

Evolutionism through Chinese Eyes: Yan Fu, Ma Junwu and Their translations of Darwinian Evolutionism

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Abstract: The huge impact that Darwinian Evolutionism has effected over Chinese intellectuals through Yan Fu's translation of Huxley's "Evolution and Ethics" into the *Tianyanlun*, is in fact based on Chinese traditional worldview on the one hand and the novel ideas it brings to the Chinese mind facing the challenge of transition. However, Yan Fu's translation is not as scientific as it should be when dealing with Huxley's discourse. Ma Junwu's translation of Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" attempts to be more scientific, in an effort to supply exact scientific terms and discourse in Chinese. However, at the end it is social Darwinism that has won the mind of the Chinese people. This paper analyses the ideas in Chinese past that leads to Chinese perception of Darwinism evolutionism and examines the ways it has been translated by Yan Fu and Ma Junwu.

Keywords Translation; Darwinism; Yan Fu; Ma Junwu; Scientificness

Toward the end of Qing Dynasty, Chinese intellectuals embarked on the project of reformation, which involved the introduction of Western thought and science. Later, following the success of the 1911 Revolution, the establishment of the Republic of China laid the institutional political foundations for China's quest for modernity. The period from then until the May 4th Movement in 1919 was one of intensive change, which aimed to cleanse the corrupt imperial China of its old social and cultural makeup, while searching for a modernity modeled after Western methodologies and values such as democracy and science.

The initial movement for the introduction of Western thoughts and ideas at the end of Qing Dynasty had as its paradigm Zhang Zhidong's *Zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong* 中學為體，西學為用 (*Chinese Learning as Substance, Western Learning as Function*). For the second movement, from the 1911 Revolution to the May 4th Movement, the paradigm changed from the previous dualistic substance-function model to the extreme criticism and deconstruction of traditional values and philosophy. Arguably, this was intended to either save the Chinese nation from perishing (*jiuwang* 救亡), or to enlighten the Chinese mind (*qimeng* 啟蒙), and thus create a new national power with new values. At this time, unsettled by the impact of Western modernity, Chinese intellectuals lacked the breadth of vision to reflect on their own national spiritual resources in order to guide Chinese development. Instead, they focused on introducing Western thought, sciences, and technology so as to push ahead as a modern country.

Several Western trends of thought were introduced to China at this time, including Darwinian evolutionism, Liberalism, pragmatism, Nietzschean philosophy, and Marxism.¹ Even though the early efforts of Chinese thinkers to introduce Western thought were quite different in terms of content and focus, they nevertheless represented the effort of intellectuals of the time to appropriate modern Western philosophical discourses in the aim of achieving Western modernity and, at the same time, to reflect on its failings. Similarly, the thinkers engaged in this process were commonly instrumental in criticizing and decon-

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structuring traditional Chinese philosophy and values, while contributing to the development of science and democracy in China.

Among the currents of Western thought being brought into the stream of Chinese intellectual history, the most powerful was Darwinian evolutionism, which was accepted by and greatly influenced all contemporary thinkers and Chinese intellectuals; no matter what other Western ideas they accepted, be it Liberalism, pragmatism, Nietzschean philosophy, or Marxism, all accepted Darwinian evolutionism. Even as some ideological groups seemed to fight against one another, the leaders of these camps, namely Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) and Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1889-1927), and later Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976), in the Marxist camp and Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), Jiang Menglin 蔣夢麟 (1886-1964), and Chai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) in the liberalist and pragmatist group, were all greatly influenced by Darwinian evolutionism.

Although Darwinian evolutionism had been introduced into China prior to Yan Fu's 嚴復 (1854-1921) translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in 1898 (i.e., *Tianyanlun* 天演論 *Theory of Evolution*), it was this book that made an important impact on the Chinese mind. At the time, in order to encourage the Chinese people to augment their physical strength and China's competitiveness, Yan deliberately neglected the ethical dimension in Huxley's book and interpreted the theory of evolution in line with Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism. As a result, mottos like the "competition for survival," "survival of the fittest," "natural selection," "the strong win and the weak are defeated," etc., became familiar among Chinese intellectuals.

