕他，	Tell him people is not feared of him anymore,
他已不再是哥伦比亚人民的暴君	He is not anymore the despot of Columbia’s people!
暴君最蛮横的侮辱遭到了反击，	A tyrant’s rudest insults meet a counterattack,

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<sup>305</sup> Kinsley, No. 425, pp.732–4 (732).

他们高呼：一个民族得到了自由！他们 They shout: a nation got freedom! They  
欢呼一个大国得到了拯救！<sup>306</sup> Hail a great nation saved!

The italicized portions within the translation of this stanza reveal the deliberate alterations and additions made by the translator to align with the ideological imperatives of the time. Notably, the two lines, 'And dare him to his very beard, / And tell him, he is no more is feared' were translated as 'Tell him people are not feared of him anymore', omitting 'And dare him to his very beard' and inserting the term 'people' to underscore the collective resistance against tyranny. This intentional strengthening of the revolutionary action of the populace is throughout the stanza. The term 'people' is added three times in this stanza, stressing their role and agency in the struggle. For instance, the line 'See gathering thousands, while I sing' becomes 'See, I sing, thousands of people gathering', and 'No more the Despot of Columbia's race' into 'He is not anymore the despot of Columbia's people!'. In the final line of the stanza, Yuan replaced the word 'People' by a broader term, 'nation' and 'an Empire' by 'a great nation' as well. Through these adaptations, the translation effectively conveys the heightened spirit of the people's oppressive rule and their fervent cry for freedom, elevating the political vibe of the piece.

In the translation of 'Scots Wha Hae' or 'Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn', the title, given its potential complexity and lack of historical context regarding the eighteenth-century Scotland, was rendered by Yuan as 'Scottish People', ensuring accessibility and comprehension for Chinese audience. In the translation of 'Wha Scot Hae', Yuan implemented ideological alternations as well. For instance, in the final stanza,

Lay the proud Usurpers low!

Tyrants fall in every foe!

**LIBERTY's** in every blow!

Let us Do—**OR DIE!** ! !<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Yuan Kejia, 1959, p.6.

<sup>307</sup> Kinsley, No. 425, pp.707-8(708).

打倒骄傲的窃国大盗！	Beat the proud usurpers down!
一个敌人死，十个暴君倒！	One foe dies, ten tyrants fall!
每一次攻击都带来自由！	Every fighting brings liberty!
我们干吧，或者死掉！ <sup>308</sup>	We do, or die!

In the first line, ‘lay low’ was translated as ‘beat down’ (打倒 *dadao*) which was a common phrase from the slogans of the time, carrying a strong ideological connotation of struggle and fighting. This phrase was able to be applied to various class enemies and reactionaries, such as the bourgeoisie, landlords, upper class and exploiting classes, even extended to political parties, the state and doctrines, as seen in a quite popular political slogan at the time like ‘Beat down Imperialism!’. This translation demonstrated people’s awe-inspiring revolutionary spirit when dealing with reactionaries, conveying an intense and indignant tone compared to ‘lay low’ in the original. In the second line, the translator expresses the author’s ideological translation more explicitly. By adding the quantifiers ‘one’ and ‘ten’, Yuan stressed the result of the action, ‘beat down’. Likewise, ‘fighting’ described a stronger emotional intensity than ‘blow’ in the original, highlighting the merciless revolutionary fighting spirit against the reactionaries. Overall, Yuan’s translation imbues the spirit of revolutionary struggle with great vigour and energy.

The tendency to translate Burns using phrases that echoed the discourse of the CCP propaganda was continued by Wang Zuoliang. He included ‘Why Should We Idly Waste Our Prime’ in his 1959 selection another text of disputed authorship, following ‘For a That And a’ That’ and ‘Wha Scots Hae’. Wang offered a footnote to the poem, observing that ‘this song has different titles, in some of which the first line is used, and sometimes ‘Revolution Song’ or ‘Revolution Lyric’ is adopted’<sup>309</sup>. In the lines two and three in the first stanza,

Come, rouze to arms, ‘tis now the time

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<sup>308</sup> Yuan Kejia, 1959, p.11.

<sup>309</sup> Wang Zuoliang, *Robert Burns: Selected Poems*, 1959, p.5.

To punish past transgressions.<sup>310</sup>

起来! 到了战斗的时候,

Get up! Time for fighting,

清算过去的一切冤仇!<sup>311</sup>

To liquidate all the past rancour!

‘Come, rouse to arms’ is translated as 起来 (qi lai ‘get up’), the opening phrase of the PRC’s national anthem. Wang also added specific expressions such as 战斗(zhan dou ‘fighting’), and rendered ‘punish’ and ‘transgressions’ as ‘liquidate’ and ‘rancour’, expressions which were used commonly as the typical discourse for class fighting at the time.

At the same time, in the Soviet Union, ‘the Soviet father of Robert Burns’<sup>312</sup> Marshak was doctoring in his translation for the ideological aim. Marshak’s translation attempted to propagate and advance the primary values of the official communist doctrine, including ‘optimism, patriotism, positivism de-personalization and the importance of proletarian revolution’ by ideological adaptations.<sup>313</sup> For instance, ‘For a’ that and a’ that’ was translated as ‘Honest Poverty’. And in the stanza two of this piece, ‘Their tinsel show, and a’ that;/ The honest man, though e’er sae poor, / Is king o’ men for a’ that. —’, was strongly ideologically rendered as ‘Don’t judge by clothes./ Whol feed on honest labor- / I’ll call them nobility’.<sup>314</sup>

Yuan did not tamper with the original text to a great extent. Undoubtedly, he made some alternations. Compared with Yuan Shuipai’s earlier translation in 1944, Yuan Kejia’s version was closer to the original texts and exhibited fewer adaptations. Nonetheless, due to the ideological need, Yuan Kejia’s translation tended to incorporate words and phrases preferred by the ideology at that time, such as ‘beat down’, ‘people’,

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<sup>310</sup> Patrick Scott, ‘The Early History of ‘Why Should We Idly Waste Our Prime’’, *Burns Chronicle* 2019, pp.38-49(41).

<sup>311</sup> Wang Zuoliang, *Robert Burns: Selected Poems*, 1959, p.5.

<sup>312</sup> Vid, 2011, p.121.

<sup>313</sup> Vid, 2011, p.122.

<sup>314</sup> Yang De-you, ‘On Marshak’s Russian Translation of Robert Burns’, *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Vol.22, Iss.1 (1987), pp.10-29(23).

‘nation’, ‘fight(ing)’ and others. In general, Yuan Kejia’s ideological translation fulfilled the authorities’ expectations of literary translation.

In terms of registers in the translation, like his predecessors, Yuan Kejia continued the tradition of employing vernacular Chinese, a practice that had been promoted since the MFM in 1919. By 1959, the vernacular Chinese had been widely endorsed for over forty decades. Yuan’s utilization of vernacular Chinese demonstrated a higher level of proficiency and refinement compared to earlier translators, reflecting the ongoing evolution of the Chinese language during the period. In the 1950s, the vernacular Chinese had transitioned into standard Mandarin, which referring to modern Chinese. The previous translators like Liang Shiqiu and Yuan Shuipai, in their Burns translation, employed the translation approach characterized by ‘European translationese’ in China which refers to a literal translation according to the wording, depiction, expression and words order without making the alterations in terms of the conventions of Chinese language. While Yuan Kejia’s translation exhibited a more natural, fluent and faithful rendering of the original.

Yet, Yuan did not differentiate between the various registers in his translation as the four registers discussed in detail in Thomas Crawford’s studies to Burns’s poems and songs.<sup>315</sup> Instead, Yuan followed the precedent set by previous translators by maintaining a consistent register throughout. Yuan opted the standard Mandarin without incorporating the variety of registers as seen in the original. And the overall tone of the translation lacked the humour and folksy style characteristic of the original, leaning instead towards a more formal written expression. Like the translation styles of the previous translators, Yuan’s rendition appeared rigid, less lively, and less convivial in comparison to the original.

As with translations of Burns, studies of the poet responded to the ideological requirements of the time. Wang Zuoliang, an influential Burns’s translator and scholar in China who will be discussed in detail later in chapter five, in his article ‘The Great Scottish People’s Poet Robert Burns’ (1959) and the preface of his works *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1959), ‘The Achievements of Robert Burns’, maintained the law of ‘measuring everything by political standards’<sup>316</sup> throughout his elaboration of Burns and

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<sup>315</sup> T. Crawford, *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs*, (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994).

<sup>316</sup> Zhang Longxi, p.37.

his works. Firstly, like Anikst, Wang highlighted Burns's humble birth of peasantry and continued to reiterate his 'affinity to the people'. Wang accounted, 'in the history of British literature, how many poets akin to Burns can be found? He is a genuine poet of the working people themselves',<sup>317</sup> and

the greatest feature of Burns's pieces is that he sees the world through the eyes of working people. [...] Burns is a poet of working people's own and formed an instructive contrast with 'The Lake Poets' born of the ruling class. If the attitude towards the French Revolution was the litmus test of the progress of British poets of the time, Burns was the first one to pass the test gloriously.<sup>318</sup>

In contrast to The Lake Poets, Burns, being a poet of working people, was defined by Wang as a progressive poet. In this sense, being a poet with affinity to working people emerges as a criterion of a progressive poet.

Furthermore, Wang employed Burns's identity as 'a poet of people' to scrutinize the spirit of fighting and revolution against the government, the church and the rich as depicted in Burns's works. Wang stated,

At that time, Scottish people were weighed down by the three mountains: the government, the church, and the gentry. Burns has opposed them all and he wielded poetry as his primary weapon in this struggle. The fact that people from all over the world are reading Burns's poetry with a great enthusiasm and excitement today indicates how sharp this weapon was, and how Burns gained his final victory by it.

Certainly, in any regions did not govern a proletarian dictatorship, the oppressors of people always are the state apparatus of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the multifaceted presence of the church and the privileged class comprising capitalists and landowners.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', 1959, p.1.

<sup>318</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Great Scottish People's Robert Burns [wei da de su ge lan shi ren Peng Si]', *Literary Review*, 01 (1959), pp.144-52(149, 146). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>319</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', p.2.

Wang argued that Burns, as a poet of the people, utilized his poetry as a tool to fight against what Wang referred to as ‘the three mountains’, ultimately leading to his success. Wang respectively examined how Burns reflected the fighting spirits towards the government, church and gentry in this article through his works. Wang cited ‘Scots Wha Hae’ to illustrate poet’s advocacy for liberty and defiance against the national oppression.<sup>320</sup> Likewise, in response to the church, Wang used the two lines of ‘Epistle to a Young Friend’, ‘The fear o’ hell’s a hangman’s whip, / To haud the wretch in order’<sup>321</sup> and the piece ‘Holy Willie’s Prayer’ to convey Burns’s attack on the church. Wang stated,

The Church’s most detrimental aspect is its ability to sustain its oppressive rule on behalf of the ruling class by using spiritual intimidation and indoctrination, particularly in societies where people have not yet gained access to modern scientific knowledge. From the perspective of the working class, these two lines reject the significance of all the religious poetry often warmly discussed by bourgeois scholars!<sup>322</sup>

In relation to Burns’s attacking the gentry and landlords, Wang examined the piece ‘The Twa Dogs. A Tale’ to demonstrate the revolutionary power within Burns’s works. Wang remarked,

Of Burns’s works against landlords, the most significant is the long piece ‘The Twa Dogs’. The piece deeply depicted the sharp contrasts of two country lives: the moral corruption of the gentry and the endless toil of the peasants. Everything is described in detail, but throughout the concrete details is the vivid feeling of class antagonism. [...] In some points, we can see that the poet conveys a wish of a reconciliation between the class struggle, yet the intensive feeling of class antagonism is its main point. [...] And the final conclusion is like a finishing touch that pours the power of the whole piece into one single line: ‘Rejoic’d they were na *men* but *dogs*’!<sup>323</sup>

It carries the bitterness of countless generations of working people, and all the sufferings brought about by the whole unreasonable social system.

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<sup>320</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘The Achievements of Robert Burns’, pp.3,4.

<sup>321</sup> Kinsley, No.105, p.250.

<sup>322</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘The Achievements of Robert Burns’, p.4.

<sup>323</sup> Kinsley, No.71. p.145.

What a poet Burns is !<sup>324</sup>

Finally, Burns's incorporation of Scottish dialect and folksong in his works is considered by Wang as a commendable attribute of his status as a poet of people. Wang contended that Burns's use of vernacular tradition served poetry to 'return to labouring people and deserved acclaiming',<sup>325</sup> while criticizing Burns's pieces written entirely in English as 'with not a great value', 'ordinary', 'somewhat artificial and full of abstract nouns, for English was only what he learned from books', and 'English poems were written for the literati and elite, mostly lacking the real sense of life'.<sup>326</sup> In this sense, language register is simply categorized by Wang as a configuration of class antagonism, with Scots dialects for labourers and English for ruling class and bourgeoisie. Furthermore, Wang stated,

He (Burns) took the only path he should have taken: to depict the lives of the working people in alive dialects that came with his mother's breast milk.

On the surface, it seems to be merely a simple shift in language, a matter of pure form. Yet in fact, it marked a significant milestone in the revival of poetry, bringing it back to the nutrition of its rich tradition of local dialect literature – and thus to bring poetry back to people, and it warrants considerable attention and discussion.<sup>327</sup>

Scottish poetry in English was criticized by Wang as 'empty and inanimate poetic practices'<sup>328</sup> but the works in Scots was the genuine tradition of Scottish literature.

The final aspect of Wang's ideological response to Burns's works is the love pieces in his poetry. As aforementioned in this chapter, the romantic love between men and women was ruthlessly scrutinized by the authorities, being seen as a degenerating life style of the bourgeoisie without the spirit of revolutionary fighting, not to mention to sing it in poems and songs. However, the love lyrics of Burns is highly acclaimed for

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<sup>324</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', 1959, pp.7,8.

<sup>325</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Great Scottish People's Robert Burns', 1959, p.148.

<sup>326</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Great Scottish People's Robert Burns', 1959, p.152.

<sup>327</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', 1959, p.14.

<sup>328</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'The Achievements of Robert Burns', 1959, p.14.



Burns is a poet who excels in portraying the camaraderie of working people. The variety of love, from the warm singing in ‘A red red Rose’ to the melancholy mourning in ‘Highland Mary’; From the passionate love of young people to the deep affection of the elderly couple in ‘John Anderson, my jo’. Freshness, vibrancy, and depth, these are the love of working people. [...] Burns’s love poetry is noble and healthy. Burns is of working people, and working people have always held a healthy attitude towards love.<sup>329</sup>

In the end of his article, Wang concluded,

We are amazed at Burns’s massive accomplishments. Burns was described by common bourgeois literary historians as nothing more than a ‘pre-romanticist’, and a countryside poet who wrote a few love pieces. They always adored literati poets like Wordsworth. There is a serious bourgeois bias inside, which needs us to remove. Burns is one of the greatest British poets, yet his significance has been greatly underestimated by bourgeois scholars. Only the people of our socialist country can proudly say that we are able to correctly understand the greatness and richness within Burns’s works. In our country where the harvest of folk songs was as abundant as grain, Burns’s pieces based on folksong would have gained innumerable genuine followers. Despite the fact that he was a Scottish poet born 200 years ago, for he came from the working people and was nourished by folklore and wrote brilliantly about the lives and feelings of the working people, he was much closer to us now than any other renowned poets in the history of British literature.<sup>330</sup>

As ‘the only poet of classic stature ever to emerge from the British peasant class’,<sup>331</sup> apparently, Burns was positioned higher above ‘the literati poet’, Wordsworth in terms of the ideology. Indeed, in the 1950s, Burns’s literary reputation had declined, and Burns was marginalized and ignored in Anglosphere academia until the 1990s, not simply because Burns’s humble origin of peasants as Wang simply asserted. Wang had a point though an ideological claim that only the socialist countries’ people can ‘correctly

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<sup>329</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘The Achievements of Robert Burns’, pp.16,17.

<sup>330</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘The Great Scottish People’s Robert Burns’, p.152.

<sup>331</sup> Carol McGuiirk, ‘Burns and Nostalgia’, in *Burns Now*, ed. Kenneth Simpson (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994), pp. 31-69 (33).

understand the greatness and richness of Burns's works'. It should be said that what Wang commented was to cater to the need of the political discourse of its time. In Mao's standard of Marxist class struggle,<sup>332</sup> the bourgeoisie is the enemy for the proletariat who constituted the majority in the PRC. Western countries are seen as enemies for being capitalists and imperialists while socialist nations were considered allies. This outlook resulted in the dismissal of Western critics as bourgeois scholars, thus undermining their credibility in literary criticism.

The principle of 'literature-as-the-slave-to-politics'<sup>333</sup> in Burns's studies did not operate in Wang Zuoliang merely, but also the other Burns scholars. Yang Zimin (1929-2008), in his 'Robert Burns – The Great People's Poet' (1959), remarked that Burns's love poems, 'never described the beauties of gentry, or delicate and pale feelings'. The heroines in Burns's love pieces were 'young, beautiful, healthy and unpretentious peasant girls'.<sup>334</sup> They did not / dared not mention that the fact that some of the heroines in Burns's love lyrics, like Clarinda, were not born into peasantry. This portrayal was intended to underscore the notion of 'affinity to the people' in Burns's works, which was a significant and compulsory ideological theme of the time.

Furthermore, when discussing the flaws of Burns's works, likewise, Wang reached an ideological conclusion as follows,

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<sup>332</sup> Mao stated that when he firstly accepted Marxism, 'I only refer to him as class struggle'. Mao Zedong, *On Rural Survey* (1941.9.13) [guan yu nong cun diao cha], in *The Collected Works of Mao Zedong* [mao ze dong wen ji], Vol. 2 (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1993), pp.378-9. [Originally in Chinese] As Wang Qisheng put it, 'Mao Zedong has always used the theory of class struggle to analyze the attitude of different classes towards the revolution, and then divided the enemy and the friend, and thought that the division of the enemy and the friend was the primary issue of the revolution. After the founding of the PRC, he insisted that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was the main contradiction in China'. Wang Qisheng, 'From 'Pan-classization' to 'De-classization': The Rise and Fall of Class Discourse in China [cong 'fan jie ji hua dao qu jie ji hua: jie ji hua yu zai zhong guo de xing shuai', *Research of Soviet Union*, 04 (2017), pp.31-40(35). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>333</sup> Zhang Longxi, p.37.

<sup>334</sup> Yang Ziming, 'Robert Burns – The Great People's Poet [Peng Si – wei da de ren ming shi ren]', *Poetry*, 05 (1959), pp.78-80(79). [Originally in Chinese]

The Scottish peasants in the late eighteenth century had a narrow vision. What they liked was a warm picture of a family sitting together around the fireplace in winter evenings, what they hated was the local clergies and landlords who had direct clashes with them, and they had only a general and rough demand for freedom and justice to the whole social system. Burns’s consciousness of politics was strong, yet it still did not go beyond this limitation. He was an enthusiastic man, but when he drunk too much, and he was unrestrained. All these left its marks in his works.<sup>335</sup>

Wang criticized Burns’s not having a thoroughly political consciousness against the ruling class from the perspective of ideological discourse. Additionally, Wang offered a moral evaluation in response to Burns’s being alcoholic, which was a typical political discourse to impose a figure, ‘a poet of people’, with the expectation of embodying an ideal role model for the populace, not allowing the poet to be expressed as genuine himself of humanity.

Likewise, Yang illustrated the flaws of Burns within the framework of political ideology:

Although his sympathy to the labourer’s miserable situation, hatred of upper-class indulgence and extravagance, the poet did not understand the social root of the imbalance between the rich and poor. And because of that, in many of his works, he revealed a negative and conservative outlook of an individual peasant on life, resulting in weakening the fighting spirit in some of his pieces.<sup>336</sup>

Yang’s views were of the same position as Wang’s from Mao’s political view of class struggle to see literary works as a way of fighting against the class enemy to judge Burns’s poetry.

Furthermore, Yuan Keja’s article, ‘Burns and Folksong’, arguably stands out as the most influential Burns’s criticism within the seventeen-year span, a significant milestone of Burns’s scholarship to the present day. For the first time, Yuan delved into the origin of Scottish folksong tradition and provided historical context for Burns’s era.

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<sup>335</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘The Achievement of Robert Burns’, 1959, pp.21-2.

<sup>336</sup> Yang Ziming, ‘Robert Burns – The Great People’s Poet’, p.79.

He extensively examined the themes and artistic characteristics in Burns's songs. Unlike the other Burns criticisms that were heavily infused with political discourse and somewhat deviated from the original, Yuan's critique was tinted with less intensive political colour. Certainly, it did not / was unable to entirely veer away from the ideological discourse of the period.

Yuan's ideological discussions in response to Burns's love poetry as mentioned earlier in this chapter, are noteworthy in their contribution to the overall Burns's ideological reception. In addition, in contrast to Marshak's ideological attempt to 'clean Burns's poetry of its Scottish coloration',<sup>337</sup> it is interesting to note that the Chinese translators have continually stressed Burns's Scottishness. Yuan Kejia, in his translation, as he stressed Burns's birth as a Scottish peasant in his preface and criticisms, intentionally Burns's Scottish identity. All the names of Scottish places and Scottish people were translated from the original with the footnotes or endnotes provided to help the reader understand these. This translation practices had been ongoing since Sun Yong, the influential translator of 'literature of ethnic minorities', as aforementioned in chapter two. Burns had been stressed as a Scottish national patriotic poet even before 1949. Interestingly, while the Soviet translators attempted to de-identify the Scottishness in Burns's works and transfer Burns into a Russian poet, Chinese translators continued to focus on Burns's Scottish nationality as a representative of 'literature of ethnic minorities', which can be traced back to Lu Xun's influential article, 'Mara Poets' (1908) mentioned in previous chapter one. For Lu Xun was highly canonized by the CPC as the 'founder of modern Chinese literature'<sup>338</sup> after the founding of the PRC, Lu's affirmation of Burns was partly impetuses for Burns's unprecedented peak as a 'great poet of Scottish people'<sup>339</sup> in 1959.

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<sup>337</sup> Natalia Vid, 'Political-Ideological Translations of Robert Burns' Poetry in the Soviet Union', *Anglo-American Studies*, 14 (2008), pp.343-51(350).

<sup>338</sup> Qian Liqun, *Thirty Years of China's Modern Literature [zhong guo xian dai wen xue san shi nian]* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2012), p.29. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>339</sup> See Wang Zuoliang, 'The Great Scottish people's Poet Robert Burns', pp.144-52; Yang Zimin, 'Robert Burns – The Great People's Poet [Peng Si – wei da de ren min shi ren]', *Poetry*, 05 (1959), pp.78-80; Fan Cunzhong, 'Scottish People's Poet Burns [su ge lan ren min shi ren Peng Si]', *Journal of Nanjing University*, 02 (1959). [All originally in Chinese]

If it might say that the politicized translation of Burns in the 1930s and 1940s was attributed to the translator’s individual intentions to inspire the fighting spirit of Chinese people for their personal patriotic passion in the context of ‘saving nation and saving people’ in the resistance of Japanese aggression, the ideological reception of Burns in the seventeen years was a national endeavour. Both Burns’s translations and studies in China were endowed a stronger political ideological tint. In the context of the ideological seventeen years, Chinese scholars were compelled to engage in political discourse on Burns, particularly through the lens of Mao’s doctrine of class struggle. This ideological interpretation played a pivotal role in labelling Burns as ‘a great poet of people’. This ideological perspective was permeated in the prefaces, postscripts of collections and criticisms in relation to Burns, guiding the reader to understand Burns and his works in a way that aligned with the requirements of ideology. The aspects of Burns’s private life that did not fit the mainstream ideological narrative, such as his numerous illegitimate children, mistresses and love of alcohol, were never mentioned, not to mention the translation of his numerous bawdy poems, for they were definitely not in line with his glorious image as ‘a great poet of the people’.

Despite the ideological tincture to Burns’s reception in the seventeen years, it is noteworthy that it made a significant improvement in both Burns’s translations and studies. Compared with Yuan Shuipai’s translation collection in the 1940s, the translations of this period were more natural and fluid, closer to the style and artistic essence of the original, demonstrating that Chinese translators have been building upon the work of their predecessors and were actively exploring approaches to translate Burns’s works more effectively. One of the ongoing challenges for Burns translators was how to properly and accurately convey the nuances of the Scottish dialects in the original.

During this period, there was a notable emergence of literary studies and criticisms focused on Burns’s works. Critics began to consciously delve into the historical context of eighteenth-century Scotland, providing detailed information in relation to the politics, religions, and historical events of that time. For instance, in ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’, Yuan Kejia extensively discussed eighteenth-century Scottish politics, religion, historical events like the Jacobitism, the issues of anglicization in Scotland’s lowlands.<sup>340</sup> These aspects were previously overlooked in Burns’s studies, which had mainly focused on

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<sup>340</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’, pp.40-1.

providing brief introductions to Burns's personal life without delving into the era in which he lived. This newfound attention to historical context greatly benefited Chinese readers, who often had limited knowledge of Scottish history and culture at the time. It helped them better understand and appreciate Burns and his works as well. However, due to the limitation of the time, Yuan Kejia's exploration remained primarily focused on examining the poetic style and the relationship between Burns and folk songs. More than thirty years later, Yuan reflected that his translation was 'associated with the reality needs of the domestic literary circles, instead of the research. Serving the realities of our country has become a feature of my research work and criticism'.<sup>341</sup> Regarding the NFM, Yuan's criticism provided a detailed elaboration on Burns's incorporation of folk songs and ballads, a feature of Burns's scholarship at the time. It deepened the understanding of Chinese readers in relation to Burns's pieces and made a lasting contributions to Burns's studies to the present day.

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<sup>341</sup> Yuan Kejia, *The Footprints of Half Century [ban ge shi ji de jiao yin]* (Beijing: The People's Literature Publishing House, 1994), p.4. [Originally in Chinese]

## 5 REVALUATION SINCE 1976

This chapter will demonstrate the trajectory of Burns reception in China from the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 to the present day. The course, referred to as a rephrase course by Chinese literary circles as well as the post-Cultural Revolution period, in the realm of the translation of Anglo-American literature, is divided by Sun Zhili into three possible sub-stages as ‘Thawing’ (1976–8), ‘Revival’ (1978–89) and ‘Flourishing’ (1990–2008).<sup>342</sup> In light of the development of Burns scholarship since 1976 as a part of the Anglo-American literary translation, drawing on Sun’s framework, I propose a slightly adjusted chronology for Burns’s reception, delineating it into three stages: ‘Thawing’ (1976–9), ‘Revival’ (1980–99) and ‘Flourishing’ (2000–now) based on analysis from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (hereafter CNKI). Therefore this chapter consists of three sections. The first part will elaborate Burns reception during the ‘Thawing’ period, characterized by a departure from the extreme ideology of the seventeen years while still retaining ideological undertones. The second part focuses on Burns’s reception during the ‘Revival’ period of the 1980s and 1990s, marked by China’s socio-economic reforms and a shift in focus from political ideology to Burns’s literary merits, particularly his lyrics and love poems for the scholars’ attention returning to human nature and humanity in the realm of literature. The final part explores the ‘Flourishing’ phase of Burns’s reception from 2000 onwards, highlighting a diversification of scholarly approaches and topics, indicative of a maturing and broadening interest in Burns’s works in China’s academia.

The upsurge of Burns’s translation and studies in 1959, spurred by the NFM, was short-lived, persisting only throughout that year. It came to an abrupt halt following Mao Zedong’s repudiation of the campaign at the Zhengzhou Conference in February 1959. Thereafter, there was a nearly two-decade interruption in Burns’s translations and studies due to the political climate of the era. It was not until an article by Xue Chengzhi (1907-

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<sup>342</sup> Sun Zhili, *The Translation of Anglo-American Literature in China: 1949-2008* [*zhong guo de ying mei wen xue fan yi: 1949-2008*] (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2009), p.192. [Originally in Chinese]

1988), ‘On a Doctored and Distorted Piece of Robert Burns’ published in 1978 (it will be elaborated on later in this chapter), symbolizing Burns’s return to scholars’ vision and Burns’s resurgence in scholarly discourse. Since the Anti-Rightist Campaign<sup>343</sup> in 1957, an increasingly extreme left political era had dawned on China. Particularly in the subsequent decade of Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, China’s literary translation came to its lowest ebb since the late Qing dynasty (1840-1911) when foreign literary works were first widely translated.<sup>344</sup>

During the decade, ‘the interference and control of politics, ideology, national regime and the party within translation work reached an extreme’.<sup>345</sup> The translation practices of Western literary works was denounced as ‘worshipping foreign affairs and fawning over foreign nations’ (chong yang mei wai) as well as ‘encouraging capitalism’. Many of Western literary classics, including those previously published, were seen as ‘poisonous weeds’ to be sealed up by bookstores and libraries.<sup>346</sup> Likewise, Burns’s translations and studies came to an entirely cease during this period. From 1966 to 1976, the overall translation and publication of Western literary works had fully halted, with only one publication in 1973.<sup>347</sup> The Cultural Revolution ended up with the downfall of the ‘Gang of Four’<sup>348</sup>, who were arrested in October 1976, approximately one month after Mao’s death. The subsequent period, known as ‘Post-Cultural Revolution period’,

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<sup>343</sup> Anti-Rightist Campaign refers to a large-scale mass political campaign launched by CCP in 1957 to purge alleged ‘Rightists’ across the nation. The leaders of CPC who believed that the rightists were rampant in their attacks. Mao initially set the number of rightists around 5,000, yet later it was greatly expanded, resulting in the arrest of approximate 550,000 rightists throughout China. A large number of intellectuals and members of democratic parties who spoke out were identified as rightists.

<sup>344</sup> Ma Shikui, ‘Literary Translation During the Cultural Revolution [wen ge shi qi de fan yi]’, *China’s Translation*, 05 (2003), pp.65-9(65). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>345</sup> Xie Tianzhen, ‘Particular Translation in Particular Times – On Literary Translation During the Cultural Revolution in Mainland China’, 2009, p.24.

<sup>346</sup> Ma Shikui, ‘Literary Translation During the Cultural Revolution’, p.65.

<sup>347</sup> The only Western literary works published during the decade of the Cultural Revolution is *The Selected Poems of Eugène Pottier* for Pottier is a proletarian poet, the author of ‘Internationale’.

<sup>348</sup> Gang of Four refers to the gang led by Wang Hongwen (1935-1992), Zhang Chunqiao (1919-2005), Jiang Qing (1914-1991) and Yao Wenyuan (1931-2005) who attempted to usurp the authority of the CPC during the course of Cultural Revolution. On 6th October 1976, Hua Guofeng (1921-2008) and Ye Jianying (1897-1986), on behalf of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, isolated and censored the Gang of Four in Beijing to smash the gang, which ended the decade of ‘Cultural Revolution’.



witnessed a gradual separation of literature from politics. In 1978, CPC issued the policy of internal reform and opening up to the external countries with the guiding principles, advocating for ‘emancipating our minds, seeking truth from facts, absorbing the strengths from foreign nations and making use of them’, which was presented within the field of foreign literary translation to encourage the exploration of the foreign cultural achievements to flourish China’s own culture.<sup>349</sup> From 1979 onwards, numerous scholarly articles discussing the relationship between literature and politics had been published in various periodicals,<sup>350</sup> questioning the proposition that ‘literature is subordinate to politics’ presented in the seventeen years, and arguing that the content of literature should not be conflated with political ideology.<sup>351</sup> Within the context of China’s policy of reform and opening-up, coupled with the appeal that literature should be separated from political influence, the stringent leftist ideology of the Cultural Revolution came to loosen its manipulation on literature in the late 1970s, the ‘Thawing’ period.

