

# Generic Intertextuality: A Case Study of the English Translations of *San Guo Yan Yi*

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## *Abstract*

In translation practice, transformation often happens at the linguistic and semantic levels since translation between two different languages inevitably entails changes to a text. This transformation is sometimes one of genre, for example, from novel genre of the original text to drama genre of the translated text. This paper takes the English translations of *San Guo Yan Yi*, a classic Chinese historical novel originally composed in the fourteenth century, as its case study as some early excerpted versions are in prose, verse, drama, textbook and other genres. Two partial translations are analysed in detail: one that has been retranslated as drama and the other as a collection of fairy tales. The classic interpretation of intertextuality (mosaic relations between texts) is thus extended in this paper to the level of genre where genre traditions play a role in spelling out the connections between texts. Moreover, this research may contribute to our further understanding of the symmetry between Chinese and Western literary traditions in genre.

**Keywords:** *genre, intertextuality, San Guo Yan Yi, early excerpted translations*

## 1. Introduction

In the translator's selection of which parts to translate and of which strategy to apply, a kind of transformation, subtle or dramatic, occurs in the process. Sometimes, the transformation takes the form of a genre shift, which can be seen in the English translations of *San Guo Yan Yi*, a classic Chinese historical novel, composed in the fourteenth century. In particular, some early abridged versions produced from 1820 onwards are framed in various genres including drama, poetry, fairy tales and insertion in articles. The existence of so many interlinked but disparate texts offers the possibility

of distinguishing the linguistic and strategic choices that serve to mark the way in which each text was tailored to its intended readers.

Since the translations in different genres and at different times refer to the same original text, the discussion inevitably involves the issue of retranslation. Furthermore, it involves the following questions: how does the previous text affect the later one in another genre? What prompts the production of the later version? What value is then inscribed? The question as to why there is so much variation in genre between the translations concerns the particular environment in which they were produced and also the functions they were designed to fulfil. In this paper, I will select two special cases in early partial translations of *San Guo Yan Yi*, one from novella to drama and the other to a collection of fairy tales, and discuss some of the ways in which identity and intentionality may vary in different forms of transformation.

## 2. Generic Intertextuality

The cases discussed in what follows take us to a few theoretical issues including genre studies, stylistics, comparative studies of different literary systems and so on. First off, studies of genre can be regarded as part of stylistics and has already been a crucial focus and a useful approach in translation studies. In source-text-oriented translation studies like those conducted by Eugen Nida explore the formal equivalence between the original text and the translated text; and in translated-text-oriented studies two approaches are worth noting: one is represented by Theo Hermans who examines translator's voice from sociological perspective and the other can be seen in Mona Baker's exploration into translator or translation's style from the corpus-based perspective. Their research has a close relation with stylistics and with genre studies in particular when they examine collaborative or common style of a group of translated texts or in a certain literary tradition. Moreover, *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (2006) also elaborates the issue of translation and genre from three aspects—literary, sacred text and drama. In analysing the genre of translated texts and the generic relation between the texts, the theory of intertextuality can enable us to understand better the multi-layered network of translations, genres and literary traditions.

Basically, intertextuality is an important term to describe the mosaic relationship among the texts and this influential theory, within the decades after being put forward, underwent changes as it was assimilated in different contexts and debated by various scholars. As its classic definition by Julia Kristeva (1980, p. 36) goes, “a text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text”, in which “several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another”. It has been argued that intertextuality is an important term to describe the mosaic relationship among the texts. For her, “authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts.” The textual material therefore cannot be separated from a larger cultural text from which the individual texts are constructed, as

Bakhtin and Kristeva agreed. It was Bakhtin's concept of dialogism that drove Kristeva to challenge the self-contained meaning of text and to place texts in an open context with traces of otherness. "Dialogism, for Bakhtin, is a constitutive element of all language." (Graham, 2000, p. 21) Bakhtin used the concepts of *dialogism* and *heteroglossia* to depict the discourse of characters in a polyphonic novel; and this nature of language was highlighted in Kristeva's new term, intertextuality.

