7 Narrativity in Lyric Translation

English Translations of Chinese *Ci* Poetry

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Abstract

This essay investigates the phenomenon of narrativization in English translations of Tang- and Song-dynasty *ci* poetry, in contradistinction to a widely assumed opposition of lyric and narrative poetic modes. Atop the deconstruction of the standard binary between these modes, the author builds a new framework through which the translator can be appreciated as an “immersive reader” in texts of low experientiality.

Keywords: Chinese poetry, translation, experientiality, narrativization, formalist-cognitive approach, narratological analysis of lyric poetry

What does translation do to narrativity in lyric poetry? My interest in this matter begins with small observations on English translations of Chinese *ci* (詞) poems, or classical Chinese song lyrics.

For instance, in Kenneth Rexroth and Ling Chung’s 鍾玲 translation of Li Qingzhao’s 李清照 “To the Tune ‘The Perfumed Garden’” (轉調滿庭芳) (1979, 47; emphasis added in this and the next three examples):

芳草

fragrant grass

池塘

pond¹

¹ The word-for-word translation for each line of poetry in this essay balances on the two principles that it should be as literal as possible, and that where possible, it should use the words rendered in the “proper” translation under discussion. It is designed to assist readers to quickly identify the textual nuances pertaining to my argument in the translation in question. I would like to stress that I make no claim for these as being the “correct” translations, or the “closest equivalents” to the Chinese source texts.

綠陰	庭院
green shade	garden

There are fragrant plants *around the* pond
In the deep green shade *of the* garden . . .

Or, in Glen W. Baxter's translation of Wen Tingyun's 溫庭筠 "To the 'Water-clock' Tune [Keng-lou tzu]" (更漏子) (1965, 337):

星斗	稀		
stars	few		
鐘鼓	歇		
night-drums	cease		
簾	外	曉鶯	殘月
blind	beyond	dawn oriole	waning moon

The stars grow few
 The night-drums cease
 Orioles *call* beyond the blind *as* the moon *sinks into* dawn . . .

Or, in Jerome P. Seaton's translation of Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 "Tune: 'Song of Picking Mulberry' (Ts'ai-sang tzu)" (採桑子) (1975, 331):

群芳	過後	西湖	好
flocks of blossoms	gone	West Lake	good

flocks of blossoms gone, *yet* West Lake's good.

Or, in Lois Fusek's translation of Wen Tingyun's 溫庭筠 "Deva-like Barbarian (*P'u-sa man*)" (菩薩蠻) (1982, 37):

水晶	簾	裏	玻璃	枕
crystal	curtain(s)	within	glass	pillow
...				
藕絲	秋色	淺		
lotus-root (color) silk	autumn color ²	light		

2 "Autumn color" refers anaphorically to the pale white of lotus roots. In ancient China, white was regarded as the color of autumn. Moreover, in classical Chinese poetry, lotus roots usually have a strong association with autumn, when they ripen.

Within crystal curtains, *she rests on a crystal pillow.*

...

She wears an ivory gown, pale as lotus root.

Most of the words highlighted above are function words normally believed to be added for grammatical purposes. Yet, trivial as they might appear to be, they inevitably help evoke a specific personal, spatial, and/or temporal relation that is absent from the original. Do these words merely fulfill the grammatical rules of the English language? Is it simply by insignificant coincidence that different translators all slip in such words? More importantly, do these words mean anything to the translated *ci* poems as lyric poems? What can they tell us about the translator's role in poetry translation?

This essay, modeled on Monika Fludernik's cognitive narratological framework, demonstrates a variety of textual manifestations and implementations of an increase of narrativity in the English translations of Chinese *ci* poems. Based on Fludernik's idea of "experientiality qua narrativity" and "narrativization," it argues that this increase of narrativity, associated first and foremost with the presence of (at least) one anthropomorphic being and the representation of his or her experiences within a textual world, has emerged from the translator-as-reader's cognitive response to the original poems. Taking cues from the theory of aesthetic illusion, this essay then foregrounds the translator-as-reader's imaginary experience of the represented worlds in the originals "as if from the inside" (Wolf 2013a, 11), hoping to shed new light on the translator's role in lyric translation. There is an enduring dilemma of either overstating a poetry translation's deficiency as a poem because of its failure to reproduce all the glory of the source poem, and thereby forgetting that, as a translation, it is doomed to be similar to yet different from the latter – or else overemphasizing its production as a translation, thereby ignoring those features that matter to it as a poem. Premised on the belief that a translated poem should be treated as *both* a poem and a translation simultaneously, this essay also aims at developing a formalist-cognitive approach to poetry translation.

