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1. Abstract

This study explores the complexities of literary and cultural translation in Chaucer's longest completed poem *Troilus and Criseyde*. While mostly assuming the role of translator, the narrator/poet occasionally speaks with the authority of an author, thereby pointing to the intricate continuum of translation and vernacular writing in the poem. In the Middle Ages translation echoes the Roman theories of translation in which the faculty of invention and the agonistic motive of eloquence are the major concerns. This rhetorical model of translation in terms of continuity and rupture provides a literary/cultural analogue for a writer like Chaucer, for the discovery of one's own literary language through translation carries within it re-inventive implications. Besides the narrator's double role as translator and author, the major characters in the poem also flesh out the many aspects of rhetoric and translation. While Pandarus distinctly embodies the role of translator, Diomedes vigorously epitomizes the force of translational process. This brings us to the issue of Criseyde as the text in the poem, which marks the significance of her "translations" in the poem. However, Criseyde's final translation is not the end of Chaucer's story; rather, it entails Troilus's further translation. Chaucer completes his project of translation in the poem by transporting Troilus to "the eighth sere," thus converting Boccaccio's secular love to one that is blessed with spiritual enlightenment.

Keywords: Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, translation, rhetoric

中文摘要

本研究計畫旨在探討喬瑟重要詩作《特洛伊勒斯與葵西妲》中牽涉到的修辭與文學/文化翻譯，以及其與喬瑟詩學之關係。《特洛伊勒斯與葵西妲》既不是翻譯，也非純創作：喬瑟佯稱其為前者，然而他對伯加丘原作之大幅重寫又似後者；另一方面，詩中之敘述者/詩人也兼具翻譯者和創作者二面。本研究先討論西賽羅等古典重要作家之論見及其影響以至但丁和伯加丘等中世紀作家之文論；之後則仔細思考喬瑟在詩作中對翻譯與寫作之態度。詩中敘述者/詩人對其自身之翻譯與寫作之曖昧立場是首先處理之課題；此外，詩中幾位主要角色，特別是兩位傳統批評上之負面人物—潘達拉斯和狄奧密得—也需要重新檢視，因為他們正體現譯者之角色以及翻譯過程之諸多動能與生發力量。詩作非以葵西妲從特洛伊勒斯到狄奧密得的「翻譯」結束，而是以詩人藉由特洛伊勒斯轉離俗世，置身天際

笑看塵事，強調基督信仰的屬靈意義作結，也因此彰顯方言寫作的神聖超越性。而這也是詩作中最終極的翻譯工程。

關鍵詞：喬瑟、《特洛伊勒斯與葵西妲》、翻譯、修辭

2. Background and Purpose

The activity of translation, in the broadest sense of the word, constitutes Chaucer's position within late medieval English literary writing. Much of Chaucer's work involved the translation of the continental concerns into writing in English, thus establishing a distinctly English participation in contemporary European letters. Chaucer's longest completed poem *Troilus and Criseyde* offers points of interest regarding the complexities of literary and cultural translation since it is neither a literal translation nor an original composition. Here in Taiwan, Middle English Literature (and medieval studies in general) is a less explored field. Even in the case of a major poet like Chaucer, interests have for the most part been confined to his *Canterbury Tales*. The first substantial study of *Troilus and Criseyde* was done by Prof. Yuan-Shu Yen 顏元叔 (1983: 638-84), who conducted a relatively close reading of the story similar to that of Donaldson. Besides Prof. Yen's survey, there seems to be no major contributions to the study of the poem except, as far as my knowledge goes, some sporadic M.A. theses (e.g., Chiu 1982; Shih 1996). Due to the scarcity of related studies, the problematics of translation in the poem is not adequately addressed. This is also true in the international scene. Though the poem has been one of the most contested yet productive grounds for Chaucerians, the problematics of translation entailed in/by the poem has not received enough critical attention either. The recent critical practice seems to move further away from the issue of translation, which is the crucial project Chaucer engages in throughout the poem. In this study of *Troilus and Criseyde*, therefore, I draw on the medieval theory and practice of translation while at the same time incorporating some of the recent critical insights. In so doing, I hope to recast the critical interest onto the problem of translation so that we can better understand (1) the complex but crucial aspects of translation involved in the poem; (2) how Chaucer directed the consciousness of the vernacular sign of his age into strategies of poetic composition; and also (3) the relationship between translation and vernacular poetics in Chaucer's literary practice in general.

