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**Exploring Louis Cha's Martial Arts Novels in the English-speaking  
World: Translation, Dissemination and Reception**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2024

# Abstract

Louis Cha (1924-2018) is a representative writer of martial arts novels in contemporary Chinese literature, whose works have gained great popularity among the readers in Chinese communities. Cha's works have been translated into English in the past few decades.

This thesis aims to explore how Cha's works are translated, disseminated and received in the English-speaking world. Drawing on paratext theory, polysystem theory and reception theory that jointly serve as its theoretical framework, this thesis focuses on four English translations: (1) *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (1993), Olivia Mok's translation of *Xueshan Feihu*, (2) the three-volume *The Deer and The Cauldron* (1997, 1999 and 2002), John Minford's translation of *Lu Ding Ji*, (3) *The Book and The Sword* (2004), Graham Earnshaw's translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu* and (4) *Legends of the Condor Heroes* (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021), Anna Holmwood, Gigi Chang and Shelly Bryant's co-translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*. To achieve the aims of the research, each case study first examines the translator and the translation strategy which affects the shaping of the translation, then it analyses the paratexts to illustrate how they play a role in enabling the translation to enter the target literary system and promote its dissemination. In order to grasp the reception of the translation and identify the affecting factors, each study devotes its last section to investigating two types of book reviews: literary reviews that are written by scholarly readers and published in journals or newspapers and popular reviews that are written by general readers and posted on the shopping website Amazon, the reading community Goodreads and the social media X.

This study finds that different translation strategies are employed to translate Cha's works and they have affected the reception. It is recommended that collaborative translation be adopted to translate Cha's lengthy novels. An analysis of the paratexts of the translations reveals a range of actors at work, thus accentuating an agent-driven and process-oriented approach. Studying the reviews illustrates that *Legends of the Condor Heroes* gained the best reception while *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* ranked last. Moreover, studying the reviews identifies both the extratextual and textual factors that affect the reception. Adopting theories and approaches in Literary Studies and Translation Studies, this thesis highlights the importance of interdisciplinary studies and contributes to current studies by extending the research scope. It further points out the future directions in this field where multimodal translations of Cha's novels should be taken into consideration.

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors at University of Glasgow, Professor Susan Bassnett, Dr Enza De Francisci and Dr Nathan Woolley, who provided unswerving support during my PhD journey. They always read my drafts carefully and gave me invaluable suggestions for improvement. Every meeting with them was an inspiring and thought-provoking experience.

My thanks also go to College of Arts Graduate School, whose Research Support Award (RSA) enabled me to attend conferences held in other institutions in the UK, deliver my conference papers and exchange ideas with renowned scholars in the field of Translation Studies.

I am deeply indebted to School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Durham University, who awarded me the travel bursary to attend the conference “Where Are We Now? The Location of Modern Languages and Cultures” held in April 2023. It was so amazing to meet Professor Katrin Wehling-Giorgi again at University of Glasgow in May 2024. School of Modern Languages and Cultures, the University of Warwick kindly offered me the bursary to participate in the conference “Afterlives of an Essay: 100 Years of Benjamin’s *Task of the Translator*” organised in September 2023. Attending these conferences has broadened my horizon, stimulated new ideas for my research and enriched my PhD life.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my family for their full support for my academic career and I appreciate the sponsorship of China Scholarship Council, which made my pursuit of PhD in the UK possible.

## **Author's Declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

# Introduction

Louis Cha, also known by his pen name Jin Yong 金庸, wrote 15 martial arts works during his lifetime, including 12 novels, 2 novellas and 1 short story.<sup>1</sup> Cha's martial arts novels have gained great popularity among Chinese readers. As John Minford states, Cha's novels can always be found wherever there are Chinese people.<sup>2</sup> John Christopher Hamm shares a similar view, claiming that it seems impossible to find a Chinese community worldwide where Cha's works do not circulate, nor is it likely to find a Chinese individual reader who does not know Cha's novels.<sup>3</sup> According to the surveys conducted by the Chinese Academy of Press and Publication, Cha had been chosen as one of the favourite writers by Chinese readers many times: he ranked first in 2005 and 2008, second in 1999 and 2001, and third in 2003.<sup>4</sup> The data released by Zhejiang Library in 2024 shows that Cha was among the top 5 most popular consecutively from 2021 to 2023 and his works were among the top ten in the borrowing list.<sup>5</sup> Another survey conducted in 2021, which was jointly launched by DTcaijing, a media devoted to data analysis and reporting, and Tamen, a WeChat account focussing on various aspects of young people's life, suggested that Cha and his works enjoyed great popularity among the younger generation as well. Nearly 100% of those who were born between the 1980s and the 1990s had read Cha's works or watched their cinematic adaptations while over 90% of those born after 1995 had done so. Among the respondents born after 2000, the proportion only slightly dropped to 80%.<sup>6</sup>

Born in Zhejiang Province in China in 1924, Cha moved to Hong Kong in 1948 and lived there until he died in 2018. It is in Hong Kong that Cha started his career as a writer of martial arts novels. Cha's first novel *Shujian Enchou Lu* was published in serial form in newspapers in 1955 and his last novel *Lu Ding Ji* was published between 1969 and 1972. However, it was not until 1993 that the first full English translation of his novel *Xueshan Feihu* entitled *Fox Volant of Snowy Mountain* by Olivia Mok was published. Other English translations available in book form include *The Deer and The*

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Cha's original Chinese name is Zha Liangyong (查良鏞). His pen name Jin Yong (金庸) derives from the separation of the last character “鏞”. Compared with his original name, Louis Cha or Jin Yong is more widely known. Cha once composed a couplet by joining together the first characters of the titles of his 14 works: “飛雪連天射白鹿，笑書神俠倚碧鴛” (Snow fluttering about the snow, shooting the white deer, smiling, [one] writes about the divine knight-errants and lean against bluish lovebirds).

<sup>2</sup> John Minford, ‘The Deer and the Cauldron-Two Chapters from a Novel by Louis Cha’, *East Asian History*, 5 (1993), 1-100 (p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> John Christopher Hamm, ‘The Marshes of Mount Liang Beyond the Sea: Jin Yong's Early Martial Arts Fiction and Postwar Hong Kong’, *Modern Chinese literature and culture*, 11 (1999), 93-123 (p. 193).

<sup>4</sup> Luo Yongzhou 羅永洲, ‘Jin Yong xiaoshuo yingyi yanjiu jianlun zhongguo wenxue zouchuqu’ 金庸小說英譯研究：兼論中國文學走出去 [Research on the English Translation of Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels—A Discussion on the Global Dissemination of Chinese Literature], *Zhongguo fanyi* 中國翻譯, 3 (2011), 51-55 (p. 51).

<sup>5</sup> Chu Jingjun 褚晶君, ‘Dangdai nianqingren haikan jinyong ma kan haining ruhe dahao zhezhang jinpai’ 當代年輕人還看金庸嗎？看海寧如何打好這張“金”牌 [Do Contemporary Young People Still Read Jin Yong's Works? See How Haining Play This Ace], <<http://www.zjwmw.com/ch123/system/2024/03/27/034577173.shtml>> [accessed 11 July 2024].

<sup>6</sup> The full report can be found on the website: <https://www.huxiu.com/article/469594.html> [accessed 11 July 2024].

*Cauldron* by John Minford published in 1997, 1999 and 2002, *The Book and The Sword* by Graham Earnshaw in 2004, the four-volume *Legends of the Condor Heroes* co-translated by Anna Holmwood, Gigi Chang and Shelly Bryant published successively from 2018 to 2021 and *A Past Unearthed*, the first volume of *Return of the Condor Heroes*, by Gigi Chang in 2023.

With the development of the Internet, there have emerged online translations of Cha's works, which can be accessed on some websites that are devoted to the dissemination of martial arts literature.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the written texts, translations of Cha's novels in other media have been expanding rapidly in recent years. In the field of audio-visual translation which centres on "the transfer of multimodal and multimedial content",<sup>8</sup> some movies or TV series adapted from Cha's novels are provided with English subtitles.<sup>9</sup> If translation is understood in a broad sense and takes cross-medial adaptations into consideration, Cha's novels have been adapted into comic books and video games both in Chinese and English.<sup>10</sup>

Building on current studies, this thesis aims to investigate how Cha's novels were translated, disseminated and received in the English-speaking world. In this thesis, the English-speaking world refers to countries or regions where English is widely spoken, either as a native language or an official language. That is, English plays a vital role in communication in these areas. The term is more about linguistic and cultural influence than geographic boundaries. The theories to be adopted in the thesis are largely reliant on the object of study. Depending on the aims of the research, paratext theory, polysystem theory and reception theory work together to compose the theoretical framework of this thesis. Each theory focuses on certain aspects of the translation phenomenon. Paratext theory reveals more about how Cha's works make their entry into the English-speaking world and how different agents of translation have played their roles. Polysystem theory sheds light on the position of Cha's works in the target literary and cultural systems and how this position has informed the translators' translation strategies. Reception theory helps to show how Cha's novels have been received in the English-speaking world at both a social level and an individual level and probe into the reasons. The three approaches work in a complementary way and

<sup>7</sup> For the online translations of Cha's novels, please see WuxiaSociety: <https://wuxiasociety.com/translations/#jin-yong> and SPECNET: <https://www.spcnet.tv/forums/forumdisplay.php/29-Wuxia-Translations> [accessed 20 April 2024].

<sup>8</sup> Luis Pérez-González, 'Audiovisual Translation' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* 3rd edn ed. by Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 30-34 (p. 34).

<sup>9</sup> One representative example is the film adapted from *Tianlong Babu* (天龍八部 Demi-Gods and Demi-Devils): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbRqx0e7fo>, and the TV series: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y\\_0hIW8QKLO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_0hIW8QKLO) [accessed 20 April 2024].

<sup>10</sup> All of Cha's novels have been adapted into comic books in Chinese, which have been published by different publishers in Mainland China. Representative is a set of comic books published by Hunan Children's Publishing House in the 1990s. The first video game adapted from Cha's novels was *Xiao'ao Jianghu* (笑傲江湖 *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer*) and it was released by Soft-World International Corporation in 1993. To date, more than 10 video games related to Cha's works have been released in Chinese. In the English context, comic books adapted from Cha's works include *The Heaven Sword and Dragon Saber* illustrated by Wing Shing Ma and published by ComicsOne in 2005, and *The Legendary Couple* illustrated by Tony Wong and published by ComicsOne in 2005. The English video game named "Swordsman MMORPG" based on Cha's novels was announced by Perfect World in 2014.

are chosen to overcome the limitations of using one alone. For example, adopting just polysystem theory risks the danger of depersonalisation which has been highlighted by Theo Hermans.<sup>11</sup> Paratext theory, on the other hand, can offer illuminating insights into how diverse agents have engaged themselves in the translation process. Though reception theory has been applied first to literary texts and then to other text types, reception of translated texts has received relatively “scant, uneven” attention in Translation Studies.<sup>12</sup>

Within the theoretical framework, this thesis will conduct case studies of the existing published translations of Cha’s novels. It also intends to explore the status of Cha’s works in the target culture and how their English translations have been received. My study thus highlights the reception of Cha’s novels in the English-speaking world. More significantly, it seeks to identify the key factors that affect the reception of Cha’s works, deepening the reception studies of martial arts novels in translation.

In line with these aims, my study will address the following research questions: (1) What translation strategies were adopted to translate Cha’s novels and what means were employed to disseminate the translations? (2) How have the English translations been received among the target readers? What are the differences in their reception? (3) What are the key factors that affected the reception of Cha’s works in English? What insights might this thesis offer into the translation of martial arts novels in the future?

Specifically, my thesis will conduct case studies of the officially published book-form English translations of Cha’s four novels in order to examine how Cha’s works entered the English-speaking world. Studies to date have tended to focus on individual translations or certain aspects of one translation, so taking the four translations into consideration will broaden the research scope and uncover their connections. While more works by Cha have been translated online or anonymously, book-form translations came into existence much earlier, with *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, the first book-length English translation of Cha’s novel, published in 1993. The four-volume *Return of the Condor Heroes*, the English translation of *Shendiao Xialü* 神雕俠侶 (*The Divine Eagle and The Hero Couple*) is still ongoing, with its first volume *A Past Unearthed* newly published by MacLehose Press in 2023.<sup>13</sup> It seems insufficient to study the whole novel in translation by only concentrating on one volume. Therefore, *A Past Unearthed* will not be investigated in my thesis.<sup>14</sup>

A discussion of the book-form translations can help better understand how Cha’s works first entered the Anglophone world, thus tracing the trajectory of dissemination. The

<sup>11</sup> Theo Hermans, *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and System-oriented Approaches Explained*, p. 117.

<sup>12</sup> Yves Gambier, ‘Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation and Reception’ in *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation*, ed. by Elena Di Giovanni and Yves Gambier (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Johan Benjamins Publishing Company, 2018), pp. 43-66 (p. 43).

<sup>13</sup> According to my email exchange with Gigi Chang on 5 March 2024, *Return of the Condor Heroes* is a four-volume translation that will be completed by Chang herself.

<sup>14</sup> In the email exchange with Gigi Chang on 4 February 2024, I planned to study *Return of the Condor Heroes* after all the four volumes are published, and Chang agreed to my plan.

publication of these translations covers a long time span from the 1990s to the 2020s, which enables me to conduct a chronological examination and compare different translations. Studying the translations in this way contributes to constructing the translation history of both Cha's works and Chinese martial arts novels. Furthermore, exploring different translations can shed light on the changes of social and cultural contexts in which Cha's works are translated and disseminated, and how these contexts affect their reception in the target culture. This will fill the gap in current studies, most of which focus on one translation of Cha's novels in one specific historical period without locating the translations in the flux of the contexts. Compared to the anonymous translations that were published either in book-form or online, the translations selected to be studied in this thesis will be more suitable to address the research questions. Their translators, publishers, editors and publication date can be identified with less difficulty. The identification of these key actors can also serve as a point a departure for an analysis of their roles in disseminating Cha's works in the English-speaking world, thus highlighting the agent-driven and process-orient approach. Book-form translations can also offer much insight into research on translation strategies, as the translators usually mention them in the prefaces. As this thesis seeks to study the reception of Cha's novels in English translation, book reviews especially popular ones posted on shopping websites, reading communities and social media constitute a crucial source of data. Compared to unofficially published translations or online translations, these book-form translations are more widely known among the target readers and they have gained quite a number of book reviews, which facilitates data collection for the reception studies.

As mentioned previously, other forms of translations of Cha's works exist, including online translations, comic books and video games. They have also played an essential role in disseminating Cha's novels in the English-speaking world. They represent a broader spectrum of formats, and extend beyond the written texts alone. Online translations integrate text, image and even videos through hyperlinks, reshaping the conventional production and consumption of literary works. Readers can actively participate in the translation process as well. Translators can revise their translations anytime based on the readers' feedback. Comic books heavily rely on visual storytelling while video games emphasise the participation and experience of the audience. Including these forms of translations would broaden the scope of this thesis and reveal the multifaceted roles that different media played in disseminating Cha's works. However, due to the research focus and space constraints, these types of translations will not be explored in depth in my thesis. Nevertheless, in the review analysis of each case study, the interactions between different forms of translations will be discussed, thereby offering a cross-medial perspective to the current scholarship. In order to advance the research on Cha's novels in the English-speaking world, more work on these areas beyond the written texts are needed in the future.

Studying the entry of Cha's works into the English-speaking world can shed light on various aspects of translations. Since the translators and their translation strategies play an essential role in shaping the translated text, they become the initial research focus in

each case study. Translators will be studied based on the available archives and their translation strategies will be discussed through textual analysis. Apart from the translators, other agents participated in the translation and contributed to disseminating these English translations as well.

When identifying the translation strategy adopted in each translation, my study will conduct an analysis of both extratextual and textual elements. Specifically, the translator's preface, published articles and interviews can serve as useful resources to examine the translation strategy, as the translators tend to mention their translation strategies in these materials. For instance, Mok points out her translation strategy in her published academic articles. Minford makes it clear how he edited the last four volumes of *Lu Ding Ji* in the translator's introduction of *The Deer and The Cauldron*. Earnshaw explains his translation strategy on his website. Chang recalls how she joined the team and collaborated with Holmwood in an interview in 2019.<sup>15</sup> The translation strategy will also be studied through a comparative reading of the source text and the target text. Comparison is of great use to discovering the differences between the two texts, which suggests a pattern that largely shapes the translation strategy. Analysing extratextual materials and reading texts are two approaches to examining the translation strategy and they are complementary to each other: the former is first-hand archives provided by the translator while the latter can further test the translators' statements. Hence, translator's translation strategies are identified through the triangulation of data in this thesis.

An examination of the paratexts of the translations enables us to identify other key agents. Paratexts of a book, in Gérard Genette's view, first serve as a "threshold" or a "vestibule" that provides readers with "the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back".<sup>16</sup> In terms of the paratexts selected for analysis, paratexts of the translations which are closely related to my aims of research will be considered. As the four English translations exist in book form, and there is little doubt that their book covers usually draw readers' attention first. Specifically, the image on the front cover and the blurbs on the back cover can reveal much information about how a translation entered the target culture and how it has been evaluated. The covers also provide readers with necessary information about the key agents including the author, the publisher and the translator. For a target reader who starts reading Cha's works, the translator's introduction can shed light on their translation strategies and the translation process. Other paratexts provided by the translator, such as the list of characters, the glossary of terms and appendix, play a significant role in facilitate readers' understanding. These paratextual elements will be given sufficient attention in the paratext analysis in each case study. In contrast, other paratexts have little relevance to my study. For instance, Mok's dedication in *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* "For My Father K. P. Mok" seems to be of little help for the target readers to understand the translation. Likewise, the notes on the pronunciation of the Chinese characters in *The Deer and The Cauldron*

<sup>15</sup> See <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1624231295515586425&wfr=spider&for=pc> [accessed 20 March 2025].

<sup>16</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2.

and *The Book and The Sword* has little influence on the dissemination and reception of the two works, and they are hardly mentioned by the target readers. Hence, such paratexts that contribute little to achieving my research aims will not be discussed in depth. It is important that research into paratexts should accentuate issues regarding “the agents involved in producing translated products”.<sup>17</sup> In my study, key agents who affected the translation process of Cha’s works include the author, the translator, the publisher and the editor. Exploring the roles of these key agents and their interaction can go beyond the limits of the conventional text-based analysis and shed fresh light on the translation process.

This thesis will examine the reception of the English translations by analysing the book reviews, thus offering the status quo of the reception based on empirical material. To reflect the reception of Cha’s novels in the English-speaking world, the reviews to be selected for analysis should be written in English and appear in main platforms in the target culture. In order to cover a wider range of readers, two types of reviews will be studied: one is literary reviews which are written by more educated readers and published in journals or newspapers, and the other is popular reviews which are written by general readers and posted on Amazon, Goodreads and the social media X. As Amazon is the largest shopping website in the world, reviews of the translations can offer much information about their buyers and how they perceive Cha’s works. Goodreads is the world’s largest site for readers and recommendation of books, and it covers a wider range of readers than Amazon, which can deepen the reception studies of Cha’s works. To obtain more diverse and contemporary data, reviews from the social media X (previously Twitter) will be collected for study.<sup>18</sup>

Thematic analysis will be adopted to analyse the book reviews of Cha’s novels in English translation. According to Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, thematic analysis is “a foundational method for qualitative analysis” and it is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data”.<sup>19</sup> I will read both the literary reviews and popular reviews available and categorise them based on the themes they deal with, such as the portrayal of characters, the fighting scenes, the influence of cinematic adaptations, and the reading experience. It is worth noting that one review may involve multiple themes and one theme may be discussed in different reviews. Presenting various themes in the reviews can shed light on the readers’ multifaceted interests in Cha’s novels, show a panorama of the reception of Cha’s works in the target culture, and contribute to uncovering the reasons behind.

Through data collection, comparison and analysis, my study will illustrate how the four translations have been received differently among the target readers, a research area

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<sup>17</sup> Kathryn Batchelor, *Translation and Paratexts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 39.

<sup>18</sup> There are other social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok and Youtube. But reviews of Cha’s works in English translation can hardly be found on these platforms. Therefore, reviews on X are selected for data collection.

<sup>19</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, ‘Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology’, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2006), 77-101 (pp.78-79).



that is often neglected in current studies. A more comprehensive understanding of the reception can be gained as the thesis deals with four translations that were accomplished by different translators and published by different publishers.

To add to the current scholarship and advance relevant studies, my study will probe into the reasons for the reception of these translations, which help explain the reception of Cha's works in another culture and can possibly offer insights into the translation of martial arts novels in the future. Exploring the reasons will be carried out in two ways: a macro-level approach will examine the socio-cultural contexts of the translations, marketing devices employed by the publishers, and the translation strategies adopted by the translators. A micro-level approach will enable the study of reviews so as to uncover the specific reasons for each translation. By combining the two approaches, my study will identify key factors that affect the reception and illustrate the dynamics between them.

This thesis consists of nine chapters.

Chapter One contextualises my research. The first section focuses on martial arts fiction by tracing its origin, examining its historical development and elaborating on its distinctive features, thereby achieving a deeper understanding of this Chinese literary genre. The second section concentrates on the New School martial arts novels to which Cha's works belong, delving into the reasons for their popularity in Hong Kong and highlighting their literary value.

Chapter Two situates the thesis within the current studies on the English translations of Cha's works and illustrates how my study engages with them. The chapter reviews the existing critical literature on the English translations of Cha's novels both inside and outside China and shows how the current research topics and methods inform the scope and methodology of my study. It argues that to fill a research gap, this thesis will adopt a comprehensive framework by combining theories from both Translation Studies and Literary Studies, extend the research scope by examining the four book-form translations and revealing their connections, investigating the translation process by taking into account key agents involved, and probing into the reception by analysing the collected book reviews.

Chapter Three discusses the theoretical framework of my thesis, that is, an integration of paratext theory, polysystem theory and reception theory. The theoretical framework will guide my research into the translation, dissemination and reception of Cha's novels in the English-speaking world and contribute to explaining various phenomena regarding the translations.

Chapter Four centres on Cha's martial arts novels that are representative of the New School in the Chinese context. It discusses the status of Cha's novels by evaluating two opposing views on the literary status of Cha's works, then it attempts to study the

literary position of Cha's novels in the process of canonization. It also delineates the trajectory of how Cha's novels were disseminated from Hong Kong to Mainland China in the 1980s and explores the reasons for the popularity of Cha's novels in this period.

Chapter Five to Chapter Eight constitute the case studies of this thesis. The four chapters examine the English translations of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (1993), the three-volume *The Deer and The Cauldron* (1997, 1999 and 2002), *The Book and The Sword* (2004) and the four-volume *Legends of the Condor Heroes* (2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021). Each chapter interrogates the translator and translation strategy, examines the paratextual elements and analyses the book reviews. Rather than treating each study as a self-enclosed or separate case, this thesis will associate one case study with another through comparison so as to reveal their connections.

Chapter Nine is the conclusion of the thesis. Based on the findings of the case studies in the previous four chapters, it addresses the research questions that are raised at the beginning of the thesis and shows my study's contributions to the research on the English translations of Cha's works, or martial arts novels in general, by making breakthroughs and generating new knowledge. To finish, it offers some recommendations for translating Cha's novels, such as adopting the collaborative translation strategy and paying more attention to the publisher's role, and indicates the direction of future studies by suggesting the importance of considering multimodal translations of Cha's novels.

## Chapter One Martial Arts Fiction as a Literary Genre

### 1.1 Introduction

The thesis will focus on the dissemination and reception of Louis Cha's novels in the English-speaking world, and explore the underlying reasons. Examining the dissemination of his works in the source culture can serve as the first step for the research. As Cha's novels are regarded as representative of martial arts fiction, a literary genre in Chinese literature,<sup>1</sup> it is necessary to investigate the role that the genre has played in their dissemination.