Narrativity and the lyric

What is narrativity in lyric poetry? Or, to push back even further, can lyric poetry, conventionally regarded as the antithesis of narrative, possess narrativity in the first place?

The conventional view of lyric as the antithesis of narrative, as “all that narrative is not” (Müller-Zettelmann 2011, 232), has been forcefully questioned by recent scholarship, partly due to the conscious effort to make full use of the versatility of narratology, and partly, as Monique R. Morgan has pointed out, due to “a larger resurgence of formalist approaches to literature” (2007, 930) that calls for a return to favor of the formal and linguistic dimension of texts. Scholars have begun advocating a treatment of lyric and narrative not as opposites but as hybrids (e.g. Dubrow 2006; Morgan 2007), and the application of narratological concepts and approaches to lyric poetry (e.g. Hühn and Kiefer 2005). But despite the valuable insights of endeavors to cut across generic boundaries, in most of these studies narrativity has still been defined, explicitly or implicitly, in a traditional way, i.e. as the existence of a (physical or psychological) story or as the concatenation of story and discourse. The former is a response to the conventional claim that a lyric has a teller but no story (Scholes, Kellogg and Phelan 2006, 4; cf. Morgan 2009, 5), while the latter emphasizes how a story can be told in ways particular to lyric poetry. Either way, narrativity has been presented as “a categorical quality operating on a ‘yes-or-no’ basis” (Wolf 2003, 183), something that either does or does not exist.

However, though a lyric poem can be *read as a narrative*, it cannot be expected to *be as narrative as a narrative*; otherwise it would not have been a lyric poem in the first place! As Gerald Prince has repeatedly stressed, “different texts exhibit different kinds or different degrees of narrativity (with some being more narrative than others...)” (1996, 96; see also 1982, 1999). For a study such as mine that treats translated *ci* poems simultaneously as lyric poems and as translations (that is, texts in relation to other texts), definitions that consider narrativity as a categorical quality would not be able to account for the subtle variations in narrativity between a lyric and its translations. What is needed is “a gradient that admits a ‘more or less’ and creates ‘weaker’ or ‘stronger’ narratives” (Wolf 2003, 183). Such is Fludernik’s definition of narrativity, which centers on “experientiality of an anthropomorphic nature” (1996, 26), i.e. “on the parameters of specificity (temporally and spatially) as well as the embodiment of protagonists” (2005, 100).

When first proposed in *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology*, narrativity, or what Fludernik calls experientiality, is defined as “the quasi-mimetic evocation of ‘real-life experience’” (1996, 12). It is constituted with a series of natural cognitive parameters. The first parameter is specificity, which is defined as “a record of the vicissitudes of human existence under the given circumstances of *a particular place at a particular time*” (29, emphasis added). Fludernik also emphasizes another parameter, namely embodiment

(or embodiedness), which is “most basic to experientiality” and to which specificity can be subsumed:

Embodiedness evokes all the parameters of a real-life schema of existence which always has to be situated *in a specific time and space frame*, and the motivational and experiential aspects of human actionality likewise relate to the knowledge about one's *physical presence in the world*.

(30, emphasis added)

Embodiment correlates, on the one hand, with the protagonist's spatial and temporal orientation, and on the other with the protagonist and/or narrator's “emotional involvement with the experience and its evaluation” (13), in the sense that evaluation makes “narrative experience relevant to oneself and to others.” In other words, experientiality “reflects a cognitive schema of embodiedness that relates to *human existence and human concerns*” (29, emphasis added). Fludernik continues on the equivalence between experientiality and narrativity:

Experientiality in narrative as reflected in narrativity can therefore be said to combine a number of cognitively relevant factors, most importantly those of *the presence of a human protagonist and her experience of events* as they impinge on her situation or activities. The most crucial factor is that of the protagonist's *emotional and physical reaction* to this constellation ... since humans are conscious thinking beings, (narrative) experientiality always implies – and sometimes emphatically foregrounds – *the protagonist's consciousness*.

(1996, 30, emphasis added)

As for the narrator, who can be story-internal or not, she later elaborates:

For the narrator the experientiality of the story resides not merely in the events themselves but in their *emotional significance and exemplary nature*. The events become tellable precisely because they have started to mean something to the narrator on an emotional level. It is this conjunction of experience reviewed, reorganized, and evaluated ... that constitutes narrativity.