Likewise, the ideological tension in Burns studies as in 1959 came to loosen. By the late 1970s, although the policy of reform and opening-up had been issued as well as the emerging trend of ideological liberation, the ideological considerations still dominated modes of thinking and expression to some extent. Particularly within the sphere of translations and studies of Western literary works, the translators and publishers found themselves navigating a delicate balance, on one hand, they were eager to introduce foreign literary works, yet on the other hand, they had to ‘guard against the eyes of left-

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<sup>349</sup> Quoted, Ye Shuifu, ‘The Translation of Foreign Literature During the Period of Reform and Opening up in Mainland China [da lu gai ge kai fang shi qi de wai guo wen xue fan yi gong zuo]’, *Chinese Translation*, 01 (1993), pp.2-5(2). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>350</sup> For instance, Zhu Guangqian, ‘Questioning the Relationship Between Superstructure and Ideology [shang ceng jian zhu he yi shi xing tai zhi jian guan xi de zhi yi]’, *Domestic Philosophical Trends*, 07 (1979), pp.4-5; Wang Ruowang, ‘Literature and Art and Politics Are Not Subordinate Relationship [wen yi yu zheng zhi bu shi cong shu guan xi]’, *Literature and Art Studies*, 01 (1980), pp.61-5; Cao Tinghua, ‘‘Literature and Art Are Subordinate to Politics’ Is An Unscientific Proposition [‘wen yi cong shu zheng zhi’ shi bu ke xue de ming ti]’, *Literature and Art Studies*, 03 (1980), pp.24-8; Liu Gangji, ‘On the Relationship Between Literature and Art and Politics [guan yu wen yi yu zheng zhi de guan xi]’, *Literary Review*, 02 (1980), pp.36-44, and a number of others.[Originally in Chinese]

<sup>351</sup> Liu Gangji, ‘On the Relationship Between Literature and Art and Politics [guan yu wen yi yu zheng zhi de guan xi]’, *Literary Review*, 02 (1980), pp.36-44(38). [Originally in Chinese]

leaning theorists and critics, akin to walking lightly on thin ice'.<sup>352</sup> Literary critics approached foreign literary works cautiously, in fear of fully abandoning Mao Zedong's guideline of 'class struggle as the key link' in literature.

In terms of Burns's criticism, although it retained as an ideological imprint, it was not as predominant as it was in 1959. Following the recognition as a great poet of people in 1959, despite a highly class-ideological definition, Burns returned quickly to the attention of Chinese scholars after the Cultural Revolution. In 1978, as aforementioned, Xue published 'On a Doctored and Distorted Piece of Robert Burns', Niu Yongmao 'A Scottish Peasant Poet Robert Burns', and in 1979 Huang Yuehua 'A Working People's Own Poet – In Honour of the 220th Anniversary of Burns's Birth'. However, no new translations were published during the 'Thawing' period, and the criticisms continued to rely primarily on Wang Zuoliang's 1959 translation as their main source of reference.

It is noteworthy that Xue Chengzhi's article, 'On a Doctored and Distorted Piece of Robert Burns' in 1978, examined the various editions of the piece, 'Lines on Stirling', marking the first translation of this piece. In comparing this piece in the two editions, one from *Robert Burns's Poems* published in 1900 by 'an American company who has specialized in printing classics' and the other one from Oxford World's Classics (Xue did not specify the year), Xue noted that, the line five and six in the version of 1900, 'Fallen indeed, and to the earth, / Whence groveling reptiles take their birth. —',<sup>353</sup> were deleted in the edition of Oxford World's Classics, and 'to honour lost' in line nine of the original was changed into 'no honour lost' as well. Xue argued that this poem would be 'commonplace if without the two lines having the metaphor of groveling reptiles' and attributed the alternation to the influence of the class struggle ideology. He remarked that 'some upper-class English, in order to retain their 'dignity' and 'reputation', would risk everything to unscrupulously tamper with Burns's originals'. Lastly Xue concluded that 'his intention of translating the piece and examining the various sources was to condemn the shameful practices of certain bourgeois publishers to doctor the original'.<sup>354</sup> It marks

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<sup>352</sup> Sun Huijun, Sun Zhiili, 'A Disturbance in the Translation of Foreign Literature in China After the Reform and Opening-up [gai ge kai fang hou wo guo wai guo wen xue fan yi jie de yi chang]', *China's Comparative Literature*, 02 (2006), pp.163-73 (168). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>353</sup> Kinsley, No. 166, p.348.

<sup>354</sup> Xue Chengzhi, 'On a Doctored and Distorted Poem by Robert Burns [tan Peng Si yi shou bei shan gai wai qu le de shi]', *Foreign Literature Studies*, 01 (1979), pp.22-3 (23,22,23). [Originally in Chinese]

the first engagement of Chinese academia in analyzing the various editions of Burns’s piece, even though Xue ultimately and rather simplistically reached an ideological conclusion of class struggle.

In the late 1970s, amidst the lingering ideological influence of the previous three decades, it is less likely that the critics were able to be courageous enough to completely break free from the ideology in their literary studies. It might see a calibration from Xue’s article in the trend of Burns’s studies from macro-level panoramic examinations of the poet and his works to a focused textual discussion of a specific piece. Prior to Xue’s article, Burns’s criticisms, including the milestone work, ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’ of Yuan Kejia (1959), primarily concentrated on the panoramic studies related to Burns’s biography, the historical context of his times and the overall writing style. Such comprehensive analyses tended to be biased towards generalities rather than in-depth insights. Despite its brevity - only two pages in length - Xue’s article can be seen as a positive approach to Burns’s studies. It signifies a move towards conducting detailed, in-depth research on specific pieces within the broader context of Burns’s works, biography and historical background. This shift suggests a need to transcend sweeping studies of a poet’s life and works, towards a more nuanced examination of individual works informed by a comprehensive understanding of the poet’s oeuvre and milieu.

While, compared with Wang Zuoliang’s ideologically-driven criticisms in 1959, Niu and Huang, influenced by Yuan Kejia’s ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’ (1959), moderated the political undertones in their articles. They retained Yuan’s perceptions on the relationship between Burns and folksong, fathoming the writing of Burns’s folk songs within the context of Scottish history and Burns’s biography. Niu and Huang confined Burns as ‘a working people’s own poet’,<sup>355</sup> asserting that Burns’s works maintained the original characteristics of working people. Niu examined the features within Burns’s political satires and lyrics, ‘democracy and militancy in its content’ and ‘dialectal Scots ballad in its form’,<sup>356</sup> as well as the poetics of Burns’s folk songs in terms of the historical

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<sup>355</sup> Niu Yongmao, ‘Scottish Peasant Poet Robert Burns [su ge lan nong min shi ren Peng Si]’, *Journal of Kaifeng Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, 03(1978), pp.32-43(33); Huang Yuehua, ‘The Working People’s Own Poet: In Honour of the 220th Anniversary of Burns’s Birth’ [lao dong ren min zi ji de shi ren – ji nian Peng Si dan sheng 220 zhou nian], *Journal of Shanxi University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 02 (1979), pp.43-53(50). [Both originally in Chinese]

<sup>356</sup> Niu Yongmao, ‘Scottish Peasant Poet Robert Burns’, p. 41.

circumstances and Burns's personal experiences. In the end, Niu reached an ideological conclusion, as Wang Zuoliang's in his preface in *Robert Burns: Selected Pomes* (1959) that 'the vision of the eighteenth-century peasantry of Scotland is narrow, [...] not asking a broad freedom and justice for the social mechanism',<sup>357</sup> that Burns had a narrow vision with 'no clear consciousness of class and lacked understandings of the class struggle', and 'the conservative side of the peasantry who were only content with their current life' although they detested the landlord class, and in some pieces advocating the ideas of 'carpe diem' and 'indulgence in eros'.<sup>358</sup> Likewise, Huang generally discussed Burns's lyrics and political poems by critically comparing them with the sentimentalism in the late-eighteenth-century Britain. Huang remarked,

At the end of the eighteenth century, British sentimentalism literature was a reflection of pessimism, despair and sadness among some petty bourgeois elements in the face of complex and sharp social conflicts. Burns's poetry is fully different from them. He absorbed the optimistic, bright and healthy nourishment from the colourful folk literature, and conveyed the active energy, healthy thinking and sentiment of working people. [...] What a people's singer Burns is!<sup>359</sup>

Huang particularly elaborated Burns's poetic techniques of 'repetition', 'refrain' and 'beautiful melody'<sup>360</sup> in Burns's folk songs - a topic that Yuan Kejia had initially mentioned yet not discussed in detail in his 'Robert Burns and Folksong' in 1959. Niu and Huang's criticisms are reiterations of Yuan's discussion of Burns's poetry within the framework of Scottish folksong, stressing its simplicity, musicality and national style.<sup>361</sup> They highlight Burns's adept use of ballad duet and choruses, as well as the techniques of 'realistic description'.<sup>362</sup> Yet they signify a departure from solely evaluating Burns and

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<sup>357</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'Preface', 1959, p.22.

<sup>358</sup> Niu, p. 42.

<sup>359</sup> Huang Yuehua, 'The Working People's Own Poet: In Honour of the 220th Anniversary of Burns's Birth', p.48.

<sup>360</sup> Huang, p.51.

<sup>361</sup> Yuan Kejia, 'Robert Burns and Folksong', p.54.

<sup>362</sup> Yuan Kejia, 'Robert Burns and Folksong', p.54.

his works through the lens of class struggle, focusing instead on the poet’s poetic techniques *per se*.

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the revival of Burns’s translation and studies, which was closely associated with the context of China’s economic development at the time. In the 1980s, the government of China decided to expand the reform of opening-up, which was taking place in the Eastern and Southern coastal areas before, to include more cities and regions. Along with the in-depth of socio-economic reform, since the mid-1980s, simultaneously China had had reforms in the fields of science, technology, education, literature and culture. Literary theorists presented ‘literary subjectivity’<sup>363</sup> that further stressed the separation of literature from politics, overthrowing the earlier norm of ‘political standards come first, literary standards second’ advocated by Mao Zedong in the early days of the founding of PRC. Instead, there was a growing recognition of the importance of literary merit independent of political ideology. Liu Zaifu (b. 1941), an influential literary theorist in the 1980s, presented:

The development of new-period literature is a process in which socialist humanitarianism has constantly gone beyond the concept of ‘class struggle as the key link’. [...] The touching point of the new-period literature lies in its appeal to human nature, humanity and humanitarianism, as well as human dignity and value with unprecedented enthusiasm.<sup>364</sup>

In the 1980s, scholars like Liu Zaifu, seeing human nature, humanity, and humanitarianism as the main trend of new-period literary writing can be said to be the backlash in the Chinese literary circles in the 1980s against the extreme-left political discourse of the previous Cultural Revolution. The 1980s were seen as the second May Fourth Enlightenment era, marked by a renewed focus on human nature, humanity and

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<sup>363</sup> See Liu Zaifu, ‘On the Subjectivity of Literature [lun wen xue zhu ti xing]’, *Literary Review*, 06 (1985), pp.11-26, and ‘On the Subjectivity of Literature (Continued) [zai lun wen xu zhu ti xing]’, 01 (1986), pp.3-20. [Originally in Chinese] This article has triggered a lively discussion about the subjectivity of literature in China’s literary circles.

<sup>364</sup> Liu Zaifu, ‘The Main Trend of New-Period Literature – Address at ‘The Symposium of Ten Years of New-Period Literature of China (Abstract) [xin shi qi wen xue de zhu chao – zai ‘zhong guo xin shi qi wen xue shi nian xue shu tao lun hui shang de fa yan’]’, *Literature Review*, 06 (1986), pp.14-5(15). [Originally in Chinese]

humanitarian values. The trauma of the Cultural Revolution, coupled with China's increasing aspirations for modernization, enabled the literature of 1980s to undergo 'a historical process of actively bidding farewell to socialist realism and vigorously learning Western modernism literature'.<sup>365</sup> Within this context, literary critics were confronted with 'a hard process of discourses transforming from revolutionary class to artistic aesthetics'.<sup>366</sup>

It was reflected in Burns's translation and studies as well. If we say that in the late 1970s Burns studies were still tinged with a diluted sense of ideology, in the 1980s Burns scholars endeavoured to remove the diluted ideological discourse and return to the aesthetic qualities inherent in the original texts *per se*. Moreover, the 1980s heralded an increasing interest in exploring human nature and the recognition of the concept of 'literature is the study of human', enabling the lyrical poems and love poems of Burns to regain the attention of readership. For instance, from the 1980s to 2000s, a large number of translated poetry collections of Western love poetry and lyrics included Burns's works have been published under titles such as 'lyrical poems', 'love poems' and 'famous poems',<sup>367</sup> highlighting the enduring popularity and relevance of Burns's works within the literary landscape. After the seventeen-year political discourse of 'expulsions of

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<sup>365</sup> Shen Xingpei, 'Method, Experience and Phenomenon: New Thoughts on Socialist Literary Studies in the Era of Reform and Opening Up [fang fa, jing yan he xian xiang: gai ge kai fang shi dai she hui zhu yi wen xue yan jiu de xin si kao]', *Nanjing Social Sciences*, 06 (2020), pp.124-31(129). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>366</sup> Qiao Guoqiang, '1978-2018: Forty-Year Review and Reflection on Foreign Literature Studies' [1978-2018: wai guo wen xue yan jiu 40 nian de hui gu yu fan si], *Nanjing Social Sciences*, 10(2018), pp.7-14,21(9). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>367</sup> For instance, *Selected Foreign Renowned Poems* [wai guo ming jia shi xuan], ed. Zou Jiang (Beijing: Foreign Literature Publishing House, 1981), ten pieces of Burns; *Selected Lyric Poems of the World* [shi jie shu qing shi xuan], ed. Tu An (Shenyang: Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House, 1983), three pieces of Burns; *Selected Foreign Love Poems* [wai guo qing shi xuan], ed. Li Hua (Jinan: Shandong Literature and Art Publishing House, 1985), five pieces of Burns; *Selected Foreign Famous Poems* [wai guo ming shi xuan], ed. Zou Jiang (Chengdu: Sichuan Children's Publishing House, 1987), one piece of Burns; *Selected Foreign Love Poems* [wai guo ai qing shi xuan], ed. Qiu Yuan, Wei Fan (Beijing: China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Company, 1988), five pieces of Burns; *Why Are You Silent: Selected Foreign Love Poems* [ni wei shen me zhen mo bu yu: wai guo qing shi hui cui], (Beijing: Foreign Literature Publishing House, 1989), five pieces of Burns, and a number of others. [All originally in Chinese]

individual love and humanity<sup>368</sup> and the decade of manipulation of literary translation by the ‘extreme political ideology’<sup>369</sup> of the Cultural Revolution, there was an explosive pent-up hunger for lyrics and love poetry in the literary circles and readership. This renewed interest in love themes eventually made its way back into Chinese literature and in the consciousness of readers after three decades of political discourse.

Characterized by bold, straightforward feelings, concise length, and easy to understand, along with the previously massive endorsement in 1959, Burns’s lyrics spontaneously became the indispensable components of various poetry collections. Wang Zuoliang played a crucial role in this regard, contributing significantly to the translations and compilation of Burns’s works. Notably, his publication of *The Anthology of British Poetry and Prose* (1980) collected eleven pieces of Burns (see Appendix 8), *Anthology of Scottish Poetry* (1986) twenty-eight (see Appendix 9), and *Anthology of British Poetry* (1988) ten (see Appendix 10). The eleven pieces in *The Anthology of British Poetry and Prose* (1980) are from Wang’s translation of 1959, while the pieces compiled into two other volumes from Wang’s 1985.

Despite the absence of new book-length translations of Burns’s works in the 1980s, both translations of Wang Zuoliang and Yuan Kejia of 1959 were republished again in the 1980s with additional pieces. Wang Zuoliang’s *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* saw republications in 1985, 1987 (renamed as *Robert Burns: Love and Liberty*), and 1988 respectively, while Yuan Kejia’s *Poems of Robert Burns* in 1981 and 1986. Wang’s 1985 edition collected a total of sixty-one pieces, adding thirty new additions compared to the first edition of 1959 (see Appendix 2). In relation to the alteration of the 1985 edition, Wang accounted in his prologue of the new translation:

This new translation collection [...], based on my translation published in 1959, doubled in number and expanded in content. Several big holes have been filled in, such as ‘Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous’, ‘The Auld Farmer’s New-year-morning

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<sup>368</sup> Wu Yun, ‘Literary Manipulation: A Particular Period of Literary Translation – Review on the Translation of Anglo-American Love Poetry During the Seventeen Years [wen xue cao zong: wen xue yi jie de yi ge te shu de shi dai – 17 nian jian ying mei ai qing shi ge yi jie ping jie]’, *Academic Forum*, 09 (2011), pp.69-73(70). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>369</sup> Xie Tianzhen, *New Horizons in Translation Studies [fan yi yan jiu xin shi ye]* (Qingdao: Qingdao Press, 2003), p.169. [Originally in Chinese]

Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie', 'Poor Mailie's Elegy', 'The Cotters' Saturday Night' and 'The Holy Fair' these renowned pieces. Particularly, 'The Holy Fair', my favourite one, has not been translated for I was concerned about that I could not do it properly, yet I am determined to do it this time. In terms of lyrics, it was added with some pieces like 'Sweet Afton', 'O saw ye bonnie Lesley', 'The gallant Weaver', 'Highland Mary', 'Open the door to me Oh' and the others. In terms of the lyrical poems of nationalism, it added 'Such a parcel of rogues in a nation', and 'The Slave's Lament' reflects the poet's feelings in relation to black Africans being brought into slavery in the United States. In terms of epistles, it added 'To W. Simpson, Ochiltree'. In terms of improvised poems, it added 'To a Gentleman who had sent him a News-paper', quite reflective in relation to Burns's concern about domestic and foreign affairs, and the pungent tone to satirize the upper class.

There are some pieces added while some removed. It excluded a couple of pieces in 1959 edition like 'Why Should We Idly Waste Time', 'The Book-Worms' and others for the uncertain authorship.<sup>370</sup>

'Why Should We Idly Waste Time' was referred as a 'revolutionary song'<sup>371</sup> in its footnote in Wang's 1959's edition despite its disputed authorship as discussed in previous chapter three. Additionally, Wang addressed the authorship of 'The Tree of Liberty', acknowledging that its attribution was uncertain as well. Therefore, he followed the Oxford three volumes of 1968 to give a label of 'dubious' as well though it is collected'.<sup>372</sup> Wang offered a footnote of its authorship under the title of the piece as well. This is a sign of liberalism that the literary translation in 1980s has been attempting to distance them from the grip of political discourse.

The selections of the edition of 1987 and 1988 were identical with the 1985, yet 1987 edition was renamed as *Robert Burns: Love and Liberty*. The People's Literature Publishing House published a series of 'foreign renowned poetry' including Shelley, Walt Whitman, Goethe, Hugo, Heine, Baudelaire, Pushkin, Gibran and Neruda. Each poetry book is titled according to a specific theme from their pieces, such as *Shelley: Love's Philosophy*; *Pushkin: Ode to Liberty* and *Whitman: I Dreamed in a Dream* while Burns's love and liberty. As mentioned in the last paragraph, Wang's deletion and his annotations

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<sup>370</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'Preface', in *Robert Burns: Selected Poems [Peng Si shi xuan]* (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1985), pp.1-36(30-1). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>371</sup> Wang Zuoliang, *Robert Burns: Selected Poems*, 1959, p.5.

<sup>372</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'Preface', 1985, p.31.



for the authorship of ‘The Tree of Liberty’, and the 1987’s edition renamed as ‘love and liberty’, convey a calling of liberalism in literature in 1980s. ‘Love and Liberty’ was initially translated and published in Wang’s 1959 edition under the title ‘The Jolly Beggars’. Within the strong ideological discourse in 1959, beggars were seen as a part of proletariat to be deserved to highly sing for while in 1980s scholars were in an attempt to escape from the discourse of class struggle to return to the literature *per se*. The choice to rename it as ‘Love and Liberty’ likely accommodates the shift in the cultural context of the 1980s, which highlighted themes of authenticity and liberalism, making the title more appealing than ‘The Jolly Beggars’. A significant adjustment in Wang’s 1985 edition is the rearrangement of the sequence of the pieces. Instead of following Burns’s pieces chronologically as is common in Anglo-American academia, Wang categorized Burns’s poems and songs into seven groups: lyrics, epigrams, improvised poems, poems of chanting animals, epics, epistles and cantata.

Wang’s thematic categorization of Burns’s works enabled Chinese readers to have immediate and accessible insights into the various types of Burns’s poems and songs. This approach proved effective and successful, particularly considering the readers might lack the knowledge of the historical context of eighteenth-century Scotland and Burns’s biography. The recent Burns’s translation collection in 2016 by Li Zhengshuan (1963- ) also adopted such an approach. In contrast to the 1959 edition, where political poems in relation to freedom and equality were positioned at the beginning, the 1985 saw a shift with lyrical poems replacing the political ones to be the top with thirty-five pieces, more than half of the total sixty-one. This reflects a broader trend within the literary context of the 1980s, which advocated a return to the human nature and humanity from ideological politics. Chinese scholars redirected their focus to Burns’s lyrics and love poems, with less emphasis on political themes of equality, freedom and satires of religious and social institutions.

As aforementioned, another influential Burns’s translation, Yuan Kejia’s *Poems of Robert Burns* (1959) was republished in 1981 and 1986. The 1981 edition remained identical to the 1959 version, while the 1986 added fourteen pieces, bringing the total to 103 (see Appendix 3). Yuan did not account for his selection of these new pieces in his 1986 translation. Of the fourteen pieces, Yuan selected renowned and influential ones such as ‘Tam o’ Shanter’, ‘Green grow the rashes’, ‘John Barleycorn’ and the three epistles to John Lapraik to make the 1986 translation the largest volume of Burns’s work prior to the recent translation of Li Zhengshuan in 2016. Likewise, he compiled the piece,

‘Love and Liberty’, into the 1986 edition. ‘Love’ and ‘Liberty’ might become an appealing word in 1980s in China’s literary circle. Regarding the source material, Yuan stated that ‘this selection of poetry was translated from various sources when it was first published in March 1959 and revised in 1981 according to the Edinburgh Centenary edition for uniformity’.<sup>373</sup> Yuan’s two collections of the 1980s have not altered much as Wang’s translation in 1985. It might have something to do with the stronger influence and popularity of Wang’s translation in readership. At that time, China’s Burns’s studies adopted Wang’s translation of 1980s, and Burns’s pieces by Wang were included in numerous translated collections of lyrical poems and love poems, further solidifying Burns’s appeal in China.

In a similar vein, the revival of Burns’s works in the 1980s echoed the extensive translations of his lyrics and love poems in the 1920s to some degree. However, during the 1980s, while Burns’s lyrics and love poetry continued to receive significant attention, he was not solely confined in the realm as a lyric or love poet as in the 1920s. This shift might be attributed to the earlier characterization of Burns as a great people’s poet during the seventeen years. In the 1980s, while Burns was occasionally referred to as a people’s poet and a peasant poet, the ideological perspective regarding Burns remained largely unchanged. In the abstract of *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* in 1986, Yuan Kejia stated, ‘Robert Burns was an outstanding Scottish peasant poet in the late eighteenth century, and also an outstanding Scottish people’s poet’.<sup>374</sup> Further to this, Yuan in his ‘Prologue’ in this collection of 1981 and 1986 continued to see Burns as a great people’s poet and a peasant poet, maintaining the ideological stance presented in the 1959 edition. In other words, Yuan did not adjust his ideological prologue of 1959 and republished it again in 1981 and 1987.

The reasoning behind Yuan’s decision to reissue his ideological preface from 1959 without any modifications in his later translations during the 1980s remains unclear. In contrast, Wang Zuoliang completely relinquished the ideological prologue of 1959 edition and rewrote it in 1985 version according to what was appealing of the time. This strategic adjustment could partly explain why Wang’s translation became more widely accepted by Chinese readership. It is puzzling why Yuan maintained the ideological

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<sup>373</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Postscript’, in *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* [Peng Si shi chao], Robert Burns, tr. Yuan Kejia (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1986), p.368(368). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>374</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Abstract’, in *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, 1986. No page number originally.

prologue of the 1959 edition. This is particularly notable given the departure from class struggle ideology by literary critics during the 1980s.

In the realm of Burns’s criticisms during the 1980s, there are nineteen articles according to the CNKI. Of them, nine are critical articles, five translations and five miscellaneous articles. Of the nine criticisms, it is noteworthy that Yang Lili’s ‘Nostalgia, Love, Heart – On Burns’s ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’ (1984) marked the first examination of ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’ in relation to Burns’s dedication to his homeland and nation from the perspectives of nostalgia, love and rustic simplicity, providing insights into the poem’s emotional depth, succinctness, and rhythmic qualities.<sup>375</sup> Another contribution came from Jiang Jiajun’s ‘Burns’s ‘Highland Mary’ and Four Poems Related to Her’(1988), which focused on Burns’s four pieces to examine Mary, Mary’s biography and her relationship with Burns. Jiang concluded that it would help the reader to study Burns further as well as the four pieces associated with ‘Highland Mary’ only by figuring out the connection between the poet and Mary, and the background of his creation.<sup>376</sup> Jiang’s article, notable for its absence of overt ideological discourse, provided original translations of the pieces discussed, a rarity for the time. These two articles by Yang and Jiang signify a shift in Burns studies from 1980 onward, with scholars beginning to adopt the approach of detailed and in-depth analysis of specific works, following the precedent set by Xue’s research on Burns’s specific piece as discussed in chapter three.

In addition, Wang Dan’s ‘On Introversion of Chinese and Extroversion of Western People Through Two Love Poems’ (1985) offered a distinctive contribution by comparing the characteristics of Chinese and Western people through ‘A red red Rose’ and ‘The Untitled (Missing)’ of Li Shangyin (818-858), a renowned love poet of Tang Dynasty (618-907). Wang examined the two love poems in terms of punctuations, vocabulary, emotion and rhetoric to reach a conclusion: Burns’s piece represented the Western characteristics of being ‘ardent, straightforward, and unconstrained’, while Li’s

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<sup>375</sup> Yang Lili, ‘Nostalgia, Love, Heart – On Burns’s ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’ [xing qing, ai si, chi zi xin – Peng Si 《wo de xin ya zai gao yuan》 qian xi]’, *Nandu Forum*, 01 (1984), pp.65-68. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>376</sup> Jiang Jiajun, ‘Robert Burns’s ‘Highland Mary’ and Four Poems Related to Her’ [Peng Si de ‘gao yuan ma li’ he you guan ta de si shou shi]’, *Journal of South-West Normal College*, 04 (1988), pp.45-9, 53(49). [Originally in Chinese]

Chinese ‘implicit, conservative and quiet’.<sup>377</sup> While attempting to draw a sweeping conclusion in regards to the personality differences between Chinese and Western people based merely on two love poems may be seen as unconvincing, it is noteworthy that, apart from the analysis of specific works, there was a rising trend in the 1980s of conducting comparative studies between Burns and Chinese poets. The inclination towards delving into the motif of love within Burns’s poetry, as exemplified by the examination of love in ‘My Heart’s in the Highlands’ and ‘Highland Mary’ by Yang Lili and Jiang Jiajun as referenced earlier, indicates a prevailing thematic interest during the 1980s within the literary translation sphere, characterized by notions of love and liberty.

Furthermore, Jiang Jiajun published ‘On the Appreciation of Burns’s Folk Songs’ in 1985, marking the first exploration of various tunes in Burns’s songs. Notably, Jiang discussed the tunes of ‘A red red Rose’, ‘The Winter it is Past’, ‘The Rigs o’ Barley’ and ‘I Once was a Maid’ extracted from ‘The Jolly Beggars’ in terms of traditional Scottish folksong tunes with five-line staff. He argued that Burns’s songs were crafted through ‘organic combination of musical and literary language’, noting that an understanding of the tunes enhance the reader’s comprehension of themes, emotions and the poet’s poetics.<sup>378</sup> While Jiang’s approach brings a fresh perspective to Burns’s studies in China, it is regrettable that, as of now, subsequent scholars have not continued to explore the musical aspects of Burns’s songs. This may be attributed to the significant challenge confronted by Chinese scholars, as it necessitates knowledge of music and a specific understanding of traditional Scottish folk songs.

The remaining articles, Fei Bai’s ‘Mountain Flowers Are Not Painted by Ink – On Poetic of Robert Burns’(1985), Gao Jiazheng’s ‘An Outstanding Peasant Poet – On Burns’s Poetry’(1986), Fang Da’s ‘Affectionate Songs, Poignant Satires – On Burns’s Poetry’(1987) and Jiang Jiajun’s ‘Eternal Poetry from Affections – In Honour of Scottish People’s Poet Robert Burns’s 230th Anniversary of Birth’ (1989), largely echoed the sweeping overviews as Yuan Kejia’s in ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’ (1959). These articles focused on the introduction of Burns’s background and his use of folk songs with

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<sup>377</sup> Wan Dan, ‘On Introversion of Chinese and Extroversion of Western People Through Two Love Poems [cong liang shou ai qing shi kan zhong guo ren de nei xiang he ou mei ren de wai xiang]’, *Journal of Shangrao Normal College*, 02 (1985), pp.107-9,94(109). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>378</sup> Jiang Jiajun, ‘On the Appreciation of Robert Burns’s Songs [qian tan dui Peng Si min ge de xin shang]’, *Journal of South-West Normal College*, 03(1985), pp.85-91(90). [Originally in Chinese]

few new insights. Overall, these articles from the 1980s indicate a stage of depoliticization and nascent revival in Burns’s studies, moving from a general exploration of Burns and his works to a more detailed examination of his specific works. While some discussions during this initial stage of revival may have been superficial and vague, they signify the beginning of new research directions with diverse perspectives, a departure from the unified voice observed in 1959 when critics largely shared similar views. This departure indicates a more varied and nuanced approach to the studies of Burns and his works. Overall, these articles are not beyond the discussions in Yuan Kejia’s ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’ (1959) in relation to the ‘musicality’, ‘national style’, ‘the application of repetition and repetition in folk songs’, and ‘realistic descriptive techniques’ in Burns’s poetry.<sup>379</sup>

Reflecting on Burns’s translations since Su Manshu’s initial endeavours, becomes apparent how the trajectory of readership for Burns’s works evolved over time. Prior to the MFM of 1919, Burns’s translations in China were influenced by the aesthetics of traditional Chinese scholar-officials as Su Manshu’s antiquated style in the translation of ‘A red red Rose’. From 1919 to 1937, leading up to the Second Sino-Japanese War, Chinese translators were particularly interested in Burns’s lyrics and love poems, casting him primarily as a love poet. The translation efforts during the two decades were directed at elites and well-educated audience, distancing Burns from the masses. This issue is not unique to Burns’s translation; rather, it reflects the elitist nature of the creation and readership during the course of New Culture Movement of the MFM. The onset of the war in 1937 marked a significant shift in the trend of the elite literature from the MFM. The exigencies of mobilizing the entire Chinese population to participate in and resist Japanese aggression necessitated a departure from elitist literary endeavours. Simultaneously, the war fostered a heightened sense of Chinese national consciousness, giving rising to a nationalist aesthetic consciousness. This shift facilitated the elite literature since the MFM to go to the public. In this transformed landscape, Burns’s reception also evolved. He was transitioned from being perceived as an elitist love poet of the May Fourth period to a patriotic Scottish peasant poet advocating independence and freedom as well as a representative of the literature of ethnic minorities bringing him into a broader vision to the masses. Given the wartime context, Burns’s translations

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<sup>379</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’, p.54.

tended to focus more on his radical politics pieces and the lyrics of singing for his homeland.

