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“Creation Through Translation” in Early Twentieth-Century Women’s Fiction: On a Literary Trend in the Initial Stages of Cultural Exchange Between China and the West

Guo Yanli

Translated by Caterina Weber

Abstract

In the 1910s, the trend of “creating through translation” emerged in fiction by female Chinese writers. This concept, similar to that of “covert translation,” introduced by the contemporary Western translation theorist Juliane House, sprang up from the early stages of new literary forms that developed in the context of changes in early modern Chinese literature. The works of female Chinese authors were influenced by the plot, characters, and narrative techniques in Western literary works from which they consciously or subconsciously took inspiration, passing from the imitation of foreign novels to “creation through translation.” The arrival of this phenomenon is closely connected to the increased dissemination of Western knowledge and to a wider circulation of foreign novels among female writers in China. When reading and translating foreign literature, female authors transposed, filtered, and rewrote it into new texts that featured local elements. Ideologically and artistically, the practice of “creating through translation” provided enlightening guidance for modern women’s fiction in that it broadened the means of learning from Western literature, proving beneficial to China’s literary and cultural development. The same trend appears in early vernacular poetry during the May Fourth era, from which it can be traced further back to scholarly texts of the early modern period, such as Wei Yuan’s *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms* (Haiguo tuzhi 海國圖志) or Wang Tao’s *Report on the Franco-Prussian War* (*Pu-fa zhan ji* 普法戰紀). Also Liang Qichao’s writings on Western thought and culture, for example, his *Notes on Rousseau* (*Lusuo xue’an* 盧梭學案), are written in a similar form. The emergence of “creation through translation” therefore evidently represents

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Relations Between Actors and Scholars During the Ming-Qing Transition, as Seen in *Tao'an Mengyi*

Chen Wenxin

Gao Tianbi

Translated by Eric Chiang

Abstract

During the final phase of a declining political order, during troubled times, or under other exceptional circumstances, concord between outsider scholars and political authority is easily ruptured. The psychology of scholars and certain actors who were subject to the same “authority” pressure thus came to rest on a common foundation. Zhang Dai’s *Recollections of Tao-an’s Past Dreams* (*Tao’an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶) can be seen as a manifestation of the relationship between scholars and actors in troubled times. Through a deep analysis of the text of “Dream Recollections of Tao An,” we can see scholars beginning to have an emotional appreciation for the independence and individuality of the actors. At the same time, a certain self-consciousness of the actors was awakened, whereby the actors provided spiritual and material support to the scholars during this difficult period. The performance of many scholars in amateur theatrical shows also meant that the status of low-ranking scholars and actors was not significantly different. This new scholar-actor relationship is inseparable from the thought, politics and economics of the late Ming and early Qing period, and should be understood in just such a context.

Keywords

Tao'an Mengyi – scholar – actor – relationship

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Research on Reader's Guides to Ming and Qing Popular Novels

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Translated by Brook Hefright

Abstract

Reader's guides (*fanli* 凡例), which form a distinct genre attached to popular novels, have a great deal of research value. This article collects and counts reader's guides to Ming and Qing popular novels, analyzes the overall characteristics of the genre, and discusses four aspects of them: (1) the historical value of reader's guides to Ming and Qing popular novels; (2) reader's guides and the creative method in popular novels; (3) reader's guides and chapter headings in popular novels; and (4) reader's guides and readers of popular novels. This study approaches this distinct genre of novels from the perspective of both examination of documents and of theoretical research; it uses theory and method to explore the creative methods and systematic structure of Ming and Qing popular novels as well as to trace the true course of popular novels' appearance, development, and evolution.

Keywords

bookstores – chapter headings – creative methods – popular novels – readers – reader's guides

Reader's guides (*fanli* 凡例) are a distinct editorial genre that convey the content of the work and the main creative idea; other names for the genre include *fafan* 發凡, *xuli* 叙例, *xulüe* 叙略, *liyan* 例言, and *buli* 補例. Reader's guides appeared quite early. Based on Du Yu's (杜預) (222-285) Preface to *Mr. Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan xu* 春秋左氏傳序), written

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Scenic Depictions of Huizhou in Ming–Qing Literature

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Translated by Casey Lee

Abstract

In the Ming through the Qing Dynasties, literary works captured Huizhou through scenic depictions of its mountains and rivers, villages, wealth, literary families, and portrayals of the local people. In these works, Huizhou men are described as virtuous, literary, and gallant while Huizhou women are often seen as knowledgeable, worldly, and industrious characters upholding the values of feudal society. By exploring such depictions of Huizhou, this article considers the way in which literary depictions correspond to historical reality, how scenes depicted in literature accord with the specific and various characteristics of a region, and the inextricable ties between scenic depictions in literature (*wenxue tujing* 文學圖景) and regional literature (*diyu wenxue* 地域文學).