(2003, 245, emphasis added)

Therefore, it is not so much that the central aim and function of narratives is to tell a story, a temporal sequence of happenings and events, as that “sequences are an integral part of human experience” that would feature

most prominently in stories (2006, 59). Narrative can portray dynamic event sequences experientially, but more essential is “the experiential depiction of human consciousness *tout court*” (1996, 30). In a nutshell, experientiality qua narrativity “consists in its implication or activation of a number of cognitive parameters, i.e. basic structures of human engagement with the world,” “particularly the embodiment of cognitive faculties, the understanding of intentional action, the perception of temporality [and spatiality], and the emotional evaluation of experience” (Caracciolo 2014). Therefore, the central aim of narrative is to communicate an “anthropocentric experience” by “drawing on fixed patterns of behavior as well as conveying thoughts and feelings, and depicting perceptions and reflections” (Fludernik 2006, 59).

But can lyric poetry possess experientiality? Is it not lyric poetry’s ability to entice us to “step ... out of experience into something else” (Frye 1985, 35) that has always been celebrated as one of its most prominent features? Though Fludernik admits in *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* that “poetry can turn to narrative ... to the extent that a situation is depicted which then allows for the constitution of experientiality” (31), she too adopts a rather conventional view on lyric poetry and speaks of “poetry’s typical lack of experientiality (and hence narrativity)” due to the lack of “fictional situations” that “need to be situated at a particular (even if indefinite) moment in time, and the story-world” that “needs to be locatable as a non-hypothetical realm” (355). In her later works, Fludernik expands the purview of experientiality to lyric poetry and acknowledges that “many lyric texts – though they do not tell a story – purvey hints of experientiality in the intermittent evocation of a specific human consciousness embodied in a specific time and place” (2003, 259n11). Her “Allegory, Metaphor, Scene and Expression” (2005), her first (and so far, only) direct engagement with experientiality in lyric poetry, is particularly important to my work. It is here that Fludernik demonstrates the presence of experientiality (or the lack thereof) as a textually identifiable phenomenon through detailed textual analysis.³

As my study focuses on the translations of *ci* poems, a question follows: if experientiality is textually identifiable, does it manifest itself in the same

3 For example, she comments that in Shakespeare’s sonnet 30, though it is marked by an initial *when*-clause (“when to the sessions of sweet silent thought”), which proposes a situation that the poem then goes on to describe, elaborate on, and resolve, “what makes a narrative reading possible in the first place, the temporal conjunction ‘when,’ at the same time prevents this type of poem from being truly narrative – ‘when’ in fact is to be read as ‘whenever’ and refer to a recurring scenario, not to a specific one” (121-122). She also argues that Sidney’s sonnet 16, though it seems to “tell a story” by opposing a “then” with a “now,” is in fact argumentative and a metaphoric description of the lover’s emotional plight because the virtual scenarios in the poem are metaphorical and “rarely move ... towards an evocation of a specific setting or residual narrativity” (114-115).

way and to the same level in the translations as in the originals? If not, what can we learn about the translated *ci* poems as poems and as translations from the perspective of experientiality?

Experientiality qua narrativity in the English translations of *ci* poetry

To answer these questions, in this section, following Fludernik in moving from theorization to detailed textual analysis, I will offer my own reading of some English translations of *ci* poetry vis-à-vis their Chinese originals. My comparative analysis demonstrates that compared to the source texts, the translations possess a higher degree of experientiality/narrativity, which manifests itself in textual features that amount to a stronger evocation of real-life experience, especially of at least one anthropomorphic being, or a specific human consciousness, of its temporal and spatial perception, and of its emotional and evaluational reaction as if it lives through or witnesses the events and observes existents, or objects, in a possible world as a human(-like) experiencer.⁴

Let me return, then, to the four translations mentioned at the beginning. Kenneth Rexroth and Ling Chung's translation of Li Qingzhao:

There are fragrant plants *around the* pond
In the deep green shade *of the* garden.

芳草池塘
 綠陰庭院

The original lines consist of four poetic images (grass, pond, shade, garden), which, though textually juxtaposed, are given no specific spatial relation. The translation, however, with three prepositions ("around," "in," "of"), connects all of them together to form "an emergent constellation of spatially related entities" (Herman 2001, 534). This mirrors our real-life experience of perceiving existents within the same space as being spatially interrelated, and also

4 Modeled on a cognitive narratological framework, my study treats these translations as, in part, textual products of the translator-as-reader's mental responses to the Chinese texts. My analysis in this section therefore aims to demonstrate the textual representations of experientiality that the Chinese poems do not provide, in preparation for my argument in the next section of a mental phenomenon that results in them. It is not a comparison of the capabilities of Chinese and English as languages.

implicitly enhances the impression of a perceiving consciousness imposing spatial contiguity onto the existents. In addition, three of the four existents are textualized as definite noun phrases, constituting a linguistic gesture towards the reader to feel “drawn into a ‘world’ already existing” (Wales 1989, 111) because definite references tap into the reader’s familiarity with the referents. That is, they help prompt the reader to construe a world as if it really exists.

