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Linguistic and Cultural Trans-creation: From Conceptual Patterns in the Chinese Bible Versions to Yoel Hoffmann's **Translational Stance**

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To the blessed memory
of my friend Tsujita Kyoji,
a true disciple of Father Otsuki
and a lover of the Bible

Yoel Hoffmann constantly translates, trans-creates and moves between languages, cultures and *Weltanschauungen*. Dynamic contacts between West and East are clearly observable in his work: between the Western, Austro-Hungarian cultural world and the Eastern worlds – the Israeli one in the "Near East", and, very significantly, what used to be called "the Far East" – mainly Japan but also China with their own multifaceted cultural worlds. In what follows I illustrate some of the paths taken by Hoffmann when he moves and associates between the so-called different "worlds", then show some of the ways taken by Bible translators as the exemplary mediators between "West" and "East".

1. Shifts and Border-crossing in Hoffmann's Writings

Swift moves from one arena to another, or, border-crossing, seems to be one of the most pertinent "names of the game" in Hoffmann's writing. What borders are crossed by Hoffmann, and in what way?

The following fragment taken from *Christ of the Fish,*[1] originally written in Hebrew, and followed here by its English version, might illustrate Hoffmann's way of moving in the text:

באלף תשע מאות ושלושים **אדון**

מושקוביץ בנה (**מצמנט** ומאבני חצץ)

שובר גלים. הוא עמד [כמו **פרומתיאוס**

שהנשרים ניקרו בכבדו], פניו צפונית

מערבית, לעבר קונסטנצה, ואחורי גופו

אל המנזר שעל גבעת הנמל. "**ור בין איך**,"

חשב [דגי סרדין חמקו בין השוניות],

"אננדרר מושקוביץ אודר איך אליין?"   (מושקוביץ אחר או אני עצמי)

> In 1930 Mr. Moskowitz (from cement
> and gravel) built a breakwater. He
> stood (like Prometheus when the ea-
> gles plucked at his liver) with his face
> pointing northwest, towards Con-
> stansa, and his back to the monastery
> on the port hilltop. "Wer bin ich", he
> thought (sardines slipped away be-
> tween the rocks), "ein anderer Moskowitz oder ich allein?"

Hoffmann, *Christ of the Fish*[2] 88

The very first line of this fragment sets the scene and the atmosphere of the picture portrayed for the Hebrew reader when he meets the phrase *adon Moskowitz* ("Mr. Moskowitz"). Using the word '*adon*' as opposed to *mar* (both words meaning 'Mr.', each belonging to another register of spoken modern Hebrew) to precede the surname *Moskowitz*, is a socio-linguistic mark characterizing the speech as referring to the register of spoken Hebrew employed by so-called "new immigrants" (here, those who came to Palestine of the 1930's from Eastern and Central Europe), whose Hebrew level was considered below normative. The vibrant marking of this register of spoken Hebrew is strengthened by another feature of the speech distinctive to people who immigrated from Central and Eastern Europe, which is the mix of words from different languages in their speech. Hoffmann's Hebrew use of mi(=from) -*tsement* ("from cement" in the verse 'from cement and gravel built a breakwater'), *tsement* being the Hebrew pronunciation of the foreign word "cement", instead of '*melet*' which is the Hebrew word for this material – is one more characteristic of this well-defined spoken Hebrew register. The distinction in the Hebrew original fragment between two kinds of registers, differentiating between the Hebrew phrases marked as "new-immigrants' speech" and the rest of the text, is altogether lacking in the English version of the fragment, thus entirely "lost in translation".

What was *adon Moskowitz*, or, in the English version, *Mr. Moskowitz*, doing? He was standing "with his face pointing northwest" in a position referring to Greek mythology "like Prometheus when the eagles plucked at his liver", and then, without further ado, the tiny fish ("sardines slipped away between the rocks") moving swiftly serve as the background of his self-dialogue[3]. Not only is a self-dialogue, by definition, an ultra-intimate way of expression, but in Hoffmann's fragment the

inherent intimacy is all the more marked by the fact that Mr. Moskowitz uses his Yiddish mother-tongue to ask himself who he really is "Who am I, another Moskowitz, or I myself?"