As an influential theory, intertextuality underwent changes in the decades following its introduction as it was assimilated in different contexts and debated by various scholars. Roland Barthes (1970) explores sources of intertextual quotation in his *S/Z* and extends to the split subject. Michel Riffaterre (1978) works on the act of reading and the role of the reader in two ways of reading, including intertextual reading. Jonathan Culler's (1976) notion of presupposition is also a way to establish some limits to the intertextual range of each text. In Gerard Genette's (1976/1997) trilogy—*Architext*, *Palimpsests*, *Paratexts*—Genette proposes *transtextuality* to include intertextuality, and outlines five sub-categories of *transtextuality* by which one text can be related to others.

Yet, in this research, I would like to use an equation to categorize intertextuality: Specific intertextuality + Generic intertextuality + Architextuality = Intertextuality. The left side of this equation is a trilogy forming all the intertextual relations in my view and among the three, generic intertextuality is the very point to be clarified in this research. Specific intertextuality refers, in the context of translation, to the echoing happening between the original text and the original culture, the translated text and the target culture, in respective reader's mind. By contrast, generic intertextuality is the opposite side to specific intertextuality; on the lexical level, the word "generic" means "non-specific".

In this paper, generic intertextuality is examined firstly through two issues: one is the ambiguity in defining the genre of the original Chinese book *San Guo Yan Yi* and the second is English partial translations which are presented not in a single style, novel or fiction, but in various genres, including drama, poetry, fairy tales, textbooks, quotation in article and so forth. Apart from the generic shift between novella and drama or fair tales discussed in the previous parts, verse genre also appears in the early partial translations. It is worth explaining here that the ambiguity in the original book's genre does not refer to a hybrid text with a clear-cut line between passages in different genres but refers to the difficulty to define the whole style of this book. That is to say, the generic transformation is examined between the original text and the translated text as a whole rather than depend on which passages were chosen to be translated.

### 3. The Original Book: Novel, Drama and Epic

First, I would like to elaborate on the genre of the original text. A consensus has been reached in mainland Chinese academia that *San Guo Yan Yi* is a kind of *Zhanghui* (章回体), a special genre in traditional Chinese literature which appeared in the fourteenth century. *San Guo Yan Yi* is recognized as the first literary work in this genre. *Zhanghui*

consists of several chapters called *hui* (回), and each *hui* has a title with two parts in couplet form. Each chapter always starts with “话说” (*huashuo*; it is said that...) and ends with concluding sentences such as “欲知后事如何, 且听下文分解” (if you want to know what follows, please read on). Every chapter narrates a relatively self-contained story, but also relates to each of the others. All these features can be identified in *San Guo Yan Yi*. Historically, *Zhanghuiti* is developed from vernacular (*huaben*, 话本), storytellers’ prompt book of historical events and wars, popular in the Song and Yuan dynasties. At this point, it is highly likely to draw the original text closer to the western literary system because storytellers’ works have also been long embedded in western literature.

Is *Zhanghuiti* the same as *novel* in the western literary vocabulary? Before I go further into the genre studies of *San Guo Yan Yi* and its English translations, an elaboration of the comparison between two literary systems is in order. This issue relates to the similarities and disparities between Western and Chinese literary genres, which have rarely been explored, except for an English-language dissertation in 1990 titled “Western and Chinese literary genre theory and criticism: A comparative study” and a few journal articles. It is accepted that the Chinese novel or *Zhanghuiti* can be defined as a full-length fictional story in the vernacular language, providing a complex plot and strong characterisation. The beginning of the fictional novel in Chinese literary tradition started from printed copies of historical texts in the vernacular language in the late 14th century; it came into the genre as we now know in the 16th century, earlier than the western novel which came of age in the 17th century. Though the emphasis of *novel* in both traditions developed from myths and folk tales to the individual experience and observations (Ropp, 1990, p. 310), *Zhanghuiti* is closer to historical fictions and folk tales.