Baxter’s translation of Wen Tingyun recasts the juxtaposition of images in the Chinese text not only as spatially related existents, but as dynamic events in a temporal relation:

The stars grow few
The night-drums cease
Orioles *call* beyond the blind *as* the moon *sinks into* dawn ...

星斗稀
鐘鼓歇
簾外曉鶯殘月

The original line 簾外 / 曉鶯 / 殘月 ‘outside blinds / morning oriole(s) / waning moon’ offers three static existents, the last two of which form a spatial relation with the first: outside the blinds there are orioles and a moon. The translation expands two static existents, the morning oriole(s) and waning moon, into dynamic events that are temporalized as happening simultaneously (“as”). Moreover, in the Chinese text, the two existents are presented inanimately, as if suspended in an instant of time, creating a sense of everlastingness in timelessness (Poulet 1954, 6), a typical technique of lyric poetry (see Culler 2015, 211-243). The translation, however, by giving orioles and the moon the ability to act (“call,” “sinks into”), locates them within the flow of time (and implicitly the change of space), and submits them to movement and changes, which, according to Werner Wolf, “have a particular affinity to experience” (2009, 156). On the other hand, like the last example, moving existents and their spatiotemporal relation also foreground a human-like consciousness on the scene to perceive the simultaneous movement of the existents.

The presence of a consciousness of anthropomorphic nature can also be enhanced by its mental or psychological reaction to the physical world it experiences, as in Seaton’s translation of Ouyang Xiu:

flocks of blossoms gone, *yet* West Lake’s good.

群芳過後西湖好

The translation follows the original line lexically and syntactically. However, the additional conjunction “yet,” signifying concession, immediately brings forth a consciousness through whose perspective praising West Lake in the absence of blossoms would contradict what is usually taken to be natural according to real-life experience – with all the blossoms gone, West Lake should not be good any more, *yet* it still is.⁵ Therefore, “yet” also implies this consciousness’s affective response, a feeling of surprise, to the immediate environment.

In other cases, instead of calling forth a human-like consciousness to establish an implicit center of experientiality, adding personal pronouns on the textual surface will conjure up an anthropomorphic being or embodied human protagonist. This is Lois Fusek’s translation of Wen Tingyun:

Within crystal curtains, *she rests on a crystal pillow.*

...

She wears an ivory gown, pale as lotus root.

水晶簾裏玻璃枕

...

藕絲秋色淺

The original poem is set in a highly feminine atmosphere, but the “people” concerned, either personae or protagonists, remain completely shadowy (Chang 1980, 36-37). The most obvious hint of a (female) being does not appear until the last two lines of the poem, yet even there, she – if there is a she – can only be inferred synecdochically from “temples” and “head.”⁶ But Fusek’s translation increases experientiality via the presence of an embodied and gendered protagonist (“she”) on the scene, and the making of this protagonist into a human in action (“rests,” “wears”). Increased narrativity also manifests in the addition of a “real” existent (“gown”) – or what we would really see if we were in her world – and in the evaluation imposed on the existent that draws an analogy (“as”). Both signal the immediate

5 This is one of ten poems from a *ci* sequence, all of which begin with a first line of identical syntax, for example, 輕舟短棹西湖好 or 畫船載酒西湖好. However, these two lines are rendered by Seaton as “a little boat with stubby oars, *and* West Lake’s good” and “painted skiff with a load of wind, *and* West Lake’s good.” A comparison with these other translations makes it even clearer that the evaluating consciousness is aware of the contradiction with natural experience and the need for concession.

6 The two lines are 雙鬢 / 隔 / 香紅 ‘two temples / separated (by) / fragrant red (flowers)’, and 玉釵 / 頭上 / 風 ‘jade hairpin(s) / atop head / wind’.

participation of an experiencing consciousness with a world-internal position.