The genre that Cha employs has been discussed in previous scholarship. He Qiubin claims that Cha's works are traditional Chinese novels in terms of their language and themes.<sup>2</sup> However, Ni Kuang argues that Cha has combined writing techniques from both traditional Chinese novels and modern English novels, thus shifting martial arts novels to a new level.<sup>3</sup> Yan Jiayan has studied the characteristics of Cha's novels and maintains that his works have transcended the generic boundaries of martial arts novels as they are filled with profound thoughts and rich in elements of traditional Chinese culture.<sup>4</sup> Though these scholars' views may vary, they seem to agree that Cha's works can be categorised as martial arts novels. Indeed, Cha's novels have been considered as an essential part of the history of Chinese martial arts novels in the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Mok states that Cha's works are generally perceived as martial arts novels, the Chinese literary genre which has a long history and is read by Chinese readers from all walks of life.<sup>6</sup> James Liu deems it interesting that readers of martial arts novels include not only general readers but also scholarly readers.<sup>7</sup> Liu suggests that there is a relationship between this genre and its readership in the source culture: martial arts novels tend to attract a wide readership.

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<sup>1</sup> Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Qianggu wenren xiake meng wuxia xiaoshuo leixing yanjiu* 千古文人俠客夢: 武俠小說類型研究 [The Knight-errant Dream of the Literati through the Ages: A Study of the Typology of Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue chubanshe, 1992), p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> He Qiubin 何求斌, 'Wuxia xiaoshuo zhongguo chuantong de xiaoshuo xingshi' 武俠小說: 中國傳統的小說形式 [Martial Arts Novels: One Form of Traditional Chinese Fiction], *Hubei shifan xueyuan xuebao zhexue shehui kexue ban* 湖北師範學院學報(哲學社會科學版), 6 (2010), 21-25 (p. 21).

<sup>3</sup> Ni Kuang 倪匡, *Wo kan Jin Yong xiaoshuo* 我看金庸小說 [My Reading of Jin Yong's Novels] (Chongqing: Chongqing Daxue Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, 'Jinyong xiaoshuo chengjiu zhi wojian' 金庸小說成就之我見 [My View on the Achievements of Jin Yong's Novels], *Zhejiang xuekan* 浙江學刊, 6 (2019), 14-20 (p. 14).

<sup>5</sup> See works on the history of Chinese martial arts novels including Wang Hailin (1988), Luo Liqun (1990), Chen Pingyuan (1992) and Lin Yao (2018).

<sup>6</sup> Olivia Mok, 'On Translating Jin Yong's Martial Arts Fiction', *Journal of Macrolinguistics*, 5 (1994), 70-79 (p. 70).

<sup>7</sup> James J.Y. Liu, *The Chinese Knight-errant* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 130.

While some English translations of Cha's works are presented just as martial arts novels, others are compared to fantasy, a long English literary tradition.<sup>8</sup> This reveals that the issue of how to categorise martial arts novels remains prominent when they are translated into English. Furthermore, how this affects the reception of Cha's novels among target readers deserves consideration.

Modern martial arts novels are generally divided into two kinds: the Old School and the New School. The Old School martial arts novels, or *Jiupai wuxia* 舊派武俠, refer to those martial arts novels produced in Shanghai, Tianjin and other mainland urban centres from the 1920s up to 1949, while the New School martial arts novels, or *Xinpai wuxia* 新派武俠, are those that originated in Hong Kong in the 1950s and then prospered in Taiwan.<sup>9</sup> Cha's novels thus belong to "the New School". The first section of this chapter clarifies the origins of martial arts fiction, mentions key development phases, and discusses its distinctive features in an endeavour to improve the understanding of the genre of Cha's works. The second section examines the historical and literary contexts in which the New School developed and then explores the reasons for its popularity in Hong Kong.

## 1.2 Martial Arts Fiction in Chinese Literature

There have been hundreds of studies on the history of martial arts novels, and most of them tend to approach this kind of fiction from the perspective of the literary genre. Here are some representative ones, which have been much quoted at the mention of martial arts novels. Wang Hailin points out that martial arts fiction, *wuxia xiaoshuo* 武俠小說 (fiction of martial arts and chivalry), became an established Chinese literary genre in the late Tang Dynasty (618–906), the first peak in its historical development.<sup>10</sup> James Liu has examined how the knight-errant prototype emerged, and he divides chivalric fiction into four types: chivalric-*tales-cum-detective* stories, romances combining chivalry with love, tales of flying swordsmen, and tales emphasizing physical feats.<sup>11</sup> Luo Liqun, a literary historian, offers a chronological overview of the genre's development and discusses seminal works in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.<sup>12</sup> John Christopher Hamm, who focuses on Louis Cha's novels and their political and social circumstances, investigates the evolution of literary conventions on *xia* (chivalry) themes through the Six Dynasties (AD 222–589), Sui (581–618), and

<sup>8</sup> On the front cover of *The Book and The Sword* appear the words "a martial arts novel by Louis Cha". The same is true for *The Deer and The Cauldron*. Yet on the front cover of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, the novel is compared to *Lord of the Rings*, an English fantasy written by J.R.R. Tolkien.

<sup>9</sup> John Christopher Hamm, 'The Marshes of Mount Liang Beyond the Sea: Jin Yong's Early Martial Arts Fiction and Postwar Hong Kong', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, 1 (1999), pp. 93-123 (p. 96).

<sup>10</sup> Wang Hailin 王海林, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shilue* 中國武俠小說史略 [A Brief History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels] (Shanxi: Beiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1988), p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Liu, James J.Y., *The Chinese Knight-errant* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 81.

<sup>12</sup> Luo Liqun 羅立群, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shi* 中國武俠小說史 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels] (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2008), pp. 11-18.

Tang (618–906) periods.<sup>13</sup> When exploring the translational phenomenon of martial arts novels around the world, Olivia Mok suggests that martial arts novels are a literary form belonging to the fiction tradition of the Chinese literary polysystem.<sup>14</sup> Though these studies have shown the importance of studying martial arts fiction, they dispute the origin of this kind of fiction.

Researchers have attempted to understand the features of *wuxia xiaoshuo* from the term itself. For example, Ni Kuang expresses the opinion that martial arts fiction, as its Chinese name implies, consists of three components: *wu* (武 martial prowess), *xia* (俠 knight-errantry) and *xiaoshuo* (小說 fiction).<sup>15</sup> Zhang Bing shares a similar view, and states that these three components form the basic criteria of martial arts fiction.<sup>16</sup> Luo Yongzhou develops this further, mentioning that the core issue of martial arts fiction lies in the relationship between *wu* and *xia*, and argues that *wu* is a means employed by the heroes to achieve the goal of *xia*.<sup>17</sup> It can be said that while the three scholars try to propose the criteria of martial arts fiction, more work is needed to further understand the meaning of *xia* in this literary genre.

### 1.2.1 The Origin of Martial Arts Fiction

Before discussing the origin of martial arts fiction, it will be useful to examine the two literary terms: *xiaoshuo* (小說) and *wuxia xiaoshuo* (武俠小說) in a chronological way. *Xiaoshuo* is a changing, fluid literary concept and its meaning as fiction has evolved over a long period. It first appeared in the philosophical and literary work *Zhuangzi* 莊子在 the Warring State Period (475 BC- 221 BC): “Depending on embellished *xiaoshuo* (trivial words) to gain fame, is far away from the great truth”.<sup>18</sup> Its speaker Zhuangzi despised the function of *xiaoshuo*, which had different meanings compared to today’s fiction. According to Xu Junhui’s research, it was not until the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD) that the term obtained the meaning of fiction, referring to a narrative literary genre which reflects society and life through characterisation, plot development and descriptions of settings.<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that the length of *xiaoshuo* can vary, be it long, medium or short, and there has been no consensus. Therefore, *xiaoshuo* can

<sup>13</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Olivia Mok, ‘Translational Migration of Martial Arts Fiction East and West’, *Target*, 13 (2002), 81-102 (p. 82).

<sup>15</sup> Ni Kuang 倪匡, *Wo kan Jin Yong xiaoshu* 我看金庸小說 [My Reading of Jin Yong’s Novels] (Chongqing: Chongqing Daxue Chubanshe, 2009), p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Zhang Bing 張兵, ‘Wuxia xiaoshuo faduan yu heshi?’ 武俠小說發端於何時? [When did Martial Arts Fiction Originate?] *Fudaan xuebao zhexue shehui ban* 復旦學報 (社會科學版), 3 (2004), 53-63 (p. 53).

<sup>17</sup> Luo Yongzhou 羅永洲, ‘Jin Yong xiaoshuo yingyi yanjiu jianlun zhongguo wenxue zouchuqu’ 金庸小說英譯研究——兼論中國文學走出去 [Research on the English Translation of Jin Yong’s Martial Arts Novels——A Discussion on the Global Dissemination of Chinese Literature], *Zhongguo fanyi* 中國翻譯, 3 (2011), 51-55 (p. 52).

<sup>18</sup> The original Chinese reads “飾小說以幹縣令，其於大達亦遠矣”.

<sup>19</sup> Xu Junhui 徐君慧, *Zhongguo xiaoshuoshi* 中國小說史 [A History of Chinese Novels] (Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991), pp. 1-2.

be novels, novellas or even short stories in Chinese literature.

According to Han Yunbo's study, the term "*wuxia xiaoshuo*" was first used by the Japanese writer Shunro Oshikawa to refer to his six-volume novels at the beginning of the twentieth century. Oshikawa launched the magazine *Wuxia World* in 1912, marking the emergence of *wuxia xiaoshuo* as one type of fiction.<sup>20</sup> Xu Mingling argues that Oshikawa's novels, which combine the Japanese Bushidao spirit and the Chinese errantry, are quite similar to Chinese martial arts fiction in terms of content.<sup>21</sup> The term was introduced into China and adopted by Bao Tianxiao, the editor of the journal *Xiaoshuo daguan* 小說大觀 (*Aspects of Fiction*), to name a section he edited in 1915. In view of the genre's naming process, Han Yunbo's concepts of *wuxia xiaoshuo* in a broad sense and *wuxia xiaoshuo* in a narrow sense might offer some further insight. The former refers to any work that deals with the theme of *xia* (knight-errants) in literary history, while the latter means martial arts novels that appeared after the existence of the term *wuxia xiaoshuo*.<sup>22</sup> This chapter adopts his first definition which is more inclusive and can illustrate the characteristics of this genre.

Though scholars hold differing views on the origin of martial arts fiction, they tend to trace it back to an early period. James Liu proposes that the earliest chivalrous tales appeared in *Prince Dan of Yan* 燕丹子, a short book compiled by Prince Dan's followers and others in the third century B.C.<sup>23</sup> Lin Yao agrees with Liu about the earliest martial arts story but he questions the year when *Prince Dan of Yan* was written. Lin believes that the time was later than what Liu suggests.<sup>24</sup> Wang Hailin argues that martial arts fiction came into existence in the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC – 9 AD). The example that Wang cites is a story about a knight-errant named Guo Jie in *Records of the Grand Historian* 史記 written by the historian Sima Qian (c. 145 – c. 86 BC) in the Western Han Dynasty.<sup>25</sup> Cui Fengyuan maintains that the Chinese fiction was born out of *zhiguai* 志怪 (recording the strange), a genre in the Six Dynasties (222–589), which narrates strange stories about ghosts or monsters. Cui claims that the earliest martial arts fiction can be found in *zhiguai*.<sup>26</sup> The view held by Ye Hongsheng and Xu Sinian is that martial arts fiction appeared along with *chuanqi* 傳奇, short tales written in classic Chinese during the Tang Dynasty (618–906).<sup>27</sup> It can be observed that

<sup>20</sup> Lin Yao 林遙, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shihua* 中國武俠小說史話 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2018), p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Xu Mingling 許明玲, 'Jinyong wuxia xiaoshuo zai riben de yijie he chuanbo' 金庸武俠小說在日本的譯介和傳播 [The Translation and Dissemination of Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels in Japan], *Neijiang shifan xueyuan xuebao*, 內江師範學院學報, 11 (2011), 87-89 (p. 88).

<sup>22</sup> Lin Yao 林遙, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shihua* 中國武俠小說史話 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> Liu, James J.Y., *The Chinese Knight-errant*, p. 82.

<sup>24</sup> Lin Yao 林遙, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shihua* 中國武俠小說史話 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Wang, Hailin 王海林, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shilue* 中國武俠小說史略 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Cui Fengyuan 崔奉源, *Zhongguo gudian duanpian xiayi xiaoshuo yanjiu* 中國古典短篇俠義小說研究 [A Study of Short Classical Chinese Martial Arts Novels] (Taipei: Lianjing shiye chuban gongsi, 1986), p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Xu Sinian 徐斯年, *Xia de zongji zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shilun* 俠的蹤跡 中國武俠小說史論 [Traces of the Xia: A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1995), p. 17.

arguments about the origin result from different understandings of the genre, so the concept of fiction and the criteria for martial arts fiction need to be further clarified.

As its name suggests, martial arts fiction is a creatively imagined literary form. Lu Xun, a literary theorist, terms its core feature as “*yishi zhi chuangzao* 意識之創造 (creation of ideas)”, which is especially salient in Tang *chuanqi*.<sup>28</sup> Literary creativity is what differentiates fiction from historical records, as the latter aims to offer a documentary account of the past. It would therefore be useful to first analyse the above origins of martial arts fiction from this aspect. Both *Prince Dan of Yan* and *Records of the Grand Historian* record heroic characters and their chivalric deeds, which did exist in Chinese history. Though they include historical characters, they differ from historical fiction as to the treatment of characters. They try to record what these characters really did in the past rather than add some imaginary elements in order to develop the plot. Therefore, the two works can be read as historical records rather than pieces of fiction. Though *zhiguai* in Six Dynasties manifests the authors’ literary imagination and creativity, it does not deal with the themes such as “*wu*” and “*xia*”, both of which are essential components of martial arts fiction. Thus, works before the Tang Dynasty provided material for the writing of martial arts fiction. These works could be adapted or extended into martial arts fiction in later periods, but they cannot be regarded as martial arts fiction due to a lack of either imaginary elements which are central to fiction or themes that are closely related to martial arts fiction. Only *chuanqi* during the Tang Dynasty has all three basic components of this genre, hence martial arts fiction appears to have originated from the Tang Dynasty. Louis Cha, in the preface of his complete works, opines that martial arts fiction derives from classic Chinese fiction, and *The Curly-bearded Stranger* 虬髯客傳, *Hong Xian* 紅線傳, *Nie Yinniang* 聶隱娘 and *The Kunlun Slave* 崑崙奴 in *chuanqi* literature of the Tang Dynasty can be viewed as the earliest instances of martial arts fiction.<sup>29</sup>

But the martial arts fiction in the Tang Dynasty consisted of short stories, only two or three pages in length. As aforementioned, *xiaoshuo* in Chinese literature can be novels, novellas and short stories, which encompasses a wider range than novels that are usually referred to as book-length stories. The fact that *wuxia xiaoshuo* is translated as “martial arts novels” in English has accidentally narrowed perceptions of the genre. In comparison, “martial arts fiction” seems to be a more appropriate English translation. The language of *chuanqi* has also been investigated. Zhu Lili argues that authors of *chuanqi* literature combined both verse and prose.<sup>30</sup> Chen Jibin holds a similar view and suggests that the language of *chuanqi* is poetic and aesthetically oriented.<sup>31</sup> Such

<sup>28</sup> Lu Xun 魯迅, *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* 中國小說史略 [A Brief History of Chinese Fiction] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chuabanshe, 2006), p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shujian enchou lu* 書劍恩仇錄 [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge] (Beijing: sanlian shudian, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Zhu Lili 朱力力, ‘Lun tang chuanqi yuyan de piansan jiaorong tezheng’ 論唐傳奇語言的駢散交融特徵 [On the Fusion of Parallel and Non-Parallel Structures in the Language of *Chuanqi* in the Tang Dynasty], *Zhejiang shehui kexue* 浙江社會科學, 6 (2018), 149-154 (p. 149).

<sup>31</sup> Chen Jibin 陳際斌, ‘Lun tang chuanqi yuyan de shenmeihua’ 論唐傳奇語言的審美化 [On the Aesthetics of the Language in *Chuanqi* in the Tang Dynasty], *Sanxia daxue xuebao renwen shehui kexueban* 三峽大學學報

language is targeted more at scholarly readers as opposed to general readers, and the same can be applied to martial arts fiction at that time.

### 1.2.2 The Development of Martial Arts Fiction: A Sketch

John Christopher Hamm has examined Cha's novels in the context of Chinese literary history, and explored factors influencing the process of canonization of Cha's novels, revisions and their dissemination in Mainland China. Based on large quantities of primary materials,<sup>32</sup> his monograph is a pioneering and comprehensive study of martial arts novels and Cha's works. Hamm's research also sheds light on the development of martial arts novels by indicating the twofold significance of *chuanqi* in the Tang Dynasty: on the one hand, *chuanqi* marked the emergence of a distinct and self-conscious Chinese fiction. On the other hand, it expanded the materials associated with *xia* and contributed to the subsequent history of martial arts fiction.<sup>33</sup> Hamm discusses the contribution of *chuanqi* to both Chinese fiction in general and martial arts fiction in particular. *Chuanqi*, as Luo Liqun argues, laid the foundations for martial arts fiction and served as a milestone in its development.<sup>34</sup> Luo highly values *chuanqi* in the Tang Dynasty and believes that the martial arts fiction in the following Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) was just an imitation of that in the Tang Dynasty in both content and artistic form.<sup>35</sup> While *chuanqi* was admittedly a crucial form of written literature in the development of martial arts fiction, other forms which were used for story-telling or performance, such as *bianwen* 變文 in the Tang Dynasty and *huaben* 話本 in the Song Dynasty, also played a significant role in shaping martial arts fiction.

According to James Liu, colloquial stories emerged in the Tang Dynasty in the form of recitals related to Buddhist preaching. Tales from Chinese history and legends were then added and recited in the same manner. The texts used for such recitals were called *bianwen* 變文 or "texts of the unusual".<sup>36</sup> Liu also points out that the weakness of *bianwen* lay in its crudity of language, an awkward combination of colloquialisms and literary expressions, and the abundance of clichés.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, though *bianwen* was a kind of popular written literature which served as the basis for chanting and story-telling, its readership was quite limited. During the Song Dynasty, storytelling was prevalent and became a highly specialised profession. Storytellers used a script called *huaben* 話本 for their performances when narrating a story in front of a crowd. In particular, *Wasi* 瓦肆, public places reserved for story-telling and listening, came into existence. The language in *huaben* was similar to the language used in daily life so it was easy for the

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(人文社會科學版), 1 (2012), 54-57 (p. 54).

<sup>32</sup> Denise Gimpel, 'Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 1 (2006), 162-63.

<sup>33</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Luo Liqun 羅立群, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shi* 中國武俠小說史 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 65.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>36</sup> Liu, James J.Y., *The Chinese Knight-errant*, pp.99-100.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.



storytellers to make their performances more accessible. The appearance of *huaben* added momentum to the development of vernacular (*baihua* 白話) novels which contrast with classical novels. Based on his examination of both the quantity and quality of vernacular novels in the Song Dynasty, Song Wei highly rates the artistic achievements of vernacular novels during this period. He argues that vernacular novels in the Song Dynasty can match *chuanqi* in the Tang Dynasty in terms of their literary significance.<sup>38</sup> The vernacular influenced the development of martial arts fiction as well, enabling it to reach a wider audience and accelerating its dissemination and reception. This made martial arts fiction a form of popular literature enjoyed by general readers. Furthermore, compared with that in the Tang Dynasty, the length of martial arts fiction in the Song Dynasty was extended, resulting in book-length works in some cases.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), *Shui Hu Zhuan* 水滸傳 (*The Water Margin*), a representative martial arts novel, was produced. The novel, composed of a number of chapters, is about a gang of robbers in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). The tensions between the official orthodox order and underground bandit society shape the novel's overall plot. Chih-Tsing Hsia mentions that the novel was written in the vernacular and retains a degree of vitality for today's readers.<sup>39</sup> Hsia's opinion shows how the vernacular continued to play a role in the development of martial arts novels in the Ming Dynasty. With regard to the content, *The Water Margin* mainly deals with *xiaoyi* 俠義 (chivalry and righteousness), which is an essential theme for this genre.<sup>40</sup> As Xu Fuchang argues, the novel is more realistic in the description of fight scenes, compared to previous works which were often fantastical and exaggerated.<sup>41</sup> In the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), the most prominent type of martial arts novels was *xiaoyi gongan xiaoshuo* 俠義公案小說 (chivalric court-case fiction), in which *xia* characters help officials to crack a criminal case and bring the culprit to justice. The conflicts between the government and the heroes disappeared, and the chivalric heroes had become affiliated to government officials, as opposed to their prototypes in the earlier period. As Luo Liqun states, this kind of fiction is a combination of martial arts and detective fiction.<sup>42</sup>

Scholars including Luo Liqun, Christopher Hamm and Lin Yao tend to divide the development of martial arts novels in the first half of the twentieth century into three phases.<sup>43</sup> In the first stage (1911-1921), martial arts novels were viewed as a possible

<sup>38</sup> Song Wei 宋巍, *Zhongguo gudian wuxia xiaoshuo shilun* 中國古典武俠小說史論 [A History of Classical Chinese Martial Arts Novels] (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 2011), p. 201.

<sup>39</sup> Chih-Tsing Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2015), p. 71.

<sup>40</sup> Lin Yao 林遙, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shihua* 中國武俠小說史話 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> Xu Fuchang 徐富昌, 'Yingxionghu xiakouhu daokouhu wuxia xiaoshuo shijiaoxia de shuhuzhuan jiedu' 英雄乎?俠客乎?盜寇乎?——武俠小說視角下的《水滸傳》解讀 [Heroes? Knight-errants? Bandits? —An Interpretation of *Shuihu Zhuan* from the Perspective of Martial Arts Novels], *Qinghua daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 清華大學學報(哲學社會科學版), 3 (2017), 60-77 (p. 75)

<sup>42</sup> Luo Liqun 羅立群, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shi* 中國武俠小說史 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 133.

<sup>43</sup> See Hamm (2005), pp. 19-20; Luo (2008), p. 168; Lin (2018), pp. 170-71.

source of national strength when China faced both domestic weakness and foreign invasion. The second stage (1922-1930) was initiated by the writer Xiang Kairan (1890-1957), whose *Jianghu qixia zhuan* 江湖奇俠傳 narrates struggles between rival martial arts schools while his *Jindai xiayi yingxiaong zhuan* 近代俠義英雄傳 tells the story of Huo Yuanjia, a patriotic hero in the late Qing Dynasty. Other representatives include Zhao Huanting who was adept in the presentation of social customs and beautiful nature descriptions, and Gu Mingdao, who was renowned for his emotive descriptions of his characters.<sup>44</sup> In this period martial arts novels were not confined to the model of chivalry and court-cases as in the Qing Dynasty. Both the writing and range of themes increased exponentially. The third stage (1931-1949) was a direct continuation of the second, but it saw an overall decrease in the number of works due to both foreign invasion and domestic turmoil. Martial arts novels in the first half of the twentieth century are the so-called Old School, in contrast with the New School works that emerged in Hong Kong in the 1950s. With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Communist Party regarded martial arts novels as “poisonous weeds” to be eliminated.<sup>45</sup> As a consequence, the writing of martial arts novels ceased in Mainland China for almost 30 years.

The above overview of the development of martial arts fiction in the history of Chinese literature is inevitably a brief summary. Key phrases in its development are mentioned in order to understand the basic trajectory. Dating back to the Tang Dynasty, martial arts fiction has undergone a series of changes over time. The use of classical Chinese was superseded by the use of the vernacular, which has become the dominant language of the genre. The length of martial arts fiction gradually increased to book-length. At the core of this kind of writing lie its distinctive features, which will be discussed below.

### 1.2.3 Distinctive Features of Martial Arts Fiction

Martial arts fiction, as *wuxia xiaoshuo* implies, focuses on *wuxia* (martial-chivalric). The Chinese word *wu* 武 (martial prowess) is relatively straightforward. Heroes in the novels usually have extraordinary martial prowess. They use different kinds of weapons such as darts, daggers, and swords, demonstrating the martial feats of various schools.<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that some martial arts moves are exaggerated by the writers since they do not or even cannot exist in real life. For example, *qing gong* 輕功, literally “light arts”, once learnt, enables its practitioners to cross difficult terrain or high walls quickly as if they could fly. *Nei li* 內力, literally “inner force”, is intangible but crucial if the hero intends to gain outstanding martial skills. Chen Mo suggests that martial arts moves have a close relationship with Daoism, a school of philosophy which dates back

<sup>44</sup> Luo Liqun 羅立群, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shi* 中國武俠小說史 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 133.

