

attitudes shaped by a structurally complex and dynamic society. To understand history, therefore, the social historian—or more accurately, the “sociological” historian—would want to examine the relationships between changing social, political, and economic structures, in a context of collective human behavior. He would not confine his investigations to the articulate, the privileged, the powerful. Although he would study them, he would *also* study the inarticulate, the underprivileged, the powerless—in order to illuminate the constantly shifting relationships that shape decisions, deference, and demeanor in all societies. He would use theory and comparison to inform his findings; and he would probably qualify his conclusions with terms like “some,” “more,” and “many” because he appreciates the precarious and probabilistic nature of human behavior. In many fundamental ways, therefore, this view of history differs from what is called the humanistic tradition of historical inquiry, which celebrates individuals and ideas while neglecting collectivities and behavior.

It is to the foregoing definition of social history that I subscribe. I do not think it is, or should be, the only approach to historical research, nor do I mean to imply that other approaches are less valuable. I simply feel that some historians of Asia should consider the potential contribution of adopting what—if one dare not call it “new”—seems at least to be a *different* perspective on the historian’s task, because it might lead to creative insights. Having undertaken the task, one can then hope it will, in time, be evaluated with some discernment and objectivity—even by those of other historical persuasions.

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## On Translation

In the interest of promoting more efficient communication and enhancing graduate education, I would be grateful for a little space in which to air my views on translation.

Translation is generally regarded as either an elementary or an overly complex exercise. Too often it is regarded as merely a matter of individual preference, hence warranting little general discussion, unless one engages in professional translation, new technology for it, applied linguistics, or the like. Having read recent publications in several fields and talked with colleagues, I beg to differ.

Before raising the issues, let us agree on the obvious. Decisions on the mode of translation often involve several dimensions. First, the choice of style: should the translation be literal, permissibly free, rendered quite lyrical, given an extended nuance for clarity or emphasis, stretched somewhat to go along with a certain interpretation, and so on? Another aspect is that of cross-cultural perspective: how to indicate something in one culture by a counterpart in another, across the barriers of respective cultural contexts? (E.g., should the old Chinese elite be called “the gentry”?) A third and related dimension may appear: how to adjust a translated term to fit a given discipline? (E.g., can “training” in an earlier translation now read “socialization,” in the interest of mid-twentieth century sociology or even political science?) A fourth dimension is whether or not to make a temporal adjustment; e.g., should a piece in classical Japanese be translated in old English or current English? A fifth dimension is something like the Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty in physics. When one particular meaning of a word gets pinned down, this imparts other connotations or implications.

There are yet other dimensions, but enough said. Let us agree that choosing one way to translate does not necessarily imply rejecting others. We know all about that; we ponder over the dimensions; we struggle with the options, and we make hard decisions. But that is not the point!

How often do we spell out this thinking process, enabling our readers to quickly fathom whither we are headed? Or rather, do we leave them to figure out, if they wish, not only what we do but how we have done it? This falls short of effective communication, not to mention the time wastefully spent retracing one's footsteps without a map.

The questions that need to be raised are these: Can we try to encourage more authors who publish considerable amounts of translation to add some brief explanation of their thinking process behind it, either as a whole or on particular passages? Would it be desirable to stress the same in graduate training? Attention to these matters will help.

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## Addenda and Corrigenda

*Addenda to the obituary and bibliography of Dr. Arthur W. Hummel, JAS, XXXV, 2, Feb 1976, pp. 265–76*

1933 "China's Literary Heritage." *D. C. Libraries*, v. 4, no. 2, Jan 1933: 23–29.

1949 Review of Antonio Sisto Rosso, *Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century*. *American Ecclesiastical Review*, v. 121, no. 5, Nov. 1949: 428–430.

The writers of this obituary notice wish to thank Mr. Sharman B. Hummel, the second son of Dr. Arthur W. Hummel, for the loan of a remarkable series of tape recordings which he asked his father to make in 1968 for the benefit of his family. These tapes, together with others made in 1973 and 1974, were most helpful in the preparation of this account.

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### Correction

In my article, "The Study of Chinese Literature in the West" (*JAS*, XXXV, 1, Nov 1975), I erroneously stated that Jean-Pierre Diény's *Aux origines de la poésie classique en Chine* was concerned with the *shih* (p. 27). The book is in fact concerned with the *yüeh-fu*. The error was due to momentary confusion of this book with another work by the same author, *Les Dix-neuf poèmes anciens*, which is concerned with the *shih*. I regret the error and apologize to M. Diény and the readers.

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