Hoffmann's movements of border-crossing are done swiftly, very much like the almost unnoticed movements of sardines slipping away between the rocks. Thus, with fish in the background and the existential question of self-identity, Hoffmann may allude, among other relevant possibilities, to one of the most well-known pieces in Chinese Daoist thought, drawn from the *Zhuangzi*, with which he had a very early acquaintance:[4]

> The "the Happiness of Fish" (魚樂之辯 *Yú lè zhī biàn*, literally: "the debate on the joy of fish")
>
> Zhuangzi and Huizi were strolling along the bridge over the Hao River.
>
> Zhuangzi said, "The minnows swim about so freely, following the openings wherever they take them. Such is the happiness of fish".
>
> Huizi said, "You are not a fish, so whence do you know the happiness of fish?"
>
> Zhuangzi said, "You are not I, so whence do you know I don't know the happiness of fish?"
>
> Huizi said, "I am not you, to be sure, so I don't know what it is to be you. But by the same token, since you are certainly not a fish, my point about your inability to know the happiness of fish stands intact…"[5]

With Hoffmann we come across intermingling of Western and Eastern cultural systems. Looking at Hoffmann's daring ways to move to and fro from what is called "West" to what is called "East", to *trans*[6]-*fer* languages and registers, to *trans-mit* different cultural views, to *trans-late* and *trans-create* a world within a world, one naturally resorts to the mega translational project of conveying Western patterns to Eastern audience. The great endeavor to which I refer here is precisely the translation of the Bible to the languages of East Asia which plays a crucial role in East-West encounter. Chinese was the first East Asian language to which the biblical text was conveyed in the first decades of the nineteenth century, followed by the Japanese translation completed by 1887. [7]

2. East-West Encounter in Translation: The Bible in Chinese as a Case Study

In so far as we cannot think without language, and basing myself on Wittgenstein's statement "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" ("*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt*"),[8] I am concerned with the way in which concepts immanent to a cultural and cognitive system born in the Western Judeo-Christian world are conveyed to the world of the East.

Different Bible-in-Chinese versions have been published since the first quarter of the nineteenth century. I have examined several versions - the first one, translated by Robert Morrison[9] and

published in 1823, is actually the second Chinese Bible of Protestant origin.[10] The second version that I have studied is known as the Delegates' and London Mission Version. Published in 1858, it was the most used Chinese version in the nineteenth century.[11] These two versions were translated into the classical Chinese language. The third translation referred to is Schereschewsky's 1874 version; S. I. J. Schereschewsky,[12] a member of the Peking Translation Committee, was the first to translate the Scriptures not into the classical language, but rather to the modern language, *bai hua*,[13] based on the northern vernacular. The fourth version under examination is the Union Version.[14] Published in 1919, thus coinciding with the May Fourth Cultural Movement in China, the Union Version has been the most widely circulated and is still the translation most commonly used by Chinese Protestant Bible readers throughout the world today. The fifth is the Roman Catholic version translated by a team at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Sinense, and published in 1968.[15] The sixth version is Lü Zhenzhong's version, published in 1970 by the Hong Kong Bible Society.[16] The seventh version is the 1992 New Chinese version, popular in nowadays China, among other new versions. While examining the Chinese translations, my attention was obviously drawn to the cases where I located dissimilarities between the various versions and occasionally also some blatant deviations from the original in conveying the biblical message, although no formal restrictions on the part of the Chinese language seem to have caused these deviations.

Whatever text in a certain language is naturally imbued with cultural and linguistic premises of the culture and the language in which it is written. When the text is translated, be it a direct translation or a relay (indirect) one, the text in the target language is the one carrying the cognitive-cultural load that is transmitted to the reader. As part and parcel of the transmission project that the translator or translators have undertaken, cultural patterns as well as modes of thinking that are characteristic of the target language are present in the translated text. In the Chinese Bible versions, whether the version was translated from the English and/or other European language, whether directly from the Hebrew (Old Testament) or the Greek (New Testament) original sources, we encounter expressions and modes of speech that correspond to cultural patterns as well as to the modes and patterns of thinking extant and prevalent in the Chinese system.

Cultural considerations and cognitive decisive factors in translation, although at times intermingling, differ from each other, as each kind is motivated by a dissimilar mechanism: *cultural translation* is dictated by the politico-cultural agenda of the translator(s) which is most often dependent on the cultural set of premises and values inherent to the worldview prevalent in the target society; *cognitive translation or lingo-cognitive translation* is, on the other hand, motivated by cognitive traits common in the target socio-linguistic system.

Cultural Translation: Accommodating the translation to the Confucian value system

Often encountered in Chinese versions of the Bible, cultural translation is mainly observable when the translated versions manifest accommodation tendency to the Confucian set of values. The following cases illustrate this tendency.

"Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father" אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ (Leviticus 19:3). In the Hebrew original of the verse, it is the mother who comes first in order, the father figuring in the second place. Some of the Chinese versions (such as Morrison's pioneering version, Lü Zhenzhong's and the Catholic version) were indeed faithful to the original order, thus not following the Confucian ethical code where the father has a definite priority. Others, however, calculatingly and deliberately skipped the mother's precedence and adhered to the familiar Chinese expression *fumu* (father-mother), where the father figures first:

Delegates: 敬尔父母 *jing er fumu* "revere your parents".

Schereschewsky: 你们都当敬畏父母 *nimen dou dang jingwei fumu* "you should all stand in awe of (your) parents".

Union: 你們各人都当孝敬父母 [17]*nimen ge ren dou dang xiaojing fumu* "each of you should be respectful and filial to (your) parents".

New Chinese Version: 各人要孝敬父母 *geren yao xiaojing fumu* "each one has to be respectful and filial to (his) parents".

The same phenomenon is observed in the translations of the verse "But for his kin, that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother" כִּי אִם-לִשְׁאֵרוֹ הַקָּרֹב אֵלָיו: לְאִמּוֹ וּלְאָבִיו וְלִבְנוֹ וּלְבִתּוֹ וּלְאָחִיו (Lev. 21:2), where the original Hebrew manifests the mother's precedence over the father. Whereas the "fidelity versions" (Morrison's, Lü Zhenzhong's and the Catholic) preserve the original order with the mother preceding the father, the "acculturation versions" put the father first:

Delegates: 若死者為己书属、父母、兄弟 [18]、子女

Schereschewsky: 唯独為骨肉之親、即如父母兒女弟兄

Union: 除非為他骨肉之亲的父母、兒女、弟兄

New Chinese Version: 除非骨肉至亲，例如父母、兒女、兄弟

What stands behind the deviation from the original order of components in these "acculturation versions"? The answer has to do with Confucian perceptions of hierarchical order. In traditional China, as well as in the entire East Asian sphere under the influence of

Confucian ethical code, hierarchy was considered as indispensable for the right functioning of social order. It was the common, strengthening element in the set of relations serving as a model for proper social operations known as "five relationships" (五 论 *wulun*), i.e. differentiated statuses between ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother and between friends. What is more, hierarchical order was well integrated into cosmological theories by connecting it to *yin* and *yang*,[19] where *yang* was preferred over *yin*. Thus, whereas the father's priority is incontestable according to Confucian ethics, a biblical verse in which the mother is mentioned first and the father comes next to her seems to confuse the right, conventional hierarchy in family relations.

Also, since Chinese canonical texts such as the *Analects* (*Lun yu*), the *Book of Rites* (*Li ji*), and the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao jing*) almost exclusively talk about the relationship between father and son (*fuzi*) and mention mothers only within the compound "father and mother" (*fumu*), Cole[20] argues that Confucian filial piety concerns only a son's responsibilities to his father and male ancestors. Positioning the mother as primary out of the two parents may cause a kind of disorientation and bewilderment in the readers' minds. Consequently, in order not to shake the notion of unequal, hierarchical relationship between father and mother, and in an attempt to avoid any doubt of the father's prominence in the hierarchy, four of the translations amend and rearrange the original order.

Another deliberate translational amendment, that was performed by the Delegates and followed by Schereschewsky, has also to do with relations emanating from the Confucian ethical code. Isaac's blessing to Jacob, which contains the phrase "be lord over thy brethren" הֱוֵה גְבִיר לְאַחֶיךָ (Gen. 27:29), is expressed in Hebrew as directed towards Jacob, who is to preside over his brothers. All Chinese translations, except the Delegates' and Schereschewsky's, are faithful to the original in transmitting this verse with "you" (*er* in Morrison's translation to classical Chinese and *ni* in the vernacular versions), referring to Jacob as the actor in the phrase "may you be lord over your brothers". However, in the renditions of the Delegates and Schereschewsky, a change in the direction of the action is introduced: the action does not derive from "you", but rather originates from the brothers (*xiongdi, dixiong*), who are placed as the agents in the phrase: Delegates: 兄弟以尔为主 *xiongdi yi er wei zhu* "(your) younger brothers will take you for lord"; Scherescehwsky: 弟兄尊你为主 **dixiong** zun ni wei zhu "(your) brothers will look up to you as (their) lord".