<sup>45</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> Huang Yi 黃禕, ‘wuxia xiaoshuo zhi wuqi jiema’ 武俠小說之武器解碼 [Decoding the Weapons in Martial Arts Novels], *Suzhou jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 蘇州教育學院學報, 2 (2018), 47-54 (p. 47).

to the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD).<sup>47</sup> Daoism stresses the importance of following the operating principles of nature, thus offering some insights into the cultivation of martial arts skills. For instance, Chen Jialuo, the hero in *The Book and The Sword*, inspired by the anecdote entitled “Butcher Ding’s Dismembering Bulls” in *Zhuangzi* in the Warring States Period, devised a set of boxing skills and repulsed the enemy.

Compared with *wu*, the term *xia* 俠 (chivalry) has rich connotations entrenched in Chinese history and culture. *Xia* is usually rendered as “knight” or “chivalric” as English equivalents. However, they are two different things. *Xia*, as a key Chinese cultural concept, when translated into English, may pose a challenge to target readers’ understanding. James Liu uses “knight-errant” to designate *xia*, but he also points out that the knight-errant did not resemble the medieval European knights in every way and “knight-errant” was only for readers’ convenience.<sup>48</sup> Adrian Hsia further discusses the differences between *xia* and knights. He points out that Chinese heroes are usually low-born persons who are skilled in martial arts. They are not noble-born knights.<sup>49</sup> Both Liu and Hsia highlight the differences between Chinese *xia* and European knights. Liang Yusheng, a modern martial arts writer, attaches great importance to *xia*. He believes that *xia* is more essential than *wu* to a martial arts novel: “Compared with *wu*, *xia* is indispensable for a novel.”<sup>50</sup> *Xia* thus plays a significant role in the writing and understanding of martial arts novels.

*Xia*, as Adrian Hsia states, originated with people from a low social stratum. Gu Jiegang suggests that *xia* referred to men of acknowledged prowess, the lower class of feudal nobles.<sup>51</sup> Feng Youlan argues that, besides the lower class of nobles, *xia* also included other social strata, such as unemployed refugees, poor farmers or artisans.<sup>52</sup> Feng enlarges the origin of *xia* by incorporating people from other lower ranks in society as well. Both Gu and Feng view *xia* as a group of people in society, who are concrete and tangible. James Liu has a different view. He believes that *xia* is not limited to a specific social group. Rather, it refers to “men of chivalrous temperament”. Liu then exemplifies *xia*’s shared temperament through eight aspects: (1) altruism; (2) justice; (3) individual freedom; (4) personal loyalty; (5) courage; (6) truthfulness and mutual faith; (7) honour and fame; (8) generosity and contempt for wealth.<sup>53</sup> Liu tries to summarise the overall characteristics of *xia*, and hopes they can work as a criterion for judging whether a hero can be called *xia* in a martial arts novel. Arguably, it seems reasonable to interpret *xia* as either righteous heroes or a kind of temperament, as the two views reveal different

<sup>47</sup> Chen Mo 陳墨, *Jinyong xiaoshuo yu zhongguo wenhua* 金庸小說與中國文化 [Jin Yong’s Novels and the Chinese Culture] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 1999), p. 100.

<sup>48</sup> Liu, James J.Y., *The Chinese Knight-errant*, p. xii.

<sup>49</sup> Adrian Hsia, ‘Review of Yong Jin 1993’, *Contact*, 10 (1996), 36-38 (p. 36).

<sup>50</sup> Song, Wei 宋巍, *Zhong guo gu dian wu xia xiao shuo shi lun* 中國古典武俠小說史論 [A History of Classical Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 85.

<sup>51</sup> Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, *Ren jian shan he: Gu Jiegang sui bi* 人間山河: 顧頡剛隨筆 [Rivers and Mountains in the World: Gu Jiegang’s Essays] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2009), p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> Feng Youlan 馮友蘭, *Zhong guo zhe xue shi bu* 中國哲學史補 [Complements to the History of Chinese Philosophy] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), p. 58.

<sup>53</sup> Liu, James J.Y., *The Chinese Knight-errant*, pp. 4-6.

aspects of this term. In general, *xia* refers to those of a relatively low social status who possess admirable virtues. *Xia* is a value-laden term in martial arts fiction, and *wu* and *xia* are usually integrated in the portrayed heroes.

Han Yunbo stresses that Confucianism, Mohism and Taoism played an essential role in the formation of Chinese *xia* culture, and they can be regarded as *xia*'s "cultural genes".<sup>54</sup> James Liu, after comparing *xia* with the three schools, concludes that *xia* has connections with these schools of thinkers, but no actual affiliation with any.<sup>55</sup> Chinese *xia* did not need to be loyal to the existing regime and ruler and had no obligations to religion or to the emperor. Peng Jianhua's study shows that a medieval knight, on the other hand, was greatly influenced by Christianity: he had to be a pious Christian to protect the interests of the church and safeguard the feudal system of medieval Europe.<sup>56</sup> It could be argued that *xia* is translated as "knight" because the two terms indicate some overlapping good personal qualities: both of them were meant to uphold justice, help the weak and poor, and keep promises. They are both righteous and loyal, and uphold the underlying structures of values respectively.

### 1.3 New School Martial Arts Novels

On 17 January 1954, a match between two rival *Kung Fu* masters took place in Macau. Luo Fu, editor of the Hong Kong daily newspaper *Xin wanbao*, decided to serialise a selection of martial arts novels, hoping to capitalise on the excitement that the match had generated. Liang Yusheng, at Luo's invitation, published his serialised novel *Longhu dou jinghua* 龍虎鬥京華 (*Dragon and Tiger Compete in the Capital*). Liang's novel attracted a large number of readers, increased the newspaper's sales and stimulated others to write martial arts novels as well. The following year, Louis Cha, under the pen name of Jin Yong, published his serialised martial arts novel *Shujian Enchou Lu* 書劍恩仇錄 (*Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge*) in the same newspaper and also achieved success. Cha's popularity soon rivalled and surpassed that of Liang. Cha later established his own newspaper *Mingbao* in 1959 where he published his own novels. With two prominent figures, the New School martial arts novels quickly acquired a wide readership in Hong Kong, Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries. Their readership then extended to Taiwan and they were finally available to readers from Mainland China in the 1980s.

As Louis Cha is a representative figure of the New School, critics tend to pay more attention to his differences from the novelists of the Old School. Zhao Xifang states

<sup>54</sup> Han Yunbo 韓雲波, *Zhongguo xiawenhua jidian yu chengchuan* 中國俠文化: 積澱與承傳 [Chinese *Xia* Culture: Accumulation and Inheritance] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2004), p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> Peng Jianhua 彭建華, 'Lun ouzhou zhongshiji de qishi zhidu yu qishi jingshen' 論歐洲中世紀的騎士制度與騎士精神 [On Chivalry System and Spirit in Medieval Europe], *Xuzhou gongcheng xueyuan xuebao shehui kexueban* 徐州工程學院學報(社會科學版), 4 (2020), 57-63 (p. 60).

that these differences mainly lie in Cha's broad-minded attitudes towards ethnic groups, gratitude and revenge, and human nature.<sup>57</sup> The relationship between the Old School and the New School is of vital importance to understanding Cha's novels and there have been some studies. Chen Pingyuan claims that the distinction between New and Old martial arts novels results primarily from geographic and political factors rather than from the requirements of artistic comprehension.<sup>58</sup> But Chen does not provide an explanation and seems mainly to take into account extra-literary factors for the two schools. Lin Baochun disagrees with Chen, and maintains that the differences between the two schools lie not only in the time and place of writing but also in themes, characters, plots and pace.<sup>59</sup>

Though differences exist between the two schools, their connections are undeniable. Liang Yusheng, another representative figure of the New School, admits that the New School is based on and developed from the Old, and his works were mostly influenced by works from the Old School writers, especially Bai Yu's novels.<sup>60</sup> Han Yunbo argues that obviously Cha learnt from his predecessors and developed their writing techniques in his novels.<sup>61</sup>

### 1.3.1 Reasons for the Prosperity of the New School in Hong Kong

Martial arts novels were banned in mainland China in the 1950s mainly due to political reasons. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the communist government had labelled martial arts novels as corrupt, feudal and backward, which ran counter to the governing view that literature should imitate social reality and be a catalyst for individuals and society.<sup>62</sup> The government then enacted some regulations to eliminate this kind of literature. Mao Dun, a prominent leader in literary circles, insisted that fiction should be a tool for revolution, while martial arts novels were literary works with "purely feudal ideology" and their readership was mainly from the petty bourgeoisie.<sup>63</sup> Mao's view shows that martial arts novels were considered to be incompatible with the communist party's political needs to consolidate power. As a result, the writing and publication of martial arts novels were banned nationwide. Some

<sup>57</sup> Zhao Xifang 趙稀方, 'Shichang xiaofei yu wenhua tisheng lun xianggang xinpai wuxia xiaoshuo' 市場消費與文化提升——論香港新派武俠小說 [Market Consumption and Cultural Enhancement: An Analysis of New School Martial Arts Novels in Hong Kong], *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yanjiushengyuan xuebao* 中國社會科學院研究生院學報, 5 (2000), 53-59 (p. 53).

<sup>58</sup> Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Qianqu wenren xiaoke meng* 千古文人俠客夢 [The Knight-errant Dream of the Literati through the Ages: A Study of the Typology of Martial Arts Novels], p. 61.

<sup>59</sup> Lin, Baochun 林保淳, 'Wu xia xiao shuo de jiu pai yu xin pai', 武俠小說的舊派與新派, *Guandong xuekan* 關東學刊, 3 (2019), 98-123 (pp.113-16).

<sup>60</sup> Liang Yusheng 梁羽生, *Bihua liuzhao* 筆花六照 [Essays in Six Volumes] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008), p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Han Yunbo 韓雲波, 'Cong qianjinyong kan jinyong xiaoshuo de lishi diwei' 從“前金庸”看金庸小說的歷史地位 [On the Historical Position of Jin Yong's Novels by Examining the Pre-Jin Yong Period], *Zhejiang xuekan* 浙江學刊, 2 (2017), 76-87 (p. 87).

<sup>62</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, p. 22.

<sup>63</sup> Mao Dun 茅盾, 'Fengjian de xiaoshimin wenyi' 封建的小市民文藝 [Feudal Petty-bourgeois Literature], *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌, 3 (1933), 17-18 (p. 17)

mainland martial writers, in fear of political persecution, started to write so-called revolutionary works. For example, Bai Yu's *lulin haoxia zhuan* 綠林豪俠傳 (*Chivalric Knights in the Outlaw Forest*) published in the 1950s became a work about the uprising of poor Chinese farmers and praised the regime of the communist party. The novel focused on the class struggles between capitalism and socialism. Huanzhulouzh, an Old School master, changed his *Youxia guojie* 遊俠郭解 (*Wandering Knight Guo Jie*) into a serious historical novel. Under formidable pressure from the party's political ideology, the writing and publication of martial arts novels ceased, and copies of such works disappeared from bookstores in mainland cities. In contrast, Hong Kong was free from such political turmoil. Song Weijie explains that Hong Kong, as an "enclave" for martial arts novels, enjoyed more cultural space and freedom of writing in Chinese.<sup>64</sup> Martial arts writers in Hong Kong therefore had the freedom to write what they wanted without any political consequences.

The New School's prevalence in Hong Kong also resulted from the development of a commodity economy, the overriding principle of which was to gain profit. Novels were first serialised in daily newspapers and their success in turn promoted sales. Newspapers are regarded as "the birthplace of New School martial arts novels".<sup>65</sup> The readers of newspapers are from all walks of life and general readers account for a large portion. Martial arts novels serialised in daily newspapers are in accessible language for general readers and they are lively and interesting in content. As mentioned above, *Longhu dou Jinghua*, the first martial arts novel by Liang Yusheng from the New School was serialised in newspapers, and all of Cha's novels were first serialised in newspapers and later published as books. As Huang Xiaoyan states, in the 1950s Hong Kong was experiencing economic prosperity and writing became highly commercialised, so most writers tried to cater to readers' needs and gaining profits was important for writers.<sup>66</sup> Thus, from the outset, New School novels were published with economic implications. Compared with books, newspapers were generally more affordable. A picture entitled "The Happiest Time of the Day" was printed in the Hong Kong newspaper *Xin Wanbao*, on 5 October 1954 and showed a father and his young son reading a newspaper on a bed while his wife was cooking in their confined home.<sup>67</sup> This picture reflects the daily life of citizens in post-war Hong Kong and implies that newspapers were a vital means for them to acquire information. Through newspapers, the New School martial arts novels reached a wider audience and circulated in Hong Kong.

Besides being more accessible to readers, the New School novels serialised in daily

<sup>64</sup> Song Weijie 宋偉傑, *Cong yule xingwei dao wutuobang chongdong jinyong xiaoshuo zai jiedu* 從娛樂行為到烏托邦衝動 金庸小說再解讀 [From Entertainment Activity to Utopian Impulse: Reinterpreting Jin Yong's Novels] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1999), p. 31.

<sup>65</sup> Pan Dongke 潘冬珂 and Han Aiping 韓愛平, 'Baoshi xinpia wuxia xiaoshuo dansheng de yaolan' 報紙: 新派武俠小說誕生的搖籃 [Newspaper: The Birthplace of the New School of Martial Arts Novels], *Jiaozuo daxue xuebao* 焦作大學學報, 1 (2010), 60-62 (p. 60).

<sup>66</sup> Huang Xiaoyan 黃曉燕, 'Jinyong xiaoshuo jingdianhua yanjiu' 金庸小說經典化研究 [A Study on the Canonization of Jin Yong's Novels] (unpublished doctoral thesis, Zhejiang University, 2021), p. 92.

<sup>67</sup> This picture can also be found in Hamm's article "The Marshes of Mount Liang Beyond the Sea: Jin Yong's Early Martial Arts Fiction and Postwar Hong Kong", p. 93.

newspapers offered entertainment. The longstanding function of literature was challenged with the development of society and economy. For a quite long time, literary critics believed that literature served as a tool to improve or educate people, which is *wenyi zai dao* 文以載道 (literature is used to illustrate the Way).<sup>68</sup> Influenced by this view, critics seldom recognised literature as a form of entertainment. The development of commodity economics in Hong Kong, however, changed this. Serialised martial arts novels as a kind of popular literature inevitably entertained readers. Researchers like Chen Pingyuan and Ye Hongsheng have shown that one salient shortcoming of the New School novels lies in the fragmentation of narration caused by the early serialisation in newspapers.<sup>69</sup> They still make their judgements based on the traditional views about literature and approach the New School martial arts novels from the perspective of educated literati. Serialised martial arts novels were targeted at a different kind of readership, and the same applies to Cha's novels. Cha declares that his novels never endeavoured to moralise or educate his readers. Instead, Cha emphasises the popularity and entertainment of martial arts novels.<sup>70</sup>

### 1.3.2 Literary Values of New School Martial Arts Novels

The New School martial arts novels drew on writing techniques from abroad extensively. Most writers from the New School had access to literary works outside China or received their education abroad. Their experiences exposed them to foreign literary styles such as detective stories and first-person narrative stream-of-consciousness fiction, and they adopted new writing techniques in their works. For example, the Six Heroes in *Legends of the Condor Heroes* are cruelly killed on Peach Blossom Island and it appears that the Apothecary Huang is the murderer. Lotus Huang, through analysis and deduction, explains what happened on the Island and finds the real culprit eventually. This writing technique reminds us of detective fiction, such as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in particular. In *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, a vendetta is recounted by different people from different perspectives. One person's story may be repeated, continued, supplemented or even negated by another's. Readers, through connecting relevant clues, are able to construct the story and then test their hypothesis during the reading process. This kind of narration, which frequently reminded the audience of the techniques employed in the film *Rashomon* directed by Akira Kurosawa,<sup>71</sup> was seldom found in previous martial arts novels where stories were usually told by an omniscient narrator.

<sup>68</sup> Lü Meisheng 呂美生, 'Hanyu wenyizaidao xiantan' 韓愈“文以載道”新探 [A New Investigation of “Literature Serves to Convey the Way” Proposed by Han Yu], *Anhui daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 安徽大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), 1 (1985), 75-81(p.75).

<sup>69</sup> Song Weijie 宋偉傑, *Cong yule xingwei dao wutuobang chongdong jinyong xiaoshuo zai jiedu* 從娛樂行為到烏托邦衝動 金庸小說再解讀 [From Entertainment Activity to Utopian Impulse: Reinterpreting Jin Yong's Novels], p. 34.

<sup>70</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shujian enchou lu* 書劍恩仇錄 [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge], p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, p. 81.

Moreover, stream-of-consciousness in fiction is used to reveal characters' inner world. For instance, in Chapter Ten of *Shendiao xialü* 神雕俠侶 (*The Giant Eagle and Its Companion*), there is a long paragraph which describes the character Yang Guo's psychological activities. It shows that his attitude towards the martial arts master Count Seven Hong gradually changed from surprise to admiration. In Chapter Forty-four of *Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記 (*The Deer and the Cauldron*), Trinket bursts into tears when he finds his martial arts teacher Chen dead. There follows a description of Trinket's psychology to reflect that he had treated Chen as his own father. Multiple modern writing techniques added new forms of expression and showed influences from foreign literature, thus marking a transition in the history of martial arts novels.

The New School's portrayal of characters was also significant. Characters rather than the plot received more attention. Song Qi, drawing a comparison between the Old School and the New School, finds that the structures of martial arts novels have evolved from "event-centred" to "character-centred".<sup>72</sup> Louis Cha insists that novels should be about different characters and they should be a form through which to express human feelings.<sup>73</sup> When portraying characters, the New School writers try to show the depth, complexity and changes of their personalities. Multiple sides of humanity are presented, be they protagonists or antagonists. Zhang Wuji in *Yitian tulong ji* 倚天屠龍記 (*The Heaven Sword and the Dragon Sabre*), on the one hand, is filial, broad-minded and courageous; on the other hand, he is irresolute. He never makes it clear which girl is his true love, thus causing all involved in the relationship to suffer. His indecision does great harm to his career too. Shi Zhixuan in Huang Yi's novel *Datang shuanglong zhuan* 大唐雙龍傳 (*Double Dragons in the Great Tang Dynasty*) is portrayed as a cruel devil, but he is a caring father throughout the course of the plot. This kind of description makes the images of these characters more real, vivid and impressive, transcending the dichotomy of good and bad in previous martial arts novels.

## 1.4 Conclusion

This chapter serves as a point of departure for the thesis. Through an overview of related critical literature, it shows that martial arts fiction originated from the Tang Dynasty and has been developing over time. This fiction has distinctive features from other kinds of fiction in terms of *wu* and *xia*, and the latter is of vital importance for this literary genre. The New School novels from Hong Kong in the 1950s, of which Cha's works are representative, are prominent in the history of martial arts novels. Multiple fresh writing techniques and character portrayals contribute significantly to both Cha's works

<sup>72</sup> Song Qi 宋琦, 'Wuxia xiaoshuo cong mingguo jiupai dao gangtai xinpai xushi moshi de bianqian' 武俠小說從“民國舊派”到“港臺新派”敘事模式的變遷 [The Changes of Narrative Models in Martial Arts Novels from “Old School in the Republican Period” to “New School of Hong Kong and Taiwan”] (unpublished doctoral thesis, Shandong University, 2010), p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shendiao yingxiongzhuan* 射雕英雄傳 [Legend of Eagle Shooting Heroes] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2013), p. 1.



and modern martial arts novels. This chapter has offered an examination of the context in which Cha's novels emerged, how Cha came to be representative of the New School and how those works have been disseminated across China.

## Chapter Two Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing research on the English translation of Louis Cha's martial arts novels both inside and outside China. Relevant studies will be categorised and analysed in terms of their research topics. Special attention will be given to the milestone events that have contributed significantly to deepening the research, such as the Lingnan Symposium and the Colorado Conference. In order to grasp the pattern that has been developing in these studies, this literature review will follow a chronological order. The differences between the studies inside and outside China will be highlighted, thus enabling a comparative study, illuminating the different foci and presenting the diversity of the research. Based on the critical evaluation, this chapter attempts to point out the gaps in the current scholarship. Meanwhile, it will state how present studies inform the research methods in the thesis and what contributions this thesis will make to the field.

### 2.1 Studies on the English Translation of Cha's Novels

#### Inside China

Studies of translation strategies and methods are crucial to the development of Translation Studies. The following section will first look at the Lingnan Symposium in the 1990s, which played a pioneering role in drawing scholarly attention to the translations. It will then examine the booming studies on translation strategies and translation methods in the twenty-first century, as well as the key works on rewriting. Finally, it will discuss representative studies on the English translations in recent years which adopt theories from adjacent disciplines such as Literary Studies, Sociology and Communication Studies.

#### 2.1.1 The Lingnan Symposium

The research into the translation strategies and methods of Cha's novels can be traced back to 1996 the year when the symposium on martial arts fiction in English translation was held at Lingnan College, now Hong Kong Lingnan University. As Joseph S. M. Lau notes, the Lingnan Symposium, rather than tackling the issue of the legitimacy of martial arts novels as "serious literature", sought to answer "how much of a good read can be expected of a martial arts novel in an English reincarnation".<sup>1</sup> Lau's remarks indicate that the symposium focussed on the English translations of martial arts novels and their reception for the first time. Though several conferences had been held before

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph S. M. Lau, 'Preface', in *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation*, ed. by Ching-chih Liu (Hong Kong: Centre for Literature and Translation, 1997), pp. III-IV (p. III).

this symposium, they were primarily concerned with Louis Cha, his works or the New School martial arts novels and hardly mentioned the English translations of Cha's works.<sup>2</sup>

The conference papers were collected in *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation* which was published in 1997.<sup>3</sup> Though the collection appears to focus on the reception of martial arts novels, most essays discuss translation strategies or specific translation methods for Cha's works. Sharon Lai's paper is representative of the studies on translation strategies. Through the analysis of translation examples in *The Priceless Secret*, *Eagles and Heroes* and *Book and Sword*, Lai argues that a domesticating strategy and a foreignizing strategy should be combined to translate Louis Cha's novels.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, her domesticating strategy includes simplification, omission, amplification and borrowing, while her foreignizing strategy is represented by preserving the special lexicon of martial arts fiction.<sup>5</sup> Lai elaborated on these strategies later and maintained that these "innovative" strategies are likely to "create what will be a new genre in English".<sup>6</sup> It is noteworthy that Lai and Minford's English translation of the first chapter of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* entitled "Eagles and Heroes" was also incorporated into the collection.

These discussions about translation strategy show initial scholarly interest in martial arts novels, especially Cha's works. This symposium played a significant role in highlighting the translation of martial arts novels as a research area in the 1990s and stimulating discussions from different perspectives. However, the research scope now seems limited: most contributions focus on Minford's *The Deer and The Cauldron*, and neglect other translations of Cha's works.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, the English translation of *Xueshan Feihu*, was published in 1993, before the symposium was convened. Unfortunately, none of the articles in the collection has dealt with this essential work. It thus sounds a little ambitious to attach the title "martial arts fiction in English translation" to the compilation, as it merely

<sup>2</sup> In "The 3rd National Seminar on Taiwan, Hong Kong and Overseas Chinese Literature" held at Shenzhen University in 1986, Louis Cha and the New School martial arts novels were discussed in Mainland China for the first time. In "The Seminar on Martial Arts Novels" held at The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1987, Louis Cha and his works were further studied and attracted more attention. "The 1st Academic Seminar on Jin Yong" held in Haining, Zhejiang Province in 1996 was again devoted to the research on Cha and his works with an aim to establish the field named "Jin Yong Studies".

<sup>3</sup> *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation*, ed. by Liu Ching-chih (Hong Kong: Centre for Literature and Translation, 1997)

<sup>4</sup> In her essay, Lai states that the two translation strategies were proposed by Friedrich Schleiermacher. As a matter of fact, Schleiermacher in his 1813 essay considers there are only two paths for a true translator: "Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him, or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him." Schleiermacher here implies the two different and incompatible patterns for a translator. It is Laurence Venuti who explicitly named the two strategies "foreignization" and "domestication" in 1995, and provoked considerable discussions thereafter.