It is a well-known historical fact that the appropriation of Darwinian evolutionism's language and discourse, after Yan Fu published *Tianyanlun* in 1898, supplied Chinese intellectuals, politicians, and common people with a new framework of conceptual reference for the march towards modernity. Influential Chinese thinkers like Lu Xun (1881-1936), Hu Shi, Chai Yuanpei, Sun Yatsen, Li Dazhao, and Mao Zedong all, albeit in their own ways, appropriated the evolutionist view in their thoughts and actions. The impact of Darwinism on both the Republicans and the revolutionaries at this time is well shown by James Reeve Pusey in his work *China and Charles Darwin*.²

My focus in this paper is not so much on tracing the impact of Darwinian evolutionism after its introduction into China, but rather on showing how, before its introduction, Chinese philosophy had prepared the horizon for the reception of translations of key Darwinian works by Chinese translators like Yan Fu and Ma Junwu 馬君武 (1881-1940). Some problems of philosophical hermeneutics are involved here, as translation itself is part of the hermeneutic process. The original Greek term *hermeneuia* means "to say," "to explain," and "to translate," after all, and the development of modern Western hermeneutics is closely related to the issue of interpretation and translation; for example, Friedrich Schleiermacher's hermeneutics was very much associated with his experience of translating Plato's works. In the process of translation, a language other than the original is used to render and interpret the original language and to make it understandable to people in another linguistic and cultural context. The exchange between peoples of different languages and cultures requires a dialogical process that involves what I call "language appropriation" and "mutual strangification," that is, going outside of the language and culture familiar to oneself to learn and express one's ideas/values/beliefs in a language used by others, and others doing likewise. Thus I understand "translation" as an essential component of "language appropriation" and "strangification," by which I mean an act of going beyond one's familiarity to reach strangers or outsiders.

From a hermeneutic point of view, there is always a gap between translation and genuine

understanding and interpretation. In regard to this, Hans Georg Gadamer, in his *Truth and Method* says, “The translator is often painfully aware of his inevitable distance from the original. His dealing with the text is like the effort to come to an understanding in conversation. But translating is like an especially laborious process of understanding, in which one views the distance between one’s opinion and its contrary as ultimately unbridgeable” (1994, 368). Although I am not as pessimistic about translation as Gadamer, I do recognize that such a distance exists. There is indeed a prejudgment or prejudice constituted by the “tradition” existing prior to the act of translation, which makes what Gadamer calls the “fusion of horizon” hard to achieve. In the present context, this means that the Chinese tradition was still a living one even in the late Qing and early Republican period, when Western thought was introduced in order to deconstruct Chinese tradition, break it down, and attempt to vitalize China with new thoughts and values.

TRADITIONAL THOUGHTS IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY LEADING TO EVOLUTIONISM

In traditional Chinese philosophy we find hardly any conceptual framework for ideas like “survival of the fittest,” “struggle for existence,” and “natural selection.” Instead, Chinese philosophy valorizes a kind of harmony that presupposes an ontology of relationship and interdependence and encourages the mutual enrichment of all beings instead of competition.

However, Darwin also stated that his concept of natural selection was about the interdependence of all beings. He said, “Let it be borne in mind how infinitely complex and close-fitting are the mutual relations of all organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life” (Darwin 2003, 144). Chinese philosophy agrees with the interdependent ontology and mutual relations of all organic beings, although it did not delve into the facts of their relation to the physical conditions of life. Traditional Chinese philosophy preferred to emphasize how the experience of life goes beyond mere physical conditions. For example, the *Yijing* affirmed the Great Ultimate (*taiji*) and its creative creativity, or productive productivity, and the vision of an ontology of dynamic relationship in which all beings exist in a web of universal relativeness and creativity. This affirmation produced a metaphysics that embraced the production of novelty and invited human beings to participate in the process of cosmic creativity leading to a meaningful life, emphasizing the responsibility of the human agent and his/her creative engagement with cosmic laws and logical structures in the unfolding of human historicity.

However, an evolutionist interpretation of ancient Chinese philosophy was now in order. For example, Hu Shi, who adopted this name³ under the inspiration of Yan Fu’s translation of the Darwinian idea of “survival of the fittest” (*shi zhe sheng cun* 適者生存), appropriated Zhuangzi’s concept of *hua* 化 (transformation), or more precisely Guo Xiang’s interpretation of Zhuangzi as “self-transformation,” (*zhihua* 自化) as related to the idea of “evolution” (*yanhua*). For Hu, Zhuangzi was a Chinese forerunner of evolutionism. In his chapter “Supreme Happiness” (*Zhile* 至樂), Zhuangzi described the process of change from one species to another as follows:

The seeds of things have mysterious workings. In the water they become Break Vine, on the edges of the water they become Frog’s Robe. If they sprout on the slopes they become Hill Slippers. If Hill Slippers get rich soil, they turn into Crow’s Feet. The roots of Crow’s Feet turn into maggots and their leaves turn into butterflies. Before long the butterflies are transformed and turn into insects that live under the stove; they look like snakes and their name is Ch’u-t’o. After a thousand days,

the Ch'u-t'o insects become birds called Dried Leftover Bones. The saliva of the Dried Leftover Bones becomes Ssu-mi bugs and the Ssu-mi bugs become Vinegar Eaters. I-lo bugs are born from the Vinegar Eaters, and Huang-shuang bugs from Chiu-yu bugs. Chiu-yu bugs are born from Mou-jui bugs and Mou-jui bugs are born from Rot Grubs and Rot Grubs are born from Sheep's Groom. Sheep's Groom couples with bamboo that has not sprouted for a long while and produces Green Peace plants. Green Peace plants produce leopards and leopards produce horses and horses produce men. Men in time return again to the mysterious workings. So all creatures come out of the mysterious workings and go back into them again. (Watson 1968, 195-196)

Hu Shi believed that the only reason Zhuangzi did not reach the same level of discovery as Darwin was that he did not explain the change as caused by adaptation to the environment. We may add that although we find the transformation from one type of being to another in the *Zhuangzi*, there is no emergence of new forms of being out of old forms, as in the case of evolutionism. Also, Zhuangzi, like Laozi, was against the idea that any form of competition, including competition for survival, could be a natural element of the world.

Besides the *Yijing* and *Zhuangzi*, in Neo-Confucianism we also find a philosophical discourse that sees the giving birth (creation) of the universe and natural process as one of devolution and complexification, in which only human beings are engaged in a process of evolution. Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073 CE), the first pioneer of Neo-Confucianism in the Northern Song Dynasty, revitalized Confucianism, after some 800 years of silence under the challenge of Buddhist and Neo-Daoist metaphysics, by appealing to the *Yijing*. In his *Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* (太極圖說), Zhou developed a two-phased vision of the cosmic process that started with the birth of the universe and the process of interaction of finite beings as the phase of devolution, and human self-perfection as the phase of evolution.

As to the devolutional process, for Zhou the creation of the universe has its origin in the Ultimate Non-Being, so called because of its infinitude. This becomes the Great Ultimate once it starts to create, thus moving from the infinite to more tangible and therefore finite manifestations. In its act of creativity, the Great Ultimate launches a dynamic process of interaction between movement and tranquility, thus bringing forth the dialectics of *yin* and *yang*, in the process of which five material forces are produced, which, following further complications and combinations, give rise to the myriad of things. This process from the infinite and formless to the myriad of things with forms and finitude seems therefore to be a process of devolution. As we read in the text of Zhou Dunyi:

The Ultimate Non Being [that is, the Infinite] and also the Great Ultimate! Great Ultimate through movement generates *yang*. When its activity reaches its extreme, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates *yin*. When tranquility reaches its extreme, activity begins again. So movement and tranquility alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction of *yin* and *yang*, and the two modes are thus established. By the transformation of *yang* and its union with *yin*, the Five Agents of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth arise. When these five material forces are distributed in harmonious order, the four seasons run their course. . . . When the Reality of the Ultimate Non-Being and the essence of *yang* and *yin* and the Five Agents comes into marvelous fusion, integration ensues. *Qian* constitutes the male element, and *kun* constitutes the female element. The interaction of these two material forces engenders and transforms the myriad things. The

myriad things are born and reborn, resulting in an unending change. (Chan 1973, 463)

Then, Zhou continues, human beings with intelligence and spiritual awareness emerge from among the myriad things. In their process of self-cultivation and self-perfection in achieving virtues, extendable even to the whole universe, human beings could become sages. To establish a perfect model for all human beings is the ultimate end of Zhou Dunyi's philosophy. Therefore, with the emergence of human beings, there emerges a process of evolution. Zhou writes,

It is the human being alone who receives the best of all and is most intelligent. At the moment of the formation of his body, his spirit develops consciousness. The five moral principles of his nature are aroused by and in reaction to the external world and engage in activity; good and evil are distinguished; and human affairs take place. The sage settles human affairs by the principles of the Mean, uprightness, humaneness and righteousness, regarding tranquility as fundamental, and thus he establishes himself as the perfect model for all human beings. Hence, [as the *Yijing* says], the sage's virtue is extendable to Heaven and Earth; his brilliancy is like that of sun and moon; he is as orderly as the four seasons; and he is in harmony with spiritual beings as to good and evil fortunes. (Ibid., 463-464)