The reason for this twist lies, here too, in the "five relationships" of the Confucian ethical code, according to which it is the duty of the person whose status is lower to pay respect to the one higher

in status, and not vice versa. Just as a subject has to revere the ruler, a son – his father, a wife – her husband, so it is the younger brother's duty to be loyal and servile to his elder brother, rather than the elder brother's task to rule.

Another interesting case concerning alteration or lexical substitution in the translated version for cultural reasons, occurs in Schereschewsky's rendering of the sentence וּפָנֶיךָ הֹלְכִים בַּקְרָב *u-phaneikha holekhim ba-kerav* which literally reads "and your face (will) walk into battle" (2 Samuel 17:11). The original Hebrew sentence consists of a metonymy in which a body part, the face, stands for the larger individual who is Absalom, King David's son. The metonymic expression ("your face") is not rendered as such in the Chinese versions which, perhaps in accordance with the English King James Version reads "and that thou go to battle in thine own person", opting to render the meaning of this expression using the semantic equivalent of 'in person': 亲 *qin*, or 亲自 *qinzi* "in person". Accordingly, the Union version runs as follows: 你也亲自率领他们出战 *ni ye qinzi shuailing tamen chu zhan* "you yourself will lead them to war". However, in Schereschewsky, the 2nd personal pronoun is substituted by the noun 王 *wang* "the King": 王亲自率领他们出战 *Wang qinzi shuailing tamen chu zhan* "the King in person will lead them to go into battle". The reason for this change, from "you" to "the King" in addressing Absalom, seems to be culturally based. As the speaker in this case is Ahitophel (originally a counselor of King David, who at the time of Absalom's revolt deserted David and supported the cause of Absalom), the language he would use here, following Schereschewsky's recognition of Chinese mores, should fit Absalom's expected status as future king. Thus, although the original does not contain any reference to the word "king", and the other Chinese versions do not attempt this strategy, Schereschewsky, with his reader-oriented translation policy, employs this manner of addressing the usurping Absalom.

Looking at ways of how father-son relations were rendered in the early Chinese versions of the Bible, I came across cases in which some of the Chinese versions simply do not convey part of the original. For example: "the nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover" עֶרְוַת אָבִיךָ וְעֶרְוַת אִמְּךָ, לֹא תְגַלֵּה *ervat abhikha ve-ervat imekha lo tegale* (Leviticus 18:7). Three versions, that is the Delegates, followed by Schereschewsky and the Union, omit the part of the verse designating "the nakedness of thy father" altogether. Delegates: 勿烝尔母 *wu zheng er mu* "Do not commit incest with your mother". Schereschewsky: 不可与母苟合 *bu ke yu mu gouhe* "You are not allowed to have an illicit union with your mother".
Union: 不可露你母親的下体 *bu ke lu ni muqin de xiati* "You are not allowed to expose your mother's lower part of the body".

Not mentioning the father's nakedness at all, these three versions refer solely to the mother, and,

when referring to the mother the Union version uses the metaphor "expose the lower part of the body", while the Delegates and Schereschewsky both translate the biblical metaphoric expression "disclose the nakedness of your mother" by interpreting it literally as incest. How can the total omission of "the father's nakedness" be explained? The answer lies, here too, in the Confucian ethical code, according to which filial piety was extolled for centuries as the highest virtue. Now if these three versions were making a great effort to accommodate the Judeo-Christian scriptures to the ethical system they saw praised by the Chinese literati of the nineteenth century, they evidently preferred not to adduce any detail that might even hint at debasing or disgracing the father's status. Moreover, as can be gathered from Confucian literature, filial piety essentially concerned the attitude of a son towards his father and male ancestors, so that a mother's nakedness, if mentioned at all, might offend to only a lesser extent the sensibilities of the Chinese literati who read the translated versions of the Bible.

Lingo-cognitive Chinese Translation

Four predominant cognitive traits that represent very typical lingo-cognitive phenomena of Chinese *Weltanschauung* are revealed in the language of the Chinese versions of the Bible. They are: accuracy in definition; concreteness (as opposed to abstraction); refraining from extreme expressions; and numerical representation of phenomena.