In what follows, I will analyze one complete poem alongside its translation. The analysis will show, on the scale of an entire poem, how experientiality is represented in ways and degrees that are different from those in the original. This is Wang Jiaosheng's 王叔升 translation of "Tune: 'Sand Washed by Waves' In Memoriam" (浪淘沙), by Li Qingzhao (1989, 113, emphasis added):

- Outside the curtains the *howling* fifth-watch wind
 Blows away the last vestige of my *melancholy* dream.
 Who will be my company
 When I go up the painted tower again?
- ⁵ I remember *how he loved to chaff me*
 Poking the fire sideways with my jade hairpin –
 A *memory* now *vanished like* the auspicious omen
 In the seal-character *incense*.
Recollections flood my mind
- ¹⁰ *Of happy days gone by*
 When *the two of us climbed* Purple Gold Peak *hand in hand*
Gazing at the hazy view below:
 A river of spring waves wrapped in rain and mist,
 Gliding away *as if* half-sober and half-tipsy.
- ¹⁵ I keep on my garment
 Tears shed the day before –
 To shoot to the wild geese
 As they wing past.

簾	外	五更	風	
curtain(s)	outside	fifth watch	wind	
吹	夢	無蹤		
blow (away)	dream	no trace		
畫樓	重	上	與誰	同
painted tower	again	go up	with whom	together
記得	玉釵	斜	撥火	
remember	jade hairpin	slantingly	poke fire	
寶篆		成	空	
precious seal		turn to	nothing(ness)	
character				

回首	紫金峰		
look back	Purple Gold		
	Peak		
雨	潤	煙	濃
rain	hazy	mist	thick
一江	春浪	醉醒中	
a river (of)	spring waves	tipsy-sober	
留得	羅襟	前日	淚
keep	garment	the day	tears
		before	
彈與	征鴻		
shoot to	wild geese		

In the Chinese text there is no mention of a second participant in the textual world – even if the presence, implicit or explicit, of a lyric persona is the default setting of a lyric poem. The only phrase that might hint at an interpersonal relationship is 與誰同 ‘with whom’ at the end of l. 3. This second participant, however conspicuous his (?) absence is in the Chinese, has not only been embodied as a male participant (“he”), but is also given the ability to act like a “real” human (“loved,” “to chaff,” “climbed,” “gazing at”) and to engage in interpersonal activity (“the two of us,” “hand in hand”). This male participant also evokes a strong interpersonal relationship through which the lyric persona that has the potential of being “a universal ‘I’ belonging to no one and to everyone” (Howe 1996, 6) is further embodied, becoming a (supposedly) female personal subject.

The translation then creates, out of the single noun phrase 紫金峰 ‘purple gold peak’, an event in the past involving two human participants in action.⁷ The sudden change to past tense temporalizes the event of “climb[ing] Purple Gold Peak” and at the same time pinpoints a specific experiential position, a “now” for the lyric persona, from which the event of climbing Purple Gold Peak can be regarded as past. Also heightened is the lyric persona’s perceiving consciousness, which has been evaluating, commenting on, and reflecting on existents and events within the textual world. At the beginning of the translation, through the evaluative adjectives “howling” (l. 1) and “melancholy” (l. 2), the lyric persona as a protagonist has a psychological reaction to the situation like a real person; on the other hand,

7 Not to mention that the Chinese verb-object 回首 ‘to turn one’s head’ can refer to either physically turning around to look back at Purple Gold Peak, or psychologically looking back at an event that happened in the past.

as a speaker, the lyric persona has also justified the mentions of “wind” and “dream,” because they have an emotional significance for the protagonist. Secondly, the expression 寶篆 / 成空 ‘precious seal-character / turns into nothing(ness)’ functions figuratively, in that “precious seal-character” refers to the shape of the incense as well as to the incense itself, while “turning into nothing(ness)” could mean the incense burning up, but also brings forth a strong tendency towards reading past events figuratively as vanishing into nothing. Metaphorical images tend to impair experientiality, in the sense that we do not normally see flowers that can weep or a man who is also a lion; at first glance, then, the translation merely unfolds and combines all the meanings (incense shape, incense; turning into ash, turning into nothingness) into the vehicle of a simile. By clarifying what the real existent is (“a memory”), however, and by explicitly indicating that the connection between the metaphorical and the literal (between the “non-existing” and the “existing” within the represented world) is validated by the reflecting consciousness (“vanished like”), the metaphorical images have been “contextualized” to “make ‘commonsense’ ... [because] they are taken as metaphors and contextualized as such” (Stewart 1989, 35). The same can be said about 一江 / 春浪 / 醉醒中 ‘a river (of) / spring waves / tipsy-sober.’ Since the translator understands 醉醒 ‘tipsy-sober’ as the figurative modifier of 春浪 ‘spring waves’ (rather than of the protagonist), giving the latter properties that it could not have in real life, the translation has recourse to a perceiving consciousness drawing an analogy (“as if”). That is, the “spring waves” are not really “half-sober and half-tipsy”; they are thus only as perceived by a consciousness within that world.