In this second part of the *Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*, Zhou puts forward a concept of an emergent evolution in which humans develop into higher spiritual beings reaching out to the whole universe in a progressive picture of human life leading to sagehood. The sage leads a life of sincerity capable of penetrating all things, and on the social level, the sage lives impartially. Finally, through practicing and extending the virtues of humanness, righteousness, the Mean, and impartiality, the sage can match Heaven and Earth, in that his character is identical with theirs.

HISTORY AS THE REAL LOCUS OF EVOLUTION IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Even though productive productivity and universal relatedness among natural beings were affirmed in Chinese philosophy prior to the introduction of Darwinian thought, the emphasis was put on the place of human beings in nature and their evolutionary process, as opposed to that of all living organisms. Human history, for Confucianism in particular, is the locus of evolution. The idea that human history evolves into improved self-perfection and higher values was basic to the Confucian philosophy, which served also as a reformative ideology. This line of thought originated in Gongyang's *Commentary of the Annals of Spring and Autumn*. Gongyang's idea of *dayitong* (大一統 "great unification") was first developed by Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE). Dong interpreted Confucius' *Annals of Spring and Autumn* as divided into Three Ages, thus already taking a progressively evolutionary vision of history. Also, he saw Confucius's *Annals* as promulgating historical laws for future dynasties as well as embodying natural laws, thus combining the evolution of history with an orderly, designed vision of nature. His concept of Three Ages was developed in the later Han Dynasty by He Xiu (129-182 CE) in his *Notes and Explanations of Gongyang Commentary* (春秋公羊傳解詁). He Xiu expounded on the three stages of historical development. First, He claims, there is the Age of Disorder (*juluan shi* 據亂世), in which one is only familiar with one's own country and considers other states as foreign. Second, in the Age of Rising Peace (*shengping shi* 升平世), all highly civilized Chinese states become one and consider the uncivilized countries as foreign. At the end, in the Age of Great Peace (*taiping shi* 太平

世), all Under Heaven, including the close and the far away, the small and the great, are considered to form one country. Therefore, the vision for the end of history is that “All under heaven are but one family; China is but one person”(天下為一家，中國為一人), as is stated in the *Liyun* 禮運 chapter of the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*). In this final stage of history, the virtues of benevolence (*ren* 仁) and righteousness (*yi* 義) will prevail in all societies; there will be no need of violence and therefore violence will no longer exist.

This idea of Great Peace influenced the Daoist movement in the later years of the Han Dynasty. The Daoist Great Peace movement was based on the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (*Scripture of the Great Peace*), in which the ultimate realization of history is the Great Peace. But it is worth noting that this idea originally came from Confucianism and was properly Confucian. The vision that the whole process of history is processing toward the ideal state of Great Unification can be found in the *Liji*, where we also find the concept of Great Harmony or Great Commonality.

The vision that took the Great Peace, Great Commonality, or Great Harmony as the Ultimate Age of history was very inspiring both philosophically and politically for all Chinese people. Indeed, their faith in it has long since become deeply embedded. The faithful adherence to this belief was illustrated when, in the late Qing period, Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) proposed the reform of the Qing Government, which was at that time inefficient, internally corrupted, and threatened by European imperialism together with the science and technology that came with it. Kang reinterpreted Confucius’s philosophy of history to serve as an ideology of reform. For this purpose, he deliberately redescribed the image of Confucius, interpreting him as a prophet/religious founder who was able to foresee the future development of human society.

For Kang, when Confucius wrote the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* he foresaw the eventual development of history, and he embraced all Three Ages in his writings. Similar to He Xiu, Kang understood the Three Ages as follows: during the Age of Disorder, Confucius considered his own state (of Lu) as native and all other Chinese feudal states as foreign. In the Age of Rising Peace, he considered all Chinese feudal states as native and those outlying barbarian tribes and states as foreign. And in the Age of Great Peace, he considered all ethnic groups and states, far or near, big or small, as one (Chan 1973, 726-727). Under the influence of Darwinism, Kang conceived all of this as representative of the principle of evolution. At the end of his vision, as described in his *Datong Shu* (*Book of the Great Unity*, 1927), Kang recommended the complete transcendence of all kinds of distinctions, and called for the total abolition of borders, such as those of nations, families, classes, etc. He even proposed a detailed organization and program for his ideal society, which would involve communal living, public nurseries for all children, cremation, and the use of cremated ashes for fertilizer. While some say he went too far, Kang’s idea of extending *ren* 仁 (humaneness) and *zhi* 智 (wisdom) beyond all borders is worthy of reconsideration in this time of globalization.