Accuracy in definition

In a dialogue between the two biblical figures Laban and Jacob, Laban asks Jacob: "Because you are my brother, should you therefore serve me for nothing?" *Ha-khi ahi ata va-avadetani hinam*? (Gen. 29:15). As shown by the different Chinese renderings, it is the Hebrew word *ahi* "my brother" figuring in this verse, that constitutes the problematic focal point for translation. Only Morrison's version, showing maximum literal fidelity to the original, translates this word almost literally, using 弟 *di* "younger brother": 因尔为我弟则应无报而事我乎 *yin er wei wo di ze ying wu bao er shi wo hu* "Because you are my younger brother (do you) have to serve me without compensation?" However, if one might think that the problem lies in the fact that Chinese kinship terms do not include a neutral word for "brother", so that a choice in translation should always be made between elder or younger brother, the other versions demonstrate that the difficulty goes further. All other versions offer different solutions:

Delegates: 尔虽我甥 ...*wo sheng* "Although you are my nephew…".

Schereschewsky: 你虽是我至亲 …*wo zhi qin* "Although you are my closest in kin…".

Union: 你虽是我的骨肉 …*wo de gu rou* "Although you are my flesh and bone…".

The Delegates draw on the term *wo sheng* "my nephew" using the character 甥 *sheng* "nephew, who is the son of my sister". Their translation runs as follows: 尔虽我甥岂可使尔徒劳乎 *er sui wo sheng qi ke shi er tulao hu* "Although you are my nephew how can (I) cause you to labour in vain?" Schereschewsky employs the compound 我至亲 *wo zhiqin* thus interpreting "my brother" as "my closest of kin": 你虽是我至亲、岂可白白的服事我 *ni sui shi wo zhiqin, qi ke baibai de fushi wo* "Although you are my closest of kin, how can (you) serve me for nothing?" And the Union Version used the expression 骨肉 *gurou* "flesh and bone".

What these different solutions reflect is that each translation looks for accuracy from another point of view: whereas Morrison seeks near-literal faithfulness, rendering the word meaning "my brother" as *wo di* "my younger brother", the Delegates version opts for the exact definition of the kind of kinship relationship that existed between Laban and Jacob. Since Laban is the brother of Jacob's mother, Jacob was his nephew, and the term used by the Delegates is therefore 甥 *sheng*. The modern Chinese versions such as the Catholic translation composed by the Studium Biblicum, Lü Zhenzhong's and the New Chinese Version all follow in the Delegates' steps, employing the term 外甥 *wai sheng* "sister's son, nephew". This solution that seeks the accurate designation of the actual relationship between the two biblical figures, perfectly fits the Confucian principle of 正名 *zhengming* "rectification of names". Thus, the faithfulness here is not to the literal wording in the original text, but to reality, in that it conveys to the Chinese reader the proper state of the relationship between Laban and Jacob. Schereschewsky's and the Union's versions, each in its own way, seem to look for another kind of faithfulness in this case: faithfulness to the true intention of the biblical text, rather than to real family relationships. In translating *ahi* "my brother" as 我至亲 *wo zhiqin* "my closest of kin," Schereschewsky finds an exact semantic equivalent that conveys the Hebrew meaning. The Union version, too, with the expression 骨肉 *gurou* "bone and flesh, kindred" aspires to a suitable accurate semantic parallel.

Concreteness (as opposed to abstraction)

God's first commandment imposed on the newly created human beings in the Garden of Eden is: מִכֹּל עֵץ-הַגָּן, אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat". God goes on prohibiting: וּמֵעֵץ, הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע--לֹא תֹאכַל, מִמֶּנּוּ "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. 2:16-17). Are God's words concrete or specific? No. What exactly should Adam and Eve eat of the trees? What part should not be touched by them? The original wordings "of every tree"/ "of the tree" do not contain any exact reference to the specific part of the tree. However, all Chinese

versions specify "the fruit of the tree". Schereschewsky's: 園中各樣樹上的果子你可以隨意吃，只是分別善惡樹上的果子你不可吃 *yuanzhong geyang shushang de guozi ni keyi suiyi chi, zhishi fenbie shan'e shu shang de guozi ni buke chi* "The **fruit** of every kind of a tree that is in the garden – you may eat as you wish; only the **fruit** of the tree of discerning good and evil – you are not allowed to eat". The tendency of Chinese for concrete designation of things is here revealed.

