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Serenella Zanotti (eds)

The Translator as Author

Perspectives on Literary Translation

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INTRODUCTION

On 28 and 29 May 2009, the Università per Stranieri of Siena hosted the international conference "Il traduttore come autore/The Translator as Author". Scholars and translators from all over the world met to discuss the problems of literary translation, calling attention to the figure of the translator as both a mediator in the encounter between languages and cultures, and as an author in his or her own right.

The aim of the conference was to stimulate discussion on the concept of authorship with regard to translation. The initiative also intended to stress the creative role of translators and to affirm a view of translation as work of interpretation and re-creation or, in other words, as artistic and intellectual endeavour.

The variety of languages and dialects represented (languages from English to French, Spanish to German, Arabic to Chinese and even Quechua; dialects from Roman to Taiwanese) combined with the vastly different cultural contexts to animate a rich and lively debate. The problems confronted and the translational proposals which emerged from the discussion highlighted a variety of mutually enriching and enlightening approaches without, however, arriving at unilateral or definitive solutions.

The themes which arose during the conference can be referred to three principal areas represented in the three parts which make up this volume, where different theoretical aspects and actual translating experiences are faced and intertwined.

The papers in part 1 address the translator-author equation from various perspectives, ranging from the Eastern-European tradition to "formal pragmatics", up to recent "process studies". These lines of research on the one hand highlight the vagueness of the terminology used in translation studies and the ambiguity of traditional terms such as "faithful" and "equivalent"; on the other hand, they emphasize the existence of an original which, far from being monolithic, is in constant transformation just as its translations are. In spite of the inevitable difference between author and translator, the idea of translation as an interpretive and therefore creative act striving to enhance meaning is maintained and emphasized. As Benjamin writes, the translator makes the survival of the work possible

THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE ARAB WORLD IN THE AGE OF NAHDAH (RENAISSANCE). THE TRANSLATION MOVEMENT IN THE ARAB LITERARY REVIEWS

Maria Avino (Università di Napoli l'Orientale)

The paper reflects on the role played by literary reviews in the spread of the knowledge of Western culture. In the Age of Translation, a vast cultural movement arose whose intent was to re-establish communication between Eastern and Western cultures. This led to substantial changes to aesthetic canons and a broadening of the reading public, as well as to social, political, and civil developments throughout the Arab world. Central to these transformations was the translation of the Bible from Greek and Hebrew to Arabic, which profoundly influenced the formation of modern Arabic. Conservatives, in contrast, were critical, fearing new "imported" literary genres – the short story, the novel, and the drama – as both entities far removed from the Arab context and vehicles for the spread of Western vices. In the end, the intellectuals and translators of the *Nahdah* found short stories and novels to be the genres best suited to their needs, as they opened a window to understanding the customs and habits of the different social classes in the West. Nonetheless, the climate of strong resistance meant that it was not until the thirties that knowledge of the European world would be deemed an acceptable model for Arabs.

The re-establishment of contact between the Arab world and Europe which occurred at the end of the eighteenth century brought political, economical and social changes that would soon afterwards cause cultural values to alter as well. This time of great overall renewal, which also affected the literary field, is known as *al-Nahdah* (The Arab Renaissance).¹

In the midst of the nineteenth century, a movement to translate Western scientific and literary works was born: it was deemed to become so important that the period from the last decades of the nineteenth century up to the thirties in the twentieth century would be named '*aṣr al-tarǧamah* (the Age of Translation). Hence, the task assigned to translation was to fill the cultural void left behind by the Age of Decadence, which is commonly set between the fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries. The huge number of works translated and submitted to the Arab public within the aforesaid time contributed to change significantly the aesthetic canons set in the previous age. Whilst literature produced in the Age of Decadence addressed

¹ For an overview of Arabic literature in the period of *Nahdah* see Camera d'Afflitto 2000.

the educated *élite* and thus had become, as stated by Pierre Cachia (1967: 14), "uncreative, artificial, concerned solely with wordy elaborations on limited and immutable themes"; during the nineteenth century a new kind of literature developed which was "informative, direct, purposeful", addressing a new public which appeared in those decades.