During the seventeen years from 1949 to 1966, the ideological manipulation on translation literature moulded Burns into the archetype of ‘a great poet of people’. At the time, the term ‘people’ was narrowly defined to encompass only three groups of people: workers, peasants and soldiers, excluding intellectuals and other segments of the population. Consequently, Burns’s works reached a limited audience, failing to resonate with broader segments of Chinese society. This restricted definition refers to the audience of Burns’s poetry at this stage as limited, ignoring segments of the population beyond the three groups failing to reach broader Chinese populace. After the Cultural Revolution, in the new period, since the late 1970s, Burns’s translations came to be genuinely accessible for a wider Chinese readership. Burns transcended previous categorizations as merely a lyric poet, love poet, patriotic poet or people’s poet. Instead, he began to be understood and appreciated for the humanity and human nature expressed in his works. Since the 1980s, Chinese readers have been able to approach Burns more as he was, liberated from the constraints of historical contexts in China, after all, much is not yet translated, including his *The Merry Muse of Caledonia*. The laurel of a people’s poet has gradually faded from Burns’s reception during this transformative period. Ironically, Burns truly embodied the essence of a people’s poet when he was no longer rigidly defined as such.

The 1990s did not witness new publications of Burns translations in China. Wang Zuoliang’s *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1985) was republished in 1998 yet it remained unchanged from the 1985 edition with no additional translation. Since Wang’s death in January 1995, there have been no revisions to his translations in subsequent editions (1998, 2012 and 2020). Yuan Kejia published *Selected Lyrical Poems of Robert Burns* in 1996, featuring a collection of 52 pieces based on his previous work, *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* (1986). Of them, 50 are from the 100 poems of the 1986 edition, and two new additions were ‘Highland Mary’ and ‘O Let Me in This Ae Night’. As aforementioned, Jiang Jiajun’s ‘Robert Burns’s ‘Highland Mary’ and Four Poems Related to Her’ in 1988 examined in detail ‘Highland Mary’, who Mary was and the other four pieces in relation to Mary, which might enable Yuan to notice and translate the little love poem and compile it into *Selected Lyrical Poems of Robert Burns* (1996).

In the preface to the collection, Yuan stated:

In June 1986, I visited the hometown of Burns during my visit to Britain. I saw the museums, statues, pavilions and buildings dedicated to commemorating Burns everywhere. The way that people honour Burns is as our people honour Confucius. In 1959, the poet’s bicentennial birth anniversary, he was widely commemorated as a world cultural icon in many countries (including China). On the 200th anniversary of his death on July 21, 1996, this book serves as a tribute to the great poet.<sup>380</sup>

This edition offers both the original texts and Chinese translations, marking the first instance of presenting both languages of Burns’s poetry in China. Yuan explains, ‘It is to provide the reader a better appreciation of Burns’s original works and to further explore the art of poetry translation’.<sup>381</sup> Providing the original texts allows the reader to grasp the style of the original, appreciate the translator’s meticulous efforts, and discern the nuances between poems in two different languages. Additionally, Yuan’s 1996 translation is based on *Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* edited by James Barke in 1955, indicating that Yuan has endeavoured to use the more recent source as he can to perfect his translation comparing to the 1896’s Edinburgh centenary edition in his translation of 1981 and 1986.<sup>382</sup> In the introduction of 1996 edition, ‘Robert Burns – A Great Scottish Peasant Poet’, Yuan did not account why he selected Barke’s 1955 edition rather than the influential collection, James Kinsley’s 1968. It is noteworthy to mention that no Burns translations in China have adopted Kinsley’s scholarly 1968 edition for translation for no reason.

Since the upsurge of Burns’s translation in 1959, the translations of Wang Zuoliang and Yuan Kejia have been republished multiple times, attesting to widespread acceptance among Chinese readers. In the 1990s, both translations saw their fourth editions. The considerable influence of Wang and Yuan deterred many other translators from attempting Burns’s translation. With the exception as well as Wang and Yuan, Gao Jian entered the scene in 1992 with his translation work on Burns. His *A Selection of English Poems* (1992) included seven pieces of Burns: ‘To Jean’, ‘Afton Water’, ‘To Mary in Heaven’, ‘A red red Rose’, ‘Auld lang syne’, ‘My Heart’s in the Highlands’, and ‘For a’

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<sup>380</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Preface’, *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* [Peng Si shi xuan], tr. Yuan Kejia (Changsha: Hunan Wenyi Press, 1996), pp.1-10 (9). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>381</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Preface’, *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, 1996, p.9.

<sup>382</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Preface’, 1996, pp.9-10.

that and a' that'. In a departure from other Burns's selections, Gao provided annotations at the end for the poems and songs to aid the reader's understanding. Gao's chosen pieces are predominantly lyrical poems, a fact that he highlighted in his brief introduction to Burns before the translations:

His (Burns's) main achievement is the short lyric songs. They are not only the classics of English literature, but also deservedly occupy a certain position in the world literature. Most of his best poetry is written in the northern Scottish dialect with a strong rustic flavor. His poetic style is simple, romantic and unrestrained, permeated with the life spirit of enthusiasm and the colourful interests between seriousness and humour.<sup>383</sup>

Gao's commentary and selections in relation to Burns's works likely mirrored the view of many translators and editors of the time: the most significant contributions lay in his lyrical pieces. For instance, Yuan Kejia's publication *Selected Lyrical Poems of Robert Burns* in 1996 further underscored this focus (see Appendix 4). Furthermore, from the 1980s to the 1990s, Burns's lyrical poems have been frequently compiled into various foreign poetry collections in China, particularly 'A red red Rose', 'My heart's in the Highlands' and 'Auld lang syne' being among the most commonly featured. This emphasis on Burns's lyrical output laid the groundwork for his resurgence in the twenty-first century. During this period, numerous literary criticisms focused on these three pieces, a trend that will be further explored in subsequent Burns studies in the twenty-first century.

In his renditions, Gao has endeavoured to achieve fidelity to the original, resulting in what could be described as a "standardized" translation focusing on words (rather than the poetic style)<sup>384</sup>. This approach resulted in a loss of the original's emotional nuances and failed to convey the poet's unique personal style. By providing a literal translation at the language level, Gao's renditions may overlook the essence of the original, such as the

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<sup>383</sup> Gao Jian, *A Selection of English Poems [ying shi lan sheng]* (Taiyuan: Beiyue Wenyi Press, 1992), p.119. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>384</sup> Fei Bai, 'On 'Stylized Translation' — On the Transparency of the Translator [lun 'feng ge yi' —tan yi zhe de tou min du]', in *Translation Reflection*, ed. Xu Jun (Wuhan: Hubei Education Press, 1998), pp.426-35(430). [Originally in Chinese]



wild heather’s spontaneous and free blooming on the hills. Here is the translation of the first stanza extracted from ‘For a’ that and a’ that’:

Is there, for honest Poverty  
That hings his head, and a’ that;  
The coward-slave, we pass him by,  
We dare be poor for a’ that!  
For a’ that, and a’ that,  
Our toils obscure, and a’ that,  
The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,  
The Man’s the gowd for a’ that. —<sup>385</sup>

难道有哪个人只因清贫，	Is there anybody only for poverty,
便要垂头丧气，以及什么？	That hangs his head down, and what?
那将将是十足懦夫一个	That would be a full coward
我们却敢贫穷，任它怎么！	We dare be poor for it what!
任它怎么，以及什么，	Let it what, and what,
劳而无功，以及什么；	Toils in vain, and what,
爵位不过金币上的戳记；	The rank of nobility is nothing but the gold coins’ mark,
人哪才是金子，任它怎么。 <sup>386</sup>	The man ah is the gold, for it what.

Translating the repeated line, ‘For a’ that, and a’ that’, poses a challenge in finding an equivalent Chinese expression. Gao translated it as ‘let it what, and what’, while Wang Zuoliang ‘Regardless of this way or that way’ and Yuan Kejia ‘Regardless of this all, and all’. Gao’s rendition fluidly conforms to the expression of Chinese language yet fails to capture the passion in the original. For instance, the fervent line three in this stanza, ‘The

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<sup>385</sup> Kinsley, No. 482, p.762.

<sup>386</sup> Gao Jian, *A Selection of English Poems*, p.126.

coward-slave, we pass him by' was feebly rendered as 'That would be a full coward'. From the translation, the reader is unable to sense the ardent and fearless spirit of the poet in the original which rather bears out the contrasting of Chinese and Western styles discussed earlier in this chapter.

Concerning Burns's biography, Liaohai Press published *Collections of 100 Great Men's Biographies* in 1998. This series of collections include six volumes featuring statesmen, strategists, industrialists, philosophers, scientists and writers/artists. Burns was collected into the volume of writers and artists, covering great figures in literature such as Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Mark Twain, Anton Chekhov, Hemingway, Alexander Dumas and others. Despite being aimed at the 'students of junior and senior high school and college'<sup>387</sup> rather than academic scholarship, the inclusion of Burns in this series among the 100 great men in the world was a potent evidence of his perceived influence as a poet in the view of the Chinese editors. The biography, edited by Ji Youzhi, drew from unspecified sources and adopted a tone of typical translationese of English language where the translation approach involved a literal rendering of the original text in the surface structure regardless of the diction, expression and internal logic of the Chinese language.

The biography of Burns commences with Burns's letter to Dr. Moore in 1787 to recall Burns's birth to open the poet's life and concludes with his death. Rather than a traditional biography, it presents Burns's life in the form of a series of short stories. Notably, it lacks the information of the translator and the original source of the biography. It might be beneficial for Burns's reception in China though it has no footnotes, endnotes or bibliography, rendering it more akin to a fiction than a scholarly resource for Burns's studies.

Burns's studies of the 1990s exhibited similarities to the preceding decade yet there was a more diverse distribution of articles. According to the data of CNKI, a total of 22 articles in relation to Burns were published during this period. Of them, four delved into Burns's works, four comparative studies, four Burns's translations, and the remaining ten are on Burns's biography, hometown and Burns night. Of the four articles on Burns's works, it is noteworthy that Xiao Qin's 'On Thoughts of Democracy and Freedom in

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<sup>387</sup> Guo Equan, 'Introduction', in *Robert Burns* [Peng Si zhuan], ed. Ji Youzhi (Shengyang: Liaohai Press, 1998), pp.1-2(1). [Originally in Chinese]

Robert Burns’s Works’ in 1995 argued that Burns’s ideas of democracy and freedom are mainly embodied in love and animal poems during the ‘germination’, satirical poems during the ‘developing period’, and in poems like ‘Scots Wha Hae’ and ‘The Tree of Liberty’ during the course of ‘maturity’, and concluded that Burns’s poetry was able to won its global appeal for such ideas.<sup>388</sup> Yet Xiao’s division of Burns’s ideas of democracy and freedom is arbitrary with no references to support it. The other three concentrated on Burns’s poetic styles including the aspects of emotions, artistic images, rhetoric and language, stressing the features, such as simplicity, clarity, repetitive chant, humour and employment of metaphors,<sup>389</sup> which mainly retained within the field of Yuan Kejia in his ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’ in 1959 and Wang Zuoliang ‘Preface’ of 1985 translation without new contributions in Burns’s studies.

Although no substantial progress has been made in Burns’s studies in 1990s, it is notable that articles in relation to discussing the translation of Burns’s works appeared by the late 1990s. Burns’s translation-related research during this period are particularly associated with the translation analysis of ‘A red red Rose and ‘My Heart’s in the Highlands’.<sup>390</sup> As previously discussed in chapter one and two, ‘A red red Rose’ and ‘My Heart’s in the Highlands’ are the most widely read and translated pieces of Burns in China. Based on the comparison of renditions in various periods, these articles commonly concluded that in the realm of the poetry translation, the translator should endeavour to

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<sup>388</sup> Xiao Qin, ‘On the Thoughts of Democracy and Freedom in Robert Burns’s Poetry [lun Peng Si shi zuo zhong de min zhu he zi you de si xiang, *Tianzhong Journal*, 10(1995), pp.36-8(36-8). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>389</sup> Zhu Zhiwei, ‘On the Artistic Style of Burns’s Lyrical Poems [lve tan Peng Si shu qing shi de yi shu feng ge]’, *Foreign Literature Review*, 4(1996), pp.36-8. [Originally in Chinese]; Du Chunrong, ‘On the Artistic Style of Burns’s Love Poems [tan Peng Si ai qing shi de yi shu te se]’, *Tsitsihar University Journal (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 01 (1994), pp. 68-71. [Originally in Chinese] and Bian Jianhua, ‘On the Style Features of ‘A red red Rose’ [qian xi yi duo hong hong de mei gui de wen ti te dian]’, *Journal of Dezhou Normal College*, 1 (1996), Vol. 12, pp.41-2, 48. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>390</sup> They are: Li Hexin, ‘Keep Pace with the Time and Keep Improving – On Various Translations of Burns’s Poem ‘A red red Rose’ in Different Periods [yu shi yu jin jing yi qiu jing – ping Peng Si shi yi duo hong hong de mei gui ji ge bu tong shi qi de yi ben]’, *Journal of Datong College*, Vol. 10. No.1, 03(1996), pp.40-4. Yang Xiaohong, ‘What Poetry Is Lost in Translation – On Burns’s ‘My Heart’s in the Highlands’ [shi ge zai fan yi zhong sang shi le shen me – tan Peng Si wo de xin zai gao yuan]’, *Journal of Hangzhou Normal University*, 4(1996), pp.82-7. Wang Zongwen, Wei Chunjuan, ‘A Comparative Study on the Chinese Translation of ‘A red red Rose’ [Peng Si mins hi yi duo hong hong de mei gui de han yi bijiao yan jiu]’, *Journal of Dalian University of Foreign Languages*, 06 (1997), pp. 56-9. [All originally in Chinese]

achieve the ‘beauty in images, melodies and forms’.<sup>391</sup> During this period, it is also notably that Chen Guohua’s discussion ‘On Wang Zuoliang’s Burns translation’ in 1998, which I will elaborate in chapter five in relation to Wang’s translation.

In addition, four comparative studies exploring the connections between Burns and other poets were published during this period. Fang Da made a general comparison to the ideas embedding in their works and poetic features between the works of Burns and Scott in 1994 in his article ‘A Comparison on the Poetry of Burns and Scott’. Fang concluded,

Scott’s understanding of the exploited Scottish farmers and lower-class people is far less comprehensive and profound compared to Burns. The tramps and beggars in Scott’s works lack the resilience as in ‘The Jolly Beggars’ depicted by Burns. Scott’s portrayal falls short in capturing the strength of these characters. Burns, being a singer of people’s democracy, encourages people to move forward, making his poetry with a future-oriented perspective. In contrast, Scott’s understanding of the future appears vague, and his poetry merely summarize conflicts that have already concluded and been resolved by history.<sup>392</sup>

Apparently, Fang is more supportive of Burns’s works than those of Scott.

In addition, in 1991, Yu Jihong’s ‘On the Comparison of Hafez and Burns’ explored the similarities between the two poets, Persian poet Hafez (1315-1390) and Burns, in terms of their background experiences, poetic thoughts, the themes of love and wine, and artistic techniques. Yu argued that medieval Hafez’s poetry had influenced Burns’s poetry and the possibility that Burns may have read the English translations of Hafez’s poetry based on the similarities in their poetry.<sup>393</sup> Yu’s argument appears speculative and lacks concrete evidence, such as correspondence or direct references in Burns’s works, to support this claim. Additionally, Yao Donglian’s ‘On Comparing the Poetry of Burns and Frost’ in 1996 merely examined the similarities of the two poets and their works in terms of nature, national tradition, and language styles, arguing that they

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<sup>391</sup> Li Hexin, ‘Keep Pace with the Time and Keep Improving – On Various Translations of Burns’s Poem ‘A red red Rose’ in Different Periods’, p. 43.

<sup>392</sup> Fang Da, ‘A Comparison on the Poetry of Burns and Scott [Peng Si he si ge te de shi ji qi bi jiao]’, *Journal of Anqing Normal College*, 02 (1994), pp. 75-80(80). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>393</sup> Yu Jihong, ‘Comparison Between Hafez and Burns’[ha fei zi he Peng Si shi ge zhi bi jiao]’, *Foreign Literature*, 01 (1991), pp.160-9(163). [Originally in Chinese]

had common in resonance with their fellow for their attentive portrayal of mundane occurrences and emotions, coupled with their adept use of colloquial language. This approach enabled their work to transcend geographical and linguistic confines, garnering recognition as esteemed poets worldwide.<sup>394</sup> In both cases, it is essential to approach these claims with caution, as Yu’s argument lacks strong evidence for the influence of Hafez on Burns, and Yao’s analysis is based on similarities without robust supporting evidence.

Furthermore, Yao Junwei conducted a comparison of several Chinese classical poems with English poetry, particularly contrasting Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’ with an ancient lament ‘Sorrowful Separation’ by Meng Jiao (751-814), a renown poet in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), aiming to explore the distinct expressions of feelings of parting in Chinese and British poems. Yao asserted that the pieces of Burns and Meng had similar artistic sentiments, yet Meng’s was characterized by a more lingering and subtle emotional expression.<sup>395</sup> In summary, these four comparative studies primarily focus on the well-worn aspects of themes, writing styles, and techniques to draw parallels between Burns’s works and those of other poets. They lack significant novelty or contributions, as they revisit common grounds without substantial new insights.

When it came to the twenty-first century, significant progress has been made in the translation of Burns compared with the twentieth century. In 2016, Li Zhengshuan (1963-), a professor in English literature at Hebei Normal University, published *Selected Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)* in commemoration of the 220th anniversary of Robert Burns’s death. Li had been a visiting scholar at University of Stirling from 2014 to 2015, dedicated his effort to translating Burns’s works during his year there. Li accounted his connection with Burns and his work in Burns translation in his ‘Forward’ (not my translation but the original title of the contents in Li’s translation),

My personal translation of Burns’s works is closely associated with my fondness for him.

During my undergraduate studies, I first encountered Burns in the course of The History of British Literature. As I pursued my postgraduate studies, particularly in the exploration of

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<sup>394</sup> Yao Donglian, ‘On Similarities Between the Works of Burns and Frost [lun Peng Si he fu luo si te shi ge de xiang si xing]’, *Journal of Zhejiang University*, 09 (1996), pp. 91-4(94). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>395</sup> Yao Junwei, ‘Parting as Well as Sympathy – On Comparison on Two Poems of Britain and China [tong shi li bei ye tong qing – liang zu zhong ying li bei shi bi jiao]’, *Appreciation on Renowned Works*, 05 (1990), pp.91-4,87(93). [Originally in Chinese]

Romantic poetry, it was inevitable that I engaged in more in-depth studies of poets like Burns. However, my engagement with the poetry of Burns commenced in 1992 when I initiated an optional course titled ‘Appreciation of Anglo-American Poetry’ at the university. In this course, Burns emerged as a prominent poet among those I lectured about. In 2004, when I published a textbook *Anglo-American Poetry*, I selected and translated several of Burns’s pieces into the collection. However, the decision to create a dedicated collection of translated Burns’s poems arose when I became a visiting scholar at the University of Stirling.

Commissioned by the China Scholarship Council, I embarked on my academic visit to the University of Stirling at the end of 2014. It was during this time that I resolved to translate a collection of Burns’s poems.<sup>396</sup>

This collection includes a total of 108 Burns’s pieces (see Appendix 5), marking the most extensive compilation of Burns’s translation in China. One of the two prefaces is given by Gerard Carruthers from the University of Glasgow, and the introduction is by Kirstie Blair University of Stirling.

In terms of the arrangement of contents, Li followed previous Wang Zuoliang’s classification to structure the collection into six parts: love poems, patriotic poems, poems of friendship, poems on freedom, satirical poems and poems on animals.<sup>397</sup> Li’s edition is predominantly composed of Burns’s short poems, of which 75 are lyrical pieces, accounting for 70 percent of the total. In addition, 57 pieces are translated for the first time, according to Li’s categorization, encompassing 46 love poems such as ‘A Lass Wi’ a Tocher’, ‘As Down the Burn’, as well as 11 patriotic poems like ‘Ballad on the American War’, ‘Awa’, Whigs, Awa’ (see Appendix 5). Regrettably, many of Burns’s longer and influential works are absent from the collection such as ‘Tam o’ Shanter’, ‘Holy Fair’, ‘Love and Liberty’, ‘The Twa Dogs’, ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night’, and ‘The Auld Farmer’s New-year-morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie’, which were included in Wang Zuoliang’s translation in 1985.

Li does not provide the original source of his translation. Li’s collection, perhaps intentionally, focuses on the short pieces, possibly due to the limited time he spent in

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<sup>396</sup> Li Zhengshuan, ‘Forward’, in *Selected Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)*, tr. Li Zhengshuan (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2016). pp. xv-.xviii (xvi).

<sup>397</sup> These names of classification are from Li’s contents, pp.iii-vii.

Stirling for his translation. Although his compilation stands as the most extensive volume of Burns translation in China and introduces many previously untranslated pieces, its impact falls short of the influence wielded by the collections of Wang Zuoliang and Yuan Kejia. Li accounted in his ‘Forward’, ‘the collection does not compile Burns’s narrative poems which will be published in another publication’.<sup>398</sup> Therefore, Burns scholars frequently use Wang Zuoliang’s *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1985) as a key source for studying Burns’s work. Despite containing only 61 pieces, Wang’s selection includes nearly all of Burns’s most influential works.

In response to the approaches of Burns translation, Li presented seven laws:

1. Never to check or read any existing translations until completion to avoid being influenced by them;
2. To insist on translating poetry by poetry, rhyming as far as possible rhyme, and no rhyming if not possible;
3. When translating, I endeavour to be faithful and equal with fluid sentences and natural tones;
4. To retain the original style as possible and keep the flavour of folk songs;
5. To figure out the poet’s consciousness to study the context of the piece and maintain the tone of the original;
6. To transplant Burns’s feelings into the context of Chinese language;
7. Prioritize foreignization in translation, with domestication used as a supplementary approach.<sup>399</sup>

Despite Li’s claim of not consulting the other translations until completion to avoid being influenced, it is evident that Li’s translation has been significantly influenced by Wang Zuoliang. For instance, Li’s second law is fully followed Wang’s ‘translating poetry by poetry’<sup>400</sup> presented in his collection of Burns translation in 1985. This will be elaborated further in chapter five. When it comes to the translation of short pieces, it can be observed that Li, drawing on Wang’s previous experience and translations, closely adheres to the original style and largely preserves the original flavour. An illustrative example is his translation of ‘Bonie Dundee’, which he renders into Chinese as follows,

Bonie Dundee

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<sup>398</sup> Li Zhengshuan, ‘Forward’, p. xvi.

<sup>399</sup> Li Zhengshuan, ‘Forward’, p. xvi.

<sup>400</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.31.

‘O, WHAR gat ye that hauver-meal bannock?’

‘O silly blind body, O dinna ye see;

I gat it frae a young brisk Sodger Laddie,

Between Saint Johnston and bonie Dundee.

O gin I saw the laddie that gae me ’t!

Aft has he doudl’d me upon his knee;

May Heaven protect my bonie Scots laddie,

And send him safe hame to his babie and me.

My blessins upon thy sweet, wee lippie!

My blessin’s upon thy bonie e’e brie!

Thy smiles are sae like my blyth sodger laddie,

Thou’s ay the dearer and dearer to me!

But I’ll big a bow’r on yon bonie banks,

Whare Tay rins wimpling by sae clear;

And I’ll cleed thee in the tartan sae fine,

And mak thee a man like thy dadie dear.<sup>401</sup>

可爱的邓迪

Cute Dundee

曲调：阿丢.邓迪

Tune: Adew Dundee

“呵，你从哪里弄到的那燕麦薄饼？” ‘O, where did you get that oatmeal pancake?’

“呵，你不明白？你傻小子看不见？” ‘O, don’t you see? Silly buddy can’t see?’

我从一个活泼的年轻士兵那里得到的， I got it from a young lively soldier laddie,

就在圣约翰斯顿和可爱的邓迪之间。” Between Saint Johnston and bonie Dundee.

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<sup>401</sup> Kinsley, No. 157, pp.338-9.



但愿我能再见到给我薄饼的小伙子！ Hope I can see the laddie again who gave me  
the pancake!

他经常把我抱在膝上逗弄； He often cuddled me to tease upon his knees;

愿上苍保佑我那苏格兰小伙子， May Heaven bless my Scots laddie,

把他送回家还给我和这小东西。 Send him home to me and this baby.

“保佑你这可爱的小嘴唇！ ‘Blessings upon your little cute lips!

保佑你这可爱的小眼眉！ Blessings upon your little cute eyes and brows!

你的笑容很像我那快活的兵哥哥， Your smiles are so like my jolly soldier brother,

对于我，你更亲，你更亲！ To me, you’re much dearer, you’re much dearer!

但我要在那边河岸上建一个凉亭， But I’ll build a bower on that bank,

那里泰河蜿蜒水清流； Where Tay winds so clearly;

我要给你穿上上等格子呢， I’ll make you in a finer tartan,

把你抚养成你爹一样的人。”<sup>402</sup> And make you a man like your daddy.’

The comparison of translations reveals that Li adheres to his principle three and four of being ‘faithful and equal with fluid sentences and natural tones to retain the original style as possible and keep the flavour of folk songs’. Regarding the vocabulary, Li endeavours to incorporate appropriate Chinese colloquial expressions, stressing the folksong style inherent in the original, such as 傻小子 (sha xiao zi – silly little boy), 可爱的小嘴唇 (ke ai de xiao zui chun – cute little lips), 可爱的小眼眉 (ke ai de xiao yan mei – cute little eyes and brows), 快活的兵哥哥 (kuai huo de bing ge ge – jolly soldier brother), 你更亲 (ni geng qin – You’re much dearer). These renderings vividly depict a young mother’s affection for her husband and baby, adding a folksy liveliness and charm to the song.

In addition to Li’s translation work, Yuan Kejia published *My Luve is Like a Red, Red Rose – The Essence of Robert Burns’s Poems and Songs* in 2008, translating from *The Poetry of Robert Burns The Centenary* edition (1896). This compilation contains 90

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<sup>402</sup> Li Zhengshuan, p.27.

pieces, with 76 drawn from Yuan's previous *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* (1986) and two from *Lyrical Poems of Robert Burns* (1998). The remaining 12 newly added pieces are lyrical poems, including 'Scotch Drink' which stands as the sole translation of this work in China. This underscores the Chinese translators' inclination towards Burns's lyrical poems. Meanwhile, Wang Zuoliang's *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* republished in 2012 and 2020, maintaining identical translations to his 1985 edition. Yet the 2012 edition includes both the original text and Chinese translation to help readers understand Burns's poetry and compare their own comprehension between the original text and the translation.

In addition to Burns translation, it is noteworthy that recently Nanjing University Press published a series of Scottish literary studies in 2020, *A Guide to Scottish Literary Classics*, which was based on *Scotnotes*. Lv Hongling, a professor in Nanjing Normal University, served as the chief editor of this series. The selection included Robert Burns, Robert Louis Stevenson, Muriel Spark, Edwin Morgan and Scottish Ballad, aiming to enhancing Chinese readers' familiarity with Scottish literature.<sup>403</sup> The idea for this translation publication was suggested by Professor John Corbett in 2018, who was the vice-president of The Association for Scottish Literary Studies (hereafter ASLS), the organization responsible for editing and publishing the *Scotnotes* series.<sup>404</sup> This marks the first volume of Scottish literary studies in China.

Furthermore, in 2005 Zou Bicheng published *The Burns Birthday Book*, a compilation that featured two lines from Burns poems and songs for each day of the year. Zou accounted in his preface,

The Burns Birthday Book covers various aspects of life: life and death, romantic love, friendship, happiness, truth, conscience, youth, universal love, religion, integrity, honor and so forth. His poetry is rich in profound philosophical insights, deeply reflective, soul-stirring, providing us with moments of profound enlightenment about life. The translator holds that these short poems depict the poet's fidelity to love, loyalty to friends, passion for life, yearning for freedom, equality, and universal love, pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty, as well as exploration of life. [...] enabling to expand our horizons, enlighten our

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<sup>403</sup> Lv Hongling, 'Preface', in *Robert Burns*, tr. Lin Yun (Nanjing: Nanjing Univeristy Press, 2020), pp.i-iii(i). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>404</sup> Lv Hongling, 'Preface', p.i.

wisdom, refine our sentiments, purify our souls, and enrich our lives. Moreover, the language of the poetry is succinct, refined, flowing, beautiful and perfect, offering us the enjoyment of beauty.<sup>405</sup>

Zou translated by himself and provided the annotations but did not specify the source of his translation. Zou states,

The aim of this book is to help readers who have a certain level of proficiency in English to understand and appreciate *The Burns Birthday Book*. Therefore, the book adopts a bilingual format, providing annotations for challenging vocabulary and phrases. Particularly, it aims to enable readers (including those whose native language is English), to recite the original poems. Additionally, the book includes pronunciation guides and annotations in modern English for the Scottish dialect and archaic English used in the original.<sup>406</sup>

Technically this book cannot be considered as a translation of Burns. Instead, it may be more aptly described as an entertainment pocket book designed for the general public. This pamphlet can be regarded as a modest contribution like a small bundle of flower in the ongoing process of Burns reception in China.

When it came to the twenty-first century, China underwent a period of rapid economic development, and the influence of political ideology on literature and literary research continued to diminish. Unlike the cautious approach of literary critics in the 1980s and 1990s, the first two decades of the twenty-first century witnessed a significant progress in Burns studies. With the easing of strict political control after the seventeen years and the Cultural Revolution, the literary criticism landscape moved away from a uniform literary discourse. Instead, there emerged a proliferation of diverse individual aesthetic perspectives among scholars, resulting in an increased diversity within the field of Burns’s studies.

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<sup>405</sup> Zou Bicheng, ‘Preface’, in *The Burns Birthday Poems 366* [Peng Si sheng ri xiao shi 366 shou], ed. Zou Bicheng (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2005), pp.1-2(1). [Originally in English and Chinese]

<sup>406</sup> Zou Bicheng, ‘Preface’, pp.1-2(2).

From 2000 to 5th October 2023, according to the data of CNKI, there are 198 articles in relation to Burns, 13 Master theses and one doctoral thesis. Of the 198 articles, 109 focus on the poet's pieces, 27 translation studies, 25 comparative studies, 7 Burns's reception, and the remaining 30 Burns biography, Burns Night, and Burns's homeland Scotland. There are also numerous references to Burns and his works that it is unlikely to quantify accurately.

In terms of Burns criticisms, there is a notable fervour on the studies of his lyric pieces. Burns scholars tend to dedicate considerable attention to well-known pieces like 'A red red Rose', 'My Heart's in the Highlands' and 'Auld lang syne'. As mentioned in the first chapter, 'A red red Rose' has been the most frequently translated piece in China with over 30 renditions. Likewise, it attracts the highest level of literary criticism in the field of Burns studies. As of 5th October 2023, a search for 'A red red Rose' as a keyword to search on CNKI reveals 93 criticisms, with 90 of them published since the year 2000. These studies predominantly focus on three realms: stylistic analyses of the piece, examinations of specific renditions or the comparisons of various translations, and comparative studies that explore 'A red red Rose' in relation to other love poems.

There are six articles specifically dedicated to 'My Heart's in the Highlands', with a focus on the artistic imagery and romantic style of the poetry. Additionally, four articles delve into the themes of compassion for animals depicted in 'To a Mouse'. Three articles each are devoted to 'Auld lang syne' and 'John Anderson my Jo', examining the emotional aspects and stylistic elements of these pieces. Overall, the discourse surrounding Burns's poetry continues to primarily revolve around the discussions of his writing style, romantic artistic imagery, and the passionate and unrestrained emotions expressed in the songs.

The overall conclusion remains largely unchanged, lacking fresh perspectives. Despite the abundance of articles on Burns during this period, many of them tend to reiterate viewpoints and discussions, essentially rehashing the ideas presented in Yuan Kejia's 'Robert Burns and Folksong' (1959). These articles continue to adopt Yuan's analytical approaches, focusing on Burns's works in terms of poetic style, emotional elements, and the utilization of ballads. One innovative study of Burns is 'Burns's Debt to Macpherson's Ossian Forgery' by Xu Xiaodong, which, in 2012 explored in detail the influence and inspiration of Macpherson's Ossian on Burns's poetry within the context of the Scottish literary tradition. Xu examined Burns's letters to demonstrate that Burns not only read Ossianic poetry during his youth but also showed through Burns's works

that he was deeply influenced by Ossian. For instance, the name ‘Luath’ in ‘The Twa Dogs’ is derived from Ossian. Additionally, in the poem ‘Vision’, Burns uses the term ‘duan’ to express the division of the poem into two parts, a usage that originated with Macpherson. Xu also traced the origin of the term ‘Bard’ and its tradition in Scottish literature, arguing that Burns, as demonstrated in his letters and poems, not only drew on but also continued the Bardic tradition from Macpherson’s Ossian, and evolved into a Scottish Bard and a profound literary symbol.<sup>407</sup> In this, Xu is influenced by Western commentators such as Murray Pittock.<sup>408</sup> In the Chinese context, Xu’s work is a refreshing move away from stale tropes about the patriotic ploughman-poet who deployed folksong to express his revolutionary zeal.