The phenomenon of preferring concrete reference rather than a metonymic, sometimes unclear description, is illustrated by two verses from the Book of Esther: "but the city Shushan was perplexed" וְהָעִיר שׁוּשָׁן נָבוֹכָה (Esther 3:15). The translators to Chinese made it a point to clarify who exactly in the city was perplexed: the people. Schereschewsky's version reads 書珊城的民都慌亂 *Shushan cheng de min dou huangluan* "all the people of the city Shushan were alarmed and confused". The same procedure can be seen in a very similar line וְהָעִיר שׁוּשָׁן צָהֲלָה וְשָׂמֵחָה "and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad" (Esther 8:15). The Union version reads: 書珊城的人民都歡呼快樂 *Shushan cheng de renmin dou huanhu kuaile* "all the people [*renmin*] of the city Shushan cheered and were happy".

Refraining from extreme expressions

Chinese language shows a relentless abstinence from extreme, negative expressions. A vivid illustration is drawn from the Chinese translation of a very well-known scene in the Judeo-Christian tradition: Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve, each presented his offering and made sacrifice to God. God favored Abel's sacrifice instead of Cain's. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Genesis 4:4-5). Cain's reaction was extreme: "he was very wroth" וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד (Genesis 4:5). Schereschewsky's translation consists of a typical understatement: 該隱就大大的不悅, *Gai Yin jiu da da de bu yue* "Cain was very much displeased".

Numerical representation of phenomena

A mode of expression deeply rooted in the Chinese way of thinking consists of the tendency to use numerical expressions to represent various sorts of phenomena. In the Chinese Bible translations this tendency is reflected when numerical expressions are employed to render expressions that in the original do not consist of numerical or quantified expressions. Derk Bodde entitled this propensity as "Categorical Thinking",[21] by which he meant the overall tendency to classify and categorize each and every phenomenon in terms of a numerical group.

When God found out that the serpent had persuaded Eve to taste the fruit of the tree of discerning good and evil, he cursed the serpent: אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה "you are cursed more than all livestock, and every animal of the field" (Gen. 3;14). In the translated version of Schereschewsky,

we find two numerical expressions in this verse: 你...就必比六畜百獸加倍受咒詛 "you are cursed doubly more than the six domestic animals (livestock) and the hundred animals". The compound 六畜 *liuchu* (the six domestic animals: horse, ox, goat, pig, dog and fowl), and 百獸 *baishou* (all animals) are used to express all kinds of animals.

When Joseph was in the land of Egypt, he managed to gather all sorts of wheat "and Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much" וַיִּצְבֹּר יוֹסֵף בָּר כְּחוֹל הַיָּם הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד (Gen. 41:49). Whereas the original uses a general term referring to "corn," "wheat" or "grains" (Hebrew *bar*), Chinese versions use the compound 五穀 *wugu* (lit. five grains) in which the numeral 五 *wu* (five) precedes the noun 穀 *gu* (grain). Schereschewsky gives: 約瑟這樣積蓄五穀 *Yuese zheyang jixu wugu* "Joseph thus stored up all kinds of cereals" [lit., five grains]; and so do other versions. The compound *wugu* "five grains" is intended to semantically encompass all the cereals, the exact list of which varies.[22] The specific items that constitute the list being irrelevant, this compound denotes the whole, i.e., food crops in general.

In the Book of Isaiah we find כִּי-לִי תִּכְרַע כָּל-בֶּרֶךְ תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל-לָשׁוֹן "unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45:23). The expressions citing the body parts (knee, tongue) referring to the whole person are translated into Chinese as 萬膝 *wan xi* "ten thousand knees" and 萬口 *wan kou* "ten thousand mouths" respectively. Preceding a noun, *wan* is idiomatically used in Chinese to mean "all".

Having portrayed some features that characterize the rendition of Judeo-Christian scriptures coming from the West to Chinese audience, I would like now to look afresh at Yoel Hoffmann's shifts between the worlds.

3. Back to Yoel Hoffmann

天地一指也，萬物，一馬也 "Heaven and earth are one finger. The ten thousand things are one horse".[23] According to the Chinese Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi, the greatness of heaven and earth is no different from one finger; the amount of the ten thousand things is no different from one horse. In Hoffmann's translation to Hebrew of this line which is included in a selection from the *Zhuangzi*,[24] we find not only his rendering of the idiosyncratic Chinese tendency to classify and categorize each and every phenomenon in terms of numerical group (*wan wu*, "ten thousand things" is a generic term signifying all things in the universe), but also major clues to his works. As to the Chinese compound "ten thousand things", Hoffmann rightly conveys it as "all things". As to the overall idea of this phrase – this seems ro be a concept of paramount significance in Hoffmann's writings. Trifle or gigantic, main or trivial, from here or from there, in this language or in another – things all seem to come up to one. There is no essential difference between things, thus no real

borders exist.