The press performed a seminal role in promoting the dissemination of European literature. Cairo, Beirut, and then Damascus and Haifa hosted some of the most relevant cultural reviews of the time. First and foremost among the reviews dealing with literary issues set within the frame of the relationship with Western culture and supporting the translation of European works, one must cite *al-Muqtataf*² and *al-Hilāl*.³

When the review *al-Nafā'is* was founded 1908 in Haifa by Ḥalīl Baydas (1874-1949), it had the merit of primarily disseminating Russian literature. Also in 1908, the Syrian intellectual Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī moved the review *al-Muqtatabs*, which he had founded two years earlier, from Cairo to Damascus, in a very short time causing it to become one of the major cultural journals of *Bilād al-Šam*.

The aforementioned reviews offered translations or adaptations of European literary works in *ad hoc* surveys. At the same time, several contributors became committed to disseminating Western literature through articles regarding European authors as well as the cultural and literary movements which they believed to be most relevant. At the outset, these articles proved to be of scanty value in terms of criticism, though afterwards they would acquire more and more methodological rigour.

Arab intellectuals of the nineteenth century thus acquired a greater openness to the knowledge of European languages, undoubtedly crucial to participation in the translation movement. The Lebanese Buṭrus al-Bustānī is known, among other things, to have contributed valuable insights as far as linguistic and lexicographic renewal is concerned. Hopeful about a possible reform of Arabic, he had studied Italian, English, Greek and Latin in addition to Hebrew and Syrian. Aḥmad Fāris al-Šidyāq could fluently master English, which he had studied first in Lebanon and then improved during his stay in Great Britain.

² Set up in Beirut in 1876 by Ya'qūb Šarrūf and Fāris Nimr, in 1885 *al-Muqtataf* was moved to Cairo, where it was published until 1957.

³ Set up in Cairo in 1892 by the well-known Lebanese intellectual Ġurġī Zaydān, it is still published today.

In 1861 a first translation into Arabic of the English work *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe was accomplished by Buṭrus al-Bustānī;⁴ in 1868 the Egyptian Rifā'ah Rāfi' al-Ṭaḥṭāwī translated the first French literary work into Arabic: Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque*.

As far as theatre is concerned, the Lebanese Marūn al-Naqqāš was responsible for the first adaptation into Arabic of *L'Avare* by Molière, in 1848, which he would subsequently stage.

A rather significant event occurred in Lebanon that mightily influenced the development of Arabic literary style: the translation of the Bible from Greek and Hebrew, deemed by some as the greatest achievement of literary translation in the nineteenth century. Some of the most outstanding men of letters of the time contributed to it, from al-Šidyāq to al-Bustānī, and from Naṣīf al-Yāziġī to his son Ibrāhīm al-Yāziġī.⁵

The translation of the Bible can be almost considered a founding act in modern Arabic literature, as it had been for German literature.⁶ The translators employed an accurate and elegant language devoid of complications and abstruseness: their sober and vibrant style, with its capacity to convey intense emotions, not only won converts amongst Christian Arab writers, but affected the style of an entire generation. Thereafter, Arabic began to get rid of the useless complexity distinctive of the Age of Decadence, shedding the moralising strain and difficult-to-comprehend rhetorical

⁴ As a matter of fact, a first translation of this work had been already carried out in 1835, though it is often neglected by the scholars due to the fact that it was published anonymously in Malta. Šafiġ al-Biqā'ī assigns its paternity to Aḥmad Fāris al-Šidyāq (al-Biqā'ī 1990: 138).

⁵ Until then the Christian Arabs had used the translation of the Bible carried out in Rome in 1671. In the nineteenth century three new translations of the Bible were completed. The first version was commissioned by the Anglican Church Missionary Society to Fāris al-Šidyāq, who joined the orientalist Lee, and it was published in London in 1857. The second translation, requested by the Americans and thus known as the American version, or Van Dyck's translation, was initiated in 1848 by Ely Smith with the assistance of Buṭrus al-Bustānī. The latter translated from Hebrew, Syriac and Greek, and then submitted the work to Naṣīf al-Yāziġī's revision. Upon Smith's death in 1857, he was replaced by Cornelius Van Dyck, who referred to the Muslim Yūsuf al-Aṣīr for the revision. This version was published in 1865. As for the Jesuits, they began their translation in 1876, availing themselves of the collaboration of Ibrāhīm al-Yāziġī. He too had studied Hebrew, like al-Bustānī, in order to make a correct translation. The work was concluded in 1882 (al-Šulḥ 1987: 137-145).

