

**The Emerging Master, Zhou Zuoren's First Translation Attempt:
The First Chinese Face of Edgar Allan Poe**

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This research paper probes and problematizes Edgar Allan Poe's first translation in China, *The Gold-Bug* produced in 1905 by the emerging modern literary critic and translator Zhou Zuoren. To operate in a continuous and coherent fashion, this paper compares and contrasts Zhou's work with three later translations in 1914, 1918 and 1949. It attempts to refocus Chinese intellectual social engagement, national literature construction, and Sino-Western cultural exchange. With textual analysis, this research provides historical illustrations over how Zhou Zuoren's creative representation of Poe operates within a cultural and historical frame during the tumultuous 20th century. This translation work was created when Chinese intellectuals struggled staggeringly to modernize Chinese literary as a vehicle of realizing national modernization, equipped with insufficient knowledge of western imperial culture. This research applies textual, theoretical and historical analysis to decipher how Zhou Zuoren's creative energy reflects the translatability and untranslatability in the early 20th century Chinese translation history. Also, it renegotiates how translator's cultural authority would cause failure for further revision, and to some extent, contributes to the haunting cultural boundaries till today. In addition, this paper is intended to reflect on the debate over how early Chinese translators' paradoxical identities as both empowered elite intellectuals and powerless cultural authorities at the semi-colonial context, affect how cultural exchange proceed in subtle yet significant ways.