Xu’s work notwithstanding, despite the wealth of international scholarship on Burns, there seems to be a limited exploration in China of the influence of earlier poets like Macpherson, Allan Ramsay, and Robert Fergusson on Burns’ poetry. The lack of discussion on this topic could be attributed to challenges in accessing first-hand Anglophone archives, information asymmetry between Chinese and Anglo-American literary academia, and a reliance on English literature without a comprehensive understanding of Scottish literature and history. Encouraging scholars to explore alternative perspectives and engage with a broader range of themes in Burns’s poetry could lead to a more comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of his literary legacy in the Chinese literary landscape.

Xu’s article can be seen as a pioneering effort that has opened a new avenue for Burns research in China. Regrettably, it remains the sole contribution by far that delves into the relationship between Burns and the Scottish poets before him. Despite numerous articles examining the political ideologies, natural feelings, geospatial imagery, and poetical styles in Burns’s works, the discussions often remain superficial. They tend to focus on elucidating these themes without delving deeply into the cultural, historical, religious and political context of eighteenth-century Scotland. Nevertheless, when considered as a whole, the scope of Burns studies in China has undeniably broadened significantly compared to the previous century.

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<sup>407</sup> Xu Xiaodong, ‘Burns’s Debt to Macpherson’s Ossian Forgery’, *Journal of Zhejiang Normal University*, Vol. 37, 1(2012), pp.56-64. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>408</sup> Murray Pittock, *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.148.

Furthermore, there has been a rise in comparative studies of Burns' poetry with similar Chinese genres. Not surprisingly, there has been scholarship comparing Burns' 'A red red Rose' with ancient Chinese love poems in the 17 articles out of the 25 comparative studies in total, such as 'Guanguan Jujiu' in the *Book of Songs*, the folk song 'Shangye' of Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220), 'Untitled' by Li Shangyin (813-858) and 'Zui Hua Yin' by Li Qingzhao (1084-1155), China's contemporary poems such as 'The Joy of Snowflower' by Xu Zhimo (1897-1931)<sup>409</sup>, and other foreign poets such as T. S. Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and John Donne's 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'. The remaining eight concentrated on the comparison of 'My heart's in the Highland', 'To a Mouse', 'John Anderson my Jo', 'Auld lang syne' and Chinese poems. These studies explore the similarities and differences in the imagery, rhetoric, emotions, and views of love in the Western and Chinese literary traditions. They often emphasise what is perceived as a bold and passionate expression of emotion in Burns's poetry, compared to an apparently more reserved or conservative approach in ancient Chinese love poems. However, it is notable that there has been less of an appetite to compare Burns's works with those of his contemporaries in China, or with modern Chinese poets. Analysing how Burns's themes and styles, and his refashioning of traditional tropes, resonate or diverge with those of more recent Chinese poetry could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of cross-cultural literary influences and expressions of emotion in different poetic traditions.

The concentration of Burns translation studies on the comparative analysis of various versions of 'A red red Rose', with a primary focus on the translations by Su Manshu, Yuan Kejia, and Wang Zuoliang, indicates a sustained interest in examining how different translators have approached this particular love song over the course of more than a century of Burns's reception in China. The preference for Wang's translation in these studies suggests a consensus among researchers regarding the perceived quality or effectiveness of his rendition of 'A red red Rose'. However, the observation that such studies often stress diction and equivalence to the original while lacking an in-depth discussion of cultural translation that suggests a potential avenue for further exploration. In a sense however, this unoccupied space has been filled, to some extent, by studies of the reception of Burns in China.

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<sup>409</sup> Xu Zhimo (1897-1931): An influential Chinese modern poet, writer, essayist, Crescent poet, Crescent Poetry Society member, Jingxing Society member.

The emergence of studies on Burns’s reception in China since 2010 indicates a growing interest in understanding how Burns’s poetry has been perceived and translated over the past century and more. These studies, ranging from historical reviews to examinations of specific periods and aspects of Burns’s reception, contribute to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics involved in the reception of a foreign literary figure in the Chinese context. By providing a comprehensive historical overview of Burns’s reception, ‘Historical Context and Translation Changes – A Review on Burns’s Translation’ by Wu Yun in 2014 extensively discussed Burns’s reception history in China, covering aspects such as nationalistic translation in the late Qing and early Republic, a new era of translation after the New Culture Movement, the artistic and politicized nature of Burns translation after the founding of the PRC, and a return to artistic aesthetics in translation in the new era. This work has provided a comprehensive contour of Burns’s reception in China. Wang Gaidi and Chen Mingxi’s ‘Review on One-Hundred-Year Translation of Burns’s Poetry’ in 2018 primarily focused on the recommendation and review on Li Zhengshuan’s *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* (2016). The article covered an overview of Burns’s translation over a century, the era-specific characteristics of Burns’s translation, the evolution of translation styles within Burns’s translations, the regrets left in Burns’s translations: musicality and biography, and attempts at restoring the true essence of Burns’s original. These two articles lay the groundwork for an understanding of the broader trends and changes in how Burns has been received and translated in China.

Additionally, three articles discussed the translation and reception of Burns’s poetry in different specific periods. Xia Yiyun’s ‘The Popularity of Burns’s Poetry in the 1950s in China from the Perspective of Cultural Manipulation’ in 2015 examined the popularity of Burns in China during the 1950s. The article offered a socio-cultural context of literary translation in 1950s China before the discussion, arguing that the characteristics of Burns’s translation during that period were manipulated by three factors: ‘ideology’, ‘poetics’, and ‘sponsorship systems’.<sup>410</sup>

In 2019, Shi Meifang’s ‘A Study of Burns’s Translation During the Second Sino-Japanese War’ compiled the publications of Burns’s translations during the period from 1931 to 1945 from two aspects: translations published in publicly available periodicals

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<sup>410</sup> Xia Yiyun, ‘The Popularity of Burns’s Poetry in the 1950s in China from the Perspective of Cultural Manipulation [wen hua cao zong shi jiao xia jie du 1950 nian dai Peng Si shi ge zai zhong guo de zou hong]’, *Young Litterateur*, 35 (2015), pp.71-3. [Originally in Chinese]

(university journals) and translations collection, as well as translations in secondary school periodicals. Then, the article summarized the features of Burns's reception during the period: a decrease in quantity, Burns's portrayal as a love poet, the emergence of Burns's Scottish national identity, and the impact of Burns's poetry on Yuan Shuipai's later 'dialect poetry'.<sup>411</sup>

In 2020, Zhang Jianfei and Li Kuangyuan published 'On the Translation of Burns's Pastoral Poetry in China (1949-1966)'. During these seventeen years, considering the realistic background of China, Zhang and Li explored how Burns's Scottish pastoral was rewritten into a Chinese local style, how emotional elements in Burns's poetry were adapted, how religious sentiments in Burns's poetry were transformed, and how the expression of sexual desires in Burns's poetry was modified to align with the spirit of class struggle and ideological needs at the time.<sup>412</sup>

Furthermore, there is a noteworthy article by Song Da, 'Chinese Translation of Burns – The British Poet Whose Scottishness Is Not Unveiled', published in 2016. Song provided a general contour of Burns's hundred-year translation and reception in China, arguing that it lacks the Scottishness of the original in Chinese translation by quoting the renditions like 'A red red Rose', 'Scots Wha Hae', and 'Such a parcel of rogue in a nation'. Song claimed that the Scots dialects in Burns's original and the characteristics of the poet as a Scottish national bard have been largely lost during the process of translations into Chinese, addressing 'the history of Burns's translation needs to be re-examined and reviewed'<sup>413</sup>. Song presented how Burns's Scottish dialect poems and song of a peasantry poet had been received in British literary circles of fancying elegant and bourgeois elegant favour in poetry and elevated to a symbol of Scottish national culture identity for Scottish diaspora across the world should be considered as a research project

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<sup>411</sup> Shi Meifang, 'A Study of Burns's Translation During the Second Sino-Japanese War [kang zhan shi qi Peng Si shi ge de fan yi pian mu hui bian yu yi jie yan jiu]', *Guangxi Social Science*, 04 (2019), pp.160-4. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>412</sup> Zhang Jianfei and Li Kuangyuan, 'On the Translation of Burns's Pastoral Poetry in China (1949-1966) [Peng Si tian yuan shi zai zhong guo de yi jie (1949-1966)]', *Yangtzi River Academic*, 4 (2020), pp.102-9. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>413</sup> Song Da, 'Chinese Translation in Robert Burns – Insufficient Construction of His Scottish Identity' [han yi Peng Si – su ge lan xing wei neng zhang xian de ying guo shi ren], *Research of Chinese Literature*, 01(2016), pp.113-21(113). [Originally in Chinese]



for Chinese Burns scholars to help the Chinese academia to recognize Burns better.<sup>414</sup> Song presents a valuable perspective, addressing the issue of the lack of Scottishness in Burns’s translation in China. This has indeed been a longstanding concern for Chinese Burns scholars and translators. Wang Zuoliang’s approaches in translating Burns will be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapter five. However, Song dedicates a significant portion in the introduction of Burns’s translation, arguing the lack of Scottish vocabulary or equivalent of Chinese translation in Burns’s poetry supported by three short pieces of Burns translation. This approach may seem a bit rigid and strained and Song fails to discuss previous work in Burns studies, which is a notable gap in her argument.

In the terms of Burns’s reception in China, the focus has primarily been on the process of translating Burns’s works, with little attention given to Burns studies and research on his dissemination beyond the text. It is worth mentioning the article by Li Zhengshuan and Ye Hongting in 2023, ‘The International Dissemination of Burns’s Song ‘Auld lang syne’’. This article uniquely examined the musical aspects of the dissemination of ‘Auld lang syne’ in China and overseas. However, the main emphasis of the article is on the international dissemination of this song, and there is not a detailed exploration of its spread within China. The article provided a summary of various translations of ‘Auld lang syne’ in China. Perhaps the original intent of this article was to offer an external perspective for Chinese readership.

Furthermore, since 2010, the theses of Master and PhD with respect to Burns began to appear. There are one doctoral thesis and thirteen master’s theses. Song Da’s doctoral dissertation *A Study of Chinese Translation Problem of Scottish Literature in the Framework of English* in 2016, published in 2017, examined three Scottish poets, Burns, Scott and Byron, in China’s reception, offering an overall but detailed picture of Burns’s reception in China more than one hundred years by one chapter. Song claimed that it is a ‘dilemma’ for Burns’s reception in China that ‘Burn’s Scottishness is blur’<sup>415</sup> in terms of Burns translation as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Song examined the acceptance process of Burns’s poetry translation in China, yet she did not mention the other aspects of Burns’s reception in China, such as in culture and music, for example, Burns Night,

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<sup>414</sup> Song Da, ‘Chinese Translation in Robert Burns – Insufficient Construction of His Scottish Identity’, pp.113-21.

<sup>415</sup> Song Da, *A Study of Chinese Translation Problems of Scottish Literature in the Framework of English Literature*, p.81.

and the musical acceptance of Burns's pieces. However, Song presented a new viewpoint offering an approach to Burns's translation, after which scholars came to stress the Scottishness in the process of Burns's Chinese translation. Of the thirteen master's theses, eight concentrated on Burns's translation and translation comparative studies, two the themes of Burns poetry, one Burns's pastoral poetry, one the cultural study of Gaelic in Burns poetry and one Burns study within the context of ethical literary criticism. It is evident that the scholarly attentions of the researchers have been predominantly revolved around the studies of Burns's translation.

Burns has been embraced in China for more than one hundred years, and there have been notable achievements in translations and studies, and the academic community has held a high attention to Burns. However, there are many lacunae and challenges. No biography of Burns has been published, and there has been a dearth of new collections for nearly two decades, with Li Zhengshuan's in 2016 being a notable exception. The total number of Burns works translated is less than 200, and several of his influential piece, such as 'Vision', 'To Haggis', 'A Winter Night', 'Address of Beelzebub', and a number of others, remain untranslated. The lack of comprehensive collections of Burns's translated works and biographies has significantly impeded the further progress of Burns studies in China. Notably, there are no doctoral theses exclusively devoted to the study of Burns. The focuses of Burns criticisms tend to be repetitive, predominantly targeting on specific lyrical pieces such as 'A red red Rose' with little attention or fully ignorance given to other influential works like 'Tam o' Shanter' or 'Love and Liberty'. Furthermore, a notable gap has taken placed in research concerning Burns's relationship with the other Scottish poets like Macpherson, Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson. Overall, it is Burns's reception and Burns's translation that Chinese scholars have more interest in, while Burns's studies within the framework of Scottish literature is seriously insufficient. Burns's employment of various registers, politics, Scottish identity and the comprehension of Burns within the context of Scottish romanticism, which have been extensively studied in-depth in Anglosphere academia, and have been disregarded in China's Burns scholarship. It can be observed that Burns studies and the studies of Scottish literature, particularly those represented by Burns, are still in their infant stage and have an ample space to explore-develop further in China.

## 6 WANG ZUOLIANG: THE BURNS TRANSLATOR IN CHINA

One of the most significant Chinese scholars of Scottish literature, Wang Zuoliang (1916-1995) has contributed to shape, define and evolve the understanding of Robert Burns in substantial ways. He is principally known to Burns researchers as the translator of the landmark *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1959, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1998, 2012, 2020), but also is an authority more widely on Anglo-Scottish poetry and a noteworthy editor, providing authoritative and scholarly editions including *Anthology of British Poetry and Prose* (1980), *Anthology of Scottish Poetry* (1986), *Anthology of British Poetry* (1988), *History of British Romantic Poetry* (1991), *History of British Poetry* (1997), *History of The Twentieth Century British Literature* (1998), and *History of British Literature* (2017). Wang is an influential Burns scholar and a prominent figure who devoted his entire career to the study of Anglo-Scottish poetry in the first generation of scholars in China.

This chapter is not an attempt to demonstrate the overall contribution of Wang in Scottish literature but to examine Wang’s achievement and influence within Burns translations. This chapter is in four parts. The first part discusses in Wang’s translation strategies in relation to Burns translation. The second compares his 1959 and 1985 translations. The third compares Wang’s strengths in Burns translations with those of other Burns translators. The final part examines Wang’s influence on a subsequent translator, namely Li Zhengshuan.

Wang received his first degree from the Department of Foreign Languages at Southwest United University (formerly Tsinghua University) in 1939. Remaining at the university as a faculty member, he later pursued postgraduate studies in English Literature at Merton College, Oxford University, from 1947 to 1949. Upon completing his studies in September 1949, he returned to China and embarked on a research career at Beijing Foreign Studies School (later renamed Beijing Foreign Studies University) until his retirement. Wang’s association with Robert Burns began in 1958 when the People’s

Literature Publishing House approached him to translate a selection of Burns's poetry for the commemoration of the poet's upcoming 200th birthday. Although Wang had not translated Burns before, his admiration for the poet motivated him to take on the challenge. As Wang recounted, 'I never translated Burns's works before, yet I am fond of his works and I would like to try it'.<sup>416</sup> During the course of his translation work, Wang commented that it is not only the lyrical and love poems in Burns's works, but also narrative poems 'in which there are many characteristics that are quite hard to see in the other poets' poems and songs like the drama, vigour, and a playful spirit which are particular cute',<sup>417</sup> fuelling Wang's dedication to the task. His initial Burns translation in 1958 laid the foundation, and he later revised the collection in 1985. Additionally, Wang authored influential Burns criticisms in 1959 and the 1980s, solidifying his reputation as an influential Burns scholar.

In his *First Commonplace Book*, Burns writes on the suitability of Scots as the language for Scots melodies,

There is a certain irregularity in the old Scotch Songs, a redundancy of syllables with respect to that exactness of accent & measure that the English Poetry requires, but which glides in, most melodiously with the respective tunes to which they are set. [...] There is a degree of wild irregularity in many of the compositions & Fragments which are daily sung to them by my compeers, the common people — a certain happy arrangement of old Scotch syllable, & yet, very frequently, nothing, not even *like* rhyme, or sameness of jingle at the ends of the lines. — This has made me sometimes imagine that perhaps it might be possible for a Scotch Poet, with a nice, judicious ear, to set compositions to many of our most favourite airs, particularly that class of them mentioned above, independent of rhyme altogether.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'On Answering Queries on Literary Translation [guan yu wen xue fan yi da ke wen]', *Chinese Translation*, 10 (1983), pp.9-12(9). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>417</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'On Answering Queries on Literary Translation', p.9.

<sup>418</sup> Robert Burns, *First Commonplace Book, 1783-1785*, in *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, Vol I. Commonplace Books, Tour Journals, and Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Nigel Leask (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.34-69(65-6).

These Burns’s endeavours above are exactly the issues and targets which Chinese translators have strived to achieve in their renditions. In light to the Scots dialect in the original, Wang’s primary principle for his translation strategies is to ‘translate poetry with poetry’<sup>419</sup>. In the realm of translating poetry with poetry, the most crucial aspect is to capture the original poem’s phonology, rhyme, and rhythm. As Wang puts it in his ‘Preface’:

For Burns’s poetry is characterized by strong musicality, the translation maintains a rhythm (but just only a rough rhyme, and follows the pronunciation of modern Mandarin Chinese), and the form of the translation strives to closely resemble the original. For instance, Burns often uses six-line stanzas, where the first, second, third, and fifth lines have eight syllables each, while the fourth and sixth lines have four syllables each with the rhyme scheme in the original is aaabab. My translation also comprises six lines with a similar rhyme scheme, with a shortening of the fourth and sixth lines. However, within each line, my translation does not adhere to forming rhythmic units with ‘dun’ (a unit of rhythm in Chinese poetry), partly because it is not easy to determine where to place ‘dun’. Instead, I employed a different approach by imposing a restriction on the number of characters in each line, typically not exceeding thirteen to fourteen characters, unless the original poem had unusually long or short lines, in which case I adjusted the characters count accordingly. The sense of rhythm in the poem is related to the speed at which it is read. When read at a normal pace, a line with thirteen to fourteen characters would typically contain approximately four to five phrases, equivalent to four or five rhythmic units, thus maintaining a roughly consistent rhythm between lines. The challenge lies in: too much uniformity leading to monotony. I deliberately deviate from self-imposed rules and vary the character count and sentence structure in accordance with the content at times.<sup>420</sup>

For instance, the stanza twelve extracted from ‘Tam o’ Shanter’, a typical reflection according to Wang’s translation strategy of ‘translating poetry with poetry’,

As *Tammie* glowr’d, amaz’d, and curious,

The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:

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<sup>419</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.31.

<sup>420</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.31.

The piper loud and louder blew;  
The dancers quick and quicker flew;  
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,  
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,  
And coost her duddies the wark,  
And linket at it in her sark!<sup>421</sup>

汤姆|又惊|又怕|, 赶紧|看究竟, Tammie both surprised and scary, to hurriedly see  
what happened,  
那一片|笑呵|, 乐呵|, 玩得|正起劲; The smirk oh, the joy oh, and having fun to the  
fullest;  
笛子|越吹|越响, The piper blew louder and louder,  
舞步|越跳|越欢; The dance was quicker and quicker;  
妖魔们|急转|、交叉|、分开|、合拢|、把手牵, The witches turned quickly, crossed,  
separated, held hands,  
直跳得|女妖|一个个|流汗|冒热烟, danced till the witches one by one were sweating  
with hot smoke,  
纷纷|把|外面的|破衣|都脱掉, taking off all the outside rugs,  
只穿|贴身|汗衣|一阵|狂跳! <sup>422</sup> and wildly dancing around only in a tight-fitting shirt!

Wang recounted his translation of this stanza,

Here the third and fourth lines form a distinct pair, different from the other lines; the fifth line includes five dance movements, therefore has more characters than the other lines;

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<sup>421</sup> Kinsley, No.321, p.561-2.

<sup>422</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'Preface', 1985, p.176.

both of these factors bring changes in speed and rhythm in the middle of the stanza, precisely as required by the chaotic dance of the warlocks and witches in here.<sup>423</sup>

The translation of this stanza nearly perfectly reproduces the original. In terms of rhyme and rhythm, Wang adheres to the original’s rhyming scheme with every two lines rhyming but not strictly.<sup>424</sup> The original text is octameter, while Wang’s lines generally have approximately five rhythmic units. In the Chinese language, typically two characters form a rhythmic unit, creating a dual rhythm, and there is a single rhythmic unit consisting of only one character. Additionally, three characters create a triple rhythm, four characters a quadruple rhythm, and five characters a quintuple rhythm, yet all of these are considered as one rhythmic unit. In this stanza, as can be seen, the stanza is divided according to the rhythmic units in each line according to the Chinese rhythmic pattern. It is evident that Wang’s translation indeed predominantly corresponds to the original eight-syllable rhythm by using around five rhythmic units in each line as he claimed. Yet in the third and fourth line of this stanza, Wang deliberately cut down the number of rhythmic units to three, while increasing it to six in the fifth line, forming a well-balanced variation in the formal structure, akin to the dances with both fast and slow movements. Likewise it builds a tension, showcasing how the rhythm of the dance movements become faster and more intensive, particularly in the translation of the fifth line, where Wang intentionally uses four pause marks (‘、’ 顿号 *dun hao*) to switch between five different dance movements, echoing to the shift of joyful mood by two commas in the second line, and painting a vivid picture of a lively, brisk, and fervent dance scene. Furthermore, the strategy of following the rhyme scheme of the original with every two lines of the rhyming provides an exotic charm to the translation, as traditional Chinese poem typically involves rhyming every other line throughout the entire piece.

Furthermore, Wang consciously employs a colloquial style in his translation. As Wang pointed out,

Merely refined Chinese is insufficient for the work. [...] For Chinese translators who are proficient in foreign languages are well educated and high quality, generally their mastery

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<sup>423</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.31.

<sup>424</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.31.

of the Chinese language tends to be classy, formal and literary. What is commonly referred to as ‘vernacular’ (baihuawen) Chinese is often encountered only in textbooks or on the stage. [...] Some individuals might be adept at exerting a more down-to-earth, colloquial style of Chinese, yet they might not be involved in the translation field due to their lack of foreign language proficiency.<sup>425</sup>

Given this consideration, Wang made a deliberate effort to use colloquial Chinese in his translation to approximate the employment of Scottish folkloric vernacular in the original. For instance, the spoken phrases such as ‘赶紧’ (hurriedly), ‘笑呵’ (the smirk oh), ‘乐呵’ (the joy oh), ‘玩得正起劲’ (having fun to the fullest), ‘直跳得’ (danced till), ‘一个个’ (one by one), ‘冒热烟’ (hot smoke), ‘外面的’ (outside), ‘脱掉’ (take off), ‘只穿’ (only in), these are highly colloquial expressions which are unlikely to be met in traditional poetry. Particularly in the first, third and fourth lines, the colloquial phrases such as ‘又...又...’ (both...and...), and ‘越...越’ (the more...the more...), depicts vividly Tam’s expressions, and the rhythm of the music and dance offers the reader the feeling of being present at the scene.

Most importantly, Wang employed the cultural translation in Burns’s works. As he remarked,

Even if a translator manages to render the dictionary meanings of all the words, follows the original piece closely, and preserves all the imagery, it does not necessarily mean they have truly translated the poem, for without the original rhythm, tonality, resonance, and implied meanings which have constituted the significance of the poem. These aspects of rhythm, tonality, resonance, and implied meanings are derived from life and are a part of its culture.<sup>426</sup>

Though the overall Burns’s translations in China has been criticised by Song Da as lacking Scottishness, it is a formidable task to achieve a perfectly equivalent translation

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<sup>425</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Chinese Translators and American Poetry Style [han yu yi zhe yu mei guo shi feng]’, in *On the Translation of Poetry [lun shi de fan yi]* (Nanchang: Jiangxi Education Press, 1992), pp. 87-100 (98). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>426</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Chinese Translators and American Poetry Style’, p. 98.



to the original.<sup>427</sup> Cultural translation does not aim for a perfect, one-to-one rendering of the cultural nuances inherent in the original, as this is often unattainable. Instead, it involves a ‘cultural turn’.<sup>428</sup> Chinese translators, particularly Wang, as discussed in the translation of the above stanza, have continuously studied and improved the translation approaches to Burns’s translation in terms of the poet’s employment of vernacular. The use of colloquial language, rhyme, form, and imagery in Burns’s translation reflects Wang’s endeavour to capture the Scottish colour and flavour within Burns’s poetry.

Likewise Wang’s translation strategies were mirrored in his 1985 revision of *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1958) through the comparisons between the two editions. In the 1985 edition, he added 29 new pieces, as well as revising several pieces based on the 1959 edition. In 1958, Wang was working at the Beijing Foreign Studies College, and his translation work on Burns was commissioned by the official publishing institution, People’s Literature Publishing House. It is reasonable that Wang conducted the work of Burns’s translation in accordance with the ideological requirements of the government at the time.

The 1959 edition, driven by the strong ideology, was no longer fitting in the period of literary revival in the 1980s which saw a renaissance in literature in China. Between the two editions, albeit less than three decades, the contexts were significantly shifted. The best evidence is the alteration in the prefaces of Wang’s translations. The preface in the 1985 translation can be considered a complete rewriting, markedly departing from the heavily ideological preface of the 1959 edition. However, these are not to the same extent ideologically represented pieces which are translated in both editions, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The 1959 preface primarily encompassed four aspects: 1) how Burns utilized poetry as a weapon to resist the ‘three major mountains of the government, church, and rich on the heads of Scots people’;<sup>429</sup> 2) the themes of equality and revolution in Burns’s poetry; 3) the utilization of the folk song and colloquial style

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<sup>427</sup> Song Da, ‘Chinese Translation of Burns – The British Poet Whose Scottishness Is Veiled [han yi Peng Si – su ge lan xing wei neng zhang xian de ying guo shi ren]’, *Research of Chinese Literature*, 01 (2016), pp.113-21. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>428</sup> Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, ‘Introduction: Proust’s Grandmother and the Thousand and One Nights. The ‘Cultural Turn’ in Translation Studies’, in *Translation, History and Culture*, ed. Susan Bassnett, Andre Lefevere (London, New York: Cassell, 1990), pp.1-13(5).

<sup>429</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Preface’, 1959, p.2.

in Burns's works; and 4) an evaluation of Burns's works from the perspective of class struggle. In contrast, the 1985 preface introduces Burns and his works from four different aspects: 1) a brief overview of the poet's life and poetic style; 2) the Scottish dialectic poetic tradition and the characteristics of Burns; 3) the deficiencies of Burns's works and the process of its reception in China; and 4) the changes in the 1985 translation and the translator's insights into translating Burns's works. The significant shift in the preface indicates that the 1985 version of the translation diminishes political ideology and emphasizes objective factual statements, aligning more faithfully with the original.

In light of the significant alternation to the preface, it can be inferred that Wang meticulously reviewed his 1959 translation. Of these revisions, 'A red red Rose' underwent the most substantial changes, clearly demonstrating Wang's translation strategy in terms of language, rhythm, form and imagery related to the 'cultural turn'. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Wang did not have explicitly acknowledged the extensive revisions made to 'A red red Rose', possibly because this particular piece had already been most translated and well-received in China, leading Wang to place a greater emphasis on it during his revision. The two versions of the translation of 'A red red Rose' along with the original are presented as follows:

O MY Luve's like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June;  
O my Luve's like the melodie  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.—

As fair art thou, my bonie lass,  
So deep in luve am I;  
And I will love thee still, my Dear  
Till a' the seas gang dry.—

Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:  
I will love thee still, my Dear,

While the sands o’ life shall run.—

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!

And fare thee weel, a while!

And I will come again, my Luve,

Tho’ it were ten thousand mile!—<sup>430</sup>

Wang’s 1959 translation:

呵，我的爱人象一朵红红的玫瑰<sup>431</sup>， Oh, my lover is like a red red rose,

六月里迎风初开；

呵，我的爱人象一曲甜蜜的歌， Oh, my lover is like a sweet song,

唱得合拍又柔和。 Singing in tune and softly.

我的好姑娘，多么美丽的人儿！ My good girl, what a beauty!

我呀，多么深的爱情！ Oh I, how a deep love!

亲爱的，我永远爱你， Dear, I love you forever,

纵使大海干枯水流尽。 Even if the seas go dry and waters run out.

纵使大海干枯水流尽， Even if the seas go dry and waters run out,

太阳将岩石烧作灰尘， Sun will burn the rocks into dust,

亲爱的，我永远爱你， Dear, I love you forever,

只要我生命犹存。 As long as my life is still alive.

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<sup>430</sup> Kinsley, No.453, pp.734-5.

<sup>431</sup> The underline phrases refer to the revisions between the two editions, which is Wang’s point of his translation strategy. If there are no alterations, the author does not give hints or translations.

珍重吧，我唯一的爱人，  
珍重吧，让我们暂时别离。

但我定要回来，  
哪怕千里万里！<sup>432</sup>

But I surely want to come back,  
Even if a thousand or ten thousand mile!

The revision of 1985:

呵，我的爱人像朵红红的玫瑰，  
六月里迎风初开；  
呵，我的爱人像支甜甜的曲子，  
奏得合拍又和谐。

Oh, my lover is like red red rose,  
六月里迎风初开；  
Oh, my love is like sweet sweet melody,  
Playing in tune and harmony.

我的好姑娘，你有多么美，  
我的情也有多么深。  
我将永远爱你，亲爱的，  
直到大海干枯水流尽。

My good girl, how beautiful you are,  
How deep my love is too.  
I will love you forever, dear,  
Till the seas go dry and waters run out.

直到大海干枯水流尽，  
太阳把岩石烧作灰尘，  
我也永远爱你，亲爱的，  
只要我一息犹存。

Till the seas go dry and waters run out,  
Sun burned the rocks into dust,  
I will love you forever, dear,  
As long as I still have one breath.

珍重吧，我唯一的爱人，  
珍重吧，让我们暂时别离，  
我准定回来，亲爱的，

I will absolutely come back, dear,

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<sup>432</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1959, p.18.

哪怕跋涉千万里!<sup>433</sup>

Even if traversed an or ten thousand mile!

In the first stanza, the initial line, ‘like a red red rose’, undergoes a change to ‘like red red rose’, removing the word ‘a’, which disrupts the rhythmic repetition of ‘red’ in Chinese translation. So does the later third line, ‘like a sweet song’ to ‘like sweet sweet melody’. This adjustment highlights the rhythm in accordance with the oral Mandarin language conventions. The third line is added one more ‘sweet’ into ‘Oh, my lover is like sweet sweet song’, echoing previous ‘red red rose’ to create a rhythmic resonance. The overlapping use of double characters is a typical diction of the traditional Chinese folk songs conveying various vibes. Wang’s revision, ‘sweet sweet melody’, successfully captures the essence of Chinese folksong. Additionally, the word ‘melody’ aligns more closely with the original than ‘song’ in 1959 edition, as the subsequent ‘playing’ than ‘singing’.

In the second stanza, the first two lines, ‘As fair art thou, my bonie lass, / So deep in luv am I’, was translated into from ‘My good girl, what a beauty! / Oh I, what a deep love!’ in 1959, to ‘My good girl, how beautiful you are, / How deep my love is too’ in 1985. The latter aligns more closely with the original’s ‘as ... so’, while the utilization of ‘how ... how ... too’ resonates with common diction found in Chinese folk songs. The subsequent line, ‘And I will love thee still, my Dear’, experienced a transition from ‘Dear, I love you forever’ in 1959 to ‘I will love you forever, dear’ in 1985, introducing the auxiliary verb ‘will’ and reordering the sentence structure to achieve an equivalence with the original. Additionally, the original term ‘till’ was initially rendered as an archaic phrase ‘even if’ (纵使 *zong shi*), and later revised to a more colloquial word ‘till’ (直到 *zhi dao*), thereby capturing the nuanced essence of the original.