<sup>5</sup> Sharon Lai, 'Domesticating and Foreignizing: Strategies for Translating the Fiction of Louis Cha', in *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation*, ed. by Ching-chih Liu (Hong Kong: Centre for Literature and Translation, 1997), pp. 65-82 (p. 66).

<sup>6</sup> Lai Tzu-yun, *Translating Chinese Martial Arts Fiction: With Reference to the Novels of Jin Yong* (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 1998), p.14.

<sup>7</sup> Among all the ten research articles incorporated in the collection, seven discuss Minford's translation of the first two chapters of *Lu Ding Ji*.

investigates the translation of one novel. Furthermore, most studies are conducted based on comparative readings of the source and the target texts, so the theoretical framework and research methods are confined as well. As Diao Hong puts it, this collection lacks in-depth research concerning readers' responses and translation dissemination.<sup>8</sup> The phenomenon could be attributed to the scarcity of the English translations available and the prevailing text-oriented approach at that time which emphasised the transfer of linguistic elements of the source text. Therefore, to deepen the research on the English translation of Cha's novels, it is necessary to include more available translations thus enriching the case studies and unveiling the connections between different translations. In addition, theories especially those from Translation Studies should be employed, thus offering insights into various aspects concerning the translations.

### 2.1.2 Research on Translation Strategies in the 21st Century

With more English translations of Cha's novels published, the below-listed studies concerning translation strategies have been proliferating since the beginning of the twentieth century. Chen Gang's research analyses the English translations of the chapter titles, proper nouns and cultural backgrounds in *The Deer and The Cauldron* and shows that domesticating translation will continue to persist and serve as the overall translation strategy.<sup>9</sup> Here Chen's conclusion is different from Lai's, as the latter prefers a combination of the two strategies. Compared with Lai, Chen examines a wider range of examples. In addition, Chen explores the reasons for adopting domestication, including the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication and the acceptability of the target readership.<sup>10</sup> Arguably, Chen has considered more factors about the dissemination of the translation.

Wang Shaoxiang and Su Yilin's study illustrates that in order to ensure the storytelling in *The Book and The Sword*, Graham Earnshaw used the strategies of combining translation with editing by restructuring chapters. To enhance the readability of the translation, Earnshaw provided various lists which serve as annotations and mainly adopted free translation.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, their study investigates the reasons from the perspective of genre. That is, martial arts novels are a popular literary genre which combines both entertainment and storytelling.

Moving away from the dichotomy of domestication and foreignization, Lu Jingjing's

<sup>8</sup> Diao Hong, *Translating and Literary Agenting: Anna Holmwood's Legends of the Condor Heroes* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Lingnan University, 2021), p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> Chen Gang 陳剛, 'Guihua fanyi yu wenhua rentong ludingji yingyi yangban yanjiu' 歸化翻譯與文化認同——《鹿鼎記》英譯樣本研究 [Domestication in Translation and Cultural Identity: A Study of the Samples Selected from the English Translation of *Lu Ding Ji*], *Waiyu yu waiyu jiaoxue* 外語與外語教學, 12 (2006), 43-47 (p. 43).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Wang Shaoxiang 王紹祥 and Su Yilin 蘇毅琳, 'Wuxia xiaoshuo fanyi zhongde gushixing yu keduxing yi shujian enchou luyingyiben weili' 武俠小說翻譯中的故事性與可讀性——以《書劍恩仇錄》英譯本為例 [Narrativity and Readability in the Translation of Martial Arts Novels: A Case Study of the English Translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu*], *Zhengzhou hangkong gongye guanli xueyuan xuebao shehui kexue ban* 鄭州航空工業管理學院學報 (社會科學版), 1 (2010), 97-100 (p. 97).

study adopts the notion of explicitation to shed light on the translation strategy used in *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*. Explicitation means the interpretation of the source text performed by the translator might lead to a more lengthy target text.<sup>12</sup> Lu maintains that explicitation is reflected in translating Chinese martial arts spirit, explaining the historical and cultural background information and clarifying the novel's plot.<sup>13</sup> Explicitation enables the translation of martial arts novels to move beyond domestication and foreignization. However, it is worth noting that explicitation does work when translating some aspects with rich cultural elements and enhances the target readers' comprehensibility, but it cannot serve as a one-size-fits-all strategy especially when necessary omissions, simplifications or rewritings are adopted.

Lin Tianying's research, on the other hand, refers to compensation when examining the translation strategies adopted in *A Hero Born*. Compensation means "the techniques of making up for the loss of important ST features through replicating ST effects approximately in the TT by means other than those used in the ST".<sup>14</sup> Lin examines four categories of compensation: compensation in kind, compensation in place, compensation by merging and compensation by splitting.<sup>15</sup> Arguably, compensation contributes to preserving the "Chineseness" of martial arts novels, highlighting the status of martial arts novels as a unique genre and ensuring the fluency of narrative in translation.<sup>16</sup> The "Chineseness", in Mok's words, is the cultural elements that give martial arts novels a peculiar flavour and taste, and it can be found in both the Chinese language itself and the Chinese culture contained in the martial arts novels.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, compensation, similar to explicitation, adds necessary information to the target text in order to facilitate the target readers' comprehension. Both explicitation and compensation can result in a lengthy target text. Thus, it seems unnecessary to label the same strategy with different names.

The translation strategy of certain aspects of Cha's novels, the fighting scenes in particular, has been questioned as well. As Yan Jiayan puts it, being an integral part of Cha's novels, the vivid description of martial arts fighting, contributes significantly to the success of Cha's novels. The fighting scenes in his novels contain rich cultural connotations and they are closely connected with the depiction of characters.<sup>18</sup> Since

<sup>12</sup> Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 'Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation' in *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication: Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies*, ed. by Julian House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1986), pp.17-36 (p. 19).

<sup>13</sup> Lu jingjing 盧晶晶, 'Xueshan feihu yingyi mingxihua celue jianlu wuxia xiaoshuo fnayi zhidao' 《雪山飛狐》英譯明晰化策略——兼論武俠小說翻譯之道 [Explicitation in the English Translation of *Xueshan Feihu*: The Way to Translate Martial Arts Novels], *Xi'an waiguoyu daxue xuebao* 西安外國語大學學報, 1 (2014), 126-29 (p. 126).

<sup>14</sup> Sandor Harvey and Ian Higgins, *Thinking Translation: A Course in Translation Method: French-English* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 35

<sup>15</sup> Lin Tianying 林天穎, 'Qianxi wuxia xiaoshuo de fanyi buchang celue' 淺析武俠小說的翻譯補償策略 [A Study of the Compensation Strategy of Translating Martial Arts Novels] (Unpublished master's thesis, Zhejiang University, 2020), p. 29.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. pp. 59-61.

<sup>17</sup> Olivia Mok, 'Strategies of Translating Martial Arts Fiction', *Babel*, 1 (2001), 1-9 (p. 3).

<sup>18</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jinyong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), pp. 27-32

martial arts moves are of essential importance to fighting scenes, the two are often studied inseparably. Ding Zhenjie's investigation of martial arts moves in *The Deer and The Cauldron* reveals that foreignization is adopted when the moves scarcely appear and are of little importance to the novel, while domestication is employed when the moves frequently appear and are closely connected with the development of the novel's plot and the description of characters.<sup>19</sup>

Also concentrating on the translation strategy of martial arts moves, Gu Changshuai and Tan Xiaocui's study finds that in *A Hero Born*, Anna Holmwood mainly adopts domestication to translate martial arts moves, thus ensuring the fluency of her translation. Holmwood uses foreignization at times in order to convey the rich Chinese cultural connotations.<sup>20</sup> It can be observed that when translating fighting scenes, domestication is mainly adopted to facilitate the target readers' understanding, while foreignization can help impart the foreign flavour to the target readers and raise their reading interests. Rather than favour one strategy and oppose the other, nowadays researchers tend to hold a balanced view that the two strategies should be combined in translating martial arts moves.

The above studies on translation strategies of martial arts novels deal with either one of Cha's novels or some aspects of his works. The reasons for using different strategies are explored mainly from the perspectives of the target readers, such as readability, comprehensibility and the fluency of narrative. Hence, it leaves much space to explore the reasons for adopting different strategies from a broad socio-cultural perspective.

### 2.1.3 Research on Translation Methods in the 21st Century

As more English translations of Cha's novels become available, studies on translation methods have increased and the scope has been enlarged considerably. The translation of swear words in *Lu Ding Ji* has been discussed. According to Wu Yuguang's research, Minford mainly adopted four methods to translate swear words: literal translation, free translation, the combination of the two and omission so as to achieve the "pragmatic equivalence" in Leo Hickey's words.<sup>21</sup> Wu's study draws on linguistics and attempts to explain Minford's translation method from a new angle. Wu Congming's study, on the other hand, examines the translation of swear words in terms of image presentation, emotional connotations, characters' personalities and literary style.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ding Zhenjie 丁楨傑, 'Ludingji yingyiben zhong wugong zhaoshi fanyi celue de xuanze' 《鹿鼎記》英譯本中武功招式翻譯策略的選擇 [The Choice of Strategies for Translating Martial Arts Moves in the English Translation of *Lu Ding Ji*], *Changjiang daxue xuebao shehui kexue ban* 長江大學學報 (社會科學版), 5 (2012), 120-21 (p. 120).

<sup>20</sup> Gu Changshuai 谷長帥 and Tan Xiaocui 譚小翠, 'Lun shediao yingxiong zhuan yingyiben wugong zhaoshi de fanyi celu' 論《射雕英雄傳》英譯本武功招式的翻譯策略 [On the Translation Strategy of Martial Arts Moves in the English Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*], *Mingzuo xinshang* 名作欣賞, 11 (2020), 19-21 (p. 19).

<sup>21</sup> Wu Yuguang 吳玉光, 'Cong yuyong gongneng shijiao kan ludingji de cuyu fanyi' 從語用功能視角看《鹿鼎記》的粗語翻譯 [The Translation of Vulgar Languages in *Lu Ding Ji*: A Pragmatic Functional Perspective], *Hunan keji xueyuan xuebao* 湖南科技學院學報, 11 (2016), 165-68 (p. 168).

<sup>22</sup> Wu Congming 吳叢明, 'Ludingji zhong cusuyu de keyixing xiandu' 《鹿鼎記》中粗俗語的可譯性限度 [The

Some studies have been conducted to examine the translation methods of fighting scenes in different novels following Peter Newmark's ideas. Drawing on semantic translation and communicative translation, Zhang Xuefei's study shows that semantic translation can preserve the cultural images in martial arts moves and prompt the target readers to appreciate the Chinese culture, while communicative translation enables the translation to influence the readers greatly, thus achieving the communication goal.<sup>23</sup> In a similar vein, Cheng Gong discusses the translation of martial arts moves in *A Hero Born* and his findings indicate that both translation methods are equally important and they form a continuum in practice.<sup>24</sup> It seems that a combination of the two translation methods is suggested to provide a framework for the translation of fighting scenes. In recent years, there has emerged a considerable body of studies that focus on more specific issues regarding the fighting scenes, such as the translation of the action verbs.<sup>25</sup> How the translation of martial arts moves affects the dissemination of Cha's novels deserves further attention.

In addition to swear words and fight scenes, translation methods regarding the characters' images especially women have been researched as well. Portrayals of various characters presented in Cha's novels are attracting research interest. Zeng Yue's study focuses on the depiction of the characters in translation and suggests that the translator's methods are greatly influenced by cultural contexts including history, customs and religious beliefs.<sup>26</sup> Zeng's study involves two translations, namely *The Book and The Sword* and *The Deer and The Cauldron*, and indicates the connections between the two translations. Moreover, it moves beyond the textual analysis and explores the translation methods from the broader social and cultural contexts. It is acknowledged that numerous female characters present in Cha's novels reflect his expectations of ideal women and his endeavour to construct a "gender utopia". Wang Weiyan's study shows how Cha transformed conventional views about gender which helped his works win a great number of readers.<sup>27</sup> Lu Jingjing's research compares

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Translatability of Vulgar Languages in *Lu Ding Ji*], *Liaoning gongcheng jishu daxue xuebao shehui kexueban* 遼寧工程技術大學學報 (社會科學版), 2 (2011), 175-78 (p. 175).

<sup>23</sup> Zhang Xuefei 張雪飛, 'Cong yuyi fanyi he jiaoji fanyi shijiao kan wushuzhaoshi he wuda changmian fanyi yi ludingji yingyiben weili' 從語義翻譯和交際翻譯視角看武術招式和武打場面翻譯——以《鹿鼎記》英譯本為例 [Translating Martial Arts Moves and Fight Scenes from the Perspectives of Semantic and Communicative Translation: A Case Study of *The Deer and The Cauldron*], *Haiwai yingyu* 海外英語, 13 (2019), 180-81 (p. 180).

<sup>24</sup> Cheng Gong 程功, 'Lun niu make fanyi lilun shijiaoxia shediao yingxioangzhuan wugong zhaoshi de yanjiu' 論紐馬克翻譯理論視角下《射雕英雄傳》武功招式的研究 [A Study of the Martial Arts Moves in *Legends of the Condor Heroes* from the Perspective of Newmark's Translation Theory], *Xiju zhijia* 戲劇之家, 5 (2019), 223-24 (p. 223).

<sup>25</sup> Li Huahua (2020) studied the translation of action verbs from the perspective of embodied cognition and illustrated how the embodied effects in the translation matched those in the source text. Zhu Ying (2022), by adopting a corpus approach, explored the collocations of action verbs in Cha's novels and their English translations, then further discussed the possible reasons.

<sup>26</sup> Zeng Yue 曾悅, 'Jin Yong xiaoshuo renwu jainghu chuohao de wenhua yixiang yingyi yanjiu' 金庸小說人物江湖綽號的文化意象英譯研究 [A Study on the English Translation of Cultural Imagery of Jianghu Nicknames in Jin Yong's Novels] (Unpublished master's thesis, Fujian Normal University, 2014), p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Wang Weiyan 王維燕, 'Lun jinyong xiaoshuo zhong nüxing xingxiang moshi de chengyin' 論金庸小說中女性形象模式的成因 [On the Shaping Causes of Female Character Patterns in Jin Yong's Novels], *Zhonghua nüzi xueyuan xuebao* 中華女子學院學報, 1 (2005), 62-66 (p. 62).

different representations of women in *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, *The Deer and The Cauldron* and *The Book and The Sword* and explores why translators adopted different methods. In Lu's view, Mok's emphasis on female images and her effort to represent them in translation can be largely attributed to her identity as a Chinese, female translator.<sup>28</sup> Lu suggests a subfield of Translation Studies: "Translator Studies", which explores the agents involved in the translation, such as "their activities or attitudes, their interaction with their social and technical environment, or their history and influence".<sup>29</sup>

Studies on translation methods cover a wider range of topics and involve more translations of Cha's novels. As translation strategies and translation methods are in a whole-and-part relationship and they are integrated in translation practice, there are some similar and overlapping topics. It merits attention that some discussions about translation methods not only take textual factors into account, but also explore the socio-cultural contexts of the translators.

## 2.1.4 Translation as Rewriting

A comparative reading of Cha's novels and their English translations reveals that omissions, restructuring and added annotations frequently appear in translation. The translators thus "rewrite" the source text to some extent. Rewriting theory proposed by André Lefevere is employed to explain these changes that occur in translation. Indeed, rewriting theory has been employed to study the four available translations in book form. Mok claims that her translation strategy is "extensive rewriting into the target language". Her translation involves "much stylistic refinement" and "a major restructuring of the different components of a sentence".<sup>30</sup> In terms of *The Deer and The Cauldron*, Zhang Jingyi argues that Minford rewrites information about Buddhism and martial arts moves through summary and omission, resulting in weaknesses in his translation.<sup>31</sup> Focussing on *The Book and The Sword*, Tao Fangfang identifies the main aspects where rewritings can be found, including chapter titles, fight scenes and nicknames, and points out that Earnshaw made use of omission, simplification, compilation and paraphrase to rewrite the source text.<sup>32</sup> With regard to *A Hero Born*, Liu Hehua examines Holmwood's various forms of rewriting, which include the different depictions of the characters, the changes in the sentence structures and the

<sup>28</sup> Lu Jingjing 盧晶晶, 'Jin Yong xiaoshuo nüxing xiangxiang yingyi yanjiu' 金庸小說女性形象英譯研究 [A Study on the English Translation of Female Images in Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], *Changchun gongye daxue xuebao shehui kexueban* 長春工業大學學報 (社會科學版), 5 (2013), 94-96 (p. 96).

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Chesterman, 'The Name and Nature of Translator Studies', *International Journal of Language and Communication Studies*, 42 (2009), 13-22 (p. 22).

<sup>30</sup> Olivia Mok, 'Strategies of Translating Martial Arts Fiction', *Babel*, 1 (2001), 1-9 (pp. 3-4).

<sup>31</sup> Zhang Jingyi 張靜宜, 'Cong gaixie lilun qianxi ludingji yingyiben' 從改寫理論淺析《鹿鼎記》英譯本 [A Preliminary Analysis of the English Translation of *Lu Ding Ji* from the Perspective of Rewriting Theory] (unpublished master's thesis, Wuhan University, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Tao Fangfang 陶芳芳, *Gaixie yu wenhua renting shujian enchoulu yingyiben yanjiu* 改寫與文化認同：《書劍恩仇錄》英譯本研究 [Rewriting and Cultural Identity: A Study on the English Translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu*] (unpublished master's thesis, Zhejinag Gongshang University, 2013), p.II.



removal of redundant information in the source text.<sup>33</sup> All these works illustrate that rewriting has taken place as numerous changes appear in translation. Nevertheless, more often than not, the above-mentioned studies risk being similar to those concerning translation methods, as they both deal with the differences between the source text and the target text and largely remain to be text-based. It is the key concepts “poetics” and “ideology” in rewriting theory that contribute to research on the translations of Cha’s novels.<sup>34</sup>

### 2.1.4.1 Studies on the Translations from the Perspective of Ideology

Some studies have discussed the significant role of ideology in rewriting. For instance, Hua Liang’s article shows that Earnshaw’s ideology influenced his understanding of chivalry and his reader-oriented translation strategy, and played a role in the selection of *Shujian Enchou Lu* for translation.<sup>35</sup> Liu Xuelan studies the differences between *Lu Ding Ji* and *The Deer and The Cauldron* and illustrates how the translator’s own ideology has influenced the translation.<sup>36</sup> Lin Lina and Wang Shaoxiang’s research pays attention not only to the relationship between the translator’s ideology and translation strategies in *A Hero Born*, but also to the role of the publisher in text selection.<sup>37</sup> Specifically, MacLehose Press whose mission is to “Read the World”, publishes “literature from around the world, mainly in translation”.<sup>38</sup> Paul Engles, editor of the book at the press, expressed in one interview that there are similarities between the spirit of Chinese martial arts novels and chivalry in English literature.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Liu Hehua 刘荷花, ‘Cong lefuweier gaixie lilun shijiao jiedu haoyuqing shediao yingxiong zhuan yingyiben’ 从勒弗维尔改写理论视角解读郝玉青《射雕英雄传》英译本 [An Analysis of Anna Holmwood’s English Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* from the Perspective of Lefevere’s Rewriting Theory] (unpublished master’s thesis, Shandong University, 2021), p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> André Lefevere (1992:20) considers that a poetics consists of two components: one is an inventory of various literary elements such as devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other is a concept of the role of literature in the social system as a whole. Arguably, if the first component largely decides the shaping of the translation with the available repertoire in the target culture, then the second exerts great influence on the selection of works to be translated. According to Lefevere’s definition (1998:48), ideology refers to “the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts”. Thus, ideology is more concerned with social factors and it affects both the translation practice and the reception of the translated texts.

<sup>35</sup> Hua Liang 花亮, ‘Cong Shujian enchou lu yingyiben kan yishi xingtai dui zhongguo wuxia yizuo de caozong’ 從《書劍恩仇錄》英譯本看意識形態對中國武俠譯作的操縱 [On the Manipulation of Ideology on the Translation of Chinese Martial Arts Novels from the English Translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu*], *Xuzhou shifan daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 徐州師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), 3 (2011), 77-80 (p. 77).

<sup>36</sup> Liu Xuelan 劉雪嵐, ‘Fanyi zhong de yishi xingtai yinsu yi ludingji yingyiben yu yuanzuo zhong de bufen cuoci chayi weili’ 翻譯中的意識形態因素：以《鹿鼎記》英譯本與原作中的部分措辭差異為例 [Ideology in Translation: Wording Difference in *The Deer and The Cauldron* and Its Source Text], *Lanzhou daxue xuebao shehui kexueban* 蘭州大學學報 (社會科學版), 6 (2011), 138-44 (p. 138).

<sup>37</sup> Lin Lina 林麗娜 and Wang Shaoxiang 王紹祥, ‘Fanyi beihou de tixianren zhi yishi xingtai yi jinyong shediao yingxiong zhuan yingyiben weili’ 翻譯背後的“提線人”之意識形態——以金庸《射雕英雄傳》英譯本為例 [Ideology as the Puppet Master of Translation: A Case Study of the English Translation of Jin Yong’s *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*], *Fujian jiangxia xueyuan xuebao* 福建江夏學院學報, 2 (2019), 100-05 (p. 104).

<sup>38</sup> See <https://www.maclehosepress.com/landing-page/maclehose-press/maclehose-press-company-information/> [accessed 22 January 2024].

<sup>39</sup> Tu Yue 屠悅, ‘Guojing yu huang lianhua zai yinglun’ 郭靖與黃蓮花在英倫 [Guo Jing and Huang Lotus in Britain], *Wenhua jiaoliu* 文化交流, 6 (2018), 70-73 (p. 70).

According to this essay, the publisher is an essential element of patronage, which refers to powers such as persons or institutions that can “further or hinder the rewriting” of literature.<sup>40</sup> Taking the publisher into account, Lin and Wang’s study explores the connections between patronage and ideology. However, they do not investigate the related questions: did the publisher’s ideology and the translator’s ideology remain consistent during the whole translation process, and if they contradict each other, what are the solutions? How might such ideological differences be represented in the translations?

### 2.1.4.2 Studies on the Translations from the Perspective of Poetics

Some studies focus on the role that poetics has played in shaping the translations of Cha’s novels. Xiao Caiwang’s study highlights that English literature with a long tradition is able to provide enough repertoire for translating *Xueshan Feihu*, thus creating a new literary genre in the target literature. He argues that Olivia Mok rewrote the source text by adjusting, simplifying or amplifying information so as to conform to the norms of poetics as well as ideology in the target culture.<sup>41</sup> Tang Jie analyses different ways of providing information in *The Book and The Sword* and shows how poetics in the target culture influenced Earnshaw’s translation strategies which are reflected in simplification, omission and free translation.<sup>42</sup> Han Xiangge discusses the influences of poetics in *A Hero Born* in terms of translating culturally loaded words, syntax and rhetoric. More specifically, Holmwood replaced culturally loaded words with alternative expressions in English, combined the four-character phrases into longer sentences, and created rhyming effects while preserving the rhetorical devices.<sup>43</sup>

It can be seen that these studies contribute to shedding light on the influence of poetics in the target culture on the translator’s strategies, but what they have in common is that they tend to view poetics in the target culture as fixed and unchanged without considering different historical periods. These studies are likely to contribute more if they could discuss the development of poetics in the target culture over time, the differences between poetics in Chinese literature and that in the Anglophone world, and

<sup>40</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> Xiao Caiwang 肖才望, ‘Wuxia xiaoshuo yingyi huodong zhong de yishi xiagtaihe shixue yi mojinping xueshan feihu yiben weili 武俠小說英譯活動中的意識形態和詩學——以莫錦屏《雪山飛狐》譯本為例 [Ideology and Poetics in the English Translation of Martial Arts Novels: A Case Study of Olivia Mok’s *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*], *Yunnan nongye daxue xuebao shehui kexue ban* 雲南農業大學學報 (社會科學版), 4 (2012), 107-10 (p. 107).

<sup>42</sup> Tang Jie 唐潔, ‘Wuxia xiaoshuo fanyizhong de yishi xingtai he shixue yi ensh shujian enchoulu yiben weili’ 武俠小說翻譯中的意識形態和詩學——以恩沙《書劍恩仇錄》譯本為例 [Ideology and Poetics in the Translation of Martial Arts Novels: A Case Study of Earnshaw’s *The Book and The Sword*], *Shandong nongye gongcheng xueyuan xuebao* 山東農業工程學院學報, 4 (2015), 140-42 (p. 140).