It would be rewarding to have a look at how the translators interpret the genre of this book. Take the full-length translation by C. H. Brewitt-Taylor in 1925 as an example. This version is entitled *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The word “romance” in the title reveals the translators’ interpretation of the genre. It is worth noting, however, that although Brewitt-Taylor renders the *yanyi* of the original title as *romance* here, he did not fully agree with this categorization, as indicated in his discussion of the book’s genre in a review entitled *The San-Kuo* in the 1890s, prior to the publication of his full-text translation. In this text, Brewitt-Taylor (1891, p. 169) argues that the word *Paraphrase* is a more fitting translation of *yanyi*, as in his view “the romantic portion consists almost entirely of legends that have grown up and wreathed themselves round the figures of two or three of the more important characters”. In this review, Brewitt-Taylor also compared the book with western literary works such as Walter Scott’s historical novels, the epic *The Iliad* and so on; none of these is in the same genre as the book *San Guo Yan Yi*, however, since the book has a historical basis and features mortal men as its characters, rather than the divine heroes of Homer’s work. In addition, one of Brewitt-Taylor’s reasons for not categorizing the original book as a novel is its lack of some important features including “the absence of plot” (Brewitt-Taylor, 1891, p. 170). For him, “the *San-Kuo* has more the character of a long historio drama than of a novel or romance” since “the characters speak

as if on the stage” and the battles look like stage battles (Brewitt-Taylor, 1891, p. 169).

Some western scholars call *San Guo Yan Yi* a classic Chinese novel or a historical novel in their research, as an American sinologist and also translator of *San Guo Yan Yi*, C. T. Hsia, did in his monologue *The Classic Chinese Novel*. In fact, most of the early partial translations of *San Guo Yan Yi* use a similar classification. Moss Roberts also entitled his 1999 full-text translation as *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel*, though he had used *Three Kingdoms: An Epic Drama* as the title of his 1976 abridged version.

To my mind, the novel *San Guo Yan Yi* combines three different genres in the western literary tradition: novel, drama and epic. It is rather difficult to categorize the original text into a single genre. Genres in western literature are classically divided into the three forms of ancient Greek literature: poetry, drama and prose. Novel or novella is restricted to a rather loose term fiction and romance, as a style of heroic prose and verse narrative, is a closely related long narrative. The characteristic of a novel, such as the long narrative and prose text, seem to apply in the book *San Guo Yan Yi*, though its language and characterization are more dramatic. The book is not the same as some western literary works in the *romance* genre, such as *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table* which presents the spirit of chivalry, nor historical romances such as those by Walter Scott, according to Scott’s own definition of *romance* as “a fictitious narrative in prose or verse; the interest of which turns upon marvellous and uncommon incidents” (1824, p. 436). In the definition by the Britannica Encyclopedia, the *marvellous* is also stressed as “an essential ingredient of ‘romance’ in the sense in which it has been defined”. And “to most English readers the term romance does carry implications of the wonderful, the miraculous, the exaggerated, and the wholly ideal [...]”<sup>1</sup>. Yet, *San Guo Yan Yi* is not inscribed with very much marvelous element nor any association with chivalry; instead, it puts more ink on brotherhood, appropriateness, military battles and political plots. Therefore, if it needs to be categorized in the western literary tradition, *San Guo Yan Yi* can with justification be regarded as a *novel* in this paper though its close relation with other genres can still be found in its English translated versions. In what follows, I would like to discuss how retranslations can be shaped in a different genre from those of previous translations and how some English translations shift between the novel and other genres.

## 4. Intertextual Relations Between Genres and Texts: A Case Study

### 4.1 Two cases

Among the early excerpted English translations of *San Guo Yan Yi*, two are of the drama genre. The example I will discuss here is a special case, since it combines the issues of generic shift and self-translation. In 1861, a free translation of a chapter of *San Guo Yan Yi* by G. G. Alexander was published in London-based periodical *Once a Week* (1861). It was entitled “A Chapter of Chinese History: The Minister’s Stratagem”. This version is in prose, centring on the chain plot by Wang Yun and the beautiful Diao Chan. The story

originates from chapters seven, eight and nine of the novel, which cover Wang Yun's manipulations of Diao Chan in order to foment a deadly feud between Dong Zhuo and Lv Bu (the adopted son of Dong Zhuo), inducing Lv to join his conspiracy to kill the tyrant Dong. There is also a one-page-long introduction of the novel *San Guo Yan Yi* prior to the main translated text. In 1869, Alexander published a play entitled *Teaou-Shin: A Drama From the Chinese*, printed by Ranken and Company in London. In the preface, the translator talked of his previous free translation of 1861 and to what extent that version was based on to produce the play.