In relation to the final line of this stanza, the same as the first line of the third stanza, ‘Till a’ the seas gang dry’, and the second line of stanza three, ‘And the rocks melt wi’ the sun’, Wang recounted in his preface,

The imagery employed here – ‘a’ the seas gang dry’ and ‘the rocks melt wi’ the sun’ – is rendered freshly and robustly in the original. However, a direct and unreflective translation

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<sup>433</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.57.

by using the idiom ‘unyielding love till the sea goes dry and rocks dust’ would lack genuine fidelity. Because the four-character idiomatic expression ‘海枯石烂’ (the seas go dry and the rocks dust) has been ingrained and habitually utilized in the Chinese language and cultural milieu over an extended period, thereby no longer evoking a sense of novelty.<sup>434</sup>

The imagery holds a paramount position within poetry, and poets dedicate themselves to its cultivation. The translation process is similarly bound by this imperative. If an original text contains a novel and vivid image, yet the translated counterpart renders it as a cliché or hackneyed expression in the target culture and language, despite maintaining a faithful literal translation, the endeavour can be deemed unsuccessful. As Wang put it,

Due to significant disparities between languages and cultures, fidelity in translation cannot be confined to literal resemblance; other factors must be included, such as whether the strength, imagination, and vibe in the translated work are broadly akin to those in the original?<sup>435</sup>

The image, ‘a’ the seas gang dry’, might be Burns’s original, yet ‘the rocks melt wi’ the sun’ is copied from *The Hornfair Garland* (? ante 1780), which is ‘not for the first time or the last in Burns’s work’.<sup>436</sup> Burns met James Hutton at the home of Professor Adam Ferguson in 1787.<sup>437</sup> Despite no concrete evidence for the correlation between the image with Hutton in this song, it is reasonable to infer that they had conversations over what today we would call ‘Earth Science’ among other subjects.<sup>438</sup> Burns was familiar with contemporary thoughts and would have known Hutton’s work of the historical instability

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<sup>434</sup> Wang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.32.

<sup>435</sup> Wang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.32.

<sup>436</sup> Robert Burns, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, Vol. III, The Scots Musical Museum Part Two, Notes and Appendices*, ed. Murray Pittock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp.150-1. Also see Kinsley, vol. III, pp.1454-6.

<sup>437</sup> Donald B. McIntyre, ‘James Hutton’s Edinburgh: The Historical, Social, and Political Background’, *Earth Sciences History*, 1997, vol. 16, No. 2 (1997), pp. 100-57(104).

<sup>438</sup> Gerard Carruthers, ‘Paul Bishop and Robert Burns’, *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 12 April (2023), DOI: 10.1080/14702541.2023.2199712, pp.359-62(360).

of Earth geology and the erosional energy of rain.<sup>439</sup> This probably inspired Burns to provide a little new context to this song in order to be difference of his lyrics from the traditional love folksong. The combination of the two images balances a freshness and originality, particularly within the Scottish and broader British milieu of the time. While in the Chinese context, the idiom ‘the seas go dry and the rocks dust’ (海枯石烂, hai ku shi lan) originated from the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) poet Yuan Haowen (1190-1257) in his work ‘West Tower Song’ (西楼曲, xi lou qu).<sup>440</sup> Having seen a millennium of circulation, it has evolved into a well-worn cliché depicting unwavering love between a man and woman. If an unfaithful translation of the original occurred to Chinese, it would be unsuccessful to impart any sense of novelty or the inherent ‘strength, imagination, and vibe’ found in the original. The translation, despite its fidelity, can be considered a failure. Within the context of Chinese culture, the two images of ‘the sea goes dry and rocks go dust’ are invariably attached as a fixed pairing, resulting in a lack of the sense of strangeness for Chinese readers. Wang’s translation strategy, as evidenced in this instance, involves dismantling the fixed cliché imagery into two separate detailed images as ‘the seas go dry and waters run out’ and ‘sun burned the rocks into dust’, offering Chinese readers a distinct sense of novelty. Indeed, Wang’s approach in this piece has been proved successful and garnered popularity in China. Both the popular folk readings and academic studies in China have adopted Wang’s 1985 version. For instance, in a nationally planned undergraduate English textbook for Chinese higher education, *New Horizon College English*, the supplementary content features the bilingual text of Burns’s ‘A red red Rose’, with the Chinese translation opting for Wang’s rendition.<sup>441</sup>

It is noteworthy that the translation strategy employed for the imagery of ‘the seas gang dry’ and ‘the rocks’ stands in stark contrast to that applied to the final line of stanza three, ‘While the sands o’ life shall run’ which was rendered into ‘As long as my life is still alive’ in 1959 and ‘As long as I still have one breath’ in 1985. The image of ‘sands o’ life’, is a British idiom, evolved from the idiom ‘sands of time’, symbolizing the

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<sup>439</sup> Gerard Carruthers, ‘Paul Bishop and Robert Burns’, p.360.

<sup>440</sup> *Comprehensive Dictionary of Idioms [cheng yu da ci dian]*, ed. the Editorial Committee of the Comprehensive Dictionary of Idioms (Beijing: Commercial Press International Co., 2013), p.438. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>441</sup> *New Horizon College English (third edition)*, 4 Vols. ed. Zheng Shutang (Shanghai: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2015).

passage of time akin to the sand flowing through an hourglass. In the ancient Western culture, the hourglass served as a timekeeping instrument, whereas the ancient China employed ‘ri gui’ (日晷, sundial)<sup>442</sup> for the same purpose. It is challenging for Chinese readers to be aware of the visual metaphor of sand depleting in the hourglass conveys the finite nature of human existence and the inevitable changes in the Western culture. In Wang’s 1959 translation, ‘sands o’ life’ was rendered as ‘my life is still alive’ in 1959 and ‘I still have one breath’ in 1985. In this song, the imagery, ‘sands of life’, as a cultural code, reflected the cultural phenomena prevalent in eighteenth-century Scotland.

Wang’s translation involves a complex process of both decoding and encoding cultural nuances. In this process, Wang interpreted (or decoded) the imagery and cultural context of the Scotland as depicted in the eighteenth-century works of Burns. He then transformed (or encoded) these elements into a form that would be more comprehensible and relatable to readers in twentieth-century China. This adaptation was specifically tailored to fit the cultural and linguistic landscape of China during the 1950s and 1980s, ensuring that the translation resonated with the Chinese audience of that time. Wang’s process of decoding and encoding can be construed as a manifestation of ‘cultural turn’, as elucidated by Stuart Hall. This approach acknowledges the asymmetry in the use of codes when confronting societal structural differences, wherein encoding and decoding are not directly congruent.<sup>443</sup> Within this process, ideology plays a pivotal role in shaping both encoding and decoding. Literal translating ‘sands of life’ would be incomprehensible to Chinese readers, necessitating the translation of an equivalent imagery that is both meaningful and intelligible within the Chinese cultural context. Undoubtedly, the 1985 translation surpasses the 1959, as the phrase ‘one breath’ encapsulates a more concrete and holistic imagery compared to the expansive factual description of ‘my life is still alive’ in 1959. The choice to translate ‘sands of life’ into ‘one breath’ resonates with the earlier imageries of roses newly sprung in June, sweet melody, the seas, and the rocks, establishing a thematic coherence across content, form, mood, language, and even poetic rhythm, achieving a greater equivalence with the original work. In the 1985 translation, Wang liberates himself from strict adherence to the imagery in the source text, employing

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<sup>442</sup> Rigui (日晷) refers to an ancient Chinese timekeeping instrument that utilized the shadow cast by the sun to determine the time.

<sup>443</sup> Stuart Hall, ‘Encoding/Decoding’, in *Culture, Media, Language*, ed. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Love, and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980), pp.128-38(131).



a cultural turn in translation by opting for the more familiar expression ‘one breath’ within the Chinese cultural context. This choice imbues the translation with heightened emotional vigour, diverging from the mundane factual statement of ‘my life is still alive’.

The final two lines of the song, ‘And I will come again, my Luve, / Tho’ it were ten thousand mile!’, initially rendered as ‘But I surely want to come back, / Even if a thousand or ten thousand mile!’ in 1959, and ‘I will absolutely come back, dear, / Even if traversed an or ten thousand mile!’ in 1985. From the comparison, 1985’s version removes the conjunction ‘but’ that is not present in the original, replaces ‘want to’ with ‘will’, and appends ‘dear’ at the end of the line, enhancing the equivalence to the original. However, a noteworthy addition in the 1985 version, the word ‘traversed’ before ‘an or ten thousand mile’, which introduces an element of redundancy. In the overall revision of this song, Wang refines the rhythm and diction, infusing the translation with a more melodic and folkloric quality. In essence, these alterations exemplify Wang’s translation strategy, demonstrating his nuanced approach to phonetics, rhythm, imagery, and cultural translation.

To take another example, the introduction of ‘Holy Willie’s Prayer’ undergoes significant revisions, underscoring Wang’s economy of language and his mastery of the sense of rhythm in verses.

Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor Elder in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tipling Orthodoxy, and for that Spiritualized Bawdry which refines to Liquorish Devotion.<sup>444</sup>

The translation in 1959 is as follows:

威利是摩希林地方教堂的长老，一个上了年纪的单身汉，他喜欢与人争论，以此出名，终于成为正统卫道之士。但因贪杯，所卫的道也就常发酒疯；又喜欢同女人鬼混，虽然道貌岸然，信教似乎极诚，其实只是酒色之徒。<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> Kinsley, No. 53, p.74.

<sup>445</sup> Wang, 1959, p.57.

Willie was the elder of the parish church of Mauchline, an old bachelor, who had earned a fame for his penchant for arguing with people and eventually became a defender of orthodoxy. But due to the obsession with drinking, his defence of the faith often went mad; Also liked to fool around with women, although seemingly sanctimonious and deeply pious in faith, in reality he was only a voluptuary.

The translation in 1985:

威利是摩希林地方教堂的长老，一个上了年纪的单身汉，喜与人争，喋喋不休，以此出名，终成正统，然贪杯如故；又以好色著，虽经净化，貌似虔诚，实仍多欲。

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Willie was the elder of the parish church of Mauchline, an old bachelor, known for fancying quarrel with people, and chattering, eventually became orthodox but drank as before; also fame for bawdry, though purged, seemingly faithful, in reality still lustful.

The original verses perfectly demonstrate Burns's astonishing capability to organize words, making its faithful translation quite challenging yet immensely rewarding for those who seek to capture the essence and lyrical beauty of his poetry in another language. This is evident embodied in Wang's 1985 revised translation. Albeit only 37 words, it provides a detailed background of Willie as well as contains informative vocabulary that is hard to be translated, such as 'polemical', 'tippling', 'spiritualized bawdry', and 'liquorish devotion'. In the 1985 version, Wang departs from the colloquial expressions used in the 1959 translation, opting instead for seven four-character phrases commonly used in Chinese culture conventions, such as '喜与人争' (fancying quarrel with people), '喋喋不休' (chattering), '以此出名' (known for), '终成正统' (eventually became orthodox), '虽经净化' (though purged), '貌似虔诚' (seemingly faithful), and '实仍多欲' (in reality still lustful), which align with Wang's assertion of a 'mixture of literary and vernacular language'. This choice is in accordance with Chinese linguistic habits, where four-character expressions often manifest as idioms, enhancing the conciseness of

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<sup>446</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.75.

the statement. Moreover, the use of these four-character idioms contributes to a rhythmic and humorous cadence in the overall translation, akin to the style of a satirical ballad, aligning with the original’s ironic and witty tone.<sup>447</sup> To compare the two editions of translations, it can be seen that the 1985 is more clarified and refined. The formal word, ‘polemical’, is translated initially from ‘loving arguing’ into ‘fancying quarrying and not stopping chattering’. The former is colloquial, yet the latter is poetic with a sense of rhythm and adds ‘chattering’ of the original. The 1959 version is loosely structured and colloquial with mild sense of irony. In contrast, the 1985 translation refines the diction into four-character phrases to strengthen the irony, narrative tone and sense of rhythm, making the image of the elder Willie vividly pictorial. From this comparison, it can be seen that Wang endeavours to convey the satirical style of the original work by refining the vocabulary and sentence pattern to make the translation more accurately reappear the original.

Another example is of the translation of ‘On W. R——, Esq.’.

So vile was poor Wat, such a miscreant slave,  
That the worms even damn’d him when laid in his grave.  
‘In his scull there’s a famine!’ a starv’d reptile cries;  
‘And his heart it is poison!’ another replies.<sup>448</sup>

The translation of 1959 is as follows:

此人乃坏透了的奴才，	Such a miscreant slave,
一条恶毒的长虫，	A vicious reptile,

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<sup>447</sup> ‘打油诗’ (Dayou poetry) is a form of poetry characterized by its whimsical, humorous, and compact nature, often infused with colloquial and vulgar expressions. Sometimes, the poets use it for self-mockery. Dayou poetry does not adhere strictly to metrical rules and pays little attention to, rhyme, or tonal patterns. It is often composed in lines of either five or seven characters. This type of poetry is frequently employed to mock and satirize various aspects of society.

<sup>448</sup> Kinsley, No. 452, p.734.

就连他尸上的蛆，	Even the worms on his corpse,
也咒他永不超生。	Damned him to the hell forever.
一条饿极了的毒蛇喊道：	A very starved serpent shouted:
“此人头脑空空，只有饥荒；”	‘He’s got nothing in head but only famine’;
另外一条毒蛇答道：	Another serpent replied:
“此人的心根本就是砒霜。” <sup>449</sup>	‘His heart is a poison at all.’

In the 1985 translation, it is altered as follows:

这个奴才坏到了极点，	This slave is as bad as can be,
他尸上的蛆也咒他永不超生，	The worms on his corpse also damned him to the hell forever,
一条饿蛇叫道：“他脑里只见灾荒；”	A starved serpent cried, ‘In his head there’s on famine;’
另一条蛇答道：“他的心乃是砒霜。” <sup>450</sup>	Another serpent replied, ‘His heart is a poison.’

Both the translations capture the ironic essence of the original, albeit with distinct stylistic choices. The former opts for a more conversational structure with eight lines, while in the latter, Wang refines the epigram into a concise four-line format reminiscent of a quatrain in traditional Chinese poetry. After this adaptation, the translation acquires a poetical quality infused with echoes of archaic quatrain rhymes, enhancing the rhythmic elements. Notably, in the third and fourth lines, the word count corresponds, establishing a nuanced contrast and amplifying the underlying irony.

Another example, ‘Epistle to J. Lapraik, An Old Scotch Bard’, the first three lines of stanza six,

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<sup>449</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1959, p.49.

<sup>450</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.118.

That, set him to a pint of ale,  
An’ either douse or merry tale,  
Or rhymes an’ sangs he’d made himsel,<sup>451</sup>

were translated as the follows in 1959:

他们说只要敬上一杯酒，      They say if only toast a glass of booze,  
你的诗就源源不断像河流，      Your poems will be consistently flowing like a river,  
庄重的和诙谐的全都有，<sup>452</sup>      With both the solemn and witty.

While they were revised in 1985 as follows:

他们说只要敬你一杯酒，      They say if only make a toast to you with a glass of booze,  
诗句就源源不断像河流，      Poems and verses will be consistently flowing like a river ,  
庄重的和诙谐的全都有，<sup>453</sup>      With both the solemn and witty.

Both translations maintain the same rhyme scheme (aaabab) as the original. While the original three lines consist of eight syllables each, the 1959 translation adapts them into lines with 10, 11, and 10 words, respectively. In the 1985 version, the second line is adjusted to 10 words by removing ‘your’, ensuring uniformity in characters across the three lines. This adjustment aligns with the conventions of form, rhythm, and phonology present in traditional Chinese poetry.

Furthermore, Wang’s contributions to Burns translation is evident not only in the internal improvement observed across his own various renditions but also in an external comparison with other translators. To illustrate, consider three notable renditions of ‘My

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<sup>451</sup> Kinsley, No.57, p.86.

<sup>452</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1959, p.35.

<sup>453</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.35.

heart's in the Highlands' by Yuan Shuipai in 1944, Yuan Kejia in 1986 and Wang Zuoliang in 1985 in stanza two as follows. A detailed exploration of Li Zhengshuan's translation, completed in 2016, will be provided later in this chapter, stressing Wang's influence exerted on subsequent translators.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North;  
The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth;  
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,  
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love. ——<sup>454</sup>

In 1985, Wang's rendition is as follows:

再会吧，高原！再会吧，北方！(ang)	Farewell, the highlands! Farewell, the north!
你是品德的国家、壮士的故乡，(ang)	You are the country of virtue, the home land of warriors!
不管我在哪儿游荡、到哪儿流浪，(ang)	Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
高原的群山我永不相忘! <sup>455</sup> (ang)	The hills of the highlands I never ever forget!

In 1944, Yuan Shuipai translated it as:

再会了，高原，再会了，北方，(fang)	Farewell, highlands, farewell, north,
英雄之所诞生，四海之所尊敬；(ing)	The birth of hero, the respect of four seas;
无论我走到哪儿，无论我流浪何方，(fang)	Wherever I go, wherever I rove,
高原的群山呀，总归在我心上。 <sup>456</sup> (ang)	The hills of the highlands Oh, anyhow in my

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<sup>454</sup> Kinsley, No. 301, p.527-8(528).

<sup>455</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.35.

<sup>456</sup> Yuan Shuipai, *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, 1944, p.1-2.

heart.

Yuan Kejia translated it in 1985 as:

别了啊高原，别了啊北国，(guo) Farewell the highlands, farewell the northern country,  
英雄的家乡，可敬的故国；(guo) The homeland of hero, the home country of honour;  
哪儿我飘荡，哪儿我遨游，(ou) Where I drift, where I roam,  
我永远爱着高原上的山丘。<sup>457</sup> (iu) I love the hills of the highlands forever.

The original features an *aabb* rhyme scheme, Wang’s pattern is *aaaa*, Yuan Shuipai’s *abaa* and Yuan Kejia’s *aabc*, according to the rhyme feet of the Chinese *Pinyin*<sup>458</sup> I marked at the end of each line. The three translators do not strictly adhere to the original arrangement of rhyme feet. Notably, in Yuan Shuipai’s translation, the rhymes of the first and third lines have the same character ‘fang’ (方). Generally, it is advisable to avoid the same work repeatedly in rhymes, a principle applicable to Chinese. Yuan Kejia, on the other hand, repeats the word ‘guo’(国) in the rhymes of the first and second lines. In terms of overall rhyme arrangement, Wang’s approach is more inventive and tidier, employing different words to rhyme with ‘ang’, resulting in a more aesthetically pleasing poetic effect. This emphasis on phonology reflects Wang’s commitment to making his translation more poetic, aligning with his overarching translation principle of ‘translating poetry by poetry’.

The second line of the stanza, ‘The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth’, is the hardest part to be translated in this stanza. The idea of the ‘Highlands’ as ‘an idealized locale of value’ rather than merely a physical region stems from Scottish nationalist historiography, and the speaker in the song is evidently estranged from what they love and value place, evoking universal human sentiments of ‘displacement, longing, and

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<sup>457</sup> Yuan Kejia, *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*, 1986, p. 13. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>458</sup> *Pinyin* refers to adopt the international common Latin alphabet, adopts the phonetized syllable structure, and spells the Mandarin phonetic system with Beijing pronunciation as the standard sound.

nostalgia'.<sup>459</sup> Translators confront a challenge in rendering the complicated emotions and value behind the lines and the nuanced meaning of 'Valour' and 'Worth'. Wang translates them as 'warriors' and 'virtue', while Yuan Shuipai as 'hero' and 'respect' and Yuan Kejia as 'hero' and 'honour'. To maintain the rhyme scheme, Wang rearranges the order of the two elements and introduces a subject into 'You are the country of virtue, the home land of warriors', clarifying that this line pertains to the preceding highlands and the north. 'The country of Worth' is rendered as 'the respect of four seas' by Yuan Shuipai. The 'four seas' is an elegant and archaic phrase referring to the world, which potentially dilutes the folksong flavour in the original.

In the third line, where the original mentions 'Wherever I wander, wherever I rove', the translators grapple with the nuanced meaning of 'wander' and 'rove' by their own selections. Yuan Shuipai translates them as 'go' (走, zou) and 'rove' (流浪, liulang), Yuan Kejia 'drift' (飘荡, piaodang) and 'roam' (遨游, aoyou), and Wang 'wander' (游荡, youdang) and 'rove' (流浪, liulang). Wang's choice of 'youdang' and 'liulang', rhymes with 'ang' as two distinct words with a rhythmic quality akin to music, aligning with his strategy of 'translating poetry with poetry'. Likewise, in the final line of the stanza, which states 'The hills of the Highlands for ever I love', Yuan Shuipai renders it as 'The hills of the highlands O, anyhow in my heart'. However the term 'anyhow' here does not seem appropriately faithful for the original 'forever'. Yuan Kejia provides a literal translation, 'I love the hills of highlands for ever', lacking the evocative resonance and emotional impact in common colloquial language. Wang's version, 'The hills of the highlands I never ever forget!', deviates from the usual Chinese words order which should be as 'I never ever forget the hills of the highlands', bringing a sense of freshness and defeminization. Recognizing that the original 'for ever I love' is a cliché in Chinese, Wang replaces it with 'I never ever forget' to maintain rhyme at the end of the line, effectively conveying the poet's enduring passion.

Overall, in the translation of this stanza, Yuan Shuipai employs a more freely translated approach with loosely structured lines between stanzas. Yuan Kejia's rendition is the most literal, closely resembling the original but lacking the emotional depth. In contrast, Wang's translation endows more rhythm and beauty reminiscent of Chinese

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<sup>459</sup> Robert Burns, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, Vol. III, The Scots Musical Museum Part Two, Notes and Appendices*, ed. Murray Pittock, p.84.



archaic poetry, while still maintaining proximity to the original. While Wang’s translation does not precisely replicate the rhyme and rhythm of the original Scottish folk songs, it introduces a fresh and exotic quality distinct from traditional Chinese poetry.

In addition to the contributing to Burns’s translation through phonology, register and cultural turn, Wang stands out for his precise and literal comprehension of Burns’s works, setting his translation apart from others and making it influential. This is evident in his translation of ‘Tam o’ Shanter’. Of Burns poetry published in mainland China, only Yuan Kejia and Wang Zuoliang attempted the translation of ‘Tam o’ Shanter’<sup>460</sup>. This chapter will discuss the comparison between Wang and Yuan Kejia in their translations of ‘Tam o’ Shanter’. As the zenith of Burns poetics, ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ represents a ‘perfect example of Burns’s complete mastery in a harmony of English and Scots’<sup>461</sup>, a perfect combination of the Scots oral folk tradition and the literatures of Scotland and England, and the eighteen-century Scots in the poem related to ordinary Scottish life. Given the complexity of the piece, it poses a considerable challenge for translation. The comparative analysis of Yuan Kejia’s translation with Wang’s reveals the overall translation proficiency of a translator in terms of vocabulary, sentence pattern, rhyme, rhythm, semantics, logic, style, cohesion and coherence.

For instance, the second line of the first stanza, ‘And drouthy neebors, neebors meet’<sup>462</sup>, ‘drouthy neebors’ was wrongly translated into ‘thirsty neighbours’ by Yuan, while ‘neighbours who are addicted to drink’ by Wang. The tem ‘Drouthy’ is a Scots word, referring to ‘dry, thirsty, addicted to drink, [...] also used substantially = a drunkard’<sup>463</sup>. Apparently, Yuan literally adopted the meaning of ‘dry, thirsty’ in this line without considering the context. In terms of the contexts, Wang’s rendering of ‘addicted to drink’ is a more accurate understanding compared to Yuan’s ‘thirsty’. Likewise, the line 42, ‘His ancient, trusty, drouthy Crony’<sup>464</sup>, Yuan persists with the translation ‘his old,

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<sup>460</sup> Liang Shiqiu’s translation of ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ was published in *New Moon* in 1929. Yet since in 1949 Liang escaped the civil war to fled to Taiwan where he taught in Taiwan Normal University until his retirement in 1966, Liang has been no longer classified in the scope of mainland scholars and writers, therefore Liang is not included in the comparison of this chapter in relation to the influential mainland Chinese translation .

<sup>461</sup> Thomas Crawford, *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs*, 1994 (1960), p.255.

<sup>462</sup> Kinsley, No.321, p.557.

<sup>463</sup> *Dictionaries of the Scots Language*, < <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/drouthy>>, accessed on 16 June 2022.

<sup>464</sup> Kinsley, No. 321, p.558.

trusty, thirsty crony’, whereas Wang’s ‘the old drinking buddy’ aligns more closely with the original.

In line 107, ‘Wi’ tippeny, we fear nae evil’,<sup>465</sup> Yuan translates it as ‘After drinking beer, we do not fear evil’,<sup>466</sup> while Wang as ‘buying beer at two copper coins, after drinking fear nothing’.<sup>467</sup> According to *Dictionaries of the Scots Language*, the term ‘tippeny’ in Scots refers to ‘weak ale or beer sold at twopence the Scots Pint 3 imperial pints’.<sup>468</sup> Yuan simply translates it as a general word ‘beer’ while Wang provides a specific and detailed translation as ‘buying beer at two copper coins’. In ancient China, the prevalent currency included copper coins, silver coins and gold ingots. For Chinese readers, ‘two copper coins’ provides a more tangible and relatable representation of the price, allowing the reader to better grasp the economic context of the original, akin to an explanatory note the meaning of the term ‘tippeny’.

Furthermore, the lines 21-6,

That frae November till October,  
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;  
That ilka melder, wi’ the miller,  
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;  
That every naig was ca’d a shoe on,  
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;<sup>469</sup>

Yuan Kejia’s translation is as follows:

从今年十一月到来年十月份，	From this November to next October,
每逢赶集，总喝得大醉酩酊，	Every market day, always drunk,

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<sup>465</sup> Kinsley, No. 321, p.560.

<sup>466</sup> Yuan Kejia, 1986, p.310.

<sup>467</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.174.

<sup>468</sup> *Dictionaries of the Scots Language*, <<https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/tippenny>>, accessed on 16 June 2022.

<sup>469</sup> Kinsley, No. 321, p.558.



sat as lang as thou had siller'. Likewise, the two lines, 'that every naig was ca'd a shoe on, / The smith and thee gat roaring fou on', present a narrative discourse rather than serving as a metaphorical expression for 'ae market-day thou was nae sober'. Yuan's version deviates from the true understanding of the original, tampering with the semantic and logical coherence of the piece. The contextual disconnection introduced in the translation may confuse readers and is likely linked to the translator's limited comprehension of the original. In contrast, Wang's translation maintains clarity and natural semantic cohesion, aligning seamlessly with the original. Moreover, in the narrative segments involving the miller and smith, Wang employs a symmetrical structure in both words and forms, a rhetorical technique akin to juxtaposition in Chinese literature. This approach adheres to the rhythmic traditions of Chinese poetry, resulting in a rendition that is rhythmically pleasing and memorable.

The line 47 and 48, 'The landlady and Tam grew gracious, / Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious'<sup>472</sup>, were translated by Yuan as 'the landlady and Tam grew closer, / giving benefits secretly, sweet and precious',<sup>473</sup> while by Wang as 'Tam chatted with the landlady very affectionately, / who knows how many secret intimacy, how many sweet agreement'.<sup>474</sup> Notably, Yuan translates 'gracious' as 'closer' while Wang introduces a verb, 'chatted', to make the line into 'chatted with the landlady very affectionately'. Yuan's diction is a more ambiguous regarding the relationship between a man and a woman than Wang's. Yuan's rendition of the latter sentence as 'giving benefits secretly', lacks clear semantic continuity with the previous line. The ambiguity arises from the unclear identification of whether the landlady or Tam is providing 'secretly benefits' to the other or each other. This lack of clarity could confuse readers. On the other hand, Wang's translation, 'who knows how much intimacy in secret, how much sweet agreement', transforms the adverbial phrase after the preposition with into a complete sentence. Wang includes a subject and predicate with 'who knows', and an object leading by 'how much' followed by 'intimacy in secret' and 'sweet agreement', creating a clearer and more structured expression. Wang's restructuring of the sentence facilitates a logical connection with the preceding semantics, enhancing reader comprehension. The challenge posed by the original four words, 'favours, secret, sweet, and precious', is

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<sup>472</sup> Kinsley, No.321, p.558.

<sup>473</sup> Yuan Kejia, 1986, p.307.

<sup>474</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.172.

effectively addressed by Wang. While Yuan’s literal translation results in a confusing rendition, Wang skilfully reorganizes the four words into two pairs, ‘favours’ and ‘secret’, ‘sweet’ and ‘precious’, creating the phrases ‘secret intamac’ and ‘sweet agreement’. This restructuring forms a pair of parallel exclamatory sentences, presenting a more elegant and poetic expression. Wang’s choice of free translation maintains clarity while incorporating a vernacular style reminiscent of early twentieth-century Chinese poetry expression, aligning more closely with the original style and meaning.

Furthermore, the line 151-8:

Now, Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,  
A’ plump and strapping in their teens,  
Their srks, instead o’ creeshie flannen,  
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linnen!  
Thir breeks o’ mine, my only pair,  
That ance were plush, o’ gude blue hair,  
I wad hae gi’en them off my hurdies,  
For ae blink o’ the bonie burdies!<sup>475</sup>

Yuan’s translation is as follows:

汤姆哦汤姆！这些兴许	Tam Oh Tam! These might be
是又肥又壮的妙龄少女！	Fat and strong young girls!
她们的衬衣并非法兰绒沾满了油污，	Their shirts are not flannel smeared with grease,
而是雪白的十七支纱细麻布！——	But snow-white seventeen-yard fine linen!
我这条裤子，唯一的一条	This trousers of mine, the unique one
丝绒做的，有蓝色绒毛，	Made of velvet, with blue hair,
我宁愿脱下来送给她们，	I would prefer to take it off to give them,

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<sup>475</sup> Kinsley, No. 321, p.562.

只要让我瞅一眼美丽的姑娘们！<sup>476</sup> As long as allow me to have a glance at  
pretty girls!

Wang's translation:

呀，汤姆呀！汤姆！	Oh Tam! Tam!
如果跳舞的是年轻姑娘，	If the dancers were young girls,
年方二八，体态轻盈口脂香，	Sixteen-year old, slim figure with good-smell breath,
如果她们的汗衣不是那块油抹布，	If their underwear were not the grease rags,
而是雪白透明绣花缃边的细夏布，	But a snow-white transparent embroidered fine cambric,
而我也愿立刻脱下我唯一的呢马裤，	I also prefer taking off my only woollen breeches at once,
天气再冷也不怕光屁股，	With no fear of bare ass even in the extremely cold,
这裤子原是蓝绒缝成料子好，	The trousers was made of blue velvet fine fabric,
但为了瞅一眼姑娘，马上可送掉！ <sup>477</sup>	But I can give it away for a glance at girls!

Yuan's translation of the subjunctive mood in the line 'had thae been queans' as 'These might be / fat and strong young girls!' reflects a misunderstanding of the original construction. The use of 'might be' introduces ambiguity and makes the following lines challenging to comprehend. Describing young girls as 'fat and strong' is incongruous and fails to evoke the image of teenage girls as the original does. Additionally, between the two lines 'their shirts are not flannel smeared with grease, / but snow-white seventeen-yard linen', it seems to lack a semantic coherence. Likewise, when the translator expresses his intention to remove his trousers to give them to the girls in the subsequent lines, the reader is left puzzled by such a gesture. Generally, Yuan himself does not fully

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<sup>476</sup> Yuan Kejia, 1986, p.313.