3. Results and Discussion

Since medieval understandings of translation are far from homogeneous, we need to broaden our horizon in understanding the scope and nature of medieval translation.

Even so, the many aspects of literary and cultural translation in the Middle Ages are closely related, and as a whole they can help us better understand the general practice of medieval poetics, especially the significance of Middle English vernacular writings. To begin with, the classical rhetorical model of translation in terms of continuity and rupture established by Cicero and Quintilian provides a literary/cultural analogue for a writer like Chaucer, who in the poem foregrounds the tension and relation between the belated translator/writer and the original classical author, hence the prominence of the narrator's double role as translator and author. Next, the complex relationships among the major characters in the poem especially provide illuminating analogues to the double role of translator and the agonistic performance of translation. This may also explain why this Trojan story holds a special application to Chaucer's literary project, for the irresistible forces of translation that bring about the downfall of Troy and Troilus paradoxically generate the literary and cultural translation to vernacular Britain. We witness in Calkas the aggressive role of the translator who takes advantage of his special capacity to manipulate the whole process of translation. On the other hand, his treasonous "translation" of himself from Troy to the Greek camp also demonstrates that translation is at once a traitorous and dangerous act that destabilizes the status quo and transgresses the given boundaries. Calkas's "translation" significantly heralds a whole series of translation in various forms. The most significant one involved is his daughter Criseyde, who immediately undergoes forces of translation to set her in motion/translation to cross over to a new life. This brings us to the issue of Criseyde as the text in the poem, which not only marks the significance of her "translations" but also foregrounds translation as enactment of competition and displacement. But if Criseyde can be carried over to a new life, then it follows that it is hard to deny her another possibility of further translation. This dangerous and volatile nature of translation invokes the notion of translation as infidelity and change. A closer look at Pandarus and Diomedes, despite the many negative readings that these two characters have incurred, also helps us better understand the force of translation in the poem. Pandarus distinctly embodies the role of the translator--the force that brings about the textual dynamics of the poem--for his restless energy has much to do with the role of mediator and the idea of translation. Diomedes energetically epitomizes the vigorous forces at work regarding self-asserting translation, for he carries out his series of advances with an extraordinary command in rhetorical maneuver, which is exercised with artistic design that likens him to a rhetorician and poet. However, Diomedes's eventual translation of Criseyde is not the end of Chaucer's story; rather, it entails Troilus's further translation. At the end Chaucer completes his project of translation in the poem by transporting Troilus to "the eighthe spere," thus converting Boccaccio's secular love

to one that is blessed with spiritual enlightenment. The tale of the unhappy love of Troilus thus turns out to encourage readers to turn away from worldly vanity to divine love. Chaucer finally concludes his poem with a direct address to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word and the source of all true language. This liturgical address in English to the unmediated presence of the illuminating Word reinvests the humble vernacular with the powers of the holy. This is perhaps the ultimate translation of Chaucer's *Troilus*.

4. Self-Assessment

The problematics of translation in Chaucer's literary project turns out to be much more complicated and intricate than the time and energy a one-year research project can afford to tackle. As a result, the study can only focus on some major issues demonstrated in the *Troilus*, without probing into the rich array of translation theory and practice in Chaucer's time. At the same time, the study can only touch on the subtle yet significant rhetorical rivalry between Chaucer and the continental writers like Dante and Boccaccio, a curious agon that deserves fuller discussions. Even so, this study has already pointed to a very fruitful and crucial direction that future projects can pursue, and it has also made follow-up studies possible and necessary.

As a whole, I believe this research project is a success. Part of the results of this project was already published in the prestigious *NTU Studies in Language and Literature*. Besides the acquisition of related studies and research materials from abroad on my part, in the process the two research assistants could also apply the research skills and methodology involved in this project to their own research and thesis writing. One assistant, Ya-Shih Liu, has also published a related study on Chaucer in *Chung Wai Literary Monthly*. With the research experience that helped her become familiar with the Chaucer scholarship, Ms. Liu is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the field of medieval studies at the Indiana University.

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