⁶ On the translation of the Bible into German by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century see Nergaard 1993: 35-37.

style.⁷ More and more in the next years a new writing style, simpler and more direct, established itself; gradually, the rhythmic prose, formalism and obsolete lexicon were left behind; texts full of allusions, metaphors and metonymies were given up, following the inspiration brought by the Western models, above all English and French, but also Italian and German etc. This trend was accelerated by the press that, needing to be understood by the readers, in turn encouraged the development of a clearer style. Translation hence acquired in those years a pivotal role in the cultural scene; it was seen as one of the most urgent tasks for literature in order to enhance (within set limits) the communication skills of its own language. Besides, translation from the mid nineteenth century had highlighted the manifold inadequacies of Arabic which, having been left essentially unchanged during the Age of Decadence, needed to undergo a process of adaptation to modern reality so as to assimilate its novelties. It was of some urgency to renew the lexicon in order to be able to express the new concepts imported into the Arab world from European civilisation. Simultaneously, it was essential to simplify existent vocabulary, discarding a number of synonyms which had fallen into disuse, having been employed in a society whose needs, costumes and social habits were dramatically different from the current ones.⁸

Translation then was regarded as the means whereby Arab people could establish an enduring and deep communication with all other countries, chiefly with the European ones. It was thanks to the translators that communication could be established not only with the contemporary West, but also with the remotest Western past. Thus the translation of the *Iliad* from Greek by the Lebanese Sulaymān al-Bustānī must be mentioned here, a work that engaged the translator for many years, and that, once completed in 1904, was received by the press and by the intellectual Arab clubs as an extraordinary event since it allowed the Arabs to forge even stronger bonds

⁷ According to Šafīq al-Biqā'ī, the translation of the Bible accomplished by the Protestants was met with such great favour by the believers glad to read it, that it contributed to an increase in the number of conversions to Protestantism. Jealousy would have induced the Jesuits to accomplish a new translation of the Bible (see al-Biqā'ī 1990: 139). Cachia (1991: 36) writes: "Evidently these Christian translations were intended for a restricted public, but the training provided by such intensive labours in collaboration with Western Arabists was invaluable".

⁸ For more on this, see Buṭrus al-Bustānī 1990: 108-109.

with Western knowledge, for Greek literature had formed the basis upon which modern Westerners had built their own culture.⁹

However, while on the one hand most intellectuals of that time strongly supported the translation movement, regarding it as a decisive means of growth for their own language and culture, on the other some controversial stances regarding foreign literature were to be found, for the latter had become more and more the object of imitation by Arabs. The great number of translated works, along with the increasing interest in European literature, triggered disapproving reactions amongst some conservatives who expressed great concern over the phenomenon, which they defined as *tafarnuḡ* (Europeanization or imitation of Europeans). *Tafarnuḡ*, they asserted, threatened to dispossess the Arab culture of its own identity, and put at risk the very existence of "genuine" Arabic literary genres, such as poetry. New literary genres – the short story, novel and theatre – having appeared in the Arab world as borrowings from Europe, held undoubted appeal for Arab writers, so that the number of authors experimenting with them was steadily increasing.

The fiercest representative of once such conservative group was the Egyptian Muṣṭafa Šādiq al-Rāfi'ī, who attracted the criticism of the majority with his wish to dismantle the literary translation movement, which for him represented a threat to the system of Arab-Islamic values. In his view, literary translation was none other than an instrument used by the Europeans to transplant into the Arab world visions and ideas altogether foreign to the latter, thus undermining its cultural identity from its very foundations. Nothing in European literature was worth reading, its most frequent feature being the depiction of human appetites and passions, mainly sexual ones: in contrast, Arab poetry had been long since hovered in a universe of noble ideals (al-Rāfi'ī 1926: 34). Moreover, literature was the port of entry to the Islamic world for the materialistic and atheistic theories that outraged Arabs' religious feelings. For al-Rāfi'ī, atheism and secularism posed an extremely serious risk for Arab society; consequently, he was persuaded that only a revival of Islamic religion and morals would lead to a genuine regeneration of the Arab world.

⁹ The work of translation of diverse masterpieces of Greek literature accomplished some decades later by ṭāhā ḥusayn is also deserving of mention. Occasionally the Arab press dedicated articles to Latin and Greek poets and authors. In 1930 the review *al-Muqataṭaṭ* celebrated the poet Virgilius with a two-part article entitled "Virgilio: al-šā'ir al-qadīm al-ḡadīd 70-19 q.m.".