What my textual analysis shows is that the translations contain textual details that strongly enhance the emergence of the lyric persona and/or protagonist(s), and the specification of their (temporal and spatial) experience(s) within the textual world, as well as their emotional and evaluational involvement with such experience(s). The translations therefore exhibit a higher degree of experientiality than the source texts.

Narrativization, aesthetic illusion, and the translator as an immersive reader

The analysis in the preceding section concentrates on the significance of the textual features under discussion to the translated *ci* poems as lyric poems – in short, they increase narrativity. But why would translations demonstrate a higher degree of narrativity? In this section, I will introduce

two other theoretical concepts, narrativization and aesthetic illusion, to show the implications of these textual features for the translated *ci* poems as translations and for our understanding of translational behaviors. That is, these textual features testify to the translator's mental involvement with the textual worlds as an immersive reader.

Silhouetted against the backdrop of cognitive narratology, which investigates "mental processes and representations corresponding to the textual features and structures of narrative" (Bortolussi and Dixon 2003, 24), Fludernik complements experientiality, which foregrounds the text's capability of mimetically eliciting real-life experience, with narrativization, the "receptional and creative aspect of narrativity" (1996, 373). In Fludernik's theoretical framework, the reading process is "fundamental to the constitution of narrativity" (2003, 244), in that the process of narrativization is "the sheer act of imposing narrativity" (1996, 34) on a text. Fludernik argues that

Narrativity is not something that is simply present in or absent from texts but rather something that is recognized by readers or sometimes projected onto the text by them. The narrativization of reluctant story material in the reading process thus reinforces or even creates narrativity for certain texts.

(2006, 109)

That is, narrativization is the reading process "that naturalizes texts by recourse to narrative schemata" (1996, 34), i.e. by connecting them to cognitive frames based on "real-life" human experience. If a text itself is highly experiential, the process of narrativization comes automatically and probably unnoticeably. However, "[w]hen readers are confronted with potentially unreadable narratives, texts that are radically inconsistent, they cast about for ways and means of recuperating these texts as narratives" (ibid.). By doing so, narrativization imposes experientiality on a text, and thus "reinforces or even creates narrativity." I therefore argue that the reason the translations hold a higher degree of narrativity/experientiality is because translators are also readers in the first place, who in the mental process of comprehending the source texts narrativize them according to cognitive schemata based on their "real-life" human experiences, thus imposing experientiality on the original poems. Subsequently, in the production of the translations, the imposed narrativity can be projected onto the textual surface in the translations, thereby rendering the translations relatively more experiential/narrative.

So how does the reader activate natural and cognitive parameters to narrativize a text? Fludernik explains that narrativization

produces narrativity by means of a mediation through consciousness. That mediating consciousness can be situated on the level of the fictional world, in a protagonist; on the level of narration ... or even in the reader (or her proxy).
(1996, 372)

That is, narrativization takes place through identification with the consciousness (1) of a protagonist, “on the plane of the represented world, in its re-cognition by means of basic frames” (372), (2) of a narrator, “in the constitution of story experience as narration” (ibid.), or (3) of the reader, when a “story-internal consciousness” has been evoked and “the reader takes an internal position with regard to the represented events, as if she were a witness rather than a mere camera eye” (201). The result of the mediational process is “the establishment of the *mimetic illusion*, of narrativity” (372, emphasis added).

Fludernik does not go further down this path into the relation between experientiality-and-narrativization on the one hand, and the evocation of “mimetic illusion,” on the other. But another theoretical concept turns out to be particularly relevant: aesthetic illusion. Aesthetic illusion refers to a “particular imaginative response” triggered by representational artifacts in their recipients (Wolf 2013a, 6), which can elicit a “quasi-experience of, and immersion in, represented worlds” (11). It “consists primarily of a feeling, with variable intensity, of being imaginatively and emotionally immersed in a represented world and of experiencing this world as a presence (even if it is a narrative of the past) in an as-if mode, that is, in a way similar (but not identical) to real life” (Wolf 2017, 32). In this immersion, the reader/recipient would be allowed to “experience ... [the represented] worlds as well as what exists and happens within them *as if from the inside*” (Wolf 2013a, 11, emphasis added), and become “recentered,” i.e. imaginarily occupying a position within the represented worlds (12), whether that position overlaps with a character’s or not. Thus, aesthetic illusion foregrounds a state of immersion in which the reader imaginarily steps out of their own here-and-now situation and temporarily steps into an alternative textual world, experiencing this world from within as if it is real, while still maintaining a distance, i.e. a “rational and observational awareness ‘from without’” (22). Immersion and distance always coexist, and foregrounding the former does not nullify the latter.