For Confucianism and Daoism, human history is always moving toward the better in the sense of evolution, and in accord with an ordered natural world, clearly imbued with laws and designs. The legacy of Kang Youwei’s evolutionary philosophy of history influenced late Qing reformist intellectuals including Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, and Yan Fu. It was within this evolutionist vision of human history that Yan Fu appropriated Darwinian evolutionism.

THE TIANYANLUN: YAN FU'S TRANSLATION OF HUXLEY'S EVOLUTION AND ETHICS

At this juncture we should consider whether we can safely say that Yan Fu introduced Darwinian evolutionism purely for the interest and according to the spirit of science at the time of reformation in the late Qing period. It is true that Yan Fu was an admirer of science and translated many biological, economic, sociological, and logical works. We have only to take a look at the nature of his translations to examine how he grasped the spirit of Western science. Normally, scientific discourse uses descriptive statements to talk about factual states of affairs, and hypothetical statements are expressed in the “if...then” form in order to denote causal relations and reasoning. Dogmatic assertions and metaphysical assumptions are to be avoided in scientific discourse. To determine, then, whether Yan Fu's translation of Huxley's work was only concerned with the accuracy of rendering a scientific treatise into Chinese, we may take the first paragraph of the *Tianyanlun* as indicative the nature of the translation. Huxley's text reads as follows:

It may be safely assumed that, two thousand years ago, before Caesar set foot in southern Britain, the whole country-side, visible from the windows of the room in which I write, was in what is called “the state of nature.” Except, it may be, by raising a few sepulchral mounds, such as those which still, here and there, break the flowing contours of the downs, man's hand made no mark upon it... (Huxley 1947, 33)

Yan Fu translated this paragraph as:

赫胥黎獨處一室之中，在英倫之南，背山而面野，檻外諸境，歷歷如在幾下。乃懸想二千年前，當羅馬大將愷徹未到時，此間有何景物。計惟有天造草昧，人功未施，其借徵人境者，不過幾處荒墳，散見坡陀起伏間，而灌木叢林，蒙茸山麓，未經刪治如今日者，則無疑也。

In his original text, Huxley starts with a description of what Yan saw from the room in which he wrote. However, in Yan Fu's translation, this becomes a story retold by the translator himself; the translator thereby assumes the role of narrator. In this way, the translator becomes the agent of writing, thus his subjectivity in choosing and judging for the readers what to read, what to learn, and which position to take, becomes important.

Additionally, Yan Fu's translation turns Huxley's scientific hypothesis “It may be safely assumed that...” into an imagination of Huxley, 「赫胥黎懸想...」, and Huxley's hypothetical phrase “it may be...” gets dropped without translation, resulting in a categorical assumption of 「則無疑也」 (literally “that is absolutely without doubt”). The “translation,” we begin to see, is unusual.

We may also notice here that “state of nature” was a technical philosophical term used by English empiricists like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke and by the French philosopher Jean. J. Rousseau. Yet in Yan Fu's translation it is not mentioned at all as a technical term, but becomes “計惟有天造草昧,” which literally means “I guess there existed only the primordial nature,” thus neglecting the technical term itself. In Yan Fu's translation, the hypothetical sentences become categorical assumptions, while the descriptive sentences become involved with emotional and affective interpretations. Take, for example, the following description of plants by Huxley: “One year with another, an average population, the floating balance of the unceasing struggle for existence among the indigenous plants maintained itself”(Ibid, 33). This description is translated by Yan Fu as: “憔悴孤虛，旋生旋滅，苑枯頃刻，莫可究詳。是離離者亦各盡天能，以自存種族而已。” Yan's Chinese literary sentences like “憔悴孤虛，苑枯頃刻” imbue the description with a more pessimistic and

melancholic overtone when speaking of the idea of “struggle for survival” than is present in the original. Moreover, whereas Huxley limited his comments only to plants and animals, in Yan Fu’s translation they are extended to human societies.