In his opinion, laicism and atheism were undeniably the bases upon which the troubles of the spirit affecting the European civilisation rested, because the nature of the individual becomes corrupt as it gets further away from religion (al-Rāfi'ī 1926: 33-34). The same strict judgements towards the Western world were put forth in 1907 by another influential Egyptian intellectual, Muḥammad Luṭfī Ğum'ah, in an article published in the review *al-Muqtabas*. There, he reproached the translators for having flooded the national literary market with novels and stories conveying ideas nurtured in Europe by materialist intellectuals and philosophers who considered the world as a mere material entity, denying the existence of the soul. By warding off religion and placing man at the centre of the universe, the West had come to a point at which any desire could be justified. At the same time, the loss of faith had sown a poisonous desperation in the hearts of Europeans. According to Ğum'ah, evidence of this loss of hope in the Western world could be found in the fact that many novels (but mostly tragedies) that mirrored the reality of European societies ended with the main character's suicide. Theatre was perceived by Ğum'ah as a sort of Trojan horse whence the Europeans tried to make the materialistic and sceptical ideas that were threatening the future of Arab society appealing by representing them in evocative ways (Ğum'ah 1907: 199). Unlike European literature, Arabic literature (from popular tales to the *Aḥbār*) had always praised inner strength, courage, generosity and hope. The key feature of its production was embodied in the power of life, whereas the bulk of Western literature was limited to outlining human weaknesses and cowardice, and celebrating death.¹⁰

With regard to Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfi'ī, it's worth noting that he only acknowledged the legitimacy of scientific translation, by means of which the Arab world should catch up to Europe eliminating the scientific and technological gaps in knowledge accrued over preceding centuries, so as to fight the West more effectively.

It is difficult to comprehend the weight of the concerns put forward by the more conservatively-biased Arab intellectuals unless the political events

¹⁰ Ğum'ah complained that Arab writers, trying to imitate Europeans, were creating works that ended with the main characters' suicide. For this detestable habit, he stated, they could thank the translators. In particular, he quotes a poem describing a suicide written by the Egyptian poet Ḥafīẓ Ibrāhīm that in his opinion was upsetting the serenity of readers "by infusing evil in their hearts" (198).

affecting Arab countries at that time are taken into consideration. These were subject to such thorough control from a political and an economical standpoint, that many intellectuals were afraid of losing their own cultural identity, which they perceived as impaired by the powerful translation movement. The political events hence exerted their influence more specifically over the literary field.

It was immediately after the First World War that the debate became quite inflamed; mostly fuelled by the review *al-Hilāl*, it saw the participation of some of the most prestigious names of the cultural Arab scene at that time. When unfulfilled expectations of national independence and mounting Western political influence over the Arab world made queries regarding the relationship between national and European culture even more compelling, this in many instances induced conservative intellectuals to adopt attitudes of even further closure. In addition, concern about the excessive power exerted by European civilisation and by the so-called "Western spirit" over Arab culture was spreading so widely in those years that it was sometimes perceived and articulated even by intellectuals supportive of a more moderate line in favour of an opening, albeit a conditional one, towards the West. European political influence was too great and tangible, it was feared, not to have severe repercussions in both the literary and linguistic fields. The reservations held by the intellectuals, including some moderates such as, for instance, the Lebanese Ġabr Ḍūmiṭ, claimed that such a massive encroachment of Western cultural models as the one occurring in the years at issue, rather than boosting Arab writers' inventiveness and providing them with new topics to exploit, would instead paralyse their creative impulses to the extent of hampering the establishment of a modern literature bearing national features, a literature depicting the specific Arab character and drawing inspiration from their own history, living conditions and daily reality. That is to say, writers were running the risk of remaining mere imitators: perhaps no longer of the ancient Arabs, as they had been during the Age of Decadence, but rather of the Westerners (Ḍūmiṭ 1920: 300).

Even the process of dissemination of Western literature accomplished by the journals developed along the key assumption of the Arabs' specificity and of their substantial otherness from other peoples, especially from the Westerners; therefore European cultural production was indeed advantageous for the Arabs, but only up to a point. Departing from such a premise, the dissemination of Western literature turned out to be subject to

precise rules, which although not clearly stated, were invariably complied with.

Moreover, as already stated, the Arab world was going through a very peculiar phase that could be described as social, political and civil transformation, which the Arab intellectuals joined in with great involvement and sense of duty, and this, too, significantly influenced their choices concerning literary dissemination and translation. In that phase of the Renaissance a clear-cut social function was ascribed to literature. In contrast to the past when a literature had been produced which was "addressed to an élite that wanted not be stimulated or directed in a quest, but gratified in its expectations" (Cachia 1967: 14), the literati of *nahḍah* stood for the ideal of a committed literature that would partake in the moulding of a more dynamic and modern society, as well as of a new Arab man.