As I have explained in detail elsewhere (2018), Fludernik's experientiality-and-narrativization framework echoes the theory of aesthetic illusion in many ways. Most importantly, aesthetic illusion, like Fludernik's experientiality, is a matter of degree, and relies on both the text's (or other artifact's) own potential and the recipient's contribution. That is, texts (or other artifacts) that hold a higher degree of experientiality also possess a stronger potential to induce aesthetic illusion, and vice versa. Yet when reading a less experiential text, the reader's "share" or "cognitive contribution" (Wolf 2013a, 8-9), i.e. the reader's active immersion, can supplement these experiential details.⁸ "Narrativization" is Fludernik's name for the reader's cognitive contribution as activated through the mental state of immersion.

Many if not most classical *ci* poems are texts of low (but not zero) experientiality,⁹ and as with many lyric poems, they display a generic resistance to aesthetic illusion. They are usually quite short, which means the constitution of worlds inside them often takes place fragmentally and intermittently. They are written according to strictly prescribed rhyme schemes and tonal patterns set by the song tunes, which means they tend to foreground formal self-referentiality and linguistic defamiliarization. More often than not, they are highly ambiguous, and after centuries of metaphorical and allegorical reading imposed on them, they have almost been mystified into a genre that strives for the ultimate depth of inspiration and suggestiveness through extreme subtlety of expression.¹⁰ It is not a genre that has been used to keep detailed "lifelike" records of human experience.

8 I want to emphasize that the limits of a given text's cognitive contribution to inducing aesthetic illusion have nothing to do with any "lack" of ability in the language itself, but rather with its particular textual representations. Classical Chinese is fully capable of representing spatiotemporal relations through the use of prepositions and conjunctions or fully gendered, embodied, and socially specified personae/protagonists (e.g. 鳳歸雲 (兒家本是)). In addition, a text's (or other artifact's) ability or inability to induce aesthetic illusion is not only an inherent quality, but also a potential, the fulfillment of which relies on the recipient's response. In my study, it is the fact that the translations contain textual details that are absent from the source texts and that elicit a "quasi-mimetic evocation of 'real-life experience'" (Fludernik 1996, 12) that leads to my argument of the translator-as-reader's narrativization through mental immersion. I make no claims that classical Chinese texts *intrinsically* rate low in experientiality or ability to induce aesthetic illusion.

9 As Wolf points out, lyric poetry still fulfills at least two minimal conditions of aesthetic illusion, namely, "at least one anthropomorphic being ... present in a textual world, and (an) experience(s) related to this being" (2013b, 220). I do not claim that all *ci* poems are of equally low degree of experientiality, however. Some are more narrative than others.

10 In the tradition of criticism on *ci* poetry, *ci* poetry is often portrayed as so mysterious and intangible a genre that it can only be talked about in an equally mysterious tone. In the words of Miao Yüeh, one of the great critics of *ci* poetry: "The world of the lyric is like a mountain viewed through the mist, or a flower seen in the moonlight. Its beauty resides in its elusive ambiguity,

Brief, defamiliarized, and ambiguous as they may be, however, just as in other texts of low experientiality, the limited share of aesthetic illusion on the texts' part will only encourage the reader to contribute by recourse to natural cognitive parameters, to actively and imaginatively (re)experience a world and its elements in analogous ways to real-life experience. In my opinion, the recognition of the reader's *re*-cognition of a textual world in the form of immersion is significant to our understanding of translational behaviors. It is my contention that this points to an important role of the translator that has been sidelined or neglected by translation studies, namely, that of *the translator as an immersive reader*.