<sup>477</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, pp.176-7.

grasp this stanza, making the reader confused when reading it. While Wang effectively conveys the logical relationship between lines of this stanza in his translation. Starting with the hypothetical scenario of ‘If the dancers were young girls’ and ‘if their underwear were not the grease rags’, he seamlessly connects these conditions to the subsequent action: ‘I also prefer to take off my only woollen breeches at once’ with the purpose of ‘giving it away for a glance at girls’. This ensures a logical and coherent flow throughout the stanza. In contrast, Yuan’s translation presents these elements – ‘young girl’, ‘snow-white seventeen-yard linen’, and ‘I give my velvet trousers to girls’ – in a disjointed manner, leaving readers struggling to comprehend the relationship between these details. While Yuan’s translation remains faithful to the original in terms of details, Wang’s approach, as he points out, prioritizes overall coherence to avoid a fragmented rendition.<sup>478</sup>

The importance of maintaining overall coherence in translation becomes evident when some translators prioritize the literal equivalence of details, often resulting in a rendition where each line is comprehensible in isolation but fails to convey a meaningful whole. Wang underscores the necessity for the translation to be viewed as a unified entity, comprising two essential aspects. Firstly, while maintaining fidelity at the sentence and line levels, the overall impact of the translation should align with the original work. Language, Wang argues, inherently conveys meaning within a specific context, and when the context is coherent, the translator can approach details by emphasizing, omitting, or modifying them to align with the overarching mood or vibe.<sup>479</sup> In essence, Wang’s approach involves highlighting, omitting, and modifying details to ensure the overall coherence of the translated poem, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding.

Yuan and Wang exhibit numerous differences in their translations of ‘Tam o’ Shanter’, with one notable distinction being the arrangement of lines. The original work features couplets that rhyme in a/a, b/b, c/c, and so forth. Wang adheres strictly to this couplet-rhyming pattern in his translations, while Yuan does not follow the original structure. Additionally, Yuan first published his translation in 1986 as part of the third edition of *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* (1959, 1981), whereas Wang’s translation was initially included in the 1959 edition of *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* and has remained unchanged in subsequent republishing. Overall, Wang’s translation is considered more

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<sup>478</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.35.

<sup>479</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘Preface’, 1985, p.35.

successful than Yuan's, displaying superiority in terms of diction, phonology, faithfulness to the original, and various other aspects. Wang employs a more poetic diction, incorporating changes in different registers, whereas Yuan's translation leans toward colloquial language, lacking refinement and conciseness in verse structure and poetic sensibility.

Finally, Wang's significant contribution to Burns translation is evident in his lasting impact on the subsequent translators. Following Wang Zuoliang, Yuan Shuipai and Yuan Kejia, the next influential translator to publish a collection of Burns's poetry was Li Zhengshuan in 2016, *Selected Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)*. Notably, Li's arrangement of translated poems in his collection is based on the classification in Wang's *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1985). Wang's original collection includes seven categories: lyric poetry, satirical poetry, improvisation poetry, animal poetry, narrative poetry, epigram and cantata. While Li's classification has undergone slight modifications, condensing it into six themes: love poems, patriotic poems, poems of friendship, poems on freedom, satirical poems and poems on animals. Li's decision to focus on Burns's short pieces, predominantly lyrical poems, results in further sub-classifications, such as love poems, patriotic poems, friendship poems and freedom poems. Despite these adjustments, it is evident that Li's classification is fundamentally influenced by Wang's original categorization.

Li's translation principles are notably influenced by Wang, particularly in his commitment to the approach of 'insisting on translating poetry by poetry'<sup>480</sup> mentioned in Li's 'Foreword' of the translation collection. This echoes Wang's assertion that the foremost rule in translating Burns's poetry is to 'translate poetry with poetry'<sup>481</sup> as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Furthermore, Li stated, 'Try best to retain the original style and the flavour of folk songs. [...] Retain the tonality of the original'.<sup>482</sup> Wang, in his preface in 1986 translation, extensively elaborated on his strategies for translating Burns's poetry as I elaborated earlier in this chapter. His emphasises on maintaining rhymes, aligning words with original syllables, faithfully adhering to the poetic form, and employing various registers, including archaic Chinese, vernacular, colloquial, folk songs, and written language, have evidently influenced Li Zhengshuan's

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<sup>480</sup> Li Zhengshuan, 'Foreword', p.xvi.

<sup>481</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 'Preface', 1985, p.31.

<sup>482</sup> Li Zhengshuan, p.xvi.



translation ideas as well. For instance, in the case of the title of the song ‘O Whistle an’ I’ll Come to Ye, My Lad’, Wang employs a successful translation strategy to capture the folksong style ‘Lang (郎) Whistles Mei (妹)’ll Come’. He adapts the word order and incorporates the personal pronouns of traditional Chinese folksong. ‘Lang’ (郎) refers to a young boy as the male lover while ‘mei’ (妹) a young girl as the female lover in a romantic relationship in the context of traditional Chinese folksong. Li, influenced by Wang’s approach, makes a minor adjustment, changing Wang’s ‘lang’ into ‘ge’ (elder brother, 哥), namely, ‘Ge Whistles Mei’ll Come’. In Chinese folk songs, ‘ge’ is another name as ‘lang’ associated with the male lover. The best demand in Wang’s translation of the title is to adopt the personal pronouns of Chinese folksong, ‘lang’ and ‘mei’, providing an authentic flavour of Chinese folksong. Li, influenced by Wang, adopts Wang’s strategy but has a bit improvement for referring to the male lover from ‘lang’ to ‘ge’.

Likewise, taking the first stanza of the song as an example, these differences can be observed. Take the first stanza of the song as an example,

But warily tent, when ye come to court me,  
And come nae unless the back-yett be a-jee;  
Syne up the back-style, and let naebody see,  
And come as ye were na comin to me—  
And come as ye were na comin to me.—<sup>483</sup>

Wang translate as follows:

你要求爱得悄悄来, (ai)	Come over quietly when you want to court,
后门不开不要来, (ai)	Don’t come if the back door is not open,
来了从后院上楼别让人见, (ian)	Go upstairs from the backyard letting nobody see,
见了装作不是为我来, (ai)	If being seen as pretend not coming for me,

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<sup>483</sup> Kinsley, No.420, p.700.

见了装作不是为我来!<sup>484</sup> (ai)      If being seen as pretend not coming for me.

Li Zhengshuan's translation:

你来向我求爱时要当心, (in)      When you come to court me be careful,  
 后门没虚掩时你莫来。 (ai)      The backdoor is not half open you don't come.  
 爬上后面梯, 莫让人发现。 (ian)      Go up the backstairs, don't let people see.  
 来时假装不是为了我, (o)      Come as pretend not coming for me,  
 来时假装不是为了我。<sup>485</sup> (o)      Come as pretend not coming for me.

Both Li and Wang opt for a literal translation and adopt a style of spoken language to endeavouring to create a folksong flavour. In the final line, 'And come as ye were na comin to me', Wang renders it as 'if being seen as pretend not coming for me' while Li 'come as pretend not coming for me'. It is notably to identify that Li's translation is followed is in an attempt to match the rhyme as the original, albeit not perfectly in the third line. As he puts it, 'Burns's poems are very musical, therefore my translation retains the rhymes (but only approximate rhymes) and also intends to be equivalent in form'.<sup>486</sup> Li's translation, like Wang's, strives to capture the flavour of folk songs by incorporating the vocabulary of folksong. For instance in the second and third line of this stanza, 'And come nae unless the back-yett be a-jee; / Syne up the back-style, and let naebody see', Li uses the typical folksong word, 'mo'(莫) in Chinese to translate negative adverb 'no' in the original, immediately endowing the rendition a folksong colour. In the final line, 'and come as ye were na comin to me', only the initial two words differ between Wang's and Li's translation, with the subsequent sentences being essentially the same. It is evident that Li's translation builds upon the foundation laid by Wang.

We already looked at Wang's translation strategies earlier in this chapter. Li's translation can be seen as following Wang's style and make an improvement based on

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<sup>484</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.55.

<sup>485</sup> Li Zhengshuan, p.109.

<sup>486</sup> Wang Zuoliang, 1985, p.31.

Wang’s translation. Wang’s influence on Li is further evident in the translation of the popular song in China, ‘A red red Rose’. The early part of this chapter discussed Wang’s translation strategies in detail in relation to this song. Here, without further elaboration, only highlight Wang’s influence on Li’s translation. In relation to the title, Li follows Wang’s lead and translates it as ‘a red red rose’ (一朵红红的玫瑰). The two images, ‘a’ the seas gang dry’, and ‘the rocks melt wi’ the sun’, are separated by Wang to avoid repeating the fixed Chinese cliché ‘the seas go dry and the rocks dust’ (海枯石烂) by taking the approach of literal translation. Likewise, based on Wang, Li translates them as ‘till the seas go dry and the waters run out’ and ‘sun turns the rocks to dust’.<sup>487</sup> Li only adjusts ‘burns’ to ‘turns’, a more poetic term in Chinese, adding an refinement to Wang’s work. And the imagery, ‘While the sands o’ life shall run’, is rendered as ‘As long as my life isn’t ended and I still have one breath’<sup>488</sup> by Li, which obviously repeats Wang’s successful ‘cultural turn’, ‘one breath’ for ‘sand o’ life’, as I discussed previously in this chapter. Yet Li supplements a specific context, ‘my life isn’t ended’, to make the line more detailed and understandable. This indicates that Li’s work has been within the framework and under the influence of Wang’s approaches to Burns translation.

In conclusion, Wang Zuoliang’s translation of Robert Burns’s works represents a remarkable fusion of linguistic versatility, rhythmic precision, and cultural sensitivity. His ability to navigate various language styles, coupled with a keen understanding of rhyme and rhythm, contributes to translations that are not only accessible but also convey the expressive and melodious qualities of Burns’s poetry. Wang’s commitment to cultural translation ensures that the Chinese renditions capture the essence of the original Scots poems while sounding distinctly Chinese. His approach stands as an illuminating model for future translators tackling the works of Scots poets in Chinese, showcasing the possibility of maintaining both linguistic faithfulness and artistic resonance across cultural boundaries.

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<sup>487</sup> Li Zhengshuan, p.3.

<sup>488</sup> Li Zhengshuan, p.3.

# 7 BURNS RECEPTION BEYOND TEXT: ROBERT BURNS IN CHINA

This chapter delves into Burns culture in China beyond text consisting of three parts. The initial part focuses on the reception of Burns Night in China's academic and civil spheres. Subsequently, the chapter explores Burns Nights within the Chinese diaspora across the world. The final part scrutinizes the dissemination of Burns's music, with a specific focus on 'Auld lang syne', as it undergoes transformation into a widely recognized popular song in China.

At the 2019 Spring Festival Gala by China Central Television (hereinafter CCTV), Xiao Shenyang, a young comedian in a Scottish red tartan, garnered overnight fame throughout China with his performance in a comic sketch, 'No Shortage of Money' (bu cha qian). The Spring Festival Gala hosted by CCTV, the most influential annual event in China, has held on to the eve of the Chinese lunar new year as a new tradition for saying good-bye for the old year and party into the new year since 1983, featuring incredible live music and extravaganzas. This comic sketch could be perceived as a remote tribute to the Scottish bard, Robert Burns, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the poet's birth. While Burns translations and studies were discussed in the initial four chapters, Burns culture beyond text also has won an appeal in China. In the Anglo-American world, the cultural memory associated with Burns encompasses festivals, songs, rituals, texts, rites, and objects dedicated to commemorating the poet and his works. However, the landscape of Burns culture in China illustrates a distinctive contour shaped by Chinese Confucian culture when confronted with the heterogeneous Western culture represented by Burns's works and Burns Night.

The most important manifestation of Burns's appeal in China is the celebration of Burns Night. Prior to the founding of the PRC in 1949, no evidence supports the occurrence of Burns Night in the mainland China during the Republic era. However,

historical records document St Andrews Dinners organised by the influential Jardine Matheson trading family, commencing on board one of their ships, the *Jamesina* off Fukien, in 1832 and with subsequent annual dinners held at the different locations of family factory area in Canton (now Guangdong in Mandarin) commemorating their Scottish roots.<sup>489</sup> Local newspapers describe it as ‘a splendid dinner was given by Mr Jardine, at which 67 gentlemen sat down’, including at least one Chinese merchant.<sup>490</sup> Over the next two decades, these events took place at the company’s headquarters in Hongkong before ultimately relocating to the refined environs of the Hongkong Club from the 1850s. Over time, these dinners garnered support of the Hongkong St Andrew’s Society, established in 1881 or 1882 which introduced a Burns Supper a few years later, possibly coinciding with the arrival of the esteemed Burnsian Dr James Cantlie (1851-1926) to teach medicine in the Colony in 1886.<sup>491</sup> The St Andrew’s Society dinner and Burns Supper continue to stand out as highlights of the Special Administrative Region’s social calendar, enduring even after the Union Flag was lowered by the final garrison unit in Hongkong, the Black Watch, departing with the melody of ‘Auld lang syne’ in 1997. For instance, in 1981, the Hongkong Burns Supper had 135 kg of haggis to serve the guests. To the present day, Hongkong St Andrews Society held Burns Night annually to celebrate Scottish culture and heritage for Scots in Hongkong or anyone who has affinity with Scotland.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that in the late nineteenth century Sun Zhongshan almost certainly attended a Burns Night in London, during his period of London from 1896-7 under the auspices of Dr James Cantlie, the President of The Burns Club of London. Sun came to Hongkong in 1887 to study the practice of medicine and surgery for five years at the College of Medicine.<sup>492</sup> The Qing government put a bounty on Sun’s head for leading the Canton Uprising in 1895. Sun fled and arrived in London via the United States on September 30, 1896, and was saved by Cantlie from an abduction

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<sup>489</sup> ‘St Andrew Dinners’ <<https://standrewshk.org/st-andrews-dinner/>>, accessed on 20 November 2023.

<sup>490</sup> Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 7 January 1936. See also Tanja Buelmann, *Clubbing Together – Ethnicity, Civility and Formal Sociability in the Scottish Diaspora to 1930*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), p.169.

<sup>491</sup> Clark McGinn, *The Burns Supper: A Comprehensive History* (Edinburgh: Luath Press Limited, 2019), p.108.

<sup>492</sup> James Cantlie, *Sun Yet Sen and the Awakening of China* (New York, Chicago, Toronto, London and Edinburgh: Fleming Hi. Revell Company, 1912), p.27-8.

attempt by the Qing government in London. He eventually returned to China in July 1897. Later, in January 1912, he was inaugurated as the first president of the Republic of China. Among his Chinese associates, Cantlie also brought Sir Chih Chen Lo-feng-luh (1848-1901), the Qing's ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1896 – 1901, to the Burns Club of London where he proposed the toast to the Immortal Memory of Burns. Additionally, in the United States, Chang Yow Tong (1858 –?), a member of the Imperial Chinese Commission at the 1904 St. Louis World Fair, authored 'Human Progress as Shown at the World's Fair in St. Louis' in 1904. He dedicated his volume of graceful verse 'To Universal Peace'. The opening of the Exposition inspired him to write 'China's Message to Columbia'. The dedication of the Burns Cottage was on 24th June 1904, which coincided with Bannockburn Battle Day. Chang Yow Tong addressed his 'Lines to Burns' as follows:

O! kindred soul of humble birth,  
Divine, though of the lowly earth,  
Forgotten thou art not to-day,  
Not yet neglected – here's thy bay!

Thy cottage-home, hid from the proud,  
Nor thought of by the vulgar crowd,  
In thine own time has claimed a place  
On which the world's now gaze.

Nor changed its homely, rugged lines,  
Where closely crept thy tender vines;  
But men have changed: nor yet deplore –  
Where once they spurned we now adore.

Thy splendid fame shall ever rise  
With undimm'd glory o'er the skies; –

To struggling souls a hope shall yield  
On sailing seas and ploughing field.

I am a foreign, unknown bard,  
Whose devious course is rough and hard;  
But cheered at times by thy sweet song,  
I sing away, nor mind the throng.

Like thee, I’ll toil with manly hand,  
Like thee, by manhood ever stand;  
And, guided by thy spirit brave,  
Shall wait for verdict at the grave.<sup>493</sup>

In 1943, amid the Second World War, the Chinese government dispatched a ‘Parliamentary Goodwill Mission’ to the UK. While touring Scotland in January 1944, its leader, Dr Wen Yuanning (1899-1984), ‘surprised his guides with his knowledge of the works of Robert Burns; frequently during the tour he quoted some lines from Scotland’s national poet suitable to the occasion’.<sup>494</sup> This visit culminated in Dr Wen delivering a broadcast of an Immortal Memory on the BBC (on 25 January 1945) which the *Glasgow Herald* described not as ‘merely courteous gesture to the representative of a visiting Ally [...] but a man speaking, not for effect on a special occasion, but what he

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<sup>493</sup> Chang Yow Tong, ‘Lines to Burns’, *Burns Nights in St. Louis: Burns and English Poetry; Burns and the Prophet Isaiah; Burns and the Auld Clay Biggin*; View Points of J. L. Lowes, M.N.Sale; F. W. Lehmann; the Club, the Room, the Burnsiana, the Nights / by Walter B. Stevens (The Burns Club of St. Louis: Printed for private distribution to lovers of Burns by the Burns Club of St. Louis, 1911), pp.38-9(39).

<sup>494</sup> *The Children’s Newspaper*, 29 January 1944. Wen Yuanning (Wen Yuan-ning) (1900-1984): Scholar, politician and diplomatist. He graduated MA and LLB from Cambridge, taught literature at Beijing University, and edited an English-language magazine, *Tianxia* (The World). During the World War II, he served on the National Legislative Assembly. He was Republic of China ambassador to Greece in 1947 – 1968. He retired to Taipei, resuming teaching.

genuinely thought and felt to be true about Scotland's national poet'.<sup>495</sup> Wen mentioned two points in his address: Burns had an capability of 'evoking greatness out of the little things of life' as Chinese poetry did, and Burns's works voiced fervently 'the common belief of the brotherhood of man'.<sup>496</sup>

During 1940s, Chiang Yee (1903-1977), a painter, poet, writer and calligrapher, published the renowned Silent Traveller series, covering cities as diverse as London, Oxford, Edinburgh, Dublin and New York. In *The Silent Traveller in Edinburgh* in 1948, Chiang drew two illustrations by himself related to Burns: Burns monument in storm and Burns in Chinese dress. He argued a strong connection between Burns's works and the ancient Chinese folk songs in *Book of Songs* just as Dr Wen claimed the similarity between Burns's poetry and Chinese poetry in 1944. Chiang provided a translation of a folk song, 'Quiet Lassie' (jing nv, 静女), from *Book of Song* into Burns's style as evidence as follows:

Bonnie is my quiet lassie, supposed to be  
Waiting for me at the corner of the city-wall,  
I love her but know not where she is.  
Scratching my head I pace to and fro.

Fair is my quiet lassie,  
Who gave me a crimson reed.  
This crimson reed glows  
And reflects her beauty that I love.

From the pasture she brought back for me a tender blade,  
So beautiful and rare,  
It is not that, the blade, are beautiful,

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<sup>495</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 27 January 1944. *BBC Yearbook*, 1945 (London: BBC, 1945), p.80. The speech is printed in 'Robert Burns: His Immortal Memory', *Burns Chronicle 1945*, pp.6-7.

<sup>496</sup> Wen Yuanning, 'Robert Burns: His Immortal Memory', *Burns Chronicle 1945*, pp.6-7.



But you are the gift of my love.<sup>497</sup>

In light of the connection that Chiang claimed, Chiang even suggested that it is possible that Burns was adopted as a baby from China by a Scottish missionary named Burns, but regrettably, the details of his adventures remained undisclosed during a time when China, or Cathay, was perceived as too heathen to be associated with Scotland.<sup>498</sup> Furthermore, Chiang claimed that Burns’s life and thoughts were more Confucius than Christian.<sup>499</sup> For instance, in a letter to ‘Clarinda’ on 12 January 1788, Burns wrote, ‘I firmly believe that every honest upright man, of whatever sect, will be accepted by the Deity’.<sup>500</sup> The phrase, an ‘honest upright man’(zhiren, 直人), was constantly mentioned by Confucius in *The Analects of Confucius* (around 540 BC – 400 BC). Confucius’ main principle ‘The measure of man is man’ could not have been better expressed than Burns’s ‘A man’s Man for a’ That’. Chiang argued that Burns’s lament in ‘Man was Made to Mourn’ revealed the truth of human nature as Confucius’s statement, ‘truth may not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth.’<sup>501</sup> (道不远人。人之为道而远人, 不可以为道) Chiang argued that no genuine Chinese could have been more sincere in which he expresses his thoughts on nature, good fellowship, friendship and humanity might have been taken almost word for word from *The Analects of Confucius*.<sup>502</sup>

Pengchun Chang (1892-1957), a philosopher and diplomat, was a Burnsian and served as the vice-chairman of the Human Rights Commission from 1946 to 1948, a commission with a task of creating a new international rights document, namely the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (hereafter UDHR). According to his son Stanley Chang, P.C. Chang frequently invoked a phrase from Burns’s ‘Man was Made to Mourn, A Dirge’, ‘Man’s inhumanity against man’,<sup>503</sup> while discussing the primary objective of

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<sup>497</sup> Chiang Yee, *The Silent Traveller in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2003), p.154.

<sup>498</sup> Chiang Yee, *The Silent Traveller in Edinburgh*, p.155.

<sup>499</sup> Chiang, p.155.

<sup>500</sup> *The Letters of Robert Burns*, ed. J. De Lancey Ferguson, G. Ross Roy, 2 Vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1985), Vol. I, No. 176, p.161.

<sup>501</sup> Li Shen, p.44

<sup>502</sup> Chiang, p.155-6.

<sup>503</sup> Kinsley, No.64, pp.116-9 (118).

1948 UDHR in the initial meeting of the drafting group.<sup>504</sup> Chang placed great importance ‘human dignity’ from the outset, arguing that ‘the principle of human rights should be given universal application regardless of human level’<sup>505</sup> which encompassed the universality principle human rights and the concept of equality as the fundamental and ideological foundation.<sup>506</sup> Chang was profoundly influenced by traditional Confucianism represented by Confucius and Mencius’s thoughts, and eventually able to successfully integrate Confucius’ core concept ‘Ren’ (benevolence, two-man-mindedness, the feeling or sympathy with others) as ‘conscience’ into the UDHR.<sup>507</sup> Indeed, some Confucius’ thoughts are precisely compatible with Burns’s ideas, for instance, Confucius’s claim ‘within four seas all men are brother (四海之内皆兄弟也)’<sup>508</sup> with Burns’s fellow feelings, ‘That Man to Man the world o’er, / Shall brothers be for a’ that’.<sup>509</sup> The primary objective of the Declaration was to fight against man’s inhumanity that became evident during the Second World War. It could be asserted that Chiang Yee identified commonalities between Burns’ works and the ancient Chinese lyrics in *Book of Songs* as mentioned above, P.C. Chang alluded to a potential intersection of Burns’s ideas with traditional Confucianism in terms of humanity. In a sense, it exhibits a connection with Burns and Confucius in terms of ethnic sympathy, fellow feelings and central sympathy.

After 1949, Burns was promoted as a great people’s poet, reaching a zenith during the bicentennial of his birth in 1959. In 1959, *World Literary* published a brief report on the commemoration of Burns in Britain,

The Communist Party of Great Britain held a grand commemorating party in London. At the meeting, William Gallagher, chairman of the British Communist Party, addressed an

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<sup>504</sup> Hans Ingvar Roth, ‘P.C. Chang and the Quest for a Global Ethic’, *Diogenes*, Vol.64 (1-2), (2022), pp.39-46(45).

<sup>505</sup> Pengchun Chang, *China at the Crossroad* (London: Evans Brothers Ltd., Montague House, 1936), p.50.

<sup>506</sup> Pinghua Sun, *Historic Achievement of a Common Standard: Pengchun Chang and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Singapore: Springer, 2018), p.186.

<sup>507</sup> Pinghua Sun, *Historic Achievement of a Common Standard: Pengchun Chang and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, p.271.

<sup>508</sup> Yang Bojun, *The Annotations of The Analects of Confucius* [lun yu jimzhu] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Press, 1980), p.125. [Originally in Chinese] Four seas refer to the world.

<sup>509</sup> Kinsley, No. 482, p.763.

Immortal Memory to Burns. [...] The renowned British novelist, Jack Lindsay, also addressed to Burns at the commemoration. [...] Robin Arnold read ‘Holy Willie’s Prayer’, and the choir performed ‘Freedom is a Feast of Glory’, ‘Auld lang syne’ and other songs.<sup>510</sup>

At the same night, a massive celebration of around 2,000 people in attendance was held in honour of Burns birthday in Glasgow. Hugh MacDiarmid and Joel Campbell gave addresses to Burns, and the artists recited Burns’s pieces. At the end of the celebration, the chorus of the Young Communist League of Great Britain performed ‘The Jolly Beggars’. Lastly it was reported that ‘The Birmingham Diocesan and Peace Commission also held a Burns Night and musicals in memory of Burns’.<sup>511</sup>

In late June of the same year, Shanghai Foreign Languages Association and Shanghai Branch of Chinese Writers Association (hereinafter CWA) organised a memorial meeting for World Culture Celebrities in Shanghai Science Hall to commemorate 200th anniversary of Burns birthday along with the other two writers: the 100th anniversary of the birthday of the Jewish writer, Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916) and the 50th anniversary of death of the Brazilian writer, Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909). Over 200 participants, including writers, translators and staff and students from Shanghai International Studies University, Fudan University and East China Normal University, attended the meeting. Fang Zhong (1902-1991), a translator, made a toast to ‘The Immortal Memory’, briefly introducing Burns’ life and describing him as ‘a Scottish poet born from peasantry who had strong feelings for the working people and was adept at using the language of the working people’<sup>512</sup>. Following the toasts to the other two writers, all participants appreciated the recordings of Burns’s songs.

The decade of the Cultural Revolution in China, from 1966 to 1976, witnessed the full interruption in the translations and publications of Western literary works as

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<sup>510</sup>‘British Progressives Commemorate the 200th Anniversary of Robert Burns’s Birth [ying guo jin bu ren shi qin zhu Peng Si dan cheng 200 zhou nian]’, *World Literature and Art Trends*, *World Literature*, 03 (1959), pp.169-74(172). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>511</sup>‘British Progressives Commemorate the 200th Anniversary of Robert Burns’s Birth’, 1959, p.172.

<sup>512</sup> ‘Commemorating the World’s Three Cultural Celebrities by Shanghai Foreign Languages Association and Shanghai Branch Writers Association [shang hai wai wen xie hui, zuo xie shang hai fen hui ji nian shi jie san da wen hua min ren]’, *Academic Trends*, *Academic Monthly*, 07 (1959), p.37(37). [Originally in Chinese]

discussed in detail in previous chapter three, not to mention the celebrations for a Western poet. When the Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976, Burns swiftly regained the attention of literary translation by Chinese scholars, given his previous recognition as a people's poet, not only in text but also beyond it. In 1980, Pat Wilson visited Kilmarnock and discussed with some Burnsian the possibility of organizing Burns Nights in China. Upon Wilson's return to Beijing in December 1980, she met the members of the Chinese Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (hereinafter CAFFC) and Wang Zuoliang, Vice-President of Beijing Foreign Language Institute (hereinafter BFLI). On 25th January 1981, with the support of CWA and Zou Difan (1917-1995), the editor of the National Poetry Periodical *Shikan*, along with several universities such as Beijing University, the first Burns Night was held at Beijing People's Art Theatre (hereinafter BPAT) with approximately 400 attendees from at least six countries. Three toasts were proposed: 'Immortal Friendship' by Wang Zuoliang; 'To Friendship Between Chinese and Scottish People' Pat Wilson; and 'To 'The Lassies'' Uwe Drauter, a Burnsian from West Germany.<sup>513</sup> An influential Chinese painter, Huang Yongyu (1924-), read a poem he wrote in honour of Jean Armour, Burns's wife, and presented his portrait of the Ayrshire bard in the traditional Chinese ink-and-wash style to Scottish people.

Since 25th January coincided with the Chinese New Year in 1982, Burns Night was once again celebrated on 20th January, attracting around 500 participants at BPAT by the CAFFC, the Foreign Literature Association, the CWA, *Shikan (Poetry)* and BFLI. The Central Music Conservatory also offered their warm support. The renowned poet, Ai Qing (1910-1996), proposed the toast to the 'Immortal Memory', and Xie Banding, the vice president of the CAFFC, proposed the toast to Chinese-Scottish Friendship. The old trading firm, Jardine Matheson, provided whisky for both Burns Nights 1981 and 1982.<sup>514</sup>

On 24th January 1983, the China Foreign Literature Society, Chinese Pen Centre (hereinafter CCC), *Shikan (Poetry)* and Beijing Foreign Studies University (hereinafter BFSU) collaboratively organised the third Burns Night to commemorate the 224th anniversary of Burns's birth, drawing an attendance of over 600 people.<sup>515</sup> Lin Lin, the Vice President of the CPAFFC, delivered a toast to 'The Immortal Memory'.

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<sup>513</sup>'Burns Night in Beijing', in *Burns Chronicle 1982*, p.76(76).

<sup>514</sup>Pat Wilson, 'Burns in China', in *Burns Chronicle 1983*, pp.58-61(60).

<sup>515</sup>He Bin, 'The Literary Circle of Capital Commemorates Scottish Poet Robert Burns [shou du wen xue quan yin zhu su ge lan shi ren Peng Si]', *World Literature*, 02 (1983), p.308. [Originally in Chinese]

Subsequently, Wang Zuoliang had a presentation regarding his recent visit to Scotland, Burns’s homeland. Bi Shuwang (1918-1999) of the CCC recited several poems he had written and those of Burns. Finally, the Burns’s translator, Yuan Kejia, provided an introduction to Burns’s biography and works.

After three consecutive Burns Nights celebrations, the occasion was not celebrated again until 9th January 1992 in Beijing Institute of Education, a gap of nine years. However, it was referred as Burns Memorial Tea Party rather than Burns Night. It could be partly attributed to Pat Wilson’s departure from Beijing, who initiated and organised the previous three Burns Nights in 1981, 1982 and 1983. It would be likely to name them after Burns Night in accordance with the Scottish tradition. However, in China, events commemorating some celebrities do not have a particular title like ‘Burns Night’. Instead, they are often labelled as ‘commemorating meeting’. The Burns Memorial Tea Party in 1992 was jointly sponsored by the Foreign Literature Institute of BFSU and Beijing Education Institute with more than forty participants from universities, research institutions and presses in Beijing. Yang Youqin, the deputy director of the Foreign Language Department of Beijing University of Education, and Wang Zuoliang, respectively made a toast to ‘The Immortal Memory’. Then the artists from the BPAT and the staff from the Beijing Education Institute recited Burns pieces together and had performances related to Burns works. Eventually, the tea party was closed with ‘Auld lang syne’.<sup>516</sup> Meanwhile, in January 1992, Jia Nin published an article, ‘The Hometown of Robert Burns’, describing her trip to Scotland and an exclusive interview with Tom McIlwraith, the president of Burns Club of Edinburgh at the time.<sup>517</sup>

The four Burns Nights and the two Burns commemorations were mainly under the auspices of Wang Zuoliang. Since Wang’s death in 1995, the Chinese intellectuals and academic circles no longer officially organise Burns Night or the memorial celebrations for Burns. These commemorative events are undertaken by China’s authorities, such as Beijing University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China Association for Friendship

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<sup>516</sup> ‘Beijing Institute of Education and Institute of Foreign Literature of Beijing Foreign Studies University jointly held a Tea Party in Memory of Robert Burns [Beijing jiao yu xue yuan, Beijing wai guo yu xue yuan wai guo wen xue yan jiu suo gong tong ju ban ji nian Peng Si cha hua hui]’, *Foreign Literature*, 01 (1992), p.69(69). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>517</sup>Jia Nin, ‘The Hometown of Robert Burns [Peng Si de jia xiang]’, *Foreign Literature*, 01 (1992), pp.70-2. [Originally in Chinese]

with Foreign Countries and China Writers Association. Burns Nights in China take place on a small scale with the intellectuals in the China's Burnsiana, including Burns translators, scholars, as well as the staff and students in Western literature from universities. The content of the event is relatively formal, focusing mainly on introducing Burns's life and works, and featuring readings and singing of some of his famous pieces without Burns Suppers.