<sup>43</sup> Han Xiangge 韓賢格, ‘Gaixie lilun shijiaoxia shediao yingxiong zhuan haoyuqing yingyiben yanjiu’ 改写理论视角下《射雕英雄传》郝玉青英译本研究 [A Study of Anna Holmwood’s English Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* from the Perspective of Rewriting Theory], *Huangshan xueyuan xuebao* 黄山学院学报, 1 (2020), 57-62 (pp. 60-61).

the influences of poetics on the dissemination and reception of these translations.

## 2.1.5 Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Translations

In recent years, numerous studies have adopted approaches from adjacent disciplines such as literary studies, media studies, comparative literature, sociology, corpus linguistics and so on, thus adding fresh momentum to the methodology and deepening the research into the translations of Cha's novels. The below section offers an analysis of some representative works.

### 2.1.5.1 Approaches from Literary Studies

Some researchers have used literary theories, such as paratext theory, deconstruction and reception theory, to explore various issues concerning the translations. For instance, Genette's paratext theory has been adopted to investigate the translator's role. Han Shuqin's study, through a comparison of paratextual elements of *The Deer and The Cauldron* and *A Hero Born*, illustrates the differences between Minford and Holmwood. In Han's view, Minford is more confident in his translation and prefers to show his visibility on the book cover and provides more paratexts for his translation. Minford, as a scholarly translator, tends to practice "thick translation".<sup>44</sup> This study attempts to investigate translators from the paratextual perspective, showing the connection between paratextual elements and translators' visibility. Cai Xiaowen focuses on the translator's ethics by examining the paratexts of *A Hero Born*. She explores the construction of Holmwood's ethics in terms of environment and personal choices.<sup>45</sup> Cai's study aims to investigate the translator's ethics from a paratextual perspective, broadening the scope of translator studies. Both Han's and Cai's research has highlighted the crucial role of the translator. As stated in Chapter One, paratext theory can offer more information about the different participants involved in the translation. Therefore, the two case studies could make more contributions if they could take other participants into account and examine how they cooperated with the translators.

With recourse to Jacques Derrida's notion of deconstruction, Deng and Ye studied the reconstruction of the historical and cultural contexts in *A Hero Born* as well as the image of Guo Jing, the hero in the novel and concluded that although Holmwood's

<sup>44</sup> Han Shuqin 韓淑芹, 'Fuwenben shiyu xia de yizhe zhutixing chayi yanjiu jiyu ludingji yu shediao yingxiongzhuan yingyiben de miaoxiexing duibi fenxi 副文本視域下的譯者主體性差異研究——基於《鹿鼎記》與《射雕英雄傳》英譯本的描寫性對比分析 [Translators' Differentiated Subjectivity Presented in Paratexts—A Descriptive and Comparative Study on the English Translations of *Lu Ding Ji* and *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*], *Jiefangjun waiguoyu xueyuan xuebao* 解放軍外國語學院學報, 6 (2020), 133-40 (p. 130).

<sup>45</sup> Cai Xiaowen 蔡筱雯, 'Fuwenben shijiao xiade yizhe lunli yanjiu yi shediao yingxiong zhuan yizhe haoyuqing weili' 副文本視角下的譯者倫理研究——以《射雕英雄傳》譯者郝玉青為例 [A Study on the Translator's Ethics from the Perspective of Paratexts: A Case Study of Anna Holmwood, Translator of *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*], *Shandong waiyu jiaoxue* 山東外語教學, 2 (2021), 125-35 (p. 125).

reconstruction deviates from the source text to some extent, it nevertheless arouses the target readers' interest in Chinese literature.<sup>46</sup> They even claim that due to *A Hero Born*, reading martial arts novels has become a trend in the West.<sup>47</sup> However, their conclusion regarding the reception of *A Hero Born* is based on their personal judgement without the support of evidence such as relevant book reviews.

There are also some studies which adopt reception theory and its key concepts including “horizon of expectations” and “indeterminacy” to explain how different translation strategies facilitate the target readers' reception of the translations. To name just a few, Yin Pian and Hao Lu investigate how Minford translated culturally loaded words including martial arts moves, chivalrous spirit and swear words in *Lu Ding Ji* to ensure a good reception.<sup>48</sup> Other studies extend the scope and discuss the reception of the whole novel in translation.<sup>49</sup> These works illustrate the vital role of the target readers in affecting the choices made by the translators. Nevertheless, these studies concerning the reception are primarily concerned with the interpretation of various examples in the texts, with little attention paid to the reception of the translations in the target culture. They tend to rely more on Robert Jauss's theory and often neglect Wolfgang Iser's ideas. As will be expounded in the next chapter, Jauss and Iser shed light on different aspects of reception and combining their theories can contribute more to the research on reception. In terms of the reception of the translations, analysing first-hand data such as book reviews can be helpful, which will be shown in the following case studies of this thesis.

### 2.1.5.2 Approaches from Sociology

Quite a few studies have employed theories from sociology, especially those from Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour, to uncover the social nature of the translations. To mention but a few, Zhang Mi investigates Holmwood's habitus in order to illustrate how it has exerted influences on her selection of works to be translated and the publisher, her view about translation as well as her translation strategy.<sup>50</sup> Diao's work illustrates

<sup>46</sup> Deng Gaosheng 鄧高勝 and Ye Chengcheng 葉鉞鉞, 'Haoyuqing shediao yingxiong zhuan yingyiben de jiegou yu chonggo 郝玉青《射雕英雄傳》英譯本的解構與重構 [Deconstruction and Reconstruction in Anna Holmwood's English Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*], *Huaibei shifan daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 淮北師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), 3 (2019), 69-73 (p. 69).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>48</sup> Yin Pian 尹丕安 and Hao Lu 郝璐, 'Jieshou meixue shijiaoxia ludingji zhong wenhua fuzai ci fanyi' 接受美學視角下《鹿鼎記》中文化負載詞翻譯 [The Translation of Culture-loaded Terms in *Lu Ding Ji* from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics], *Shanxi nongye daxuexuebao shehui kexueban* 山西農業大學學報 (社會科學版), 10 (2014), 1064-1068 (p. 1064).

<sup>49</sup> Other case studies that draw on reception theory can be found in master's dissertations. For a study of *The Deer and the Cauldron*, see Wang Man (2021); for a study of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, see Li Jing (2020); Wu Tingyun (2020); Cai Sihui (2021) and He Wenhui (2023).

<sup>50</sup> Zhang Mi 張汨, 'Haoyuqinfng yizhe guanxi xingcheng jiqi dui fanyi xingwei de yingxiang yanjiu' 郝玉青譯者慣習形成及其對翻譯行為的影響研究 [Research on the Formation of Anna Holmwood's Translator Habitus and Its Influences on Her Translation: A case study of *Legends of Condor Heroes I*], *Waiguo yuyan wenxue* 外國語言文學, 3 (2020), 305-14 (p. 305).

how Holmwood as the principal translator initiated and promoted the translation and argues that Holmwood's professional habitus played a key role in the process.<sup>51</sup>

Another study conducted by Zhang Mi explores the cultural, social, symbolic, and economic capital connected with the publication process of *A Hero Born*. It concludes that before initiating the project, social capital played a major role; while carrying out the project, cultural capital possessed by the translators was of great importance, while after the publication of *A Hero Born*, symbolic capital contributed more to the dissemination of the translation.<sup>52</sup> Associating the translators with their surroundings, research into the translator's habitus and various capitals enables extratextual factors to receive attention.

Other studies investigate the dissemination of *A Hero Born* by examining the field, habitus and capital together. For example, Zhang Lu's research draws on the three key concepts and illustrates how *A Hero Born* was constructed as a hybridised cultural capital and enabled Chinese martial arts literature to spread internationally.<sup>53</sup> Though Liu Yi's study claims to investigate how "actors" construct networks, it still relies on Bourdieu's framework to examine the position of *A Hero Born* in the field of English literature, the exchanges and accumulation of different capitals and the influences of Holmwood's habitus on her translation strategies.<sup>54</sup>

Liu Xin's study divides the whole translation network of *A Hero Born* into three subnetworks: initiation network, production network and dissemination network. In each network, different actors including the translators, the publisher and the editor played their roles, cooperated with each other and jointly contributed to the successful dissemination of the novel in the target culture.<sup>55</sup> Inspired by Liu's study, my thesis not only emphasises the translators' role but also attaches importance to the roles of other agents in the initiation, translation, publication and dissemination of the translations.

So far, studies that adopt sociological theories have only dealt with *A Hero Born*, and whether they can be extended to other translations of Cha's novels remains to be tested.

<sup>51</sup> Diao Hong, Translating and literary agenting: Anna Holmwood's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, *Perspectives*, 6 (2022), 1059-1073 (p. 1059)

<sup>52</sup> Zhang Mi 张汨, 'Jin Yong wuxia xiaoshuo yingyi changyu zhong ziben de jiedu ji yunzuo yanjiu yi haoyuqing yi shediao yingxiong zhuan weili' 金庸武侠小说英译场域中资本的解读及运作研究——以郝玉青译《射雕英雄传》为例 [The Interpretation and Operation of Capital in the Field of English Translation of Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels: A Case Study of Anna Holmwood's Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*], *Fanyi Jie* 翻译界, 2 (2023), 36-47 (pp. 44-45)

<sup>53</sup> Zhang Lu 張璐, 'Budie shehuixue xia yiben zuowei zahe wenhua ziben de goujian' 布迪厄社會學下譯本作為雜化文化資本的構建 [Translation as the Construction of Hybrid Cultural Capital from the Perspective of Bourdieu's Sociology] (unpublished master's thesis, Lanzhou University, 2019), p.II.

<sup>54</sup> Liu Yi 劉毅, 'Shediao yingxiong zhuan zai xifang de yijie chuanbo, Xingdongzhe wangluo, yizhe guanxi yu fanyicelue' 《射雕英雄傳》在西方的譯介傳播:行動者網路、譯者慣習與翻譯策略 [The Translation and Dissemination of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* in the West: Actor-network, Translator's Habitus and Translation Strategy], *Jiefangjun waiguoyu xueyuan xuebao* 解放軍外國語學院學報, 2 (2021), 58-65 (p. 58)

<sup>55</sup> Liu Xin 劉欣, 'Xingdongzhe wangluo shijiao xiade shediao yingxiong zhuan yingyi yanjiu' 行動者網路視角下的《射雕英雄傳》英譯研究 [A Study of the English Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* from the Perspective of Actor-Network Theory] (unpublished master's thesis, Zhejiang University, 2022), p. III.

Some research regards the dissemination of the English translations of Cha's works as part of a cross-cultural communication process. Harold Lasswell's communication model, which consists of the communicator, the message, the media, the audience and the effects, has been revisited frequently.<sup>57</sup> Wu Xunlu holds the view that the translation of martial arts novels is an integral communication process. Wu conducts a case study of *The Book and The Sword*, and discusses how it conformed to the principles of the model and achieved the expected goal of communication.<sup>58</sup> This study may shed some light on how to foster the dissemination of martial arts novels in the Anglophone world, but Wu's study could be more insightful if Lasswell's theory were more closely linked with the case study and could move beyond the text-based approach.

Wang Guangjing's study associates Lasswell's model more closely with the translation of martial arts novels and considers more extratextual factors. Wang carries out a case study of *A Hero Born* by collecting data and analysing the text. Her study investigates how each communication element is correlated with each other. She has examined a wide range of elements including the author, the translator, the source text, translation strategies, literary agents, the publisher and book reviews from both professional and common readers.<sup>59</sup> Though Wang's study has a wide scope, it involves so many elements which make her research difficult to conduct. In addition, Wang could have paid more attention to the distinctive literary characteristics of martial arts novels, as the communication model seems applicable to other types of literary genres as well. Given this, my thesis focuses on the translation, dissemination and reception of the English translations of Cha's novels. The distinctive features of martial arts novels as a literary genre have been discussed in detail in Chapter One. Rather than incorporate all

<sup>59</sup> Wang Guangjing 王廣婧, 'Chuanboxue shiyu xiade shediao yingxiongzhuan de yingyi yanjiu' 傳播學視閥下《射雕英雄傳》的英譯研究 [A Study on the English Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* from Communication Studies] (unpublished master's thesis, Beijing Foreign Studies University, 2019), p. VI.

kinds of factors involved in the translation process, my thesis will consider those that are primarily concerned with the purpose of the research.

### 2.1.5.4 Corpus-based Approaches

It is worth mentioning that the empirical approach from corpus linguistics has been increasingly adopted to study translated texts in recent years. Hong Jie established comparable corpora of the source texts and the target texts and then carried out a corpus-based study of the *Xia* theme, the Kungfu tradition and readability of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, *The Deer and The Cauldron* and *The Book and The Sword* to analyse the translators' styles. Based on her study, she proposed a genre-based translation model, which is composed of three phases: analysing the characteristics of Cha's novels, evaluating the generic vacancy of martial arts novels in the West, and matching the translations with Cha's novels.<sup>60</sup> Hong's study is the first attempt to use the empirical approach to explore the English translations, showing great innovation in terms of research methods. Also using a corpus-aided approach, Chen Lin and Dai Ruoyu's study examines Holmwood's omissions of historical-cultural information, fighting-scene information and character-perception information in *A Hero Born*. Their findings show that these omissions have reshaped the narrative structure and by following the target narrative norms, Holmwood has turned her translation into a "fast-paced modern-looking" English fantasy.<sup>61</sup> The corpus-based method proves useful in examining the consistency of stylistic and linguistic features of *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone*. It is found that the two volumes are homogenized to a high degree at various syntactic and lexico-grammatical levels.<sup>62</sup> This approach has deepened the research into the translated texts and the translator's style by providing more convincing data analysis. But corpus linguistics is a limited approach that does not always take into account non-textual features such as social, political and economic factors.

The above-discussed studies which draw on theories from other disciplines have provided fresh perspectives and new topics for the research into the English translations of Cha's novels.<sup>63</sup> These studies also inform the methodology and research scope of this thesis, such as investigating various participants through paratextual elements, taking into account both macro and micro factors and examining the reception based

<sup>60</sup> Hong Jie, *Translations of Louis Cha's Martial Arts Fiction: A Genre-Oriented Study* (Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 2017), pp. 44-50.

<sup>61</sup> Chen Lin and Dai Ruoyu, 'Translator's Narrative Intervention in the English Translation of Jin Yong's *The Legend of Condor Heroes*', *Perspectives*, 6 (2022), 1043-1058 (p. 1043).

<sup>62</sup> Diao Hong, 'Homogenized Literary Co-translation: *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone*', *Across Languages and Cultures*, 1 (2022), 92-110 (p. 92).

<sup>63</sup> Due to the focus and space constraints, this chapter only deals with some representative interdisciplinary studies. Here are some more interdisciplinary studies: Xiao Kairong's work (2013), inspired by frame theory in psychology, argues that translating Cha's works should follow the principle of frame correspondence, rather than linguistic equivalence for the transmission of knowledge system, so that the target reader can make the least cognitive load but gain the closet reading effects of Cha's works. Luo Yongzhou's study (2017) draws on positioning theory in social constructionism and illustrates how Earnshaw reconstructed different aspects of Chinese martial arts culture in his translation. Diao Hong's research (2024) explores how cinematic texture in *A Hero Born* is represented from the perspective of cinematography.

on reviews. Though applying theories from other fields is interesting, it should be stressed that the English translations of Cha's novels exist, first and foremost, as translated literature in the target culture. Their literary characteristics deserve attention when their dissemination and reception are investigated.

## 2.2 Studies on the English Translation of Cha's Novels

### Outside China

With the emergence of the "Jin Yong phenomenon" at the end of the twentieth century, namely the universal circulation of Cha's novels and the adapted films, televisions, comic books and video games,<sup>64</sup> Cha's achievements began to draw the attention of scholars in the English-speaking world.

#### 2.2.1 English Translation

Research on the English translation of Cha's novels can be found in a collection of twelve essays presented at the conference that was held at the University of Colorado in 1998. These selected essays seek to bridge mainstream modern Chinese literature and uncanonised popular cultural production and they place the study of Cha's novels within the large scope of the twentieth-century literature and culture.<sup>65</sup>

Though the collection covers a wide range of topics including the language in Cha's writing, the canonization of Cha's novels, gender politics, and image construction, only Shuang Shen's article deals with the issue of translation. Shen discusses the translation of Cha's novels from the following three aspects: the context, the translator and the texts. She invites a discussion of Cha's "Chineseness" from the perspective of the Chinese diaspora. Based on textual analysis and several translation examples in *The Deer and The Cauldron*, Shen's study illustrates that Minford has a different perspective on Chinese culture compared with Cha, so Trinket in the translation shows an enormously different image from Wei Xiaobao in the source text. The differences between their perspectives reflect how Cha and Minford represent Chinese culture differently.<sup>66</sup> Shen's study proposed a key concept: "multilingual Chineseness", namely, the discourse of identity across linguistic boundaries and cultural differences to account for the popularity of Cha's works across the world.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, this study also explores the translator's identity and connects textual analysis with the discussion of the social contexts. This comprehensive method offers significant insights into

<sup>64</sup> Ann Huss and Jianmei Liu, *Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History* (Youngstown, New York: Cambria Press, 2007), p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Shuang Shen, 'Translating Jin Yong: The Contexts, the Translator and the Texts', in *Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History*, ed. by Ann Huss and Jianmei Liu (Youngstown, New York: Cambria Press, 2007), pp. 201-18.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.



translator studies in this thesis. Broadly speaking, if the Lingnan symposium proposed as a research topic the English translation of Cha's novels, the Colorado conference broadened the scope to a field named "Jin Yong Studies", a coined term that refers to "the research on Louis Cha, his martial arts novels as well as his other literary and non-literary writings".<sup>68</sup> As the following chapters illustrate, the English translations and their dissemination are of crucial importance in understanding Cha's works and they have contributed significantly to deepening Jin Yong Studies.

## 2.2.2 The Contexts of Cha's Novels

Due to the linguistic barriers, most people in the English-speaking world are unable to conduct comparative readings to examine translations. Consequently, the focus has tended to be on interpreting themes in Cha's works or discussing Cha's literary status. Gwendolyn Chiyao Liu looks at the settings of Cha's works and argues that the historicity and reconstruction of traditional Chinese values contribute to their popularity. Liu regards Cha's knight-errant tales as political satires in which power struggle is always the focus. Liu also deals with the gender issue and contends that Cha's works cater to the male readers' fantasies of women which reveals Cha's sexual politics.<sup>69</sup> To summarise, Liu explores Cha's works from three aspects: historical settings, political satires and sexual politics. Liu's study makes new contributions to the interpretations of themes of Cha's novels in a multidimensional way. Petrus Liu's study is also concerned with the historical background, especially its associations with the narrative forms of martial arts novels. Liu concludes that martial arts novels construct a stateless, primordial social world where conflicts are solved by *wugong*, namely, martial arts prowess. Notably, he devotes one chapter to discussing Cha's political views by situating Cha's works in the context of the Chinese cultural revolution.<sup>70</sup> If Gwendolyn Chiyao Liu explores the political implications in Cha's novels from a broad perspective, then Petrus Liu approaches this issue in a more detailed way. Both studies highlight the importance of the political and historical significance of Cha's novels, which will be further analysed in Chapter Four of this thesis. In line with the aims of my research, my thesis will deal with how the target readers understand the contexts in which Cha's novels are set.

## 2.2.3 Chinese Identity in Cha's Novels

The Chinese identity reflected in Cha's novels and how his works help construct

<sup>68</sup> Xie Likai 謝理開, 'Jinxue goujian zhi wojian guanyu jinyong yanjiu de yidian sikao' "金學"構建之我見——關於金庸研究的一點思考 [My Views about Constructing Jin Yong Studies: Some Reflections on the Research into Jin Yong], *Longyan shizhuan xuebao* 龍岩師專學報, 4 (2004), 64-67 (p. 65).

<sup>69</sup> Gwendolyn Chiyao Liu, 'Historicity, Political Satire and Sexual politics: Themes and Narratives in Jin Yong's Knight-errant Novels' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1996), pp. 18-19

<sup>70</sup> Petrus Liu, *Stateless Subjects: Chinese Martial Arts Literature and Postcolonial History* (New York: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2011), p. 156.

identities for modern Chinese people have been analysed. Teresa Zimmerman Liu points out that Cha's novel speaks to the Chinese diaspora around the world, offering them "a pattern for renegotiating their Chinese identity".<sup>71</sup> The issue of identity in Cha's works has drawn growing attention from the target readers, which is reflected in the following case studies in the thesis. It has been known that Cha's works are regarded as "the common language of Chinese around the world",<sup>72</sup> which shows that Cha attempts to define the Chinese identity through his literary writing. Nevertheless, it remains underexplored how their translations, which are targeted at a different audience in a different culture, have played their role in defining the Chinese identity. Examining target readers' opinions will illustrate how Cha's notion of Chinese identity is reflected, changed or even reshaped in translation, thus shedding more light on the interpretations of key themes in Cha's works.

## 2.2.4 Literary Values of Cha's Novels

Along with the political and social significance, the literary values of Cha's novels have been discussed too. Jie Li chooses the male protagonist and the romantic plot as points of departure to study the similarities and differences between Cha's novels and Western texts. Li compares Cha with Walter Scott and Alexander Dumas in the last chapter and addresses the sources and influences that relate Cha to the British and French novelists. Li discusses the differences and similarities between Chinese dynastic chronicles, historical novels, martial arts novels in the earlier periods, and relevant Western texts.<sup>73</sup> Her comparative approach provides fresh angles for the research into Cha's works, attempting to establish a dialogue in literary studies between China and the West and demonstrating the cross-cultural significance. Inspired by Li's study, to what extent Cha is similar to some novelists in the Anglophone world and how this analogy has contributed to the dissemination of the translations will be further discussed in this thesis through both textual analysis and the examination of relevant reviews.

A more comprehensive interpretation of Cha's works was conducted by John Christopher Hamm, a widely acknowledged scholar of "Jin Yong Studies". Hamm's *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* is the first book-length study of Louis Cha published in English. This monograph seeks to understand the twentieth-century martial arts fiction, Louis Cha's oeuvre in particular, in the context of its reading communities and considers "these communities' synchronic and diachronic variations".<sup>74</sup> Overall, Hamm's work provides "cogent readings" of

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<sup>71</sup> Teresa Zimmerman Liu, 'Moral and Flexible Heroes with Powerful, Individuated Women: Jin Yong's Construction of a Modern Chinese Identity' (unpublished master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2012), p. 113.

<sup>72</sup> See the blurb on the cover of the second Yuanliu edition of Jin Yong's works.

<sup>73</sup> Jie Li, 'Heroes in Love: A Comparative Study of Jin Yong's Novel' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Riverside, 2006), p. VI.

<sup>74</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), p. 10.

Cha's novels, the politico-historical contexts in which they are situated and "the emotional-psychological world that they embraced".<sup>75</sup> It could be said that Hamm has provided an in-depth interpretation of Cha's works and succeeded in drawing scholarly attention in Anglophone academia to Cha. Hamm draws on Pierre Bourdieu's work when analysing the shifting status of Cha's novels and also places them within "the discourse of print capitalism" to illustrate how Cha used his writing to create a market for his newspaper empire which in turn contributed to the marketing of his novels.<sup>76</sup> The newspaper that Cha established promoted the dissemination of his novels from the outset, which has been discussed in Chapter One.

The widespread popularity of Cha's novels in the source culture has contributed to the emergence of their English translations. As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, Bourdieu's theory has been applied to researching the English translations. Hamm's study, on the other hand, manifests the applicability of Bourdieu's ideas in understanding "the shifting status" of Cha's novels in the Chinese literary system.<sup>77</sup>

## 2.2.5 Interplay between Cha's Novels and Other Media

Drawing on Bourdieu's ideas as well, especially his concept of cultural capital, the latest study conducted by Paul B. Foster focuses on the creation and manipulation of cultural capital associated with Cha's works and probes into the relations between Cha's novels and the Kungfu industrial complex. According to Foster's definition, the Kungfu industrial complex refers to "a vast multidimensional cultural matrix of martial arts fiction, television and film in a dynamic process of creating and sustaining related knowledge and mechanism for its reification, reproduction, and commodification".<sup>78</sup> Here Foster intends to illustrate how Cha's novels and other fields are closely intertwined and how they jointly construct the martial arts conglomeration in modern times. His complicated concept "Kungfu industrial complex" suggests the far-reaching influences of Cha's works and the close, continuing interplay between martial arts novels and other non-literary fields. If Hamm emphasises the function that the serialised newspapers have performed in disseminating Cha's novels, Foster then highlights the contribution that films have made in creating the Jin Yong Phenomenon. They both have realised the crucial role of other forms of media in speeding up the dissemination of Cha's novels in the source culture. In relation to the English translations, the influences of other media can enrich the study significantly.