Conventionally, a great many of the textual features discussed in the previous section have been readily explained as the translator's endeavor to fill the gaps between Chinese and English as languages. In other words, those textual features in the translations are obligatory shifts (Toury 1980), added to fulfill the grammatical requirements of the English language. However, I would like to stress that while English grammar might require, for example, that nouns be connected with conjunctions or prepositions, the choice of one particular conjunction or preposition demands an imagination of *what the world is like* to the translator in the first place, e.g. that fragrant plants are "around" the pond, not "over" it. Too many translational decisions long taken for granted as determined by the grammatical reproduction of the words, phrases, sentences of a text necessarily involve imagination of a world in a text with people, objects, events, actions, etc. To overlook the immersive participation in the world *inside* the text, a mental state intrinsic to the translator's primary role as reader, would run the risk of arbitrarily forcing the translator to "stay outside." The theoretical linkage between experientiality, narrativization, and aesthetic illusion explains many textual performances that otherwise seem uncorrelated, insignificant, or inexplicable under the presumption of the translator's distanced status, according to which the translator interacts either with the text (e.g. in pursuit of equivalence) or with the world *outside* the text (e.g. in response to social-historical context or ideologies of their own reality). More importantly, this theoretical linkage urges us to allow the translator to be what Kendall Walton would call an immersive "appreciator," who is "caught up in the spirit of the work and plays along with it," rather than merely a distanced "critic" who "considers the work and the games to be played with from without, from an onlooker's point of view" (1990, 393).

and if we insist on bringing it out into the light we are acting contrary to the very nature of the form, and will only end up with something shallow and crude" (1980, 37).

Conclusion: narrativity, poeticity, and translationality

That a poetry translation should be, but too often fails to be, a poem has haunted translation studies ever since Robert Frost's curse, as it were, that poetry "is that which is lost ... in translation" (1959, 7).¹¹ Emphasis on the poeticity of translated poems takes many forms, but is most conspicuous in the accusation of their failure to achieve an idealist equivalence, be it that of the original's semantic, phonetic, syntactic, rhetorical, and stylistic excellence, or, in a broader sense, that of its "poetic value," and in the attempt to prove that translations "inevitably fall short of reproducing all the glory of the original" (Baker 1993, 234). On the other hand, the belief that translation is a complicated process that involves more than the processing of a source text advocates a closer engagement with social, cultural, economic, and political circumstances in which translating occurs and by which it is conditioned. Those features that matter to a (translated) poem as a poem are too often sacrificed in analysis, and "detailed textual signifiers, no matter how much respect they garnered in principle" might well be made "comparatively invisible, and therefore functionally insignificant" (Tucker 1999, 533).¹² This essay is thus designed in response to what I see as a dilemma in the study of poetry translation, and attempts to answer what certain textual details in these translations mean to the translated *ci* poems both as poems and as translations at the same time.

Inspired by new formalism¹³ and recent developments in cognitive narratology, this essay has adopted a formalist-cognitive approach through

11 The full sentence, usually misquoted, reads: "I like to say, guardedly, that I could define poetry this way: It is that which is lost out of both prose and verse in translation."

12 The ramifications, in the opinion of many scholars, could be serious for literary studies, and particularly for poetry studies. Marjorie Perloff expresses a strong concern that the boundaries between the literary and the nonliterary have been blurred, and "the literary, if it matters at all, is always secondary; it has at best an instrumental value" (2007, 655). She charges the claim of "interdisciplinarity" with being "other-disciplinarity" for "there is one discipline that is conspicuously absent, and that discipline is what the Greeks called *poetikē*, the discipline of poetics" (ibid.). For Mutlu Blasing, this is the culprit of lyric poetry's being gradually ignored by literary studies, for "poetry does not respond very well to current constructions of the 'discipline' of literary study, which emphasize the social, economic, or political determinants of literary production" (2007, 4).

13 The inception of new formalism has generally been dated to the year 2000, when a special issue entitled "Reading for Form" was published in *Modern Language Quarterly*, edited by Susan J. Wolfson and Marshall Brown. New formalism begins with the shared unease about the tendencies of literary studies towards macrostructural contexts. Formalist scholars worry that "the formal and linguistic dimensions of texts have been glossed over in favor of content, reference, themes, ideas, and political or other 'positions'" (Bogel 2013, 2), and that "we have come to treat artworks as 'bundles of historical and cultural content'" (Levinson 2007, 561). They call for the return to favor of form, to "the minute details of language" (Bogel 2013, 68).

which it simultaneously attends to the two properties of poeticity and translationality, as filtered through narrativity. By closely examining a textual phenomenon, I have retraced a mental phenomenon that functions below the textual surface, namely narrativization. I have then drawn a link between experientiality-and-narrativization and the theory of aesthetic illusion, foregrounding the translator's role as an immersive reader. This essay has thus developed a research model that can systematically account for a large amount of seemingly discrete, unconnected, and trivial textual details in the English translations of *ci* poetry, and explain the significance of these textual performances to the translated *ci* poems both as poems and as translations, i.e. textual products of a reading-translating process that inevitably involves natural, cognitive, mental activity.

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