However, Burns Night celebrations in other parts of China present a distinct and varied picture. In Beijing, since 2016, Beijing Scottish Society has conducted Burns Night, featuring a traditional Scottish Burns supper with Burns' poetry, Scottish delights and ceilidh dance, as well as hosting St. Andrew's Ball since 2013. In Shanghai, British Chamber of Commerce launched a Burns Night with over 360 people gathered on 27th January 2007. Stephen Mercer proposed the toast to the 'Immortal Memory', followed by Burns poetry reciting and traditional ceilidh dances.<sup>518</sup> As a part of Shanghai Scottish Company, established late in the history of the Scottish Volunteer Corps, which itself dated from 1853, just ahead of the wave of new volunteer forces emerging around the empire during the Crimean War (1853-56) to provide defence in the absence of the regular British military,<sup>519</sup> Shanghai Scottish Club, originally founded in 1868 for the purposes of fielding a cricket team against the Shanghai English and developing rapidly through the nineteenth century, was reformed in 2012. It had been disbanded in 1942 after the Japanese invasion, yet once again became a significant feature for Scots expatriates in Shanghai.<sup>520</sup> Since 2013, the second year of its reinstallation, Shanghai Scottish Club, along with British Chamber of Commerce, has annually organised Burns Night in Shanghai (2018 in Chengdu), featuring cultural performances, lively songs, a proper ceilidh dance and traditional Burns supper.

In contrast to the earlier Burns Nights organised by Chinese academic circles, the Burns Nights hosted by Beijing Scottish Society and Shanghai Scottish Club can be

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<sup>518</sup>'Shanghai Scorched by Rabbin Burns', *Shanghai Daily*, 29th January 2007

<<http://english.china.org.cn/english/LivinginChina/198066.htm>> accessed on 11 September 2022.

<sup>519</sup>Isabella Jackson, 'The Shanghai Scottish: Volunteers with Scottish, Imperial and Local Identities', in *The Scottish Experience in Asia, C1700 to the Present: Settlers and Sojourners*, ed. T. M. Devine and Angela McCarthy (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp.235-58(238).

<sup>520</sup>'Shanghai Scottish' <<https://www.kinlochanderson.com/tartan/shanghai-scottish>> accessed on 11 September 2022.

considered gatherings where Scots expatriates in China form the majority. Furthermore, the aim of Burns Night here is focused on the social and entertainment aspect, including Scottish tradition food such as haggis, cock-a-leekie soup, cranachan, beer and Scotch whisky, along with singing of Burns’s songs and ceilidh dances. These Burns Night celebrations can be seen as a means for the Scottish diaspora in China to alleviate their homesickness and reconnect with Scottish culture through the traditional festival honouring their national bard. Additionally, it may provide an opportunity for them to socialize with local Chinese people through the traditional festival commemorating the Scottish Bard and may be seen as a form of United Front / International Liaison work by the CCP. In this context, Burns, Burns Night and his works provide ‘a link between the Scots and the wider community’<sup>521</sup> in China. The Burns Nights organised by the British appear to be more laid-back and truer to tradition with a party-like atmosphere, compared to those by the Chinese academic circle. In this sense, the Burns Nights by British are more closely associated with the Scottish heritage of the diaspora in China. The influence of Confucianism and the prevailing Communist political ideology in China diminish the likelihood that China would commemorate Burns and his works to the same extent as the United States, where various clubs, rituals, erecting statues and even presidential admiration for Burns are common.<sup>522</sup> In China, Burns commemorations are limited to small gatherings among Chinese intellectuals who have done the research of Western literary works or among the Scottish community of China. Despite this, when compared with other Western poets, Burns is still considered as a well-celebrated poet, even more so than Shakespeare in China.<sup>523</sup> However, Burns and his works have not been well

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<sup>521</sup> Ann Rigney, ‘Embodied Communities: Commemorating Robert Burns, 1859’, *Representations*, Vol. 115, No.1 (Summer 2011), pp. 70-101(90).

<sup>522</sup> See: Ferec Morton Szasz, *Abraham Lincoln and Robert Burns: Connected Lives and Legends* (Carbondale: South Illinois University Press, 2008).

<sup>523</sup> Even Shakespeare, he has not been celebrated annually in China. The commemorations have typically occurred only on the centennial anniversaries of his birth and death. See Cao Shujun, ‘Cao Yu and the First Shakespeare Festival in China – to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Death [cao yu yu zhong guo shou jie sha shi bi ya xi ju jie – ji nian sha shi bi ya shi shi 400 zhou nian]’, *Journal of Henan University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 03 (2016). [Originally in Chinese] ‘Othello Series Performances to Commemorate the 450th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s Birth: National Centre for the Performing Arts’ Production of Opera Othello [ao sai luo ji nian sha shi bi ya dan cheng 450 zhou nian xi lie yan chul]’, *Music and Space*, 14 (2014). [Originally in Chinese]

beyond text in China yet, namely, not reaching the level of commercialization as they do in Scotland, where items such as pens bearing his image are widely available.<sup>524</sup>

While the Burns Night celebrations by British clubs were initially attended mainly by the Scottish expatriates in China, the increasing popularity of Burns Night and the advancement of China's opening-up policy have led to a growing number of Chinese people participating, as evidenced by ticket sales for the public in Shanghai and Beijing. However, the celebrations took place at upscale five-star hotels in Beijing and Shanghai (in Chengdu as well in 2018), and the tickets were sold expensively. For instance, in 2014, a ticket for a non-member to attend Burns Night and Burns Supper was priced at ¥1,100 (approximately £110 based on the exchange rate in 2014).<sup>525</sup> Participating in such an event would take up nearly 25% of an individual's monthly earnings.<sup>526</sup> This is perceived as costly for the average person and out of sync with their financial means. In Scotland, Burns Night, an annual celebration of the national bard, is widely attended and accessible to the general public. However, in China, it has transformed into an upscale cultural event that is merely accessible to intellectuals and high-income individuals, which might be regarded as a contradiction or Burns's designation by Chinese academia as 'a great poet of the people'.

In addition to the Burns Night and Burns Suppers in mainland China, the Chinese diaspora celebrates Burns overseas as well. The China-Britain Business Council (hereinafter CBBC), founded in 1954 as the 48 Group of Companies with the aim of promoting British participation in trade fairs and exhibitions in China, has hosted 10 Chinese Burns Suppers, combining the tradition of Burns Night and Chinese New Year

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<sup>524</sup>Pauline Mackay and Murray Pittock, 'Beyond Text: Burns, Byron and Their Material Cultural Afterlife', *The Byron Journal*, Vol. 39, Iss. 2(2011), pp.149-62(153-4).

<sup>525</sup> 'Shanghai Scottish Club, Burns Night, 25th January 2014'

<<https://img.nordangliaeducation.com/resources/asia/filecache/7e7/a1a/4312-burns-night-information-2014.pdf>> accessed on 20th September 2022.

<sup>526</sup>According to the statistics of the National Bureau of Statistics, the average annual salary of urban employees in China in 2014 was ¥56,360, that is, the monthly salary was approximately ¥4,966.67.

'Labour compensation for use of non-financial transaction funds in household sector in 2014'

<<https://data.stats.gov.cn/easyquery.htm?cn=C01&zb=A020F0501&sj=2014>> accessed on 1st December 2022. [Originally in Chinese]



in celebration of the growing relationship between Scotland and China.<sup>527</sup> For instance, at CBBC’s 2018 Chinese Burns Supper in Glasgow, the food was served with a combination of Chinese spices with Scottish produce, such as traditional Scottish cranachan with lychees and haggis with an oriental twist served dumplings with Chinese spices, and there were performances by Chinese musicians in Scottish kilts.<sup>528</sup> James Brodie, the energy sector lead of CBBC, and Ian Baxter, director of the Scottish Confucius Institute for Business and Communication at Heriot-Watt University, delivered toasts at the celebration. Furthermore, the Confucius Institute for Scotland also participated in several suppers.<sup>529</sup> While the Chinese Burns Suppers hosted by CBBC aim not only to celebrate the Scottish national bard but also to promote the Britain-China business relations, they provide a great opportunity to raise awareness of Scottish culture and its national bard among Chinese companies and individuals, helping to expand the poet’s influence with a Chinese audience.

Furthermore, in Vancouver, Canada, since 1998, the ‘Gung Haggis Fat Choy’, organised by Toddish McWong, a Chinese Canadian, has been held to celebrate Burns. The title ‘Gung Haggis Fat Choy’ is coined from the wordplay of Scottish traditional food ‘Haggis’ and the Cantonese greetings during the period of Chinese New Year ‘Gung Hei Fat Choy’ (‘Gong Xi Fa Cai’ in Mandarin) which means ‘Wishing you prosperity and good fortune’. The first ‘Gung Haggis Fat Choy’ was hosted in a crowded living room as a small fundraiser for the dragon boat team with 16 people attending. Now upwards of 300 people or more are served each year. The event blends Burns Night and Chinese New Year, featuring Scottish and Chinese poetry, music and food like a very rare delicacy – traditional Scottish Haggish and Chinese Shrimp Wonton Dumplings in 2023 ‘Gung Haggis Fat Choy’.<sup>530</sup> In 2004, CBC television in BC premiered a regional television

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<sup>527</sup> ‘China-Scotland Business Awards 2023 and Chinese Burns Supper’

< <https://portal.cbbsc.org/civCRM/event/info?reset=1&id=2654> > accessed on 12 February 2023.

<sup>528</sup> Wang Mingjie, ‘Haggis and Dumplings to Reward Scottish-Chinese Business Success’, *China Daily*, 26th January 2018.

< <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201801/26/WS5a6afa68a3106e7dcc1370e4.html> > accessed on 11 February 2023.

<sup>529</sup> ‘The China-Scotland Business Awards and Chinese Burns Supper in 2021’

< <https://www.confuciusinstitute.ac.uk/announcements/events/the-china-scotland-business-awards-and-chinese-burns-supper-2021/> > accessed on 11 February 2023.

<sup>530</sup> ‘Gung HAGGIS Fat Choy’ < <https://www.gunghaggis.com/> > accessed on 9 February 2023.

special *Gung Haggis Fat Choy*.<sup>531</sup> ‘Gung Haggis Fat Choy’ was selected by the website ‘historyscotland’ as one of the ‘Ten global Burns Supper facts’.<sup>532</sup> Now it is spreading to Seattle in the United States and other cities like London.<sup>533</sup> Gung Haggis Fat Choy connects between Chinese ethnocultural background and Chinese nationality through the Burns Supper movement. It is not only a celebration of Scottish and Chinese cultural infusion but a contribution to embracing diversity, promoting the Pan-Asia cultural heritage, the integration of Asian-Canadian communities and the unity of various culture, as reflecting in Burns’s lines ‘That Man to Man the world o’er, / Shall brothers be for a’ that.’<sup>534</sup>

In addition to the recognition of Burns Night and Burns Supper in China, Burns’s music is well received as well. As elaborated in chapter one, the love song, ‘A red red Rose’, made an appeal to the Chinese readership in the text translation. Of Burns’s songs, ‘Auld lang syne’ was the most popular in China and the Chinese-speaking world, spreading differently from Burns’s other pieces. The translated lyrics of ‘Auld lang syne’ in music have been in 16 various versions in the three decades from 1905 to 1935.<sup>535</sup> However the wide appeal of the song is closely linked to the spread of the Hollywood film *Waterloo Bridge* in China. *Waterloo Bridge* (1940), a love story set amid World War II and starring Vivien Leigh, landed in China in November 1940, was premiered in Shanghai Zhenguang Cinema, and was translated into *Tragedy on Blue Bridge* (Hunduan

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<sup>531</sup> ‘Gung HAHGIS Fat Choy’ <<https://www.gunghaggis.com/about/>> accessed on 11 January 2024.

<sup>532</sup> ‘Ten Global Burns Supper Facts’, 21 January 2021

<<https://www.historyscotland.com/history/ten-global-burns-supperfacts/?fbclid=IwAR35tcnKn7OaPfpqyRfyQiO6xwqvHv570-sy6hsmeSdQEc549No3KxxSDeI>> accessed on 10 January 2024.

<sup>533</sup> See Bill McFadden presented Todd Wong’s GUNG HAGGIS Fat Choy Seattle <<https://gunghaggisfatchoy-seattle.com/>>, ‘Gong Haggis Fat Choy’ <<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/gung-haggis-fat-choy>> accessed on 12 January 2024.

<sup>534</sup> Kinsley, No.482. p.762-3(763).

<sup>535</sup> Liu Meihui, ‘A Case Study of Hsiao Er-hua’s Lyrics Translation of The One Hundred and One Best Songs [101 shi jie min ge ji zhi Xiao Erhua ge ci fan yi yan jiu]’, *Journal of Taiwan National Open University*, J. L. A. 1021-2116 (2018), pp.139-76(142). [Originally in Chinese]

Lanqiao).<sup>536</sup> ‘Blue Bridge’ refers to a plaintive and tragic love story mentioned in *Zhuangzi* (fl. 300BC). In one beautifully memorable scene in *Waterloo Bridge*, the two stars of the film dance to the song ‘Auld lang syne’. Despite being released in the United States, the film unexpectedly became a huge success in China, generating much more enthusiasm from the audience than it did in the United States. The year in Shanghai even witnessed an incident where ‘a girl committed suicide due to watching *Waterloo Bridge* three times’.<sup>537</sup> With the wide popularity of the film, its theme song ‘Auld lang syne’ was also embraced by Chinese audience. The success of *Waterloo Bridge* also led to several domestic remakes, including *Tragedy on Blue Bridge* in 1941, produced by Shanghai Yihua Film Company and directed by Mei Qian, with Li Lihua in the lead role. In this film, ‘Auld lang syne’ was still employed as the theme song, yet the lyrics was translated by the director Mei and the song was performed by Li Lihua. The lyrics were freely translated in the style of the School of Mandarin Duck and Butterfly,<sup>538</sup> which was somewhere between archaic Chinese and modern Mandarin, as well as proving quite popular with the readership during the Republic of China era. The free translation of ‘Auld lang syne’ by the director Mei is as follows:

恨今朝，相逢已太迟，今朝又别离，流水呜咽，花落如雨，无限惜别离。

白石为凭，明月作证，我心早相许，今后天涯，愿常相忆，爱心永不移。

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<sup>536</sup> The story is: an infatuated man named Wei Sheng had a date with a beloved girl under a bridge, yet the girl did not appear for the date. Unfortunately, the water rose up. Wei Sheng chose to keep his promise to stay at the same spot, waiting for the girl’s showing up. Finally, he drowned while hugging a pillar of the bridge. It is said that the place they dated on was named Blue Bridge. The pillar that Wei Sheng held onto until his death also becomes a faithful symbol with him. According to the *Records of Xi’an Fu*, the bridge is located over the Blue Valley River in Bluefield County, Shanxi Province. Since then, it has been referred to as ‘Tragedy on Blue Bridge’ when one of the love couple dies for the other who misses the appointment.

<sup>537</sup> *Dongnanfeng*, 01(1941), No page numbers. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>538</sup> The School of Mandarin Duck and Butterfly refers to a modern novel school in China and is one of archaic style novel. It started in the early twentieth century, evolving from the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China romance novels, and particularly prevailing in Shanghai. It was named after the verse, ‘Thirty-six mandarin ducks with birds, a pair of butterflies are pathetic worms’ in a novel of Qing Dynasty, *The Traces of Flower and Moon*. Meanwhile due to the influence of the journal, *Saturday* in Shanghai, one of the publications of the School of Mandarin Duck and Butterfly, it is also well-known as the Saturday School, referring to it as the citizen novel of wits and beauties.

为君断肠，为君断魂，谅君早知矣，恨重如山，命薄如絮，白首更难期。

白石为凭，明月作证，我心早相许，今后天涯，愿常相忆，爱心永不移。<sup>539</sup>

To regret today, too late to encounter, apart today again, the flowing-water is moaning, the petals are falling as the rain, cherish the moment of being separate.

White rock as the evidence, bright moon as the witness, my heart has already promised, even apart from the end of the world, hope to recall often, the love will never change.

The sorrow for you, the broken heart for you, you should know it earlier, the regret is heavy as a mountain, the life is light as a fluff, harder to expect to be together till grey hair.

White rock as the evidence, bright moon as the witness, my heart has already promised, even apart from the end of the world, hope to recall often, the love will never change.

Mei's translation is a re-creation and significantly different in both content and form from the original song. It only preserves the theme of love in the original based on the plot of the film and the artistic conception of the original. It is not the translation of 'Auld lang syne' but rather a new Chinese lyric set to the identical tune of the original with the identical title 'Waterloo Bridge'. The genuinely widespread popularity of the Mandarin-lyric version of 'Auld lang syne' occurred in 1979 in the translation of Deng Yiying (1920-2004) which will be elaborated later in this chapter. The extensive distribution of the Hollywood film and the frequent local remakes made the melody of the Scottish folk song win appeal across the nation, rather than the translation lyrics as 'its score was reprinted in a variety of Chinese magazines at the time'.<sup>540</sup>

The style combines the Western folksong tune with the strong sense of archaic feminine Chinese-lyrics song, along with the phenomenon of the Hollywood movie and the remakes of China's movies. This can be likened to the adaptation of the traditional Chinese garment, the Qipao, which incorporates Western elements, or the inclusion of a traditional Chinese character '壽' (shou – longevity) in a cream top of a birthday cake,

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<sup>539</sup> 210 *Chinese Popular Songs in the 1930s and 1940s* [jie yu hua: zhong guo san si shi nian dai liu xing ge qu 210 shou], ed. Wu Jian (Beijing: North Literature and Art Press, 1997), p.29. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>540</sup> Yang Panpan, 'Repositioning Excess: Romantic Melodrama's Journey from Hollywood to China', *Melodrama Unbound: Across History, Media, and National Cultures*, ed. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2018), pp.219-36(231).

symbolizing the intersection of dual cultural preferences or influences on Chinese audiences. On one hand, it is the embodiment of Hollywood, the West, modernity and advancement. On the other hand, it represents the persistence of Chinese identity, local culture and historical heritage, embodied by the School of Mandarin Duck and Butterfly. The combination of Scotch folksong tune and Chinese archaic lyrics has endowed the ancient song with an unusual appeal for Chinese readers who were transitioning from Manchu empire to the Republic and gaining access to Western culture. ‘Auld lang syne’ became a popular song of the time, as Yuan Shuipai mentioned at the end of his ‘Preface’ of his translation *My Heart’s* (1944),

Then there are his (Burns’s) other joyful love songs, full of passion and of the simple and bold love of peasants and commoners. These innocent songs are not only popular in Scotland, even in our China, many people can sing, for example, several ones included in the *One Hundred and One Songs*.<sup>541</sup>

Yuan did not specify which songs by Burns were popular in China in his preface. Anglo-American scholars generally claimed that Yuan mentioned that ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’ became the marching song of the Chinese army in the SSJW.<sup>542</sup> Presumably this is due to Yuan’s translated collection being named after ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’, resulting in such a misunderstanding. In Yuan’s preface, he vaguely mentioned ‘several ones’, and did not specifically refer to ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’ as a marching song of the Chinese army. The songs collection Yuan mentioned, *One Hundred and One Songs*, indeed included Burns’s ‘My heart’s in the Highlands’, and ‘Afton Water’ (‘Flow Gently, Sweet Afton’).<sup>543</sup> However given the popularity of *Waterloo Bridge* and its remakes in China in the 1940s, it can be said that Burns’s song ‘Auld lang syne’ is one of the most popular songs in China. Nonetheless, the song did not

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<sup>541</sup> Yuan Shuipai, ‘Prologue’, 1944, p.10. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>542</sup> For instance, Clark McGinn, ‘The Burns Supper in China, Hongkong and the Far East’, unpublished article, p.7; Robert Burns, *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns, Vol. III, The Scots Musical Museum Part Two, Notes and Appendices*, ed. Murray Pittock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.83.

<sup>543</sup> Liu Meihui, ‘A Case Study of Hsiao Er-hua’s Lyrics Translation of The One Hundred and One Best Songs’, p.150.

adopt the original title due to the huge appeal of *Waterloo Bridge*, but under the name of the film, ‘The Theme Song of *Waterloo Bridge*’.

Following the founding of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese government banned American Hollywood films due to political ideology, and *Waterloo Bridge* was not permitted to be shown in cinemas.<sup>544</sup> However, during the Cultural Revolution, a batch of ‘internal reference films’ (nei can pian), intended exclusively for the central leadership of CCP, were covertly shown in the screening room of Diaoyutai Buildings.<sup>545</sup> The ‘internal reference films’ were initially claimed to be serving as a reference for the production of the Model Dramas (yang ban xi),<sup>546</sup> yet in effect they were used for entertainment of the central leadership. Many of these ‘internal reference films’ were from Western countries, which were already prohibited at the time, including *Waterloo Bridge*. All the films were translated and dubbed by the Shanghai Film Translation Studio. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, *Waterloo Bridge* was released nationwide by the China Film Distribution and Exhibition Corporation in 1980. The film once again resonated strongly in China, with its initial nationwide release unable to meet the fervent demand of Chinese audiences. Responding to the call of fans across the country, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, *Waterloo Bridge* had a second national mass release. Subsequently, as the cinema business model became more flexible, *Waterloo Bridge* was screened in some cities almost every year. Burns’s song ‘Auld lang syne’ was also repeatedly sung in China with the re-release of *Waterloo Bridge*. In 1996, it was collaboratively translated by CCTV and Shanghai Film Translation Studio and premiered on 18th May 1996 in CCTV’s column of ‘World Classics Appreciation’. To the present day, the film is still available for viewing on the official website of CCTV, allowing Chinese audience to watch it for free anytime and anywhere. Through television, a widely

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<sup>544</sup> Liu Dishan, ‘The Issue of Foreign Films’ Banning During the Couse of ‘The Seventeen Years’ [‘shi qi nian’ shi qi wai guo dian ying jin ying wen ti], *Literature and Arts Studies*, 10(2012), pp.95-105(97). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>545</sup> Diaoyudao: To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the PRC and host the leaders of foreign countries and governments who came to China to attend the celebration, the China’s government chose the Diaoyudao scenic area to construct the Diaoyutai State Guesthouses in 1958 with seventeen buildings and fully finished in 1959. In 1966, during the Cultural Revolution, it became the office and living quarters for members of the Central Leading Group of the Cultural Revolution. After the Cultural Revolution, it has been restored as a national guesthouse for foreign presidents and leaders.

<sup>546</sup> Model Dramas are referred as stage art works only during the course of Cultural Revolution.

used media tool, *Waterloo Bridge* has become a household name in China, as well as the Scottish folk song ‘Auld lang syne’.

As aforementioned, when *Waterloo Bridge* was introduced as an internal reference film during the Cultural Revolution, it was translated and dubbed into Mandarin for the first time by the Shanghai Film Translation Studio. ‘Auld lang syne’, previously named after the film as ‘The Theme Song of *Waterloo Bridge*’, eventually acquired its own authentic Chinese title: ‘Friendship Everlasting’ (you yi ti jiu tian chang) translated by Deng Yingyi (1920-2004), a renowned translator of songs ever offered Chinese lyrics for Beethoven’s Ninth symphony *Ode to Joy*. Deng partially translated ‘Auld lang syne’ with the first stanza, the final stanza and the chorus. However, it is Deng Yingyi’s version of ‘Auld lang syne’ that has been the most widely accepted and nationally sung by Chinese audiences to the present day, as follows:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot

And never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And auld lang syne!

#### Chorus

For auld lang syne, my jo,

For auld lang syne,

We’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet

For auld lang syne.

[...]

And there’s a hand, my trusty fiere!

And gie ’s a hand o’ thine!

And we’ll tak a right gude-willie-waught,

For auld lang syne,

For auld, &c.<sup>547</sup>

怎能忘记旧日朋友，	How can forget the old friends,
心中能不欢笑？	Cannot smile in heart?
旧日朋友岂能相忘，	Old friends should never be forgot,
友谊地久天长。	Friendship everlasting.

友谊地久天长，亲爱的，	Friendship everlasting, dear,
友谊地久天长；	Friendship everlasting,
我们将为友谊干杯，	We'll toast for the friendship,
友谊地久天长。	Friendship everlasting.

让我们紧握手，	Let's tightly hold hands,
让我们来举杯畅饮，	Let's toss our glasses,
举杯痛饮同声歌颂，	Toast to drink and sing,
友谊地久天长。	Friendship everlasting.

友谊地久天长，亲爱的，	Friendship everlasting, dear,
友谊地久天长；	Friendship everlasting,
我们将为友谊干杯，	We'll toast for the friendship,
友谊地久天长。 <sup>548</sup>	Friendship everlasting.

Deng's translation, in contrast to the previous Mei Qian's archaic literary rendition in the style of *Mandarin Duck and Butterfly* in 1941, adopts a simple and down-to-earth spoken

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<sup>547</sup> Kinsley, No. 240, pp.443-4 (443, 444).

<sup>548</sup> Deng Yingyi, 'Friendship Everlasting [you yi di jiu tian chang]', *Sichuan Music*, 09 (1979), p.22(22). [Originally in Chinese]



language of commoners as a traditional Chinese folksong. The overall tone is gentle and moving, like an old friend repeatedly murmuring goodbye in reluctance to be apart. In particular, the title, ‘Friendship Everlasting’, chanted over and over in the song, is easily remembered and catchy across China. The title in Mandarin refers to that ‘the friendship is eternal like the sky and the earth’ in the literal translation which is a household-known idiom in China. It becomes a symbolic song for people to convey their feelings to their friends when they are gathering, graduating or departing, as used as a transition song in Taiwan alike such as at funerals.<sup>549</sup> In the process of continuous singing, the connotation of its lyrics has been greatly extended, no longer a simple love song, nor a song of friendship, but sincere love for all beautiful things and attachment to past time.

In 2019, a film was released that depicted the individual experiences of several ordinary people over the four decades of economic growth since China’s reform and opening up in 1978. The film was named after ‘Friendship Everlasting’, the Chinese translation of ‘Auld lang syne’. ‘Auld lang syne’, as the background song and the theme song, was running throughout the film, reflecting the wide reach of Burns’s music in China. In this sense, ‘Auld lang syne’ is no longer an old Scottish folk song but a Chinese song, sung consistently for over half a century. It has been fused into Chinese culture and ingrained in the memories of the people, particularly after the work of translators who created authentic Chinese lyrics that resonated with popular sentiment. The perfect harmony between melody and lyrics has genuinely made the song a naturalized Chinese version.

Shakespeare won universal appeal in China, yet few Chinese readers can recite lines or pieces of his works, while it is interesting that most of Chinese people are able to sing ‘Auld lang syne’ although few are aware of the Scottish poet, Robert Burns. In contrast to Shakespeare, Burns’s work has clearly spread far beyond himself through the warm appeal of Hollywood film *Waterloo Bridge*. Perhaps, common human sense, friendship and love in Burns’s poems and songs transcend all cultures and nations.

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<sup>549</sup>Murray Pittock, *Scotland: The Global History: 1603 to the Present* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2022), p.206.

## 8 CONCLUSION

Burns's translations are a witness to Burns's appeal in China. If only considering those published in the mainland China, Burns's translations mainly include the four Burns collections: Yuan Shuipai's *My heart* (1944, 1947, 1950, 1951, 1959), Wang Zuoliang's *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1959, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1998, 2012, 2020), Yuan Kejia's *Selected Poems of Robert Burns* (1959, 1981, 1986, 1996, 2008) and Li Zhengshuan's *Selected Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)* (2016). Of them, Yuan Shuipai's *My heart* in 1944, 1947 and 1950 did not specify the numbers of copies, but had 2,500 copies printed in 1951 and 6,500 in 1959; Wang's editions had 8,000 in 1959, 15,200 in 1985, 100,000 in 1987, 5,000 in 1998, 5,000 in 2020 and no specifications in 2012; Yuan Kejia's editions had 7,500 in 1959, 19,500 in 1981, 2,500 in 1986, 4,500 in 1996 and 6,000 in 2008; Li's edition had 2,500 copies in 2016. In total, the translated collections of Burns sold 204,200 copies in China. It would be over 210,000 copies if counted Yuan's editions in 1944, 1947, 1950 and Wang's in 2012, not to mention a large number of the published Western poetry collections including Burns's pieces.

From the above data, it is evident that the two major nodes stand out in Burns's reception in China: 1959, when the most influential Burns's translations were published, and the 1980s, characterized by a significant surge in publications. These two key nodes are closely linked to the prevailing ideologies in China during those periods. The year 1959, as extensively explored in the previous chapter three, marked the zenith of ideological influence in the process of Burns's standing of China. The 1980s aligned with the decline of political ideology and the rise of humanism.

Since the nineteenth century, the legacy of Burns has extended globally, following the routes of the Scottish diaspora, from the Burns Clubs in America to the Burns suppers in South Africa to the Burns statues in New Zealand. As Leith Davis, Holly Faith Nelson and Sharon Alker recounted, these international links ‘revised critical perceptions of Burns’s work, connecting it not only to local and national concerns, but also to the transatlantic’ and global ‘circulation of ideas’.<sup>550</sup> Nonetheless, Burns’s widespread popularity seldom transcended English-speaking nations, which shared a common culture, language, political values, and monarchy, facilitating more seamless and profound interactions.<sup>551</sup> In China, the century-long Burns reception has its own unique landscape, which is attributed to the interplay of China’s political ideology and traditional Confucianism.

In the 1920s, China transitioned from the Qing Empire to the Republic, necessitating a period of enlightenment. Accordingly Burns was shaped as a love and lyrical poet who boldly advocated the freedom of romantic expression. During the course of the 1930s and 1940s, amid the SSJW, China was facing Japanese aggression in a crucial period of ‘saving the nation and saving the people’. Spontaneously, Burns was perceived as a Scottish patriotic poet and the representative of the literature of ethnic minorities. His works served as inspiration for collective efforts to resist foreign aggression and restore national independence. Over the seventeen years from 1949 to 1966, China adopted the Soviet model in all aspects of politics, economy, and social life. Burns’s reception was profoundly influenced by Marshak, the influential translator and Burns scholar in the Soviet Union, contributing to its portrayal as a great poet of people, reaching its peak on the 200th anniversary of Burns’s birth in 1959. Following 1978, the fourth phase of Burns’s reception, China initiated a process of integrating with the world through its reform and opening-up policy. Political ideology gradually receded from the field of literary criticism, leading to a re-evaluation of the poet’s image. The labels of Burns image gradually reverted to that of a Scottish nationalist poet such as ‘a Scottish

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<sup>550</sup> Sharon Alker, Leith Davis and Holly Faith Nelson, ed., *Robert Burns and Transatlantic Culture* (Surry, Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), p.2.

<sup>551</sup> Paul Malgrati, *Robert Burns and Scottish Cultural Politics: The Bard of Contention (1914 - 2014)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023), p.131.-2

peasant poet’, ‘a national poet’, and ‘a Scottish Bard’.<sup>552</sup> Marilyn Butler delineates five categories of Burns’s political poems, encompassing praise for America as a bastion of liberty, commentary on British national politics, reflections on elections in the Ayr/Dumfries region for Westminster, allusions to the French Revolution and its Scottish reception, and equivocal poems post-revolutionary).<sup>553</sup> However, it is evident that the predominant focus of translated political poems of Burns in China centers on those lauding the French Revolution and advocating for Scottish independence, exemplified by works like ‘The Tree of Liberty’.