If at that time increasingly new genres imported from the West are experimented with, this is mainly because, unlike poetry, they allow the authors to express their commitment to society. The novel and the story are seen as suitable tools for conducting documentary surveys of the community portraying all the social classes' customs. The authors also embrace these genres as a means of critical involvement and as instruments for circulating ideas. As explained by the Palestinian Ḥalīl Baydas,¹¹ translator of several Russian works published in his review *al-Nafā'is*, the strength of the novel lies in the fact that it disseminates "new values and social ideals associated with justice, emancipation, progress and rebellion against injustice and oppression"; and also because "it draws attention not to the élite, but rather to common people's life" (quoted in al-Ḥafīb 1996: 59).

The reviews all speak out in favour of spreading a realistic literature capable of depicting people's troubles. Tolstoy's realism in particular gained immense admiration, since Arab critics greatly appreciated his expressive clarity and truthfulness as well as his participatory attitude in facing the crucial dilemmas of his time. Critics from different reviews also showed an interest in the European Romantic movement, especially the French one. For instance, various articles, significant even from a critical point of

¹¹ About this famous translator who knew Russian perfectly (from which he also translated a novel by Emilio Salgari), see Camera d'Afflitto 2007: 38-40.

view, were dedicated to Victor Hugo;¹² whereas the review *al-Muqtabas* took care to introduce its readers to representatives of German Romanticism as well.

On the contrary, Arab critics took no notice of some important exponents of their contemporary cultural landscape: to this regard it suffices to mention Oscar Wilde and Marcel Proust. However, in general it was French fiction from the final decade of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth that would be almost completely ignored. This was probably a consequence of the fact that it was marked by an absolute subjectivism and was inclined, as a reaction to the naturalism that had dominated the literary scene in the latter half of the nineteenth century, to glorify beauty, placing it higher than morals on the scale of values. This was a vision utterly antithetical to that suggested by the Arab critics, to whom beauty always had to correspond to the moral and social message spread by a given work.

The realism supported by the Arab critics was a realism where the author's documentary qualms could never stretch so far as to include faithful and objective reproductions of the most obnoxious and immoral aspects of society. The realism theorised by the Arab critics and sustained by the reviews was such insofar that the writer knew how to reproduce reality in faithful ways, having a sharp eye for observation and being lively in his representation, while still moved by a deep ethical feeling. Hence, in representing the world as it really was, yet avoiding lingering on the most wretched aspects of life, this realism aimed not only to arouse emotion in the reader, but also to convey moralistic and pedagogical teachings. Accordingly, works contrary to morals, or else describing despicable realities, were either censured in their most scabrous parts, or ignored by translators of that time. Even afterwards, when a different conception of art work was established, the idea that art could be released from everything, being free to arouse in the hearts any sort of feelings, even repulsive ones, would continue to be rejected. They continued to uphold an idea of art that could never be severed from its moral substance.¹³ As Ḥalīl Baydas writes:

¹² From 1902 to 1904 on the review *al-Hilāl* the Palestinian Rūḥī al-Ḥālīdī (1864-1913) published with the pseudonym al-Maqdisī an interesting piece of research on Victor Hugo, entitled *Ta'riḥ 'ilm al-adab 'inda al-Ifrānḡ wa al-'Arab wa Victor Hugo*. In regard to this author see Camera d'Afflitto 2007: 37.

¹³ One of the few to express a different opinion was the Egyptian Salāmah Musā, who refused to link literature to morals, in the name of the eternity and universality of art. Musā wrote: "Literature like any other form of art is by its own nature eternal [...], hence to bind

Ethics is the most relevant purpose pursued by the novel, it embodies warnings, exhortations and judgements that are of benefit and help to improve habits and to enlighten minds [...] novels have to be proper and avoid stirring the instincts or hurting the common sense of decency, notwithstanding this, they have to be pleasant and entertaining (Ḥalīl Baydas, *Fī falsafat al-riwāyah*, in al-Ḥaṭīb 1996: 59).