Daoist reflections may be traced everywhere in Hoffmann's writings. Dream or reality, dream and reality? Is there a clear cut line between dream and reality? That is the question. The allusion to *Zhuangzi*'s "butterfly episode" is vibrant:

"Once upon a time, I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man".[25]

Below are samples of Hoffmannic ruminations between dream and reality:

 "I dream that I am a murderer. (Of a man? It

Was a kind of small mummy into whose neck I'd

injected poison. But, without a doubt, there was

life within it.) I try to wake up so I

can find that I haven't killed a soul. I wake and understand that

in fact I've committed a murder. In the morning,

when I rise, I understand that I dreamed the part about waking up".

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I want to know: are there colors and

smells in the brain? The pig farmer is

dead and now the old sow is running

through the streets of my mind (across

wooden bridges) looking for him. And

maybe the sights I see when I'm awake
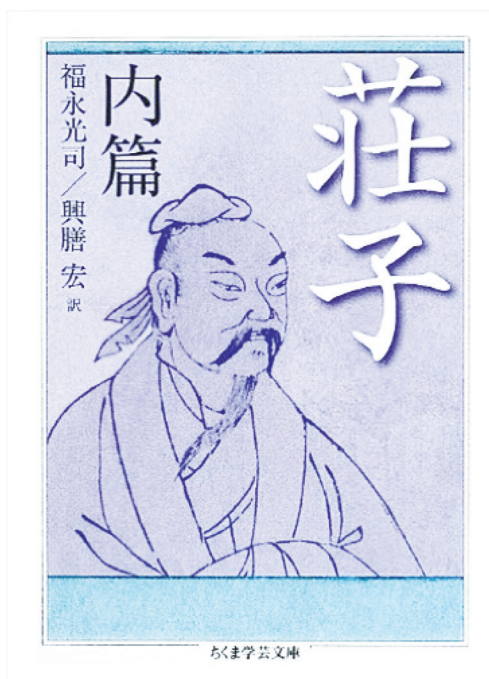
are someone else's dream?

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Or, is there a distinction line between East and West?

Hoffmann makes it a point to elucidate his total rebuff of marking borders and even the sheer irrelevance of borders. The title of his Hebrew book *Ha-Shunra ve-Ha-Shmeterling*[26] (*The Shunra and the Schmetterling*)[27] is yet another illustration of this point. *Shunra* and *Schmetterling* are both foreign words for the Hebrew reader. However, whereas *shunra* is Aramaic, and belongs to the stock of Hebrew cultural tradition as having a place in the Haggadah of Passover, *Schmetterling*, "butterfly"

in German, is totally unknown to a Hebrew speaker. With this mélange between languages and cultures, between what is considered East and what is considered West, Hoffmann consciously affirms that he does not bother to accommodate his writing to the reader's expectations. Hoffmann moves swiftly from one cultural setting to another, from one *Weltanschauung* to another. But, without the slightest attempt to make the text comprehensive to his readers: Just as his relatives and other people who immigrated from the Austro-Hungarian sphere to the Asiatic sphere in Palestine were not aware of the fact that some of their sayings were not clear at all to the audience. Following this Hoffmannic line, I suggest a slight revision in the above mentioned Daoist "Butterfly episode", to a trans-created *Schmetterling's episode:*

"Formerly, I, Zhuang Zhou, dreamt that I was a Schmetterling, a Schmetterling flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Zhou. Suddenly I awoke, and was myself again, the veritable Zhou. I did not know whether it had formerly been Zhou dreaming that he was a Schmetterling, or it was now a Schmetterling dreaming that it was Zhou. But between Zhou and a Schmetterling there must be a difference…"

Like his *Schmetterling*, Hoffmann freely but consciously and wide awake, flies over registers, cultures, languages, people, east – west, and backwards. Liberated yet with full consciousness he takes his reader on a very lucid journey in which the dream is very real.

Not only dream versus reality is being probed, but also a parallel pair: death versus life. Here too, the answer is not clear:

> I said to my father: "but Uncle Herbert is dead. Am I dreaming?" And my dead father said: "no, he is alive"

<div align="right">

Christ of the Fish (first page)

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Beyond all these existential questions, there is however a question that never finds an answer, a perpetual elusive question that emerges time and again: *"Wer bin ich?"* "Who am I?" (*Christ of the Fish,* 88)

> "The little girl Sivan was there, and also Yoel
>
> Hoffmann, who eludes me continuously and
>
> Whose nature it is hard to grasp".