In addition to drama version, other genres as fairy tales are also part of the diversity in translating *San Guo Yan Yi*. Fredrick Herman Martens's produced two excerpted translations of *San Guo Yan Yi*, drawing on the genre of fairy tale to us. In the chapter *Legends of the Gods*, there are two stories related to the characters in the novel *San Guo Yan Yi*. One is titled "The Fire-God" which depicts a fairy tale that happened to a character Mi Zhu, an advisor of Liu Bei and funded Liu's army before. Although the name of the character is not mentioned in the story, it can be assumed to be so according to other historical records which I will talk about in the second part of this chapter. The other is "God of the War", centering around the character Guan Yu, who was canonized as god of war after his death.

## 4.2 Changes in plot and character

Take Alexander's translation for example. According to the preface by Alexander, we can say that the 1869 version is based on both the source text and the free translation in terms of the main plot, some scenes and the principal characters. In the preface, the translator mentions his previous free translation of 1861:

The main plot, the principal characters, and some of the scenes of the following drama have been taken from a popular Chinese work called 'The History of the Three States,' and those who may be curious to know to what extent the original has been departed from, are referred to *Once a Week* for May, 1861 (No. 100), which contains a free translation by the author of that portion of the Chinese work from which the incidents have been drawn which constitute the leading features of the piece. (Alexander, 1869, [n])

If we could regard the drama version as a retranslation, what makes it a special case is that the retranslator and the previous translator are the same individual, and the retranslation was based primarily on his previous free translation, not the original source text. The self-reflexiveness is evident since the previous free translation is his own work and the indirectness involves between the source text and the target text as the translator himself claimed he referred to his previous work rather than the original novel only.

In Alexander's case, based on the free translation, the translator makes some changes to the drama version. For instance, Alexander makes the plot more explicit with a one-page-long "Story of the Plot". Apart from summarizing the historical background to the



story, the principal characters and the relations between them, the translator adapts the plot. The following passage is quoted from “Story of the Plot”, which appears prior to the main text and presents a different end for Diao Chan from that in the original novel:

Teaou-shin falls a victim to Wang-wan’s treachery, for she stabs herself at the very moment that the arrival of their lover would have rescued her from the tyrant’s power. She dies in his arms, and he drives Wang-wan from him in horror on discovering how cruelly he has been deceived. (Alexander, 1869, [n])

The drama presents a new version of Diao Chan’s death to make the plot more romantic and dramatic than that in the original novel, which does not mention her death. The original novel places more emphasis on the chain plan to kill Dong Zhuo and also on the death of Lv Bu after several battles with Cao Cao. The original author Luo Guanzhong, while investing a great deal of literary imagination into this character and the chain plan, attempts to leave a space for the reader to imagine the death of Diao Chan. To a certain extent, this also illustrates that the novel gives less focus to women but more attention to warfare and men’s conflicts, with women placed in a marginalized or accessorized position. Most scholars specializing in *San Guo Yan Yi* agree with the view that Diao Chan is a fictional character, rather than a historical figure, since neither the historical documentary *San Guo Zhi* (Records of the Three Kingdoms) by Chen Shou nor *Hou Han Shu* (Book of the Later Han)—two essential reference works on the history of the Han Dynasty—has any description of this character.

At the end of the final part (Act V), Alexander presents a passionate and heart-breaking dialogue between Diao Chan and Lv Bu. This occurs when Diao Chan is found guilty of being Lv’s wife, since she believes it to be a plan to deceive him at first. Her last words before her death are “My love—my love! Come—come with me! I go! / Oh! They are bearing me away!—away! / So dark—dark—” (Alexander, 1869, p. 56). And the drama ends with Wang Yun’s words “I thought to save the State, t’avenge Chang-wan—”, which echoes the very beginning of Act I in which Wang says to his wife that he is angry at Dong Zhuo for killing Chang-wan. The hyphens and exclamation marks work to strengthen the tone of the speaker by adding more dramatic colours to the dialogues.