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<sup>75</sup> Denise Gimpel, 'Review of *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 1 (2006), 162-63 (p. 162).

<sup>76</sup> Ann Huss, 'Review of *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*', *The China Quarterly*, 187 (2006), 808-10 (p. 808).

<sup>77</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, p. 30.

<sup>78</sup> Paul B. Foster, *Jin Yong's Martial Arts Fiction and the Kungfu Industrial Complex* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2023), pp. 2-3.

## Chapter Three Theoretical Framework

In 1994, Louis Cha was ranked fourth among contemporary Chinese writers in terms of aesthetic values and literary influences in *Ershi shiji zhongguo wenxue dashi wenku* (二十世纪中國文學大師文庫 *The Anthology of the Twentieth-Century Chinese Masters in Literature*), following Lu Xun, Shen Congwen and Ba Jin.<sup>1</sup> Cha won such a high ranking because his novels symbolise the new development of martial arts novels in that Cha further associates his novels with traditional Chinese culture, elevating the literary genre to an “unprecedented, new and high” level, and promoting the diversification of Chinese novels.<sup>2</sup> Chen Mo, based on his analysis of the plots and language employed by Cha, claims that Cha’s novels are such “essential chapters” of the twentieth-century Chinese literature that every literary historian cannot afford to ignore them.<sup>3</sup> Yan Jiayan even regards Cha’s novels as “a legend of Chinese culture in the twentieth century”.<sup>4</sup> Whether Cha deserves such acclaim is still under discussion. Nevertheless, these remarks reflect the extraordinary literary achievements that Cha has made in the Chinese reading community. When his works are translated into English and disseminated in another culture, one cannot help wondering what has happened during this intercultural exchange and what changes these works have undergone. The theories discussed in this chapter contribute to understanding this phenomenon and as the theoretical framework, they can provide guidance for conducting my research.

### 3.1 Paratext Theory

Paratext theory was proposed by the French literary theorist Gérard Genette in the 1970s. Genette considers that a literary work consists of both a text and its paratexts. The paratexts are a number of verbal or other productions that accompany the text, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface and illustrations. The function of the paratexts is to “present” the text, which means the paratexts ensure the text’s presence, reception and consumption in the form of a book.<sup>5</sup> Genette compares the paratext to a “threshold”, as shown in the title of his monograph, which offers the readers the possibility of further reading the book or not.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wang Yichuan 王一川 and Zhang Tongdao 張同道, *Ershi shiji zhongguo wenxue dashi wenku xiaoshuo juan xia* 二十世纪中國文學大師文庫 小說卷（下） [Works of China’s Literary Masters in the Twentieth Century Volume of Novels] (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 1994), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Chen Mo 陈墨, ‘Jinyong xiaoshuo yu ershi shiji zhongguo wenxue’ 金庸小说与二十世纪中国文学 [Jin Yong’s Martial Arts Novels and the Twentieth Chinese Literature], *Dangdai zuojia pinglun* 当代作家评论, 5 (1998), 32-40 (p. 40).

<sup>4</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jinyong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong’s Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), p. 174.

<sup>5</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

Different criteria are employed to classify myriads of paratextual elements. Based on their location in relation to the location of the text itself, paratexts can be further divided into peritexts and epitexts. The former is in the same volume as the text, such as the title or the preface. The latter refers to the distanced elements that are located outside a book exemplified by interviews, conversations, letters and diaries. A formula can neatly illustrate the relationship:  $\text{paratext} = \text{peritext} + \text{epitext}$ .<sup>7</sup> Peritexts are the most typical category and they are usually the main research focus as they are more connected with the text. As Genette's monograph shows, ten chapters are used to discuss the peritexts while only two chapters deal with epitexts. Inspired by Genette's ideas and research methods, some literary scholars explore peritexts to show their role in the dissemination and reception of a work. For instance, in the essays edited by Helen Smith and Louis Wilson, imprints, running titles and annotations receive scholarly attention, which serves as "a response to, and an extension of, Genette's wide-ranging taxonomy" and deepens research into period-specific paratexts.<sup>8</sup> Considering a book as "a coming together or an alignment of separate component pieces, each possessed of particular conventions and histories", Adam Smyth and Dennis Duncan further dissect paratextual elements into nearly twenty categories including dust jackets, errata lists, end leaves and blurbs and associate them with specific periods or genres.<sup>9</sup> In both volumes, paratext research is combined with numerous case studies of literary works. Moreover, they adopt a similar criterion of location when analysing paratexts as Genette does. Consequently, peritexts have become the focus of paratextual analysis while epitexts have been placed in a marginal place.

Genette's other classifications of paratexts are equally important but often neglected. When analysed from their temporal situation, paratexts can be divided into prior paratexts that exist before the text, original paratexts that appear at the same time as the text, and later or delayed paratexts that emerge later than the text.<sup>10</sup> Research into paratexts of a text in different periods can illuminate the changing reception contexts of a text and this diachronic study can contribute to the historical dimension of literary works. Paratexts thus can play a potential role in constructing a literary history. If classified according to their relationship with the author's life, posthumous paratexts are the elements that appear after the death of the author, while anthumous paratexts are those elements that are produced during the author's lifetime.<sup>11</sup> In this way the connection between paratexts and the author is established. Related questions may include: did the author exert any influences on the adoption of paratexts? Why did some paratexts appear only after the author's death? Who were the producers of these posthumous paratexts?

Genette lists three practices in which paratextual relevance seems "undeniable" in the conclusion of his 400-page study: translation, serial publication and illustration. He

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Smyth and Dennis Duncan, *Book Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, pp.4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

mentions that the translation by a bilingual writer can be regarded as a “commentary on the original text”.<sup>12</sup> What Genette means is that the translated text can help interpret the original text. In other words, the translation serves the original. He examines the connections between translations and paratexts from a broader perspective and in a figurative way. His notion of translation as paratext seems to degrade the status of translation and is considered as one of the “potential barriers” in his theory.<sup>13</sup> Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar maintains that this view will “serve translation research little”, as it considers translation as a derivative activity and suggests a hierarchical relationship between the source text and the target text. Consequently, it firstly de-problematizes a number of issues that have emerged in translation studies in recent years, and secondly, it is quite restricted in scope, excluding the objects of study such as pseudotranslations.<sup>14</sup> Like Tahir-Gürçağlar, Deane-Cox also moves away from the notion of translation as paratext, and points out that Genette’s typology centres on the author, the publisher and the (semi) authorised third party, with little explicit room for the translator.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, she puts forward the concept of “translatorial paratext”, which means “the tangible and concrete mediative paratextual presence of the translator”. The translatorial paratext can show how the translator plays a role in the cultural mediation of the translations and identifies how the translator engages with the previous versions of the text, either positively or negatively.<sup>16</sup> In reality, a published translation can be viewed just like a non-translated literary work, as the translation has its own paratextual elements which can be the object of study.

Following this mode of thinking, Kathryn Batchelor argues that by drawing on examples of translated texts Genette implies that the translation can be viewed as a text in its right with its own paratexts.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Batchelor outlines six key themes in paratext-related translation studies:

- (1) Paratexts as documentary sources for historical research. Namely, translators’ prefaces can be collected to construct regional or national traditions.
- (2) Paratexts as places of potential translation or translator visibility. This theme echoes Venuti’s call for the visibility of translators,<sup>18</sup> which is reflected in changes to paratextual practices.
- (3) Paratexts and socio-cultural contexts of translation. This can be further divided into two categories in terms of the interrelation between society and ideology: one is

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 405.

<sup>13</sup> Kathryn Batchelor, ‘Paratexts’, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* 3rd edn ed. by Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 401-05 (p. 402).

<sup>14</sup> Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar, ‘The Uses of Paratexts in Translation Research’, in *Crosscultural Transgressions: Research Models in Translation Studies II: Historical and Ideological Issues* ed. by Theo Hermans (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 44-60 (p. 46).

<sup>15</sup> Sharon Deane-Cox, *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Kathryn Batchelor, *Translation and Paratexts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> Laurence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 310.

research into societies with a dominant ideology and the other is research into societies with multiple and competing ideologies.

(4) Paratexts and gender, which is concerned with how female translators use paratexts on the one hand and how paratexts have been adopted to assert dominant views and restrain women's writing.

(5) Paratexts and image-formation. This area explores how the paratexts in translations influence the image construction of a particular source culture author or of the source culture more generally.

(6) Paratexts and agency. Questions regarding the agents involved in producing translated products come to the fore along with the investigation into paratexts. Explicit contributors such as preface writers and hidden contributors like editors can both be examined, thus shedding light on how the translations are brought to market.<sup>19</sup>

These convincingly show the fruitfulness of paratext theory when it is applied to the field of translation studies. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the boundaries between the above-mentioned themes are not clear-cut but overlap instead. Batchelor points out that Genette's stress on the connection between paratext and authorial intention, and his notion of translation-as-paratext have constrained the application of paratext theory. Therefore, she proposes a "primarily functional" and more inclusive definition of a paratext which is "a consciously crafted threshold for a text which has the potential to influence the way(s) in which the text is received".<sup>20</sup> This definition attempts to include both the traditional elements which make a text into a book and a wide range of elements which function as thresholds to digital or audiovisual texts. In response to the emerging various textual forms in the digital age, other scholars also put forward their own notions of paratext.

Georg Stantizek extends Genette's concept of paratext into the field of media and regards paratexts as "organisers of communication".<sup>21</sup> Taking a film as an example, its peritexts include titles, subtitles and title sequences, while its epitexts consist of film posters and trailers. Though Georg has realised the differences between the two media: literature and film, he still adopts Genette's influential category for his purpose of description as in his view the study of paratexts shares a common interest and technique with the media and cultural sciences.

Compared with Stantizek, Jonathan Gray has made greater theoretical achievements in media paratexts. Gray claims that paratexts are an integral part of movies and televisions and he further divides them into "entryway paratexts" such as trailers, posters, previews and hype, which try to control and determine the viewer's entrance to the text, and "in medias res paratexts" like websites, CDs and fan discussion forums, which appear during and after viewing and influence our reading strategies.<sup>22</sup> It is

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 31-39.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>21</sup> Georg Stantizek, 'Texts and Paratexts in Media', *Critical inquiry*, 32 (2005), 27-42 (pp.35-36)

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York: New York

evident that this classification is based on the temporal sequence of paratexts in relation to the movies or the television. This division, as Gray notes, is mainly for analytical purposes.<sup>23</sup> Not only has Gray extended the notion of paratexts from literature to media texts but also he has emphasised in medias res paratexts, which perform their interpretative functions after entering the text. In terms of the creator of media paratexts, Gary divides them into industry-created paratexts and viewer-created paratexts. Industry-created paratexts include trailers, hypes and spinoffs, while viewer-created paratexts are reflected in criticism and reviews, fan films and videos, fan sites, and many other forms. Viewer-created paratexts can challenge or supplement industry-created paratexts, thus “carving out alternative pathways through texts”.<sup>24</sup> Gary’s two categories reflect one salient characteristic of movies and televisions: interactions and tensions exist between the producer and the audience, and the audience’s response and contributions to paratexts play an essential role in understanding the media texts and should not be neglected.

Chiara Bucaria and Annika Rockenberger have also made significant theoretical contributions. Bucaria specifically examines television paratexts such as trailers, promos and teasers, namely ancillary texts or expansions, which play an essential role in distributing television products across national borders. She compares the television paratexts to a magnifying glass, which is “strategically placed” to highlight or reiterate aspects of the series.<sup>25</sup> By looking at how television paratexts in two US series *Glee* and *Breaking Bad* were adapted for Italian audiences, Bucaria places television paratexts in a continuum between a domesticating and foreignizing approach in Venuti’s terminology.<sup>26</sup> Rockenberger, on the other hand, explores the applicability of paratexts to a new area of digital culture: video games. She first adopts an auto-ethnographic description of the introductory sequences of the shooter game *BioShock Infinite*, and then critically reviews Genette’s definitions of paratext, pointing out that Genette restricts the domain of the paratexts to the realm of print culture. In addition, Rockenberger observes that the use of “paratext” in video game studies is quite vaguely connected to Genette’s definition. Therefore, she suggests four criteria for using the term as well as supplementing paratext as an analytical tool with “framings”, a higher-order umbrella term coined by Werner Wolf.<sup>27</sup> Both Bucaria and Rockenberger admit they benefit from Genette’s notion of paratext and Gary’s work on media paratext, and they attempt to refine paratext theory and apply it in some specific areas of media studies.

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University Press, 2010), p.23.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.143.

<sup>25</sup> Chiara Bucaria, ‘Trailers and Promos and Teasers, Oh My! Adapting Television Paratexts Across Cultures’ in *Media and Translation: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. by Dror Abend-David (New York: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2014), 293–313(p.297).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.311.

<sup>27</sup> Annika Rockenberger, ‘Video Game Framings’, in *Examining Paratextual Theory and Its Applications in Digital Culture*, ed. by Nadine Desrochers and Daniel Apollon (Hershey: Information Science Reference, 2014), 252–286(p.252).



As for the future direction of media paratexts, Bucaria and Batchelor mention that news translation, book trailers, localisation of video games and content on the user interfaces of streaming platforms remain under-represented, and the data-driven research into the reception of localised paratexts in different cultural contexts could offer further insight on a methodological level.<sup>28</sup> The development of the concept “paratext”, as Peter Jonathan Feeth aptly points out, necessitates a movement away from Genette’s authorial intent.<sup>29</sup> In the meanwhile, it also shows the interdisciplinary interactions between literary studies and other fields, film and media studies in particular, thus enlarging the application of paratextual theory.

Paratext theory will be adopted in my research as it can offer more information about the different participants involved in the translation. Participants in this thesis refer to a wide range of players who contribute to the production, dissemination and consumption of the translations, such as literary translators, publishers, editors and reviewers. The role of participants has received considerable scholarly attention since the 1990s and its significance to translation studies has been discussed.

Juan C. Sager uses the term “agent” to refer to “the person who is in an intermediary position between a translator and an end user of translation”.<sup>30</sup> It is worth mentioning that both the translator and end user are included in the definition when he introduces his model of document production and reception. Sager draws on the speech act theory in linguistics and states that the agent is “at the beginning and the end of the speech act of translation”.<sup>31</sup> John Milton and Paul Bandia also include translators in their study of agents and highlight their role in cultural innovation by introducing new literary and philosophical concepts through translation. Milton and Bandia focus on two types of translators: those who have influenced literary trends by introducing new styles of translation, broadening the range of translations, or selecting new works to be translated; and those who have exerted cultural and political influence.<sup>32</sup> Like Sager, Milton and Bandia have done pioneering work to explore the agent’s role from a global perspective by synergising case studies within different cultural contexts.

Actor-network theory (ANT) originated by Bruno Latour attaches importance to the network of relationships between different participants. Buzelin argues that if applied in translation studies, Latour’s approach enables us to “grasp both the complexity and non-linear character of the translation process and the hybridity of translating agents”.<sup>33</sup> According to Latour, an actor is a semiotic definition which refers to something that

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<sup>28</sup> Chiara Bucaria and Kathryn Batchelor, ‘Media Paratexts and Translation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives’, *Translation Studies*, 3(2023), 323-330(p.328-29),

<sup>29</sup> Peter Jonathan Feeth, ‘Between Consciously Crafted and the Vastness of Context: Collateral Paratextuality and Its Implications for Translation Studies’, *Translation studies*, 3(2023), 1-17 (p.1).

<sup>30</sup> Juan C. Sager, *Language Engineering and Translation: Consequences of Automation* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), p. 311.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>32</sup> John Milton and Paul Bandia, *Agents of Translation* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), pp. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Hélène Buzelin, ‘Unexpected Allies: How Latour’s Network Theory Could Complement Analyses in Translation Studies’, *The Translator*, 2 (2005), 193-218 (p. 212).

acts or to which activity is granted by others. An actor can also be termed as “actant” in ANT, which can literally be anything as long as it is granted to be the source of action.<sup>34</sup> It can be inferred that an actor can be either human or non-human. But this open, inclusive but uncertain definition makes it difficult for researchers to distinguish the two kinds of actors. Compared with non-human actors, human actors who play a more active role in translation remain the research focus.

Drawing on Latour’s approach, Cristina Marinetti and Enza De Francisci aim to uncover various interactions among different kinds of human and non-human actors in translating performance cultures. They ultimately call for “a more agent- and network-driven type of research” that features performance contexts.<sup>35</sup> It is noteworthy that they use the terms “actors” and “agents” interchangeably when they discuss the role of human actors in the process of translation including censors, translators, directors, critics and publishers. Following their mode of thinking and concentrating on the nature rather than the name, the term “participants” in this thesis is synonymous with “agents of translation”, “human actors” or “key individuals” when discussing a great number of human actors at work in a literary context through paratextual analysis.

As translations published in book form will be examined in my case studies, Genette’s paratext theory will be mainly adopted and supplemented. Examining the paratexts of the English translations of Cha’s novels can uncover how different agents play their roles in shaping the translation and how they interact, cooperate or sometimes conflict with each other. Collaborative translation which highlights this aspect will be further explored in the case study of *Legends of Condor Heroes* in Chapter Eight. Collaborative translation in its narrow sense refers to two or more translators working together, which is also termed “co-translation”.<sup>36</sup> But as aforementioned, agents contributing to the collaborative work in a literary sphere may also include publishers, editors and others who bring the final translation to publication or even to the market, and it seems insufficient to only concentrate on the translators. In view of this, a broadened notion of collaborative translation will be adopted, which takes those who have an impact on the translation into consideration. Along with the emergence of online literature and the development of sophisticated technologies, online collaborative translation is occupying an important position in translation studies.<sup>37</sup> Multiple terms such as volunteer translation, user-generated translation, community translation and crowdsourcing are used to reveal different aspects of this activity. Since this thesis focuses on the published book-form translations of Cha’s novels, online collaborative translation is beyond its research scope.

A comparative study of paratexts of different translations will help reveal multiple

<sup>34</sup> Bruno Latour, ‘On Actor-network Theory: A Few Clarifications’, *Soziale Welt*, 4 (1996), 369-81(p. 373).

<sup>35</sup> Cristina Marinetti and Enza De Francisci, ‘Introduction: Translation and Performance Cultures’, *Translation Studies*, 3 (2022), 247-57 (p. 250).

<sup>36</sup> Anthony Cordingley and Celine Frigau Manning, *Collaborative Translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> For scholarly discussions about online collaborative translation, see representative works by Minako O’hagan (2011), Jeremy Munday (2012), Miguel A. Jiménez-Crespo (2017).

voices of the key individuals and the power dynamics among them, that is, who plays a more dominant role or is more visible in the translation. As the case study in Chapter Six shows, the author Louis Cha who had gained high prestige and considerable cultural capital also provided his peritexts for the translation, which established an intertextual relationship between the translation and the source text. In a broader sense, by investigating the paratexts of these translations which reflect the socio-cultural contexts diachronically, this thesis will arguably construct a translation history of Cha's novels, offering new insights into the dissemination of martial arts novels in the Anglophone world.

### 3.2 Polysystem Theory

Polysystem theory was proposed by the Israeli scholar Itamar Even-Zohar in the 1970s, drawing on ideas from Russian Formalism and Czech Structuralism. For the Formalists, literary works were regarded as part of a literary system, “a system of functions of the literary order which are in continual interrelationship with other orders”.<sup>38</sup> In this notion, literature is located within the social, cultural and historical framework. Even-Zohar, while working on a model for Israeli Hebrew literature, coined a new term “polysystem”, which is defined as:

a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent.<sup>39</sup>

This definition emphasises the interaction and interdependence between different systems, which are heterogeneous, dynamic and constantly changing. As Even-Zohar notes in an interview, the word “system” cannot be used to imply the meaning of the “complex, heterogeneous and dynamic” network of relation, so he adds the “poly-” prefix. In his view, established terms tend to contain older concepts, so new terms must be created to make the concepts behind them conspicuous, even though the old terms seem to suffice.<sup>40</sup>

The polysystem hypothesis is postulated for the study of a situation where a community has two kinds of literature or more so that it is possible to investigate those phenomena that were previously unnoticed or bluntly rejected such as children's literature, translated literature, and mass literary productions. As the polysystem hypothesis rejects value judgement for the selection of the objects of study, the historical study of literary polysystems cannot just confine itself to the masterpieces or the canonized

<sup>38</sup> Jurij Tynjanov, ‘On Literary Translation’, in *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structural Views*, ed. by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 66-78 (p. 72).

<sup>39</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, ‘Polysystem Theory’, *Poetics Today*, 1 (1979), 287-310 (p. 290).

<sup>40</sup> Huang Dexian 黃德先, ‘Duoyuan xitonglu shiyi zuohaer fangtanlu’ 多元系統論釋疑——佐哈爾訪談錄 [Clarifications of Polysystem Theory: An Interview with Even-Zohar], *Zhongguo fanyi* 中國翻譯, 2 (2006), 57-60 (pp. 57-58).

literature. Dynamic stratification exists within the polysystem and various strata are in a permanent struggle, so phenomena can be driven from the centre to the periphery or vice versa. In terms of the respective status of the various strata, some become canonized while others remain uncanonized. Normally, the centre of the whole polysystem is identical to the canonized system. Even-Zohar labels the models provided by the innovative system “primary” while those offered by the conservative system “secondary”, and he stresses that the two models are in a constant state of flux.<sup>41</sup>

Based on his polysystem hypothesis, Even-Zohar investigates translated literature. He further discusses the position of translated literature within the polysystem and the role of translation. Even-Zohar regards the translated works as elements of the target culture. Translated literature can be considered an “integral” and “most active” literary system and the position of translated literature within the literary polysystem is not fixed all the time.<sup>42</sup> When it maintains a central position, it actively participates in shaping the centre of the polysystem. Even-Zohar outlines three conditions when translated literature occupies the primary position: (1) when a literature is ‘young’, and in the process of being established; (2) when a literature is ‘peripheral’ or ‘weak’; (3) when a literature is experiencing turning points, crises or vacuums. In contrast, if the translated literature maintains a peripheral position, it becomes a peripheral system within the polysystem and usually employs secondary models. In this case, the translated literature becomes a major factor of conservatism as it adheres to norms which have been rejected by the newly established centre.

As a type of literature written for entertainment, martial arts novels have long been in a secondary position within the Chinese literary polysystem. The same holds true for Cha’s works, whose status is influenced by a multitude of social, political and economic factors. As Chapter Four will illustrate, the literary position of Cha’s novels has changed over time, thus enabling his works to attract increasing attention from both scholars and general readers. Nevertheless, compared to other conventional literary genres such as poems written in the Tang Dynasty and novels authored in the Qing Dynasty, Cha’s works have never gained a primary position. Instead, they remain secondary or peripheral in the Chinese literary polysystem.

It is through translation that Cha’s works are introduced to the Anglophone literary system. Once Cha’s works are translated and disseminated in the English-speaking world, they become a kind of translated literature in the target literary polysystem. Even-Zohar argues that translated literature can be regarded as a system in itself. Furthermore, co-systems of the target literature influence not only the selection of works for translation but also the translation norms, behaviours and policies of the translated literature.<sup>43</sup> In the case of Cha’s novels, the selection of works for translation

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, ‘The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem’, in *The Translation Studies Reader* 4th edn, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 191-96 (p. 192)

<sup>43</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, p. 191.

and the shaping of these translations are affected by other literary and non-literary systems, which will be detailed in each case study. Overall, Anglophone literary polysystem is more influential and powerful than its Chinese counterpart, which reveals unequal status between them. As Mok observes, the long-standing dominant position of Anglo-American literature has led to the extremely peripheral position of martial arts novels in English translation.<sup>44</sup> Mok's point applies to Cha's novels as well. Translating Cha's novels into English means bringing them from a minor literary polysystem to a major one.<sup>45</sup> Given the position of Cha's novels in Chinese literature and the disparity between the two literary polysystems, Cha's works in translation tend to make little difference to the target literature and thus assume a peripheral position.