<div align="right">

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Notes

1   *Kristus shel Ha-Dagim*, (= Christ of the Fish), (Keter Publishing House, 1991).

2   Yoel Hoffmann, *Christ of the Fish*, Translated to English by Eddie Levenston, (A New Directions Book, New York, 1999).

3   "Self-dialogue involves a constant process of demarcation and interaction between "I" and "me," between speakable and the unspeakable, and between what is said and what is meant" says Victor N. Shaw "Self-Dialogue as a Fundamental Process of Expression," *Social Thought & Research* Vol. 24, No. 1/2, The Politics of Gender (2001), pp. 271-312.

4   In 1977 Hoffmann published the book *Kolot Ha-Adama. (The Sounds of Earth. Selection from Chuang-Tzu). Translation from Chinese and commentary* (Massasa). As Hoffmann states, it is a kind of relay (indirect) translation, as he relied also on Japanese translations of this text, especially that of Fukunaga, *Soshi*, asahishimbunsha publishing.

5   From *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, With Selections from Traditional Commentaries.* Translated, with Introduction by Brook Ziporyn, (Hackett Publishing, 2009).

6   From Latin trāns ("across, on the far side, beyond").

7   On the Japanese Translations of the Bible, see Doron B. Cohen, *The Japanese Translations of the Hebrew Bible: History, Inventory and Analysis*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

8   Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung*, (London: Kegan Paul, 1922).

9   Morrison was the first Protestant missionary to have lived and worked in China.

10   The first Protestant version, translated by J. Lassar and J. Marshman and published in 1822 in Serampore, India, was not as widely used as Morrison's.

11   See, for example, Strandenaes, Thor, *Principles of Chinese Bible Translation as Expressed in Five Selected Versions of the New Testament and Exemplified by Mt. 5: 1-12 and Col 1*,(Almqvist and Wiksell International. Coniectanea Biblica. New Testament Series 19, 1987), p. 48.

12   For a thorough study of Schereschewsky, his life and work see Eber, Irene. *The Jewish Bishop and the Chinese Bible: S.I.J. Schereschewsky (1831-1906)*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

13   All the Chinese versions that followed from that time on used the modern language as well.

14   The entire complex history of the Union Version is dealt with by Zetzsche, Jost Oliver, *The Bible in China. The History of the Union Version or the Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China,* (Monumenta serica Monograph Series XLV. Sankt Augustin: Monumenta serica Institute, 1999).

15   Cf. Camps, Arnulf. O.F.M., "Father Gabriele M. Allegra, O.F.M. (1907-1976) and the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*: The First Complete Chinese Catholic Translation of the Bible". in Eber, Irene, Sze-Kar Wan and Knut Walf (eds.), in collaboration with Roman Malek, *Bible in Modern China: the Literary and Intellectual Impact*. (Monumenta serica Monograph Series 43, Sankt Augustin: Nettetal Steyeler Verlag, 1999), pp. 55-76.

16   See Zetzsche, op.cit. p. 347.

17   The Union version not only follows the Delegates' and Schereschewsky's using the compound *fumu*, but also goes further in pursuing Confucian spirit as it prefers the verbal compound 孝敬 *xiaojing* instead of transmitting the concept of "awe".

18   The Delegates' version reverses, in addition, the order of the components that follow in the text-positioning "brother" before "son and daughter".

19   This viewpoint is generally credited to Dong Zhongshu of the Han dynasty, although as Sarah A. Queen has noted, historians have somewhat overstated Dong's contribution to the systematization of yin-yang thought. Queen, Sarah A., *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.

20 Cole, Alan. *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, (Stanford University Press. Stanford, California, 1998).

21 Bodde, Derk. "Types of Chinese Categorical Thinking" *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol. 59.2 (1939), pp. 200-219.

22 According to Mathews' *Chinese-English Dictionary*, "five grains" may include "hemp or flax, millet of two kinds, wheat and barley, and pulse. This is an ancient classification," he adds, "other lists include rice" (p. 1072).

23 From *Zhuangzi*, 齐物论 , "Essay on the Uniformity of All Things".

24 *Kolot Ha-Adama*, p.18.

25 Translated by Lin Yutang.

26 *Ha-Shunra ve-Ha-Shmeterling*, (Keter Publishing House, 2001).

27 *The Shunra and the Schmetterling* translated from the Hebrew by Peter Cole, (New York: New Directions Books, 2004).