### 4.3 Similarities and differences in genre traditions

#### 4.3.1 Drama

If we associate the drama version by Alexander with traditions in both Chinese and Western drama, we can see that the text depicts a Chinese story in the form of a western rather than a traditional Chinese drama. In the history of traditional Chinese drama, the story of Diao Chan in the three states period was adapted during the Yuan dynasty as “A Secret Chain Plan Made in Jinyun Court” (錦云堂暗定連環計), part of the *Yuan Zaju* (Drama in Yuan Dynasty) in Yuan period. A striking feature in traditional Yuan drama is the different tunes applied to different characters in different contexts, with titles such as

“後庭花” (Hou ting hua), “寄生草” (Ji sheng cao), and so forth. This stems from the tradition that Yuan drama is often sung or performed in musical form on the stage. The female characters are called “旦” (*dan*, young lady), the male “生” (*sheng*, young man). All these features can be seen in the plays about Diao Chan in Chinese Yuan drama, yet are not applied at all in this English drama version.

However, we can also find a few features in this drama version shared by both traditions. Take soliloquy as an example. Soliloquy is commonly seen in English drama, in which a character makes a speech to him- or herself so the audience can understand the character's inner motivations and conflict. It is particularly prevalent in the plays of the Romantic school of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries such as *Manfred* (1817) by the poet Byron. On the other hand, we can also see this kind of self-address in the Chinese literary tradition, including in Yuan-period drama (元杂剧). In *The Peony Pavilion* (牡丹亭 mu dan ting) by Tang Xianzu (汤显祖, a well-known playwright of the Yuan dynasty), there are several self-speeches such as the monologue by the principal female character Du Liniang in Act X: “哎也，天那，今日杜麗娘有些僥倖也。偶到後花園中，百花開遍，睹景傷情……” (Alas! Heavens! I am lucky enough today. A whimsical stroll to the back garden made me pathetic in spite of the beautiful scenery....) Soliloquy is also used in Alexander's text. For example, in Act II, there is a separate long paragraph uttered by A-line, in which she speaks to herself to convey her inner regret and struggle. Let us have a look at a few sentences from the soliloquy: “Well, I thought I could make most things out, but I am all of a maze! What does it all mean? First the Lady Wan in most terrible tantrums most dreadful to behold, thinking Teaou-shin no better than she should be, and my lord much worse, when phiz!” (Alexander, 1869, p. 12) More examples like this can be seen in the drama version, which do not appear in the original novel.

#### 4.3.2 Fairy tale

Generally, a fairy tale in western literature has a very close relation with oral traditions as that in Chinese literary tradition as well. Normally, a western fairy tale contains characters like fairies, witches, giants, talking animals and reflects a counter-world reality. And it is designed to have a utopian happiness and a fairy-romance ending, though not all of them contain a happy ending. Moreover, a fairy tale is always inscribed with prevailing moral values. “Together, storytellers and listeners have collaborated through intuition as well as conscious conception to form worlds filled with naive morality. Fundamental to the feel of a fairy tale is its moral pulse. It tells us what we lack and how the world has to be organized differently so that we receive what we need.” (Zipes, 2012, p. 14)

In Martens's two *San Guo* stories, we can see some typical features of fairy tale stories, including the happy ending of “The Fire-God” in which the character finally saved all his fortune due to his virtue, the fire god who changed into a beauty to test the character Mi Zhu, and the monk's successful persuasion of the ghost of Guan Yu with the thoughts of Buddhism in “The God of War”. At the same time, we can also figure out the changes made by the translator to transform the images of the characters to fit the genre of



fairy tale, like the deletion of many details depicting Guan Yu as a loyal and brave general in the novel. In the story “The God of War”, it conveys an image of a general who had killed many people in his life yet was slayed due to his failure in a battle and finally got awakened or relieved after his death by a monk.