So it seems that Huxley’s account of evolution, when interpreted through Yan Fu’s, is no longer purely for the purpose of transmitting knowledge, but rather for the taking of a position in regard to that knowledge. In the hands of Yan Fu, Huxley’s observation assumes the status of a metaphysical proposition in order to offer a firm position. Thus a scientific theory in Huxley’s sense becomes a metaphysical assumption in Yan’s translation.

For example, the third paragraph of *Evolution and Ethics* reads,

Yet nothing is more certain that, measured by the liberal scale of time-keeping of the universe, this present state of nature, however it may seem to have gone and to go on forever, is but a fleeting phase of her infinite variety; merely the last of the series of changes which the earth’s surface has undergone in the course of the millions of years of its existence. (Ibid., 34)

In Huxley’s original version, this paragraph reasoned that, by comparison with the infinite length of time, the state of nature that evolved around us was merely a fleeting phase, in fact *the last of the series of changes which the earth’s surface has undergone*. However, in Yan Fu’s translation, this becomes a metaphysical assertion, which reads “absolutely without doubt”; exaggerating and indeed changing “nothing is more certain” into “absolutely without doubt” modifies the infinite length of time in the universe into a metaphysical assumption of the Heavenly *dao*’s ever-changing process, a theme favored by traditional Chinese intellectuals. Here is Yan’s metaphysical propositions: “故事有絕無可疑者，則天道變化，不主故常是已。...實者今茲所見，實乃自不可窮詰之變動而來” (“So, what is absolutely without doubt is that the ever-changing heavenly *dao* does not limit itself to the constancy of the past...whatever we see today, is in fact from the unquestionable change.”)(my translation)

It can be seen from the above that Yan Fu’s translation has gone beyond a reconstruction of Huxley’s discourse in order to adapt it to the current needs of the Chinese people. Li Zhehou writes,

The special characteristics of Yan Fu’s *Tianyanlun* consist in this: it is not a faithful translation of Huxley’s original work, and it is rather a selective expression of “basic ideas” (*dazhi*) with his own comments, what he takes and does not take, in order to develop his own ideas when convenient and grounded in actual needs. The reason of its having provoked a huge influence is here, too: he did not rigidly introduce and translate foreign thoughts, rather he made great efforts to serve the current needs of China. (Li 1986, 302, my translation)

In fact, the analysis above indicates that the deeper reason for Yan Fu’s rewriting of Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* in his *Tianyanlun* was that he was still attached to, and his translation operated within, the pre-existing schema of the traditional Chinese intellectual discourse and humanist spirit, not yet transformed into a scientific one. Even though Yan was well versed in Western scientific knowledge, he paid no regard to the special characteristics of scientific discourse. On the contrary, he used rhetorical skill to imbue empirical descriptions with emotional overtones, and replaced hypothetical reasoning with metaphysical assumptions. Thus it is clear that Yan Fu remained a traditional man of letters and used literary skills to manipulate scientific discourse. What readers learn from his translation is what position to take, rather than a deeper knowledge of evolution given in the spirit of scientific discourse. Outwardly, Yan seemed to prioritize science over the humanities;

inwardly, however, he was still a traditional intellectual, and his discourse was effective in a tradition that allowed science to be manipulated by the use of humanist discourse.

MA JUNWU'S TRANSLATION OF *THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES*

Much later, the Republican era saw an attempt to return to the more scientific, indeed biological, evolutionism of Darwin, and to this end Ma Junwu 馬君武 (1881-1940) translated Darwin's *The Origin of Species* into Chinese. In fact, Ma started to translate this work in 1901, but did not finish until 1919, the year of the May 4th Movement. It was finally published at Zhonghua Bookstore, Shanghai, in 1920. That the project took almost 20 years to come to fruition would seem to indicate the seriousness with which Ma viewed his translation and its publication. It may be significant as well that this work was finally published at a time when the Chinese intellectuals had launched the May 4th Movement under the banner of science and democracy for the future of China.

Ma's first translation contribution consisted of his renderings of many paleontological, geographical, botanical, and zoological technical terms into good Chinese, such as species as *wuzhong* 物種, subspecies as *yazhong* 亞種, varieties as *bianzhong* 變種, sexual selection as *chixiong taotai* 雌雄淘汰 or *leizhe* 類擇, etc. The structure of his semiclassical, semi-modern Chinese language was succinct, precise, and logical, and it removed any redundant Chinese words. The use of semiclassical language is probably the reason his translation has not been read as much by generations educated in the vernacular modern Chinese language after the May 4th Movement.