Keywords

Ming–Qing literature – regional literature depictions – historical reality

In 1121, Shezhou (歙州) was renamed Huizhou (徽州) and charged with administering the six counties of Shexian (歙縣), Xiuning (休寧), Yixian (黟縣), Jixi (績溪), Wuyuan (婺源), and Qimen (祁門) as a newly formed prefecture. This geopolitical formation, which at the time was referred to by locals as “one prefecture, six counties,” would last until the Republican era (1912-1949). Huizhou was more a land of scenic mountains than it was of fields, and the quality of its soil was ill-suited to agriculture. In the Ming (1368-1644)

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BRILL

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A Comparative Study of Two Major English Translations of *The Journey to the West: Monkey* and *The Monkey and the Monk*

Hao Ji

Abstract

As two major English translations of a famous sixteenth-century Chinese novel *The Journey to the West, Monkey* by Arthur Waley and *The Monkey and the Monk* by Anthony Yu differ in many respects due to the translators' different concerns and translation strategies. Whereas Waley's translation omits many episodes and significantly changes textual features of the original novel, Yu's translation is more literal and faithful to the original. Through a comparison of the different approaches in these two translations, this paper aims to delineate important differences in textual features and images of protagonists and demonstrate how such differences, especially the changing representation of Tripitaka, might affect English-language readers' understanding of religious references and themes in the story. It also seeks to help us reconsider the relationship between translations and the original text in the age of world literature through a case study of English translations of *The Journey to the West*.

Keywords

comparison – *Monkey* – *The Monkey and the Monk* – translation – *Xiyou ji*

An immensely popular novel in China and East Asia, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*The Journey to the West*), often attributed to Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (ca. 1500-1582), is loosely based on the pilgrimage of the historical figure Xuanzang 玄奘

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BRILL

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Examining Narrative Form in *The Scholars*

Shang Wei

Translated by Colleen Howe

Abstract

In Wu Jingzi's (吳敬梓) *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史), the narrative is constructed through the characters' descriptions of themselves as well as "character zones" reconciled within the dialogue, resulting in a distinctive narrative form. This article rationalizes inconsistencies in narrative time not as the product of false authorship but, rather, as the product of Wu Jingzi's narrative style. Furthermore, because these inconsistencies are found primarily in dialogue, solving the mystery of narrative time gives us an unparalleled opportunity to examine the novel's narrative form. Wu's writing style is perhaps best described as *laissez-faire*: weaving personal experiences together with anecdotes and rumors drawn from his social circle, he fashions a character-driven narrative form that mixes different perspectives and voices. More importantly, his narration illuminates the world of the Qing-era literati, reflecting the oral and written narrative cultures of the Confucian elite.

Keywords

Chinese literature – narrative form – *The Scholars* – Wu Jingzi

Though set primarily in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), *The Scholars* (*Rulin waishi* 儒林外史) takes place during the period from the late Yuan (1271–1368) to the early Qing (1644–1911). Except for chapters 1 and 56, the core of the novel takes place over 110 years and the reigns of six successive Ming emperors: Chenghua (成化), Hongzhi (弘治), Zhengde (正德), Jiajing (嘉靖), Longqing (隆慶), and Wanli (萬曆). A close reading reveals that chapters 2 to 55 are

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BRILL

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The Drifting of the “South” to Beijing: The Southern Factor in Beijing Culture of the Early Qing

Dandan Chen

Abstract

How did southern China figure in Beijing, the Qing capital? Here “the South” (Jiangnan) must be understood as a cultural rather than geographical term. It does not, however, merely refer to the cultural space in which intellectuals gathered but, rather, to their lifestyle and spiritual existence typical of the elites who resided in regions south of the Yangzi River. This sense of the South involved the body, sense, memory, and everyday experience of Han culture in this period.

Using Foucault’s notion of the “body politic,” I consider the South in opposition to macro politics, the Qing regime, which carried out society’s disciplinary and punishment functions. The body politic is a kind of “micro power,” which can sometimes override or undermine macro politics. In the process of accepting discipline and punishment from the Qing court, the South, drifting northward as its most talented men arrived to serve the Qing, was able to penetrate and reshape national politics in Beijing. In this sense, it maintained a measure of influence even in the face of hostile macro politics. To unpack the interaction between macro politics and micro politics, this article explores how the southern literati migrated to Beijing and established cultural circles there; how southern literati rewrote the idea of the “South” in the North and turned its remembrance into textual, physical, and spiritual rituals; and finally, how the South and the inscribing of the South, either in text or in action, served as a mode of existence for Chinese elites. I consider how intellectuals maintained or created links to the old culture by extending the South into the real spaces of the North and, more importantly, into their psychology.

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