In the story of “The Fire-God”, the analysis of its genre involves a special genre in ancient Chinese literature, *Zhiguai Xiaoshuo* (Strange Tales), which can be dated back to Six Dynasties Period (A.D. 220 – 589). According to the Introduction in John Minford’s translated work *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, *Zhiguai* can be called “Weird Account” which “might best be described as a pithy narrative of some strange event, a laconic record of some grotesque creature, of a haunting, a bizarre person, a peculiar phenomenon or coincidence” (Minford, 1991, p. iii). *Sou Shen Ji* by Gan Bao, which is highly likely the source of Marten’s translated work, is a typical case of the genre *Zhiguai Xiaoshuo* (Strange Tales). The original description of the character Min Zhu in *Sou Shen Ji* is:

竺尝从洛归，未达家数十里，路傍见一妇人，从竺求寄载。行可数里，妇谢去，谓竺曰：「我天使也，当往烧东海麋竺家，感君见载，故以相语。」竺因私请之，妇曰：「不可得不烧。如此，君可驰去，我当缓行，日中火当发。」竺乃还家，遽出财物，日中而火大发。

(My literal translation: Zhu was on his way back from Luo Yang and saw a beauty along the road where ten miles to his house. She asked Zhu to give her a lift and Zhu did. After a few miles, the beauty thanked him and before leaving she said, “I am a goddess and on my way to Donghai to set fire on your house, but I appreciate your help just now and tell you that.” Zhu asked her not to do that, yet she said, “I have to fulfill my task but you can go back now quickly; I will walk a bit slowly and set the fire at noon.” Then, Zhu went back home and removed all his savings. The fire was on at noon as the goddess said.)

In the novel *San Guo Yan Yi*, there is a paragraph in chapter 11, depicting the background to Mi Zhu and narrating the story written in *Sou Shen Ji*.

此人家世富豪，尝往洛阳买卖，乘车而回，路遇一美妇人，来求同载，竺乃下车步行，让车与妇人坐。妇人请竺同载。竺上车端坐，目不邪视。行及数里，妇人辞去；临别对竺曰：“我乃南方火德星君也，奉上帝教，往烧汝家。感君相待以礼，故明告君。君可速归，搬出财物。吾当夜来。”言讫不见。竺大惊，飞奔到家，将家中所有，疾忙搬出。是晚果然厨中火起，尽烧其屋。竺因此广舍家财，济贫拔苦。

Mi Zhu (Zizhong), from an old and wealthy family in the country of Qu in the district of Donghai. Mi Zhu had once had an extraordinary experience. On the way home after doing business in Luoyang, he met a beautiful woman who requested a ride. Mi Zhu offered the woman his seat and proceeded on foot, but the woman insisted that they share the carriage. So Zhu climbed back up, but he sat stiffly, holding his gaze away from the passenger. Several li farther on the woman said good-bye, adding, ‘I am the deity of solar fire, sent by the Supreme God to destroy your household. Your commendable gentility has moved me to give you this

warning: rush home and remove your valuables. I am due tonight.’ With that she disappeared. Mi Zhu Raced home in shock and cleared out his goods. True to the prediction, a fire broke out in the kitchen that night and burned down his house. Thereafter Mi Zhu became known for showing generosity and concern to those in need. (Roberts, 1991, p. 83)

Compared with the one in *Sou Shen Ji*, the story narrated in *San Guo Yan Yi* is a bit elaborated with more details and additions, so as to fit in the style of the novel itself and also the coherence with the following chapters. Now let us have a look at Martens’s work. The opening paragraph is about the origin of the Fire-God, including the time of the legend, the development and worship of this god, like the first two sentences “Long before the time of Fu Hi, Dschu Yung, the Magic Welder, was the ruler of men. He discovered the use of fire, and succeeding generations learned from him to cool their food” (Martens, 1922, p. 61). From the second paragraph, the translator started to narrate the extraordinary experience which Mi Zhu underwent:

In the land of the four rivers there dwelt a man who was very rich. One day he got into his wagon and set out on a long journey. And he met a girl, dressed in red, who begged him to take her with him. He allowed her to get into the wagon, and drove along for half-a-day without even looking in her direction. Then the girl got out again and said in farewell: ‘You are truly a good and honest man, and for that reason I must tell you the truth. I am the Fire-God. Tomorrow a fire will break out in your house. Hurry home at once to arrange your affairs and save what you can!’ Frightened, the man faced his horses about and drove home as fast as he could. All that he possessed in the way of reassures, clothes and jewels, he removed from the house. And, when he was about to lie down to sleep, a fire broke out on the earth which could not be quenched until the whole building had collapsed in dust and ashes. Yet, thanks to the Fire-God, the man had saved all his movable belongings. (Martens, 1922, p. 62)

When we examine the three versions together, the Chinese strange tale, the novel and Marten’s translation, we can see that the English translator combines both the strange tale and the novel in the content to enrich the story and dramatize the plot. At the same time, the translator invisibly follows the western fairy tale tradition, with the introduction of Fire-God at the beginning of the story and addition of the last line as a happy ending of a fairy tale. A subtle different between the novel and the translation is worth noting here: the novel adds a further ending of the character as “showing generosity and concern to those in need” because of the Fire-God, which does not appear in Martens’s version. It is likely that the translation is not designed to cover the following stories and it fits better in the logic of this fairy story with an ending that Mi Zhu saved all his fortune. Also, the novel on the one hand puts more moral color on the character due to the spirit of the novel as a whole and also works for the logic in narration since in the novel the character Mi Zhu later sponsored Liu Bei with most of his fortune.

#### 4.4 Reasons

Based on the paratexts such as the preface which provides visible evidence of the translator's aim and strategy as well as the main text which implies invisible evidence of the translator's actual manipulation, we can look at the translations of *San Guo Yan Yi* to delve into the values the translators intended to inscribe into the text through their adaptation, omission and addition as well. In what follows, three contributing factors would be elaborated including the translator's understanding of the original book's genre, literary features or so, the target reader of these translations, as well as the times when the translations were generated and the translator were housed.

##### 4.4.1 Translator

Let us now go further in examining the generic transformation from novella to drama in Alexander's texts, in order to find out the reason for the transformation. Why did the translator want to retranslate the passage pertaining to Diao Chan as a drama? Are there any similar plots in any English-language plays of the nineteenth century, when the translation was produced, to which he may be alluding in his adaptation? Or, any other purposes? In the preface to this drama (one-page long, two paragraphs), Alexander explains the historical background of the story and the features of Chinese drama as well as performance on stage:

The period of the play being antecedent to the Tartar conquest, the costume properly belonging to it would be the rich flowing robes always employed by the Chinese themselves in their dramatic representations; and the range for selection is so great, that everything grotesque or unbecoming might be dispensed with, without a single essential characteristic being sacrificed. This is important, for were it not so, it would be very difficult to place a Chinese play upon a European stage in any other form than a burlesque. (Alexander, 1869, [n])

Evidently, the translator associated the play with its context when it was originally produced, giving thought to such matters as the proper costumes to be worn when the play was performed on stage. He also seems to recognize the disparity between Chinese and Western drama, as well as the difficulty of presenting Chinese plays to the western reader in text. Yet his intention in adapting the original novella into a complete drama script remains unclear. It is possible that Alexander was attracted by the complexity and conflicts in the plot, as the story of a beauty who was made for a chain plan falling love with and ultimately dying for the hero would have attracted a larger audience than other passages in this novel relating historical or military events.

In Marten's case, a general image of Marten's book which includes the two translated texts can be given firstly. The translations are collected in *The Chinese Fairy Book* published in 1922 by T. Fisher Unwin Ltd in London. The work selects seventy-three stories in different categories like "Ghost Tales", "Historical Fairy Tales" and the like. In the preface, the translator compares the Chinese fairy tales to the "One Thousand and One

Nights”: the two share something in common yet “they strike an exotic note distinct in itself” (Martens, 1922, p. v). It presents the translator’s understanding of the original text: he interprets the stories of *San Guo Yan Yi* as the genre of tales through the comparison to the “One Thousand and One Nights”. And it does influence the way the translator adapts the stories and makes the text closer to the genre of tales in the western literary tradition.