Significantly, Even-Zohar argues that the position of the translated text affects the translators' translation strategy. Here "translation strategy" is a term used to describe the mental operations performed by a translator. More exactly, it is an overall orientation that a translator adopts when producing the translation, for example, towards "free" or "literal" translation, towards the source text or the target text, or towards domestication or foreignization. In Even-Zohar's view, when the translated literature occupies a central position in the literary polysystem, it actively participates in forming the centre of the polysystem and becomes an essential part of innovatory forces. On this occasion, translators are more likely to break conventions, thus producing a target text close to the original in terms of adequacy and showing the dominant textual relations of the original. By contrast, if the translated text remains in a peripheral position, it then constitutes a peripheral system within the polysystem and it is modelled according to the conventional norms by a dominant literary type in the target culture. In this situation, translated literature becomes part of conservative forces and translators tend to find the ready-made secondary models for the target text and their translations are usually non-adequate.<sup>46</sup> Even-Zohar's terms such as "adequacy" and "non-adequate" reflect the relationship between the translator, the source text and the target text in different situations. According to the position of translated texts, the translator decides whether he should move closer to the source text or the target text. This reminds us of Friedrich Schleiermacher's different methods of translation: "Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him".<sup>47</sup> But Even-Zohar makes his arguments based on the textual relations within the literary polysystem while Schleiermacher emphasises the interactions between the key actors in translation consisting of the author, the translator and the target reader. Moreover, Even-Zohar suggests that the translator's engagement with the source text is in a constantly changing state since the position of translated literature is not always fixed. Schleiermacher, on the contrary, insists that the translator ethically can only choose one of the two possibilities and should never combine them.

<sup>44</sup> Olivia Mok, 'Translational Migration of Martial Arts Fiction East and West', *Target*, 13 (2002), 81-102 (p. 94).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 195-96.

<sup>47</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'On the Different Methods of Translating', in *The Translation Studies Reader* 4th edn, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 51-71 (p. 56).

As Even-Zohar puts it, when translated literature occupies a peripheral position, the translator will make efforts to find the best ready-made secondary models to translate the text and produce a non-adequate translation.<sup>48</sup> The position of Cha's works in the target literature greatly conditions their translation strategies. While translators may adopt different strategies for different novels written by Cha, they are likely to produce non-adequate or target-oriented translations by adopting the existing models rather than create new, primary ones. For instance, Mok claims that English prose fiction has a long literary history that can offer her a full repertoire for crafting a new genre in the target language.<sup>49</sup> This indicates that Mok's translation draws on the target poetics instead of creating new models. Minford emphasises the ease of reading Cha's novels and he endeavours to enable the English-speaking readers to experience the pleasure that Cha's novels have given to millions of Chinese readers.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, Minford made efforts to make his translation accessible to the target readers, which is reflected in his selection of some literary forms to present the source text. To mention just a few, Minford abandoned the couplet-like title of each chapter that was employed by Cha, but chose to use one short sentence to summarise the main content of each chapter. As illustrated in Chapter Six, Minford condensed the source text by trans-editing so that his translation is more concise and quick-paced, which is in line with the writing norms of a novel in the target literature. Greatly influenced by Minford and published by the same publisher, Earnshaw's translation bears a strong resemblance to Minford's in terms of the layout. In a sense, Minford's translation has become a ready-made model for Earnshaw's translation. Earnshaw maintains that he simplified some elements of the story and the writing in order to make his translation more acceptable to the English-speaking readers.<sup>51</sup> It can be said that Earnshaw adopted a similar approach to conform to the reading habit and expectations of the target reader. Therefore, Earnshaw did not add new, innovative model to the target literary system, either. Holmwood stated in an interview that in terms of style, her translation was more like a fantasy, a literary genre that is familiar to the target readership. Holmwood added that she favoured the promotion words on the front cover "a Chinese *Lord of the Rings*".<sup>52</sup> Chen Lin and Dai Ruoyu's study finds that the translators followed the target narrative norms and made *Legends of the Condor Heroes* a fast-paced modern-looking English fantasy.<sup>53</sup> It could be argued that the translations to be studied in this thesis are distant from the source text in terms of adequacy. In Even-Zohar's words, "the dominant textual relations of the original" are not reproduced in translation.<sup>54</sup> The translators of Cha's novels prefer to choose the ready-made devices from the target literary repertoire rather than add new ones.

<sup>48</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', p.195-96.

<sup>49</sup> Olivia Mok, 'Martial Arts Fiction: Translational Migrations East and West' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Warwick, 1998), p. 202.

<sup>50</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. XIV.

<sup>51</sup> See <https://earnshaw.com/writings/books/the-book-the-sword> [accessed 9 April 2025].

<sup>52</sup> See [https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_2169168](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2169168) [accessed 9 April 2025].

<sup>53</sup> Chen Lin and Dai Ruoyu, 'Translator's Narrative Intervention in the English Translation of Jin Yong's *The Legend of Condor Heroes*', *Perspectives*, 6 (2022), 1043-1058 (p. 1043).

<sup>54</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, p.195.

Building on Even-Zohar's work and attempting to develop the descriptive branch of Translation Studies, Gideon Toury proposes "acceptability" to refine Even-Zohar's concept "non-adequate". Toury argues that a translated text can be placed between the two poles of adequacy and acceptability and identifying its position is "one of the main objects of translation analysis".<sup>55</sup> Toury links the concept of adequacy with his concept of norms, which refer to "the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community—as to what is right or wrong, adequate or inadequate—into performance of instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations".<sup>56</sup> From this definition, it can be observed that norms are specific to a society, a time period and a culture. Individuals including the translator understand norms through education and social interactions with others and thus may be aware of what behaviours are expected in a certain situation. Toury further explains that adequacy means the translation reflects the source text and its norms as well as the norms of the source language and culture at large while acceptability implies the translation conforms to the target norms and "shifts from the source text would be an inevitable price".<sup>57</sup> Among various norms that Toury puts forward, the initial norm is the basic or overall choice made by translators, who can subject themselves either to the norms realised in the source text (adequacy) or to the norms of the target language or culture (acceptability).<sup>58</sup> Though Even-Zohar and Toury approach the issue of adequacy/acceptability from different perspectives, they share the idea that adequacy is source culture-oriented while acceptability is target culture-oriented. The poles of adequacy and acceptability arguably constitute a continuum since in reality no translation is totally adequate or absolutely acceptable.

Even-Zohar also reminds us that the normal position of translated literature tends to be peripheral.<sup>59</sup> This is the case in the Anglophone literary system where "very few translations become bestsellers; very few are likely to be reprinted...very few translations are published in English".<sup>60</sup> The situation seemingly applies to martial arts novels in the English literary polysystem. Translators are thus likely to choose the existing literary models in the target culture to translate this genre and conform to the target literary norms, making their translations more easily accepted by the target readers. With both Even-Zohar and Toury's efforts, polysystem theory enables us to identify translated literature's position in the target literary system and explain the translation strategies that have been chosen by the translators. In this sense, translation strategies are not merely translators' personal choices, but are intricately intertwined with various literary, social and cultural factors.

The significance of polysystem theory to Translation Studies has been considerable.

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<sup>55</sup> Gideon Toury, *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980), p. 49.

<sup>56</sup> Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, 2nd edn (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012), p. 63.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', p. 195.

<sup>60</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 11.

First and foremost, it provides fresh ideas for key concepts. From Even-Zohar's point of view, translation is "no longer a phenomenon whose nature and borders are given once and for all, but an activity dependent on the relations within a certain cultural system".<sup>61</sup> This notion has widened the definition of translation itself. On a non-prescriptive basis, Even-Zohar defines translation within a broad cultural context and moves beyond the discussion about equivalence between the source and target text. As for the translated text, it is regarded as an entity that exists in the target polysystem in its own right. This target-oriented approach contributed to the large amount of descriptive works that examined the nature of target texts and paved the way for the development of descriptive translation studies, which was later expounded by Toury. Polysystem theory serves as a significant milestone in advancing the discipline of Translation Studies.

Edwin Gentzler assesses polysystem positively by highlighting that polysystem theory demonstrated a crucial advance for translation studies. First, the study of literature is linked with the study of social and economic forces of history. Second, Even-Zohar moves beyond the analysis of single texts. Instead, he studies multiple texts and the literary and cultural systems in which they function. Third, his notions of "equivalence" are contingent on the historical situation, thus freeing the disciplines from the constraints of previous theories.<sup>62</sup> Jeremy Munday acclaims polysystem theory as "an important move" in the developments in descriptive translation studies, as translated literature was mostly dismissed as a derivative form previously.<sup>63</sup> Susan Bassnett, in a similar vein, states that polysystem theory "changed the nature of translation analysis" and contributed to the great expansion in the field of Translation Studies. She adds that rather than being considered a marginal activity, translation has played a fundamental role in literary and cultural history.<sup>64</sup> Sharing Bassnett's view, Theo Hermans states that polysystem theory is able to include a considerable number of "traditionally neglected texts" and allows translation to be located in a much broader context of cultural history.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, polysystem theory has opened "so many avenues to researchers in translation studies".<sup>66</sup>

However, there are also some criticisms of polysystem theory which are outlined by Gentzler. The first problem is Even-Zohar's tendency to propose universals based on

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<sup>61</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', p. 196.

<sup>62</sup> Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, revised edn (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), pp. 119-23.

<sup>63</sup> Jeremy Munday, Sara Ramos Pinto and Jacob Blakesley, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 5th edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), p. 146.

<sup>64</sup> Susan Bassnett, 'The Meek or the Mighty: Reappraising the Role of the Translator', in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, ed. by Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), pp. 10-24 (p. 13).

<sup>65</sup> Theo Hermans, *Translation in Systems: Descriptive and Systemic Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999), p. 118.

<sup>66</sup> Susan Bassnett, 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies', in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp. 123-40 (p. 128).



very little evidence and sometimes his data analysis contradicts his hypothesis.<sup>67</sup> As most cases for the hypothesis deal with European translated literary systems,<sup>68</sup> this thesis offers new raw data from non-European contexts that could further test the validity of polysystem theory.

Another problem lies in Even-Zohar's reliance on the Formalist framework, which seems inappropriate for his evolving model. Gentzler points out that Even-Zohar's "uncritical" adoption of the Formalist framework perpetuates literary concepts such as "literariness" which is incompatible with his complex cultural systems. In addition, his notion of "literary facts" seems to contradict his argument that literary texts are culturally dependent. Focussing on the theoretical foundation of polysystem theory, Gentzler further states that Even-Zohar seldom relates texts to the "real conditions" of their production and in his analysis, the extraliterary elements are always found absent.<sup>69</sup> That said, it should be noted that Formalism in its late stage had realised the limitations of treating literature as a totally closed system. Tynjanov's idea that literature is in a continual interrelationship with other factors has indicated the interactions between the literary system and other systems. It is worth noticing that Even-Zohar has revised his theory twice: once in 1990 and the other in 2005.<sup>70</sup> In the latest version, Even-Zohar does not even mention "translation" once while in the main texts of the two previous versions, it occurs seven times. This change indicates that Even-Zohar expected his theory to gain a broader dimension and assume a more general nature. In the 1970s, polysystem theory was proposed to study language, literature and translation, and it has offered illuminating insights into translation studies. Then in the 1990s, it began to expand to a general theory of culture and attempted to enlarge its scope of application. Chang Nam Fung claims that these revisions and developments made by Even-Zohar have been unfortunately overlooked and received little attention.<sup>71</sup> But Chang did not provide convincing evidence for this argument. Chang's statement may be true in the Chinese context,<sup>72</sup> yet it cannot be overgeneralised or applied to

<sup>67</sup> Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, revised edn, p. 121.

<sup>68</sup> Even-Zohar discusses the translations of various literary works into French or German, and Russian translations of texts written in Hebrew in his 'Polysystem Theory', pp. 24-25. Toury examines how German, Russian and English literatures were translated into Hebrew in *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, pp. 161-68.

<sup>69</sup> Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* revised edn, p. 123.

<sup>70</sup> Even-Zohar's three versions of "Polysystem Theory" are as follows: 'Polysystem Theory', *Poetics Today* 1 (1979), 287-310; 'Polysystem Theory', *Polysystem Studies*, Special Issue of *Poetics Today*, 1 (1990), 9-26; 'Polysystem Theory (Revised)' in *Papers in Cultural Research* (Tel Aviv: Porter Chair of Semiotics, 2005), pp. 1-11.

<sup>71</sup> Chang Nam Fung, 'In Defence of Polysystem Theory', *Target*, 2 (2011), 311-47 (p. 343).

<sup>72</sup> After 2005 when the latest version was published, quite a number of Chinese scholars still refer to the second version of "Polysystem Theory" or just Chang Nam Fung's Chinese translation and paid little attention to the latest version. Representative studies include:

Qiao Meng 喬朦, 'Duoyuan xitonglun de shiyongxing fenxi yi wanqing fanyi wenxue weili' 多元系統論的適用性分析——以晚清翻譯文學為例 [An Analysis of the Applicability of Polysystem Theory: A Case Study of Translated Literature in the Late Qing Dynasty], *Ningxia daxue xuebao renwen shehui kexueban* 寧夏大學學報(人文社會科學版), 2 (2007), 180-83

Wu Yaowu 吳耀武, 'Cong duoyuan xitonglun kan dafenqi mima de yijie' 從多元系統論看《達·芬奇密碼》的譯介 [The Translation of *The Da Vinci Code* from Polysystem Theory], *Henan shifan daxue xuebao zheshue shehui kexueban* 河南師範大學學報(哲學社會科學版), 4 (2010), 211-13

Tan Min 譚敏 and Zhao Ning 趙寧, 'Cong duoyuan xitonglun shijiao dui ertong wenxue fanyi de chongxing shenshi' 從多元系統論視角對兒童文學翻譯的重新審視 [Re-examining the Translation of Children's Literature from the Perspective of Polysystem Theory], *Beijing hangkong hangtian daxue xuebao shehui*

other situations. As a matter of fact, the refinement of the theory has received considerable scholarly attention elsewhere. To mention a few, Jeremy Munday discusses all three versions in his chapter dedicated to systems theories.<sup>73</sup> Nitsa Ben-Ari argues that the revisions of the theory reflect that Even-Zohar attempts to integrate the cultural context in which literary works are produced and examine the dynamics of culture.<sup>74</sup> Mark Shuttleworth notes that though Even-Zohar did not abandon his polysystem framework, his later work is more concerned with cultural studies. Shuttleworth also suggests that Even-Zohar's earlier works can offer more insight into translation studies.<sup>75</sup>

Chang maintains that the major weakness of the theory is that it has not fully dealt with the correlations between the literary polysystem and other polysystems. He thus proposed an augmented version of the polysystem hypothesis in order to enlarge the application of polysystem theory in translation studies. Chang's macro-polysystem consists of a multiplicity of open, intersecting and overlapping polysystems, such as ideology, politics, literature and translation.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, Chang, through a case study of the Chinese translation of David Lodge's *Small World*, argues that polysystem theory with further development and other cultural theories of translation can be mutually enriching. These views treat translation as a cultural phenomenon, emphasise the "external politics" of translation and investigate the relations between translation and socio-cultural factors.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, polysystem theory has been widely used as a theoretical framework for plenty of case studies which deal with literary translation

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kexueban 北京航空航太大學學報 (社會科學版), 5 (2011), 95-98

Chen Hui 陳暉, 'Woguo nicai yijie mengya jieduan de chalusitela rushishuo yiben fenxi yi aiwen zu ohaer duoyuan xitonglun wei zhicheng' 我國尼采譯介萌芽階段的《查拉圖斯特如是說》譯本分析——以埃文-佐哈爾多元系統論為支撐 [An Analysis of the Translations of *Also sprach Zarathustra* in the Initial Stage of Translating and Introducing Nietzsche's Works from the Perspective of Even-Zohar's Polysystem Theory], *Hunan shifan daxue shehui kexue xuebao* 湖南師範大學社會科學學報, 3 (2013), 13 5-37

Zhao Dequan 趙德全, 'Duoyuan xitonglun shijiaoxia fanyi guihua yu yihua de buduichen' 多元系統論視角翻譯“歸化”與“異化”的不對稱 [The Asymmetry of "Domestication" and "Foreignization" in Translation from the Perspective of Polysystem Theory], *Hebei daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 河北大學學報(哲學社會科學版), 6 (2014), 99-103

Liu Jia 劉佳, 'Duoyuan xitonglun yu caozonglun dui fanyi wenxue xingxiang bianqian de chanshili' 多元系統論與操縱論對翻譯文學形象變遷的闡釋力 [The Explanatory Power of Polysystem Theory and Manipulation Theory in the Transformation of Images in Translated Literature], *Zhouzhou xuekan* 中州學刊, 7 (2017), 145-48

Liu Yuhong 劉雲虹, 'Fanyi dingwei yu fanyi chengzhangxing zhongguo wenxue waiyi yujingxia de duoyuan xitonglun zaisikao' 翻譯定位與翻譯成長性——中國文學外譯語境下的多元系統論再思考 [Translation Orientation and Translation Growth: Rethinking of Polysystem Theory in the Context of Chinese Literary Translation], *Waiguoyu* 外國語, 4 (2018), 94-100

<sup>73</sup> Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p.122.

<sup>74</sup> Nitsa Ben-Ari, 'An Open System of Systems: Itamar Even-Zohar and the Polysystem Theory', in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*, ed. by Carmen Millán and Francesca Bartrina (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp.144-50 (p. 147).

<sup>75</sup> Mark Shuttleworth, 'Polysystem Theory' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 3rd edn, ed. by Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 419-23 (p. 421).

<sup>76</sup> Chang Nam Fung, 'Towards a Macro-Polysystem Hypothesis', *Perspectives*, 8 (2000), 109-23 (p.118).

<sup>77</sup> Chang Nam Fung, 'Polysystem Theory: Its Prospect as a Framework for Translation Research', *Target*, 2 (2001), 317-32 (p. 329).

activities in different linguistic, historical and cultural contexts.<sup>78</sup>

It can be observed that the reason for the possibility of Chang's refinement lies in the theory's flexibility, inclusiveness and augmentation. Polysystem theory offered insights into descriptive translation studies and it led to the cultural turn in the discipline in the 1990s. Mark Shuttleworth concludes that from the perspective of polysystem theory, literature can be viewed not only as a collection of texts but also as a set of factors which govern the production, promotion and reception of these texts.<sup>79</sup> Munday has questioned whether the theory can be applied to other text types such as the translation of scientific texts.<sup>80</sup> However, as can be observed, Even-Zohar advanced his theory based on his experience of investigating literature and literary translation, and he has restricted its application to literature from the outset. He has never tried to apply his theory to scientific texts.

### 3.3 Reception Theory

Reception theory was a new paradigm of literary theory which can be viewed as a reaction to social, intellectual and literary developments in West Germany in the late 1960s. It was proposed by scholars at University of Konstanz, of whom Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser are prominent figures. According to the terminological distinction made by Robert C. Holub, reception theory refers to a general shift from the author and the work to the text and the reader while aesthetics of reception is concerned with Jauss's early theoretical framework.<sup>81</sup> Terry Eagleton, on the other hand, places more emphasis on the central role of the reader, as he states that different from the author-centred approach in the nineteenth century and the text-centred method exemplified by New Criticism at the early stage of the twentieth century, reception theory draws the attention to the reader.<sup>82</sup> Reception theory attaches great importance to the role of the reader as well as the interaction between the reader and the text during the reading process. In other words, the reader tends to make a whole set of inferences when approaching a text. As the reading process continues, a considerable number of activities are involved, such as constructing hypotheses, making connections, filling in the gaps of either meaning or plot in the text, and testing the reader's own predictions. Reception theory suggests that the meaning of the text is not dictated by the author or merely hidden in the text but it is generated through the dynamic process of reading.

The emergence of reception theory can be viewed as a reaction to the methods of reading and teaching literature in the Anglophone world in the 1970s. Jauss sketches

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<sup>78</sup> For more case studies guided by polysystem theory, see Sirkku Aaltonen (1996), Peter Fawcett (2001), Philippe Codde (2003), Friedrike Von Schwerin-High (2004) and Gaby Thomson (2005).

<sup>79</sup> Mark Shuttleworth, 'Polysystem Theory', p. 420.

<sup>80</sup> Jeremy Munday, Sara Ramos Pinto and Jacob Blakesley, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, p. 149.

<sup>81</sup> Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), p. XII.

<sup>82</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Anniversary, 2nd edn (Oxford; Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 64.

the history of literary methods and points out that previous literary history either treated the individual works in chronological order or arranged its materials according to the chronology of great authors.<sup>83</sup> In each situation, the reader's role was not given sufficient attention. Therefore, he attempted to add the dimension of reception and influence to literary studies in order to bridge the gap between literature and history.<sup>84</sup> Inspired by Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics, Jauss coined the term "horizon of expectations", a concept which refers to readers' general expectations of genre, style or form to which the new work belongs.<sup>85</sup> Readers approach a text with the knowledge and experience that they have already gained either in daily life or through their interactions with other texts. It is evident that their previous knowledge and experience will help arouse a sense of familiarity for their reading. Furthermore, Jauss adopts a dynamic, open and changing view of the readers' horizon of expectations. He notes that the disparity between the given horizon of expectations and a new work, also named "aesthetic distance", can result in "change of horizons".<sup>86</sup> A new text may not evoke a sense of familiarity among the readers and hence the readers need to revisit their previous horizon, move on from their familiar experiences and then gain a new horizon. Change of horizons implies the tension between the reader and the work: the reader may challenge his expectations, constantly engaging himself in a dialogue with the work. Change of horizons can lead to two results among the readers: some are willing to experience the challenge and enlarge their horizon of expectation whilst others may simply refuse the change and still adhere to their previous horizon. Jauss also discusses horizon of expectations diachronically. Jauss especially points out that the aesthetic distance of a work that is experienced by early readers may disappear for later readers.<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, horizon of expectations is subject to temporal and historical change. A later generation of readers may reveal a very different range of meanings contained in the same work and revalue the work accordingly. Therefore, horizon of expectations is a changing and fluid concept that depends on myriads of factors, such as historical periods, literary conventions or norms, and different groups of readers.

If Jauss adopted a macro-perspective to construct a new kind of literary history by situating a literary work within its historical context and exploring the shifting relations between the context and the changing horizons of its readers,<sup>88</sup> then Iser employed a micro approach and paid more attention to the interaction between the text and the reader. In Iser's view, the text leaves many things unexplained for the reader and the interaction between a literary work's structure and its readers is of vital importance. Enlightened by Ingarden's idea of indeterminacy, Iser proposed the concept of blank, which means "a vacancy in the overall system of a text".<sup>89</sup> Blank distinguishes literary

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<sup>83</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Anniversary, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 72.

<sup>89</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 182.

texts from everyday use of language and it plays a crucial role in combining different segments of the literary texts. During the reading process, readers employ various means to fill in the blanks, link the schemata and perspectives together, and finally obtain their whole perception of the work.

In Translation Studies, Eugene Nida's functional equivalence states that "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message".<sup>90</sup> This receptor-oriented approach stresses the target readers' response which works as a criterion for the quality of a translation and prioritises the strategy of fluency to meet the needs of the target readers. Hans J. Vermeer's Skopos theory in the 1970s further challenged the status of the source text. The overriding and paramount rule of the theory is that the translation is determined by its purpose.<sup>91</sup> The translation is thus made meaningful by its receivers who will use it for a certain purpose. Ernst-August Gutt who favours relevance theory claims that translation is a communication based on a model of inference and interpretation. The communicator expects that the hearer can derive adequate contextual effects without spending unnecessary effort.<sup>92</sup> Gutt suggests that the cooperation between the communicator and receiver is of crucial importance: the communicator provides the receiver with communicative clues while the receiver must actively participate in the communication. It can be observed that the needs and expectations of the target readers are taken into consideration in these approaches.