In the context of China, the initial two main perceptions of Burns, a love poet for free choice of romantic love and a Scottish patriotic poet who represented the literature of ethnic minorities, were more grassroots-driven, given the weak and powerless state of the Chinese government as well as the poverty and lack of education among the people. Intellectuals spontaneously turned to the literary works of the advanced Western nations for public enlightenment and national salvation. The transformation of Burns’s image after 1949 was more top-down, driven by the official mandates of the authorities. In 1959, the 200th anniversary of Burns’s birth, two influential Burns’s translations were published: Wang Zuoliang’s *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* and Yuan Kejia’s *Selected Poems of Robert Burns*. Apparently, the simultaneous publication of these two was not the coincident option of the translators themselves but resulted from the official publishing houses’ invitations to the translators to cater to the need of the New Folksong Movement in 1958-9.<sup>554</sup> Wang stated, ‘I translated Burns’ poetry in 1958. That year, we were preparing for the bicentennial of Burns’s birth that was coming up in the next year. A publishing house in Beijing (People’s Literature Publishing House) came up with a

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<sup>552</sup> See Zhang Jingling, ‘Burns’ Poetry from the Perspective of Literary Ethics Criticism [wen xue lun li xue pi ping shi ye xia de Peng Si shi ge]’, *Chinese Foreign Language Studies*, Vol.3, 1 (2016), pp.66-71,151; Zhang Wenju, ‘Local Love, Custom Picture – On Burns’ Narrative Poems [xiang tu ai, feng su tu – Peng Si xu shi shi tan pian]’, *Foreign Literature*, 7 (2010) pp.67-71; Dong Li, ‘On the Causes of the Thoughts of Democracy and Freedom in Burns’ Poetry [shi tan Peng Si shi ge Zhong min zhu yu zi you si xiang yi shi qi yin]’, *Kaoshi Zhoukan*, 49 (2007), pp. 148-9. [Originally in Chinese]; Xu Xiaodong, ‘Bard Poets of Scotland – MacPherson and Burns [su ge lan de ba de shi ren – mai ke fo seng he Peng Si]’, *Journal of Zhejiang Normal University*, Vol. 37, 178 (2012), pp.56-64. [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>553</sup> Marilyn Butler, ‘Burns and Politics’, in *Robert Burns and Cultural Authority*, ed. Robert Crawford (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), pp.86-112(87).

<sup>554</sup> All of China’s presses are running by the government and of official organizations. Likewise, the two publishing houses mentioned in the article are both large state-owned presses.

new collection of Burns poems and invited me to translate it’.<sup>555</sup> In shaping Burns as ‘a great poet of people’, the government lauded the working class and peasantry, while criticizing and exposing the hypocrisy and malevolence of the bourgeoisie and the upper class in Western countries. Only after 1978, notably post-2000, did Chinese academia commence a renewed engagement with Burns and his literary works *per se*. Therefore, Burns’s reception in China has demonstrated the following features:

Firstly, there is always a special stress on Burns’s humble birth from a peasant family. His impoverished origins have been highlighted, to the point where, during the seventeen-year period of 1949-66, particularly the celebration of Burns’ 200th birthday in 1959, Burns was celebrated as ‘a great poet of people’, reaching his zenith in this regard. For a long time, even to the present day, in Burns’s studies in China, his humble birth is still mentioned as a virtue of him.

Secondly, likewise for the ideological reasons, in the translations and studies of Burns in China, the themes of revolution, freedom, and equality in Burns’s poems and songs are overemphasized. The best example is the translation of ‘The Tree of Liberty’ and its authorship as was brought out in chapter four.

Thirdly, the understanding of Burns’s life in China is severely insufficient. No dedicated monograph or article has thoroughly and comprehensively studied Burns’s biography from an academic perspective. In the context of political ideology and traditional Confucianism, Burns scholars have not shown the interest in Burns’s relationships with women or the portrayal of women in Burns’s works. This demonstrates with Anglo-American academia, where scholars have criticized Burns’ moral character since the nineteenth century but are now able to accept and understand Burns from a humanist perspective. Such a transformation is yet to take place in the academic community in China.

The absence of monographs on Burns’s biography is a significant impediment to Burns studies in China, depriving Chinese readers and researchers of comprehensive insights into Burns and his works. According to Burns criticism in the discourse of political ideology, the reputation of the poet was tended to be a revolutionary warrior born in the lower class of labourers, brimming with rebellious spirit, love for common people, and disdain for the privileged, the upper class and the church. This perception is one-

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<sup>555</sup> Wang Zuoliang, ‘On Answering Literary Translation Questions’, p. 9.

sided, shallow, and superficial, failing to correspond to the real Burns. It confines Burns studies in China mostly to two categories: the sympathetic and sentimental poetry of working people, and the poetry that calls for revolution, equality, freedom, and liberation against the privileged. Other themes in Burns's poetry, such as religion, bawdry, the poetry eulogizing aristocratic or polite patrons and the narrative masterpieces focusing on the 'illicit pleasures of alcohol, sexuality, popular music and dancing',<sup>556</sup> are still impossible without affecting Burns reputation. Even the most developed part, Burns's love poetry, is not sufficiently translated. For instance, the largest volume of Burns translation, Li Zhengshuan's *Select Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)* (2016) included only 75 pieces of love poems of Burns. (see Appendix 7)

The scarcity of religious works and studies is also associated with the atheistic political ideology of the China's government. Of Burns's religious works, several pieces are translated, such as 'The Cotter's Saturday Night', 'The Holy Fair', and 'Holy Willie's Prayer'. However, in Burns criticisms, no monographs have exclusively dwelt on the religious content of Burns's works. The mention of Burns's religious pieces in some criticisms is often from the perspective of Burns attacking the hypocrisy of the church of the late eighteenth-century Scotland in 'Holy Willie's Prayer'. Therefore, in this sense, Burns has been shaped as an atheist in effect in the need of political ideological requirements. Regarding Burns's genuine religious belief, no studies explore its specific embodiment in Burns's works as commonly discussed by Anglo-American scholars. This gap in research is because not only the government does not encourage the religious faith, but also Chinese scholars are not well aware of the historical context of eighteenth-century religions in Scotland. After all, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism have been the mainstream beliefs for thousands of years in China. Particularly since 1949, the government has strongly advocated Marxist atheism over religious beliefs, leading scholars to be wary of publishing research on religious topics.

Unlike the neglect of Burns's religious pieces, Burns's bawdy works are a complete taboo in both translation and criticism in China. The poems in the classic poetry anthology *Book of Songs* referring to romantic love between men and women were all negatively

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<sup>556</sup> Nigel Leask, 'Robert Burns', in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, ed. Gerard Carruthers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.71-85(79).

labelled ‘obscene poetry’<sup>557</sup> by the Confucian master Zhu Xi (1130-1200), not to mention Burns’s bawdy pieces describing coitus details. In the introductions to Burns’s life, the focus often centers on Burns’s genius, humble birth and his poverty resulting in early death. Burns’s collection of Scots songs, *The Merry Muse of Caledonia*, was only slightly mentioned in Yuan Kejia’s influential article, *Robert Burns and Folksong* (1959), where he stated, ‘Some Burns’s lyrical pieces are not of high style, or pure taste, for instance the pieces in unpublished *The Merry Muse of Caledonia*’. And Yuan elucidated immediately, ‘However they are in the minority and cannot be paralleled with his positive achievements’.<sup>558</sup> Yuan acknowledged in the Chinese readership that the bawdy poetry would affect the poet’s positive achievements and the poet’s glorious image as a great poet of the people. It is considered unpleasant and morally degenerate for a poet to publicly writes such lewd poems, leading to the exclusion of bawdy poetry in the context of Confucian culture. As a result, unlike in contemporary Anglo-American academia, the literary study of Burns’s bawdy poetry becomes a fully forbidden area. In this sense, Burns is like a white paper man, clean, simple and one-dimensional, only praising the love of working people and the fight against the ruling class, which creates a distance from the real Burns. For instance, almost one third of Burns criticism is associated with ‘A red red Rose’. In this regard, Burns’s studies in China are in urgent need of comprehensive and overall monographs on Burns’s biography.

In addition to Burns’s biography, only a total of 192 of Burns’s pieces have been translated into Chinese by four major translators – Yuan Shuipai, Wang Zuoliang, Yuan Kejia, and Li Zhengshuan. In contrast, James Kinsley’s 1968 collection of Burns’s poems and songs includes a total of 686 pieces, including the dubia. The Chinese translations of Burns poems and songs amount to less than a third of the Kinsley’s collection. However, it is a fact that Burns’s criticism in China since 1985 can be said to be almost built on Wang’s translation. Wang’s translation comprises only 61 Burns’s pieces, massively constraining the further blooming of Burns’ scholarship in China. Burns’s studies formed on a translation of less than a tenth of the total number of complete Burns’s works are far from sufficient. Therefore, from this perspective, China’s Burns scholarship urgently

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<sup>557</sup> Mo Lifeng, ‘From Classics to Literature: The Essence of Zhu Xi’s Thoughts on ‘Bawdy Poetry’ [cong jing xue zou xiang yin shi: zhu xi yin shi xue de shi zhi]’, *Literary Review*, 2 (2001), pp.79-88(86). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>558</sup> Yuan Kejia, ‘Robert Burns and Folksong’, p. 54.

needs more comprehensive translations, or the complete translation of Burns's poems and songs. Such limited translations have curbed the further-going of Burns studies in China.

Some scholars claim that the distinctive Scottishness (Scottish identity) present in Burns's works has not been adequately reflected in their Chinese translations, as these translations have been largely approached from the perspective of English literary studies.<sup>559</sup> Indeed, in China's Burns scholarship, Burns is discussed in the context of English literary framework. Nigel Leask's *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (2010) appraises Burns and his works within the context of Scotland's history, culture, religion, politics and romanticism in the late eighteenth century, it is a pity that the Chinese Burns studies do not have such an in-depth perception in terms of the Scottish context.

The shortage of complete translations and Burns's biography have greatly hindered the development of Burns's reception in China, becoming a bottleneck in the studies and an issue that urgently needs to be addressed. Given the growing interest in Scottish literature in China, particularly since 2000, it can be expected that in the near future, within the next 20 years, there would be a biography of Burns and a more complete collection of his works translated into Chinese. As Scottish culture and literature become better known in the Chinese academic community, Burns Night and Burns Supper, as the representatives of Scottish culture and literature, are expected to be more widely known to ordinary Chinese readers, not just academic circles and Scottish expatriates' celebratory events.

It is surely time for a new era for Burns studies in China. Since the new millennium, the research and publications on Scottish literature in Chinese academia has gradually improved. For instance, there are national-level supports for the studies of Scottish literature and its extension. Since 2000, eight Scottish literary studies have been funded

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<sup>559</sup> See Song Da, *A Study of Chinese Translation Problems of Scottish Literature in the Framework of English Literature*.



by the National Social Science Foundation of China.<sup>560</sup> Macao Polytechnic University has two projects on Scottish literature as well.<sup>561</sup> In regards to Scottish poetry translation, Zhang Jian published *Contemporary Scottish Poetry* in 2001, introducing 26 Scottish poets from Edwin Muir to Don Paterson with 143 poems.<sup>562</sup> And as aforementioned in chapter five, a series of translation of Scottish literary studies were published in 2020 including Robert Burns, Robert Stevenson, Muriel Spark, Edwin Mogan and Scottish ballads translated from *Scotnotes*. Furthermore, Nanjing Normal University established the Scottish Studies Centre in 2015, and the Journal of Zhejiang International Studies University opened a column of ‘Scottish Literary Studies’ in 2012. In such an era, it is certain that there will be increasingly varied and in-depth studies on Burns and his works, contributing to Burns’s appeal and the development of Scottish literature in China. This will bring a new revitalization of Burns reception in China. It is a fantastic cultural landscape that people from various nations are able to sing ‘Auld lang syne’ together, experiencing and sharing the beauty of Burns’s works – the universal aesthetic realm beyond nations, knowledge and culture.

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<sup>560</sup> They are Dai Hongbin’s ‘Research on Muriel Spark’s Novels’ in 2012, Lv Hongling’s ‘Research on Contemporary Scottish Novels’ in 2013, Wang Weixin’s ‘A History of the Scottish Novel’ in 2015, He Ning’s ‘Research on the Contemporary Scottish Poetry’ in 2018, Lv Hongling’s ‘Research on the Scottish Enlightenment Literature’ in 2018, Zheng Ronghua’s ‘Research on James Hogg’s Memory of Border and Scottish Urban-Rural Writings’ in 2018, Song Da’s ‘Research on Edinburgh Review and Modern Scottish Literature’ in 2018 and Wang Lan’s ‘Research on the Contemporary Scottish Drama’ in 2019. Zhang Pingting, ‘The Literature Review on Scottish Literary Studies in China (1959-2019) [guo nei su ge lan wen xue yan jiu shu ping]’, *Dynamic Research on Foreign Literature*, 05 (2021), pp.119-26 (125). [Originally in Chinese]

<sup>561</sup> They are Li Li’s ‘Translation and Scottish Literary Modernism’ and ‘Language Varieties in Literary Translation’ in 2022.

<sup>562</sup> Zhang Jian, *Contemporary Scottish Poetry [xian dai su ge lan shi ge]* (Beijing: Foreign Language Researching and Teaching Press, 2001). [Originally in English and Chinese]

# APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.....	226
APPENDIX 2.....	229
APPENDIX 3.....	231
APPENDIX 4.....	233
APPENDIX 5.....	237
APPENDIX 6.....	241
APPENDIX 7.....	244
APPENDIX 8.....	249
APPENDIX 9.....	250
APPENDIX 10.....	252

## APPENDIX 1

### A Chronological Bibliography of Robert Burns Print Editions in Mainland China

#### 1944

Yuan, Shuipai, tr., Robert Burns and A. E. Housman, *My heart’s in the Highlands: Selected Poems of Robert Burns and A.E. Housman* [wo de xin a, zai gao yuan: Peng Si, huo fu man], Chongqin: Xinqun Press, 1944. [Originally in Chinese]

#### 1947

Yuan, Kejia, tr., Robert Burns and A. E. Housman, *My heart’s in the Highlands: Selected Poems of Robert Burns and A. E. Housman* [wo de xin a, zai gao yuan: Peng Si, huo fu man], Shanghai: Liqun Joint Books and Newspaper Publishing House, 1947. [Originally in Chinese]

#### 1950

Yuan, Kejia, tr., Robert Burns and A. E. Housman, *My heart’s in the Highlands: Selected Poems of Robert Burns and A. E. Housman* [wo de xin a, zai gao yuan: Peng Si, huo fu man], Shanghai: Xinqun Press, 1950. [Originally in Chinese]

#### 1951

Yuan, Kejia, tr., Robert Burns and A. E. Housman, *My heart’s in the Highlands: Selected Poems of Robert Burns and A. E. Housman* [wo de xin a, zai gao yuan: Peng Si, huo fu man], Shanghai: New Literature and Art Press, 1951. [Originally in Chinese]

#### 1959

Yuan, Shuipai, tr., Robert Burns, *My heart’s in the Highlands: Selected Poems of Robert Burns* [wo de xin a, zai gao yuan: Peng Si], Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1959. [Originally in Chinese]

Wang, Zuoliang, tr., *Robert Burns: Selected Poems* [Peng Si shi xuan], Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1959. [Originally in Chinese]

Yuan, Kejia, tr., *Selected Poems of Robert Burns [Peng Si shi chao]*, Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Press, 1959. [Originally in Chinese]

**1981**

Yuan, Kejia, tr., *Selected Poems of Robert Burns [Peng Si shi chao]*, Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Press, 1981. [Originally in Chinese]

**1985**

Wang, Zuoliang, tr., *Robert Burns: Selected Poems [Peng Si shi xuan]*, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1985. [Originally in Chinese]

**1986**

Yuan, Kejia, tr., *Poems of Robert Burns [Peng Si shi chao]*, Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Press, 1986. [Originally in Chinese]

**1987**

Wang, Zuoliang, tr., *Burns: Love and Liberty [Peng Si: ai qing yu zi you]*, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1987. [Originally in Chinese]

**1988**

Wang, Zuoliang, tr., *Robert Burns: Selected Poems [Peng Si shi xuan]*, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1988. [Originally in Chinese]

**1996**

Yuan, Kejia, tr., *Selected Lyrical Poems of Burns [Peng Si shu qing shi xuan]*, Changsha: Hunan Literature and Art Press, 1996. [Originally in Chinese]

**1998**

Ji, Youzhi, ed., *Robert Burns [Peng Si zhuan]*, Shengyang: Liaohai Press, 1998. [Originally in Chinese]

Wang, Zuoliang, tr., *Robert Burns: Selected Poems [Peng Si shi xuan]*, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1998, 2020. [Originally in Chinese]

**2005**

Zou, Bicheng, ed., *366 Burns Poems for Birthdays [Peng Si sheng ri xiao shi 366 shou]*, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2005. [In English and Chinese]

**2008**

Yuan, Kejia. tr., *My Love’s Like a Red Red Rose: Selected Poems of Robert Burns [wo de ai xiang hong hong de mei gui: Peng Si shi ge jing cui]*, Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 2008. [Originally in Chinese]

**2010**

Gentz, Natascha, ed., *Selected Poems of Robert Burns in Chinese Translation*, tr., Wu Fangji, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010 [1926]. [Originally in English and Chinese]

**2012**

Wang, Zuoliang, tr., *Selected Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)*, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2012. [Originally in Chinese]

**2016**

Li, Zhengshuan, tr., *Selected Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)*, Beijing: Qinghua University Press, 2016.

**2020**

Lin, Yun, tr. *A Genius of the Time: Robert Burns [dong dang shi qi de tian cai: Peng Si]*, Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2020. [Originally in Chinese]

Wang, Zuoliang, tr., *Robert Burns: Selected Poems [Peng Si shi xuan]*, Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 2020. [Originally in Chinese]

## APPENDIX 2

*My heart's in the Highland: The Poems of Robert Burns and H. E. Housman* (1944, 1947, 1950, 1951) and *My heart's in the Highland: The Poems of Robert Burns* (1959)  
translated by Yuan Shuipai

My heart's in the Highlands

Ae fond kiss

Afton water

The Gowden Locks of Anna

Comin thro' the rye

I Hae Benn at Crookieden

Jockey's Taen the Parting Kiss

O saw ye bonie Lesley

Tibbie Dunbar

The Parting Kiss

To a Louse

Elegy on Peg Nicholson

Tragic Fragment

One Night As I Did Wander

Bruce's Address to Bannockburn

The Lovely Lass o' Inverness

A red red Rose

Damon and Sylvia: Fragment

Your Friendship

The Belles of Mauchline

唱啊！可爱的鸟儿<sup>563</sup>

O Whistle, and I’ll Come to Ye, My Lad

Jean

The Tree of Liberty

The Vision

John Barleycorn. A Ballad

O’er the water to Charlie

Ode for General Washington’s Birthday

Frae the Friends and Land I Love

Annotations in Verse

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<sup>563</sup> The translation does not provide an exact original source, and the original piece by Robert Burns could not be identified by the author.

## APPENDIX 3

*Robert Burns : Selected Poems* (1959) translated by Wang Zuoliang

A Man's a Man for a' That

Scots wha hae

Why Should We Idly Waste Our Prime

The Tree of Liberty

My heart's in the Highlands

It Was a' for Our Rightfu' King

The Lovely Lass o' Inverness

Logan Braes

A red red Rose

The Silver Tassie

Of a' the Airts the Wind Can Blaw

Mary Morrisons

Corn rigs are bonie

O Whistle, and I'll Come to Ye, My Lad

I'm o'er young to Marry Yet

Duncan Grey

John Anderson my Jo

The Banks o' Doon

Epistle to J. Lapraik

Auld lang syne

To a Mouse

The Toadeater

On Capt. Lascelles



On James Grieve, Laird of Boghead Tarbolton

On W. R——, Esq.

Epitaph on Wm. Graham, Esq., of Mossknowe

Epitaph on J-hn B-shby-

Epigram Addressed to an Artist

题某女士手册<sup>564</sup>

Lines Written on a Banknote

受任为税局小吏后口占<sup>565</sup>

The Book-Worms

Holy Willie

Twa Dogs

Tam o’ Shanter

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<sup>564</sup> The translation does not provide an exact original source, and the original piece by Robert Burns could not be identified by the author.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

## APPENDIX 4

*Robert Burns: Selected Poems* (1985,1987(renamed as *Robert Burns: Love and Liberty*), 1988,1998, 2012 (renamed as *Selected Poems of Robert Burns [in English and Chinese]*), 2020) translated by Wang Zuoliang

Lyrics

O once I lov'd

Corn rigs are bonie

Mary Morrison

Green grow the Rashes. A Fragment

The Rantin' Dog the Daddie o' t

Rantin', Rovin' Robin

Ca' the ewes [A]

Ca' the yowers to the knowes [B]

I'm o'er young to Marry Yet

Of a' the Airts the Wind Can Blaw

Auld lang syne

My Bonie Mary

Sweet Afton

Ay Waukin, O

My heart's in the Highlands

John Anderson my Jo

The Banks o' Doon

Ae Fond Kiss

Saw Ye Bonie Lesley

Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation

The Slave’s Lament

The gallant Weaver

Highland Mary

Duncan Gray

Open the door to me Oh

Logan Braes

Whistle, and I’ll Come to You, My Lad

Scots Wha Hae

A red red Rose

A Man’s a Man for a’ That

O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

The Lovely Lass o’ Inverness

Coming thro’ the Rye

It Was a’ for Our Rightfu’ King

The Tree of Liberty

Epigrams

Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous

Holy Willie’s Prayer

Death and Doctor Hornbook. A True Story

Holy Fair

To a Louse

Improvised poems

On James Grieve, Laird of Boghead Tarbolton

Lines Written on a Banknote

On Fergusson

To a Painter

To Mr E – on his translation of and commentaries on Martial

受任为税局小吏后口占<sup>566</sup>

To a Gentleman who had sent him a News-paper

On W. R——, Esq.

Lines Written on windows of the Globe Tavern, Dumbries [D]

Epitaph on Wm. Graham, Esq., of Mossknowe

Epitaph on J-hn B-shby-

On Captn L——lles—

Poems of Chanting Animals

Poor Mailie's Elegy

To a Mouse, On Seeing one on a Lady's Bonnet at Church

The Auld Farmer's New-year-morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie

Epics

The Twa Dogs

The Cotter's Saturday Night

Tam o' Shanter

Epistle

Epistle to J. Lapraik

To W. Simpson, Ochiltree

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<sup>566</sup> The Chinese translation does not provided the original source, and the author cannot find the original one.

Cantata

Love and Liberty: Cantata

## APPENDIX 5

*Selected Poems of Robert Burns* (1959,1981,1986) translated by Yuan Kejia

\* ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ are the pieces added in 1986.

The Tree of Liberty

Ode for General Washington’s Birthday

Scots Wha Hae

My heart’s in the Highlands

There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame

The Highland widow’s lament

Here’s a health to them that’s awa

It was a’ for our rightfu’ king

A parcel of rogues in a nation

Does haughty Gauls Invasion Threat? 1795

The Twa Dogs

Is there for Honest Poverty

Why should we idly waste out prime

Macpherson’s farewell

O that I had ne’er been Married

My father was a farmer

Bessie and her spin wheel

Contented with little 1794

Poor Mailie’s Elegy

The Auld Farmer’s New-year-morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie

To a Mouse

To a Louse

Willie Brew’d a peck o’ Maut

The Holy Fair

Holy Willie’s Prayer

Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous

Epistle to James Smith

Auld lang syne

My Nanie, O

Song

To the Weaver’s gin ye go

O, Whistle an’ I’ll come to Ye, my lad

The Birks of Aberfeldie

My Highland lassie, O

Duncan Davison

The Ploughman

How lang and dreary is the night

Blythe Was She 1787

Highland Harry Back Again 1789

Ay waukin O

My love she’s but a lassie yet

Jamie, come try me

The Silver Tassie

Of a’ the Airts

The Whistle

John Anderson, my Jo

Ca’ the Yowes to the Knowes

Young Jokcey was the blythest lad

A waukrife Minnie

The blue-eyed Lassie

Craigieburn-wood – A Song

Tam Glen

My Tocher's the jewel

What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man

The bonie lad that's far awa

It is Na, Jean, Thy bonie face

Wha is theat at my bower door?

Up in the Morning Early

When she cam ben she bobbed

The Banks o' Doon

Afton Water

A red red Rose

Comin thro' the Rye

O ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten

Jockey's Ta'en the Parting Kiss

Braw Lads o' Galla water

Here awa', there awa'

Duncan Gray

O saw ye bonie Lesley

Highland Mary

Dainty David 1793

O this is no my ain lassie

O were my love yon Lilac fair 1793

Bonie Jean

When o'er the hill the eastern star 1792 (The Lea-Rig)

Let me in this ae night



Mary Morison

My Wife’s a wanton, wee thing

O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

Song

Country Lassie

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day

Here’s to thy health my bonie lass

To Daunt me

My Collier Laddy 1792

How Cruel are the parents

Epistle to J. Lapraik

Second Epistle to J. Lapraik

Third Epistle to J. Lapraik

To W. Simpson

Epistle to Rev. John M’math

Epistle to Davie

O, Wert Thou in the cauld blast

Green grow the rashes

On a Scotch Bard Gone to the West Indies

John Barleycorn

On Elphinstone’s Translation of Martial

The Toadeater 1791

Tam o’ Shanter

Love and Liberty

## APPENDIX 6

*Selected Lyrical Poems of Robert Burns* (1996) translated by Yuan Kejia

The Tree of Liberty

Scots, Wha Hae

My Heart's in the Highlands

There'll Never Be Peace till Jamie Comes Hame

A Parcel of Rogues in a Nation

The Twa Dogs

Is There for Honest Poverty

Why Should We Idly Waste Our Prime

Macpherson's Farewell

Poor Mailie's Elegy

The Auld Farmer's New-year-morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie

To a Mouse

To a Louse

The Holy Fair

Holy Willie's Prayer

Epistle to James Smith

Auld Lang Syne

My Nanie, O

Again Rejoicing Nature

To the Weaver's Gin Ye Go

O, Whistle an' I'll Come to Ye, my lad

The Birks of Aberfeldie

My Highland Lassie, O

Duncan Davison

Jamie, Come Try Me

The Silver Tassie

Of a’ the Airts

John Anderson, my Jo

Ca’ the Yowes to the Knows

A Waukrife Minnie

My Tocher’s the Jewel

It Is Na, Jean, Thy Bonie Face

Wha Is That at My Bower Door?

Tam Glen

Sweet Afton

A red red Rose

Comin Thro’ the Rye

Meg o’ the Mill

Braw Lads o’ Galla Water

Duncan Gray

Saw Ye Bonie Lesley

Highland Mary

O, Let Me in This Ae Night

Mary Morison

O Tibbie, I Hae Seen the Day

To daunt on me

Epistle to J. Lapraik

O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

Green Grow the Rashes

On a Scotch Bard Gone to the West Indies

John Barleycorn

Love and Liberty

## APPENDIX 7

*Selected Poems of Robert Burns (in English and Chinese)* (2016) translated by Li Zhengshuan

### Part one Love Poems

A Lass Wi’ A Tocher

A red red Rose

A Waukrife Minnie

Ae Fond Kiss

Ah Chloris

And I’ll Kiss Thee Yet Bonie Peggy Alison

As Down The Burn

As I Cam Down by Yon Castle Wa’

As I Cam O’er the Cairney Mount

As I Was Wand’ring

As I Went Out Ae May Morning

As Late by A Sodger I Chanced to Pass

Ay Waukin, O

Behold the Hour, the Boat Arrive (First Version)

Behold the Hour, the Boat Arrive (Second Version)

Beware O’ Bonie Ann

Blythe Hae I Been on Yon Hill

Blythe Was She

Bonie Bell

Bonie Dundee

Bonie Peg-a-Ramsay

By Allan Stream

Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes

Canst Thou Leave Me Thus, my Katie?

Charlie He's My Darling

Clarinda, Mistress of My Soul

Cock up Your Beaver

Come, Let Me Take Thee

Coming Thro' the Rye

Corn Rigs are Bonie

Craigieburn Wood

Duncan Davison

Duncan Gray

Eppie Adair

Fair Eliza

Farewell to Eliza

Galloway Tam

Had I a Cave

Had I the Wyte?

Handsome Nell

Here is the Glen

Highland Harry

Highland Laddie

Highland Mary

I Love My Love in Secret

I’ll Ay Ca’ in by Yon Town

I’m O’er Young to Marry Yet

Jamie, Come Try Me

John Anderson, my Jo

Lovely Polly Stewart

Lord Ronald, my son

Mary Morison

My Collier Laddie

My Highland Lassie, O

My Love She’s but a Lassie

O, This is no My Ain Lassie

O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

Of a’ the Airts the Wind Can Blaw

Open the Door to me, Oh

She Play’d the Loon or She Was Married

The Bonie Lad that’s Far Awa

The Captain’s Lady

The Collier Has a Tochter

The Gallant Weaver

The Lass o’ Ecclefechan

The Night Was Still

The Ninetieth Psalm Versified

The Rantin Dog, the Daddie

Theniel Menzies’ Bonie Mary

To Miiss Ferrier

To the Weaver’s Gin Ye Go

Wha is that at My Bower Door?

When She Cam Ben, She Bobbed

Whistle an' I'll Come to Ye, my lad

Young Jessie

Part Two Patriotic Poems

A down Winding Nith

Amang the Trees

Awa', Whigs, Awa'

Ballad on the American War

Bannocks o' Bear Meal

Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat?

I Hae Been at Crookieden

It Was A' for Our Rightfu' King

My Heart's in the Highlands

Now Spring Has Clad the Grove in Green

'O, for My Ain King', Quo' Gude Wallace

Scots Wha Hae

Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation

When We Gaed to the Braes o' Mar

Ye Jacobites by Name

Part three Poems of Friendship

At Whigham's Inn, Sanguhar

Auld Lang Syne

Your Friendship



Part four Poems of Freedom

Is There for Honest Poverty

Ode for General Washington’s Birthday

The Tree of Liberty

Why Should We Idly Waste Our Prime

Part five Satirical Poems

Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous

Holy Willie’s Prayer

No Churchman am I

To a Gentleman

To a Louse

Part six Poems on Animals

My Hoggie

On a Lap Dog

On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by Me

Poor Mailie’s Elegy

To a Mouse

## APPENDIX 8

Burns's poems and songs collected in *Anthology of British Poetry and Prose* (1980)  
edited by Wang Zuoliang

A Man's a Man For a' That

Scots Wha Hae

My Luve is like a red red Rose

Auld Lang Syne

Mary Morrison

Coming Thro' the Rye

Epistle to J. Lapraik

Holy Willie's Prayer

The Twa Dogs

The Jolly Beggars

Tam o' Shanter

## APPENDIX 9

Burns’s poems and songs collected in *Anthology of Scottish Poetry* (1986) edited by Wang Zuoliang

Scots Wha Hae

Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation

My Heart’s in the Highlands

A Man’s a Man for a’ That

Auld Lang Syne

A red red Rose

Coming thro’ the Rye

Of a’ the Airts the Wind Can Blaw

O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

My Bonie Mary

Mary Morrison

Whistle, and I’ll Come to You, My Lad

Duncan Gray

The Lovely Lass o’ Inverness

Logan Braes

The Banks o’ Doon

Open the Door to Me, oh

Highland Mary

On Fergusson

To a Gentleman who had sent him a News-paper

Holy Willie’s Prayer

Epistle to J. Lapraik

The Cotter's Saturday Night

To a Mouse

The Twa Dogs

Holy Fair

Tom o' Shanter

Love and Liberty: Cantata

## APPENDIX 10

Burns’s poems and songs collected in *Anthology of British Poetry* (1988) edited by Wang Zuoliang

To a Mouse

Scots Wha Hea

A Man’s for a’ that

A red red Rose

Auld Lang Syne

Open the Door to Me, oh

Coming thro’ the Rye

Epistle to J. Lapraik

Holy Willie’s Prayer

Tam o’ Shanter

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