#### 4.4.2 Target reader

Through several adaptations in the drama version, Alexander departs from his previous free translation in order to target a different audience. For example, the translator makes some additions, including more characters such as Wang Yun’s wife Mun-wha and her maid A-line, who in fact exists neither in the original text nor in the free translation. The reason might be that the translator wants to create more conflicts and interactions between characters so as to make the play more dramatic and complex. Alexander also adds a more romantic scene as the ending of the play. In the free translation, the story ends with the death of Dong Zhuo, stabbed in the throat by Lv Bu; while in the drama, the ending is the beauty Diao Chan’s death in the arms of her lover Lv Bu. It is possible that the two versions have different emphasises. The free translation centres on the chain plot made by Wang Yun and the relationships among the general, the traitor and the minister. Yet the play entitled “Teaou-Shin: A Drama From the Chinese” focuses on the love story between Diao Chan (Teaou-Shin) and the general Lv Bu; the play also pays more attention to the female character through her soliloquies.

In Marten’s case, his intended reader is American one, as he said the stories “probably present the most comprehensive and varied collection of oriental fairy tales ever made available for American readers” (Martens, 1922, p. v). In fact, the translation was initially for the pleasure of reading as he said, “it is the writer’s hope that others may take as much pleasure in reading them as he did in their translation” (Martens, 1922, p. vi). Moreover, the translator believed that the fairy tales would carry the reader back “dramatically and powerfully to the Chinese age of Chivalry” (Martens, 1922, p. v). At the end of the preface, the translator said that the stories “have been told simply, with no changes in style or expression beyond such details of presentation which differences between oriental and occidental viewpoints at times compel” (Martens, 1922, p. vi). Despite this, this version is more like a rewriting than a translation.

#### 4.4.3 Times

In Alexander’s retranslation, with more dramatic conflicts and characters, the story of Diao Chan is much more appropriate to be adapted into drama and to be performed on stage. If we place the text in its nineteenth-century context, the prevalent school or tendency of critical realism should not be ignored. However, it is hard to assume that Alexander was largely influenced by that prevalent critical realism with lack of further paratextual evidence of the translator and his other literary works; even, it might be the opposite if the translator personally prefers classic English drama or the Romantic school.

We can also see the impact of times on the translation in terms of language usage. The feature which I want to address here is the style of the language in this drama version, which is quite antiquated and old-fashioned. Such frequently used phrases as “thy”, “thou”, “ye”, “wilt”, “’tis” and so on are evidence of an old-fashioned style, resonant of Shakespeare, Milton or Sir Walter Scott. We can, for instance, compare the above phrases with a passage from Scott’s *Ivanhoe*: “‘Hold,’ said one who seemed to exercise some authority over the others; ‘this bag which **thou** bearest, as I can feel through thy cloak, contains more coin than **thou** hast told us of’”. An author from almost the same period as Alexander, Nathaniel Hawthorne, wrote in this style at times as well, as seen in this sentence from his novel *The Scarlet Letter*: “**Wilt thou** yet purge it out of **thee**, and be once more human?”

## 5. Conclusion

The question as to why there is so much variation in genre between versions by translators working in similar geographical, historical, and social settings is a key concern of this paper. It has sought to study and classify these differences in an attempt to identify features of genre in translated texts and to examine the functional implications. From a macro research perspective, these variations in genre are embedded with the traditions in western literature and with the historical context of related periods. Adaptations are produced within these traditions, as can be seen in the generic shifts from novel to drama in the case of the story of Diao Chan, and from novel to fairy tale in the case of Mi Zhu’s story. Furthermore, the link between ideology and genre can be seen in the selection of texts to promote a specific image of ancient Chinese literature and to fulfil the intentions of the individual translators. The translators build up the connection between the different genres of the original text and their target texts. This research contributes to the further understanding of the symmetry between Chinese and Western literary traditions by describing the generic shift between the original text and the translate text or between several translated texts and by relating the disparity or similarities to the traditions of both literary systems. It also touches on another issue relating to the reception of the translations in various genres, though this is not a question being discussed in this paper.

## Note

1 <https://www.britannica.com/art/romance-literature-and-performance#toc508347main>

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