Theorising an impartial fiction that aimed at admonishing and reforming society, yet without ever forgetting the idyllic element and the individual's spiritual component, meant neglecting some of the most artistically fruitful literary movements of contemporary Europe. Naturalism, especially French naturalism as embodied by its best-known representative Emile Zola, was consistently the object of contempt. Zola's choice to recount all forms of behaviour, even the most despicable, including moral depravation, or to describe such social phenomena as prostitution and alcoholism, was condemned. With regard to the French writer's works, in the review *al-Hilāl* we can read: "There are things [in his works] that Eastern people loathe listening to or reading about, for modesty or decency" (Anonymous 1902: 34). Even decadence, symbolism and generally all the movements proclaiming aestheticism, by exalting the subjectivity or focussing on the evaluation of private and on introspective analysis (the current of the psychological novel, for example) were duly ignored. The Egyptian Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī, purveyor of Western culture, argued in the review *al-Hilāl* that literature could not be reduced to a sort of psychological investigation, as instead Dostoevsky had done, showing in all his novels a lack of any sense of limit, and to have overstepped the mark (al-Miṣrī 1936: 276-279). The few times Arab critics hinted at Marcel Proust, it was to underline the excess of analysis in which he indulged, which was almost always met with unease.

Moreover, the prevailing tendency was to provide a biased knowledge, even of those literary movements in which the critics showed an interest, always limited to those aspects that were believed capable of helping Arab literature fill in its gaps, rather than providing a global perspective of the movement. The revolution implemented by the European Romantic School concerning form and content became a desirable model for the Arabs. The

it to something transitory like 'morals', that is nothing more than the set of customs and habits prevailing in a specific society at a certain time, would mean to condemn it to be as transitory as those morals" (Musà 1928: 323, my translation).

aspect of the romantics that most interested Arab critics was their aptitude for freeing themselves from any subjection to the classics' authority and their talent in praising the author's personal spontaneity and creativity as well as the originality of the art work; in contrast, reservations are expressed with regard to the pessimism which marks the works of some representatives of that school. Fu'ād Ṣarrūf, in a long article in 1924, deplors the English poet Byron for having nourished neither hope for the present nor for the future, and for having described life as a vast solitude, where only desperation and despondency were inseparable bedfellows (Ṣarrūf 1924: 273).

In conclusion, the vision of Western literature with which readers were provided by most of these reviews was fragmentary rather than systemic; even more relevant, the Arab critics' approach reveals an essentially conservative bias that prevented them from going along with the avant-garde literary movements.

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FROM "LA-MIAN" TO "SPAGHETTI": TRANSLATING CONTEMPORARY TAIWANESE WRITERS INTO ITALIAN

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Translating from Chinese to Western languages is always a challenge, leading to an enormous amount of problems, ranging from strictly linguistic issues such as morphological and syntactical differences to the cultural gap evident in the non-equivalence between semantic fields, which makes the idea of perfect reversibility truly utopian. The focus of this paper is the general concept of "domestication" or "cultural localization" from Chinese (source language) to Italian (target language), analysed through a series of passages from the published Italian translation of two literary works by Taiwanese authors Wang Zhenhe 王禎和 (1940-1990) and Bo Yang (1920-2008). The paper presents the difficulties rising from the necessity of re-creating the source culture *realia* in the target language as well as that of localizing particular linguistic codes such as regional languages. The final purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the impossibility, as far as the linguistic transposition from Chinese to Western languages such as Italian is concerned, of devising a universal strategy to create cultural localization without leaving untouched the literal faithfulness to the original text – a faithfulness which, more often than not, can be more misleading than an apparently "unfaithful" adaptation.

Giving an overall presentation of all the problems and issues that literary translators from Chinese to Italian have to face would require a whole book and would go beyond the original purpose of this paper. Therefore, I will not mention strictly linguistic problems such as the morphological and syntactic differences between Chinese and Italian, the equivalence of semantic fields and the utopia of perfect reversibility. Instead, I will focus on the issues related to the general concept of *domestication* or *cultural localization*,¹ illustrating problems through examples taken from the Italian translations of some short stories by Taiwan author Wang Zhenhe 王禎和 (1940-1990), whose works mostly date back to the 1970s and 1980s² and that of the best-selling essay of the late Dr. Bo Yang 柏楊(1920-2008)³ *Choulou de Zhongguoren* 醜陋的中國人. The Italian translations of an

¹ For some general considerations on domestication, see Venuti 1998.

² A biographical sketch and a list of Wang Zhenhe's main works is available in Martin and Kinkley 1992: 209-214.

³ For Bo Yang see De Bary 2008: 792-794.