On the other hand, Ma's translation was also semimodern in that it did use rigorous grammatical structure and logical reasoning, which were more suitable for modern sciences. His translation lacks the metaphors, proverbs, historical and literary references contained in Yan Fu's translation of Huxley. Some scholars even say that Ma's translation contributed to the style of scientific writing in China after the May 4th Movement.

In spite of the differences between their translation styles, both Yan Fu and Ma Junwu emphasized the importance of the translation of modern Western works for the purpose of China's survival. More than that, Ma thought that the enterprise of translation was directly related to the civilization of a country. The Preface to his translation of *The Origin of Species* is of great interest, as here he explains his reason for translating it as follows:

This book (*The Origin of Species*) has been translated by all civilized countries of the world. Now our country cannot but become a civilized country, then even if only for the reason of keeping the face (reputation) of our country, there should not be without a (Chinese) translation of this book. (Ma 1920, ii, my translation)

Ma tried to be more faithful to the original than Yan Fu by not modifying the semantic meanings of technical terms. For example, he translated "survival of the fittest" as *zhuiyizhecun* 最宜者存, not as 適者生存 as Yan Fu had done (it was the latter translation which had inspired Hu Shi to adopt the name Shi). Personally, I would argue that Ma's translation of *zhuiyizhecun* 最宜者存 is a better translation of "survival of the fittest" than Yan Fu's translation as 適者生存, because it has added the concept of adaptation into it.

Taking Yan Fu's emphasis on the three principles of translation: *xin* 信 (faithfulness), *da* 達 (expressiveness), and *ya* 雅 (elegance), Ma Junwu emphasized "faithfulness" and "expressiveness" and paid less regard to "elegance." This was because, for him, if the original text was elegant, then the translation should be elegant as well; however, if it was not elegant, the translation should not beautify it with elegance. Since elegance is not normally a criterion of scientific discourse, it seems unreasonable to request a translator to change a plain and

artless scientific text into an elegant and beautified literary one. Ma Junwu put emphasis instead on the dynamic interaction between faithfulness and expressiveness. To be faithful to ideas written in a foreign language, one should be able to express them by unfolding their meaning in one's own language. On the other hand, when one wants to be expressive in one's own language, one should be faithful to the language and thoughts of the original text. Because of this basic idea with regard to translation, Ma, unlike Yan Fu, did not appeal to rhetorical schemes to beautify descriptive sentences, and he also avoided metaphysical assumptions in his translations of hypothetical sentences.

Even though Ma Junwu translated Darwin's *The Origin of Species* as a scientific masterpiece, he was still a Chinese scholar well versed in traditional Chinese literature and philosophy. He began studying Tang Poetry and the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書) at the age of 12. This influence is probably why he uses classical Chinese philosophical terms in his translation of Darwin to give his readers a sense of connection with classical Chinese philosophical discourse. For example, "adaptation" is translated as *sunhua* 順化, which literally means "compliance" and "transformation." This choice offers the Chinese reader a Daoist feeling for what is meant by adaptation.

Ma translated Darwin's basic scientific tenets into mild and good Chinese to engender a better comparison with Chinese philosophy. For example, Darwin says, when talking about natural selection, "Let it be borne in mind how infinitely complex and close-fitting are the mutual relations of all organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life" (Darwin 2003, 144). Ma's translation as 故事有絕無可疑者，則天道變化，不主故常是已。...實者今茲所見，實乃自不可窮詰之變動而來 means exactly the same in Chinese. Again, Darwin's words, "This preservation of favorite variations and the rejection of injurious variations, I call Natural Selection" means also more or less the same as Ma's translation 凡此保存個體差異及變異之有利者，而消滅其有害者，于名之為天擇, with the only difference being that Ma's rendering of the term "rejection" as 消滅 (destruction, perish) is much stronger.

Take another passage: in recapitulating and concluding his theory, Darwin writes, "As natural selection acts solely by accumulating slight, successive, favorable variations, it can produce no great or sudden modifications; it can act only by very short and slow steps. Hence the canon of 'Natura non facit saltum' which every fresh addition to our knowledge tends to make more strictly correct, is on this theory simply intelligible" (Ibid., 386). This important passage, when translated into Chinese by Ma, becomes: 天擇之作用，惟聚集輕微、寄序、有益之變異。而不能產出巨大或突起之變更，即其作用乃尋短緩之階級以進是也。而「自然界無躍進之事」一格言。藉吾儕所獲每一附加之新知識，愈以確定。.(Ma 1920, 605-606). In fact, Ma's translation is almost identical to the English text, although the Latin saying "Natura non facit saltum" could be better translated as 自然不跳躍, and not as 自然界無躍進之事 (literally: there is nothing like jumping in Nature). Also, Darwin refers to his theory at the end of this paragraph, while in Ma's Chinese translation Darwin's theory (of evolutionism) is not explicitly mentioned.

Thus we can say that, although it has some imperfections, Ma's translation, in general, has better rendered Darwin's scientific discourse than has Yan Fu's. Unfortunately, even though the scientific discourse of Darwinism made its impact on Chinese intellectuals, it did not spread broadly and deeply in the Chinese mind. Social Darwinism, on the other hand, entered into people's common ideology, with its metaphysical assumptions and positions based on faith, pushing Chinese readers to take "competition for survival" as a social rule that must be complied with if China was to enter into modernity. This modified translation of Darwin, together with Liberalism, led to the emergence of an image of a modern

society in which individuals compete for survival.

CONCLUSION

The continuous historical effect of the Chinese tradition even as Chinese intellectuals adapted Western ideas in order to correct the failure of their own tradition shows that there has indeed been a core thinking pattern when the Chinese appropriate discourses from other traditions. It is necessary to explore and make explicit the dynamic ontology of relation that persists even today in order to better understand the Chinese mind. Even though, as stated above, social Darwinism, together with Liberalism, created a “competition for survival” outlook with regard to society, there is also a deeper unconscious framework within Darwinism that accords well with the traditional Chinese ontology of dynamic relationships. Seen from this perspective, Darwin’s affirmation of the interrelation of plants and animals, which is the basic idea implied in his concept of the struggle for existence, is not so vastly different from Chinese philosophy. As Darwin wrote, “I should premise that I use the term ‘struggle for existence’ in a large and metaphorical sense. Including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny” (Darwin 2003, 133). A traditional Chinese philosopher, whether Confucian or Daoist, would agree with this view. They would also agree with Darwin that “Let it be borne in mind how infinitely complex and close-fitting are the mutual relations of all organic beings to each other,” (Ibid, 144) although they would argue against Darwin’s words after these that state “and to their physical conditions of life” (Ibid.) because of their belief in an ideal life beyond the physical that makes their life more meaningful.

From a contemporary perspective, Darwin’s evolutionism has its limitations and issues. For example, it was based on Darwin’s observations of plants and animals, and is therefore hardly applicable to such things as germs or bacteria, fungus, rocks/earth/minerals, etc. If we consider the universe as a whole, Darwinism is insufficient for arguing that all beings are interrelated and all depend on their physical bodies. Also, Darwinism’s slogan “survival of the fittest” presupposes a concept of “adaptation” according to which only those most adapted to their environment will survive. This is somewhat misleading in the sense that although all behaviors of living beings display some adaptive elements, the most important thing for a being’s life is not adaptation, but rather the construction of a sustainable and meaningful world. Also, the fittest behavior pattern that a species of animal learns from the adaptation process might not be the one leading to its survival. For example, the zigzag pattern of a hare when fleeing from dangers, learnt from a long process of adaptation in the biological environment, may well cause its death when evading cars on the highway.

In fact, in the process of evolution, living beings not only passively adapt themselves to the environment, but also construct a world and a mode of existence in which they can continue to exist. On the level of human existence, it is more important to construct a meaningful world rather than live in a world of meaninglessness. In other words, the human being is an intentional being imbued with intentional teleology. The human being is always looking for meaningfulness and unceasingly longing for significance and importance, or, if you like, for the saturation of values. If there is a teleology in the process of evolution from hominization to humanization, it should not be limited to passive adaptation, but rather it should include the construction of a meaningful world. The human being is born into a meaningful world and develops toward a more bountiful world of meaningfulness.

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NOTES

1. For a succinct account of the introduction of these doctrines to China and their relation with Chinese Modernity, please see Shen, 2014.
2. See, for example, Pusey, 1983.
3. Hu Shi's given name was Shimi (嗣糜), and his school name Hong Xing (洪駢), before he adopted the name Shi 適 under the inspiration of Yan Fu's translation of the survival of the fittest as 適者生存。 .