Reception theory has exerted a considerable impact on descriptive translation studies (DTS), whose focus is the function of the translated texts in the target culture, and it is DTS that makes the concept of reception relevant to Translation Studies. In line with Jauss's and Iser's theories, Brems and Pinto divide the study of reception within Translation Studies into two kinds: one focuses on the reception of translations at a social level, namely how translations are received on a supra-individual level; the other deals with the reception of translation at a more individual level, which studies the real readers and how specific translation strategies affect readers' response.<sup>93</sup> Specifically, they point out that when Even-Zohar discusses the position of translated literature in the literary polysystem, his ideas such as "primary" and "secondary" are related to Jauss's "aesthetic distance".<sup>94</sup> Their argument also indicates that reception theory which originated in literary studies could prove useful if applied to literary translation.

Drawing on reception theory, my research examines how the English translations of Cha's novels have been received by the target readers. Reviews from various sources including newspapers, websites, or journal articles, can serve as an important source

<sup>90</sup> Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 159.

<sup>91</sup> Katherina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer, *Towards a General Theory of Translational Action* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1984), p. 94.

<sup>92</sup> Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1991), p. 32.

<sup>93</sup> Elke Brems and Sara Ramos Pinto, 'Reception and Translation' in *Handbook of Translation Studies Volume 4*, ed. by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Johan Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013), pp. 142-47 (p. 143).

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

for studying the reception as they represent different reactions to the text. Varied horizons of expectations can cast light on the different receptions of Cha's works between the source and the target culture. Reviews in different periods can also reflect readers' change of attitudes toward martial arts novels, which enables an examination of reception diachronically. Based on these reviews, reasons for the change, which may be related to the social, ideological, or political factors in the target culture, can also be investigated, thus connecting the texts with their broad context of reception. When it comes to the specific reading process, some reviews may reflect how the readers engage with Cha's novels by filling in their blanks, namely, the vacancy in the text. Regarding the blanks in the text, a series of questions can be raised: have the blanks such as deliberately created enigmas or discontinuities in Cha's novels also been retained in translation? If not, what are the reasons? What strategies have the readers employed to fill in the blanks? Reception theory enables us to examine the reception of Cha's novels in the English-speaking world from two aspects—their overall reception which is largely influenced by the horizon of expectations of the target readers, and the readers' specific comprehension of Cha's works such as the interpretation of the characters or plots during the process of blank filling.

It should be emphasised that the three theories discussed in this chapter are not so clear-cut. Instead, they overlap with each other and their boundaries are sometimes blurred. Paratexts provided by the translator will be examined to discuss the active role that the translators have played in disseminating Cha's novels. The translators' paratexts can also be viewed as a translation strategy that the translators employ to facilitate the reception of their works among the target readers. Reviews from the target readers are an essential type of paratexts surrounding the translated texts. Meanwhile, they also provide key information about the reception of these translations. As will be shown in later chapters, both paratexts and the translators' translation strategies play an essential role in influencing the reception of Cha's novels. By integrating the three theories, the theoretical framework will contribute to broadening the research scope and offering fresh and multi-dimensional insights into the English translation of martial arts novels.

## Chapter Four Louis Cha and His Martial Arts Novels

This chapter explores the dissemination of Cha's novels in China in the twentieth century. The first section deals with the evolving literary position of Cha's novels which enabled them to gain a wide readership. It then discusses Cha's revision of his works, which has contributed to the elevation of the novels' literary position. The second section examines the circulation of Cha's novels from Hong Kong to Mainland China, a vital stage in their dissemination in the source culture. The last section explores reasons for their popularity, focussing particularly on the novels' language and content.

### 4.1 The Position of Cha's Novels in Chinese Literature

Different views exist regarding the literary position of Cha's novels. Yan Jiayan, a literary critic, argues that Cha's martial arts novels have been viewed as either a form of low-brow popular literature or high-brow literature connected with Chinese culture.<sup>1</sup> The position of a literary work tends to influence its readership and reception. A clarification of these differences is necessary to better understand the relationship between Cha's novels and their readers, and it will lay the foundations for further discussions about their dissemination in the source culture.

#### 4.1.1 Two Opposing Views

Cha's novels are highly valued by some scholars. To name but a few, the critic Liu Zaifu asserts that Cha's works occupy a vital position in the history of twentieth-century Chinese literature, as they have allowed native literature to thrive again, representing a free writing spirit and contributing considerably to the vernacular literature.<sup>2</sup> Yan Jiayan, by situating Cha's novels in the literary context of the twentieth century, concludes that Cha's novels are a "quiet literary revolution", as they have transformed the traditional views about knight-errantry, innovated traditional writing methods and absorbed Chinese cultural elements.<sup>3</sup> Han Yunbo holds the view that Cha's novels are a remarkable achievement for the martial arts novel judging from their structure, which serves as a complex narrative mechanism.<sup>4</sup> Fang Zhong argues that the status of literary

<sup>1</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jinyong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Liu Zaifu 劉再復, 'Jinyong xiaoshuo zai ershi shiji zhongguo wenxueshi shang de diwei' 金庸小說在二十世紀中國文學史上的地位 [The Position of Jin Yong's Novels in the 20th Century Chinese Literary History], *Dangdai zuojia pinglun* 當代作家評論, 5 (1998), 19-24 (p. 24).

<sup>3</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, 'Zaitan jinyong xiaoshuo yu wenxue geming' 再談金庸小說與文學革命 [Revisiting Jin Yong's Novels and the Literary Revolution], *Shanxi daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexue ban* 山西大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), 1 (2004), 5-10 (p. 5).

<sup>4</sup> Han Yunbo 韓雲波, 'Cong qianjinyong kan jinyong xiaoshuo de lishi diwei' 從“前金庸”看金庸小說的歷史地

works is in constant flux, and the classic position of Cha's novels has been acknowledged by the literary academy in China.<sup>5</sup> These scholars emphasise the literary values of Cha's novels, which they see as having raised the status of both Cha's works and martial arts novels more generally.

Parallel with this high status is the inclusion of Cha's novels in works of literary history in the twentieth century. In 1996, excerpts of Cha's *Legends of the Condor Heroes* were selected for *Bainian zhongguo wenxue jingdian* 百年中國文學經典 (*Classics of Chinese Literature in the 20th Century*).<sup>6</sup> As the title suggests, Cha's novels have become part of classic literature. This contrasts sharply with the idea that martial arts novels have been marginalized or excluded from the history of Chinese literature for a long time, which is indicated by Li Yong and Li Ou.<sup>7</sup> In 2004, Chapter 41 of *Tianlong babu* 天龍八部 (*The Semi-gods and the Semi-devils*) was selected into a Chinese textbook for senior high school students, which demonstrates that Cha's works have now been acknowledged by the Ministry of Education in Mainland China. Cha's novels have been regarded as suitable to develop students' literary tastes. The textbook appears to acknowledge the high status of Cha's works and further enables them to gain a wide potential readership.

There exists, however, the opposite view that Cha's novels have little value and cannot be considered as classic Chinese literature. Yan Lieshan depreciates Cha's works as "spiritual opium", which only makes readers mentally weak along with the exciting reading experience, and he appeals to readers to ignore the novels.<sup>8</sup> Wang Binbin claims that Cha's works are still a kind of advanced popular fiction, more like cultural fast food, which is under the strong influence of commercial culture, and they have too many artistic faults. He denies that "Jin Yong Studies", namely research into Cha's novels, can be compared with that of *Hong Lou Meng* 紅樓夢 (*A Dream of Red Mansions*).<sup>9</sup> More vehement criticism comes from Wang Shuo, who labels Cha's novels as "one great vulgarity". Wang also points out that the plot in Cha's novels is repetitive, the style is unsophisticated and argues that the feuds and enmities are the only things that keep the plot moving along. Wang maintains that Cha has fabricated unreal images of the Chinese people which are presented to the world.<sup>10</sup> These

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位 [On the Historical Position of Jin Yong's Novels by Examining the Pre-Jin Yong Period], *Zhejiang xuekan* 浙江學刊, 2 (2017), 76-87 (p. 85).

<sup>5</sup> Fang Zhong 方忠, 'lun wenxue de jingdianhua yu zhongguo xiandai wenxueshi de chonggou' 論文學的經典化與中國現代文學史的重構 [On the Canonization of Literature and Reconstruction of the History of Modern Chinese Literature], *Jianghai xuekan* 江海學刊, 3 (2005), 189-93 (p. 192).

<sup>6</sup> Xie Mian 謝冕 and Qian Liqun 錢理群, *Bainian wenxue jingdian di liu juan* 百年文學經典 第6卷 [Literary Classic in a Century Volume 6] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996)

<sup>7</sup> Li Yong 李勇 and Li Ou 李歐, '20 shiji wuxia xiaoshuo de wenxueshi shuxie' 20 世纪武侠小说的文学史书写 [Writing the Literary History of Martial Arts Novels in the Twentieth Century], *Hebei shifan daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 河北师范大学学报 (哲学社会科学版), 6 (2009), 92-97 (p. 92).

<sup>8</sup> Yan Lieshan 鄢烈山, 'Jujue Jin Yong' 拒絕金庸 [Rejecting Jin Yong], *Nanfang Zhoumo* 南方週末, 2 December 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Wang Binbin 王彬彬, 'Hongxue lixue jinxue' 紅學 李學 金學 [Hong Lou Meng Studies, Li Zicheng Studies, Jin Yong Studies], *Zhonghua dushu bao* 中華讀書報, 31 December 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Wang Shuo 王朔, 'Wo kan Jin Yong' 我看金庸 [Jin Yong in My Eyes], *Zhongguo qingnian bao* 中國青年報, 1 November 1999.



commentators consider Cha's novels as no more than popular literature. However, most of them are popular reviewers rather than academic researchers. Their views are no more than personal ideas which are highly subjective and eye-catching, and they are mainly published in newspapers such as *Nanfang Zhoumo* 南方週末 (*Southern Weekend*) and *Zhongguo qingnian bao* 中國青年報 (*China Youth Daily*), rather than academic journals. Wang Binbin's newspaper article, which was later collected into his book on literary criticism, only devotes one short paragraph to the discussion of Cha's works. What these reviewers share is that they do not substantiate their arguments with enough evidence. For example, Wang Binbin never elaborates on the so-called faults of Cha's works. Wang Shuo claims that he was given a seven-volume *Tianlong babu*, but stopped reading before he finished the first volume, yet all editions available are five-volume. Thus, Wang Shuo's claim is quite questionable based on his seemingly unreal reading experience. A common thread within these remarks is that Cha's novels are regarded as popular literature with low literary values, thus occupying a low position in Chinese literature.

### 4.1.2 Exploring the Literary Position of Cha's Novels in the Process of Revision

The two opposing views focus on how to classify Cha's novels and evaluate their position in Chinese literature. The existing view seems to be that classic literature enjoys a high literary position while popular literature has a low position. It could be argued that the literary position of Cha's novels has influenced their dissemination and reception. Cha has revised his novels twice during his lifetime, and his revision may shed light on the literary position of his works.

Cha's revisions changed the means by which his novels were disseminated and indeed attracted more readers. Currently, there are three editions of his novels: the first version serialised in the newspapers in Hong Kong from his first novel *Shujian enchou lu* in the newspaper *Xin Wanbao* in 1959 to the last *The Deer and the Cauldron* in *Mingbao* in 1972; the revised versions published in book form by Hong Kong's Ming Ho Press in 1976, Taiwan's Yuan-Liou Publishing House in 1980, and Beijing's Sanlian Shudian press in 1994; the new revised edition published by Hong Kong's Ming Ho Press in 2005, Taiwan's Yuan-Liou Publishing House in 2006, and Guangzhou Publishing House in 2005.

In addition, some historic paintings from museums, sculptures or calligraphies were added to the editions published by Ming Ho Press and Yuan Liou Publishing House, which implied that the characters, plots and contexts in Cha's novels were closely connected with Chinese history and culture and hinted at greater depth in his work. The revised edition did not add any major changes to the plot, but polished the style of the old edition. Li Yijian argues that the revision has attained a new artistic level, and removed drawbacks of the old edition such as tediousness and disconnectedness. Li

views the revision as a process of canonizing popular literature,<sup>11</sup> which shows that the status of Cha's novels has changed through the revision process. The revised edition has attracted more readers in China due to its improvement in terms of both form and content. If Cha's first revision has canonized Cha's serialised novels in the newspapers, his second revision can be interpreted as Cha's efforts to consolidate the canonized literary status that his novels have gained and further exert their influences in the source culture. By the time he revised his novels for the second time, Cha and his works were already well-known in the Chinese community.

It seems that once Cha's novels were published in book form, debates about their literary position emerged. As Yan Jiayan states, both popular literature and classic literature can produce masterpieces.<sup>12</sup> Yan implies the interchangeability between the two kinds of literature. For example, *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Shuihu Zhuan* 水滸傳 (*The Water Margin*) were developed and refined out of popular literature or other forms, such as story-telling and theatre performances. These novels were regarded as low-brow literature when they first appeared. As readers' tastes and literary criticism changed over time, the literary positions of these works did not remain settled. In a similar vein, Cha's novels work in this way. They transcend the boundaries established by critics between popular literature and classic literature, hence a reconsideration of their status is needed.

## 4.2 The Dissemination of Cha's Novels from Hong Kong to Mainland China

Since the publication of the revised versions, Louis Cha's novels have attracted considerable numbers of Chinese readers and have been described as "the common language of Chinese around the world".<sup>13</sup> So far, more than 300 million copies in Chinese have been sold worldwide.<sup>14</sup> Ann Huss and Jianmei Liu state that the dissemination of Cha's novels in the Chinese world has been an integral part of the "Jin Yong phenomenon", namely the popularity of his novels and related products such as films, televisions, comic books and video games.<sup>15</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter One, after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, martial arts novels were banned by the communist party, which viewed this literary genre as backward, feudal and reactionary. During the Great Proletarian

<sup>11</sup> Li Yijian, 'Rewriting' Jin Yong's Novels into the Canon: A Consideration of Jin Yong Novels as Serialised Fiction', in *The Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History* ed. by Huss Ann and Jianmei Liu (Youngstown, New York: Cambria Press), pp. 73-83 (p. 75).

<sup>12</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jinyong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], p. 127.

<sup>13</sup> See the blurb on the cover of the second Yuan-Liou edition of Jin Yong's works.

<sup>14</sup> Zheng Sanbo 鄭三波 and Tang Xiaodie 唐小堞, 'Jin Yong de shangye bantu: shujuan zhujie huangjin wu' 金庸的商業版圖：書卷鑄就黃金屋 [Jin Yong's Commercial Empire: Books Builds a Golden House], *Chongqing shangbao* 重慶商報, 1 November 2018, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ann Huss and Jianmei Liu, *The Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History* (Youngstown, New York: Cambria Press, 2007), p. 2.

Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), faced with foreign isolation and confrontation, literature in Mainland China barely interacted with literature in the then British colony Hong Kong. This situation did not change until 1978 when China adopted an opening-up and reform policy. Deng Xiaoping, who proposed the policy, admitted that he enjoyed reading Cha's novels when he met Cha in 1981.<sup>16</sup> This meeting had an impact on the dissemination of Cha's works, as bans on Cha's works were soon lifted. Almost at the same time, the journal *Wulin* 武林 (Martial Arts Forest) in Guangzhou serialised Cha's *Shediao yingxiongzhuan* 射雕英雄傳 (*Legends of the Condor Heroes*), and this was the first time that Cha's works appeared in authorised publication.<sup>17</sup> Cha then chose to involve himself in Mainland-Hong Kong politics and was selected as a member of the Hong Kong Basic Law drafting committee in 1985. He also worked in the Preparatory Committee set up by the Chinese government in 1995 to monitor the return of Hong Kong to China.<sup>18</sup> These activities not only made him a patriotic celebrity in China but also contributed to the dissemination of his novels. Most of Cha's novels which circulated in China in the 1980s were pirated ones with low-quality designs and full of typographical errors. Some writers even wrote under the pen name of Jin Yong to capitalise on his popularity. Cha mentioned in the preface of his works that he finally authorised Sanlian Shudian in Beijing to publish his works in the 1990s in order to prevent this.<sup>19</sup> Piracy and counterfeiting reflect that Cha's works had become popular in Mainland China in the 1980s, and according to Huang Xiaoyan's research, such activities promoted their dissemination unexpectedly.<sup>20</sup>

General readers in Mainland China in the 1980s were eager to experience different forms of literature beyond the limit of socialist works. Communist literature aimed to serve the nation and revolution, and had been the dominant form of literature for a long time. Communist literature was, in Itamar Even-Zohar's words, experiencing a turning point and its models were no longer tenable for the younger generation.<sup>21</sup> Cha's novels, representative of the commercial and popular culture, filled the literary vacuum in time, and added freshness and vitality to Chinese literature which was in great need of changes. Cha's readers in China, based on Yan Jiayan's survey, cover a wide range: from scientists to college professors, from government officials to ordinary citizens, with different levels of education, literary tastes and social backgrounds.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Kong Chigeng 孔遲耕, 'Jinyong yanzhong de dengxiaoping' 金庸眼中的鄧小平 [Deng Xiaoping in Jin Yong's Eyes], *Dengxiaoping yanjiu* 鄧小平研究, 4 (2019), 116-19 (p. 119).

<sup>17</sup> Li Yun 李雲, 'Maixiang jingdian de tujing jingyong xiaoshuore zai dalu: 1976-1999' 邁向“經典”的途徑——“金庸小說熱”在大陸:1976-1999 [The Path to Becoming Classics: “The Popularity of Jin Yong's Novels” in Mainland China (1976-1999)], *Hainan shifan daxue xuebao shehui kexue ban* 海南師範大學學報 (社會科學版), 3 (2008), 1-8 (p. 2).

<sup>18</sup> Fu Guoyong 傅國湧, *Jinyong Zhuan* 金庸傳 [The Biography of Jin Yong] (Beijing: Shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 2003), p. 514.

<sup>19</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shujian enchou lu* 書劍恩仇錄 [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge] (Beijing: sanlian shudian, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Huang Xiaoyan 黃曉燕, 'Jinyong xiaoshuo jingdianhua yanjiu' 金庸小說經典化研究 [A Study on the Canonization of Jin Yong's Novels] (unpublished doctoral thesis, Zhejiang University, 2021)

<sup>21</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem' in *The Translation Studies Reader* ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 192-97 (p. 194).

<sup>22</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jinyong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], p. 3.

The trajectory from Hong Kong to Mainland China reveals how Cha's novels attracted increasing numbers of readers. Political and economic factors played a significant role, though other factors, such as Cha's own efforts and the literary context in Mainland China, are also involved. The dissemination made Cha's novels widely known in the broader Chinese community.

### 4.3 Reasons for the Popularity of Cha's Novels

Existing studies have explored the reasons for Cha's novels' popularity from different perspectives, including communication studies,<sup>23</sup> cultural politics,<sup>24</sup> and aesthetics.<sup>25</sup> Zhou Xiaohong states that with the social and economic development after 1978 emerged the middle class which promoted China's urbanisation and modernism.<sup>26</sup> Zhou also attaches importance to this group's role in developing the production and dissemination of mass culture.<sup>27</sup> The middle class has contributed significantly to Cha's popularity in terms of readers' purchase power, as a book obviously costs more than a newspaper. While these studies provide extratextual explanations, the following section focuses on the textual aspects of Cha's novels. As literary works, their popularity primarily stems from the texts themselves.

Cha's unique language has played a significant role in the popularity of his works. Olivia Mok refers to Cha's language as "pseudo-archaic", that is, Cha writes in the vernacular which inclines towards the classical. This kind of language serves as a convenient vehicle for expressing philosophical and religious thoughts.<sup>28</sup> Mok's remark reveals that Cha's language is a variant of the vernacular in nature. His language is quite accessible to modern readers, who can comprehend his novels without too much difficulty. Li Tuo relates Cha's writing with the history and development of modern Chinese, and concludes that his writing does not follow the orthodox tradition or the mainstream of modern Chinese. Li argues that Cha transforms the old-style vernacular and creates a form of vernacular writing distinct from contemporary Chinese.<sup>29</sup> Li emphasises Cha's creativity in language use and its uniqueness which is suitable to present various aspects of Chinese culture. Both Mok and Li agree that Cha's works

<sup>23</sup> Zhou Liping 周麗萍, 'Jinyong xiaoshuo liuxing de chuanboxue fenxi' 金庸小說流行的傳播學分析 [An Analysis of the Popularity of Jin Yong's Novels from a Communication Perspective], *Jiaying xueyuan xuebao* 嘉興學院學報, 2 (2008), 32-36 (p. 32).

<sup>24</sup> Chen Shuo 陳碩, *Jindian zhizao jinyong yanjiu de wenhua zhengzhi* 經典製造 金庸研究的文化政治 [The Making of the Classics: The Cultural Politics in Jin Yong Studies] (Guilin: Guanxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> Shi Qinghua 史慶華, 'Jinyong xiaoshuo de shenmei yiqu tanxi' 金庸小說的審美意趣探析 [An Analysis of the Aesthetic Appeal in Jin Yong's Novels], *Liaoning gongcheng jishu daxue xuebao shehui kexueban* 遼寧工程技術大學學報(社會科學版), 4 (2003), 64-66 (p. 64).

<sup>26</sup> Zhou Xiaohong 周曉虹, 'Zhongchan jieji yu zhongguo shehui de gaige kaifang' 中產階級與中國社會的改革開放 [The Middle Class and the Reform and Opening-up of Chinese Society], *Tansuo yu zhengming* 探索與爭鳴, 7 (2008), 8-10 (p. 8).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2018), p. XXIV.

<sup>29</sup> Li Tuo, 'The Language of Jin Yong's Writing: A New Direction in the Development of Modern Chinese', in *The Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History*, eds by Huss Ann and Jianmei Liu (Youngstown, New York: Cambria Press), pp.39-54 (p. 44).

have attracted a wide readership because of their accessible language, which nevertheless is not lacking in linguistic elegance. This kind of language, combined with Cha's command of classic Chinese literature, helped to create the special atmosphere of his novels. Shen Yanhua argues that this atmosphere, based on Cha's command of classic literature, accords with the aesthetic view held by most Chinese readers.<sup>30</sup> In addition, Cha had worked as a scriptwriter for a film company under the pen name of Lin Huan at an early stage of his writing career, which helped him to create strong visual effects, as can be seen in the fight scenes which have a filmlike quality. Through quantitative statistics, Liu Ying discovered that Cha achieved his filmlike effects by his frequent use of verbs.<sup>31</sup> Dai Ruoyu considers that the description of fighting scenes with strong visual effects is a distinctive feature of Cha's novels. Dai also uses examples to demonstrate that Cha presents martial arts moves to his readers similar to slow motion in a film.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the strength of Cha's language lies in at least two aspects: its accessibility to general readers and its filmlike style.

The content of Cha's novels covers various aspects of Chinese life and society. Cha's novels engage with a wide range of historical periods in China from the Warring States Period (475 BC - 221 BC) in *Yuenü Jian* 越女劍 (*Sword of Yue Maiden*) to the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) in *Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記 (*The Deer and the Cauldron*). Song Weijie summarises that the vast geographical areas described in Cha's novels include the south, the central plains, marginal areas beyond the Great Wall and the imperial capital.<sup>33</sup> Liu Weiying and Wang Li discuss Cha's novels in terms of different themes such as gratitude and revenge, romance and treasure-seeking.<sup>34</sup> Cha also includes traditional Chinese literature in his novels, typical of which are the Tang and Song poems, *Analects of Confucius*, and *Daodejing*. The scope of his novels is not just confined to martial arts, but extends to other areas of Chinese culture, including calligraphy and painting. As a whole, the content of Cha's novels seeks to construct an image of China, which is, in Tian Xiaofei's words, a fantasy world that is distinctly Chinese.<sup>35</sup> Tian implies that this image is based on elements reminiscent of Chinese historical, literal and cultural traditions. It should be noted that this image is a utopia where both the individual and

<sup>30</sup> Shen Yanhua 沈燕華, 'Jinyong xiaoshuo de shenmei yiyu' 金庸小說語言的審美意蘊 [The Aesthetic Implications of Language in Jin Yong's Novels], *Xinan mingzu daxue xuebao* 西南民族大學學報, 10 (2004), 262-65 (p. 262).

<sup>31</sup> Liu Ying 劉穎 and Xiao Tianjiu 肖天久, 'Jinyong yu gulong xiaoshuo jiliniang fenggexue yanjiu' 金庸與古龍小說計量風格學研究 [A Comparison between Jin Yong's Novels and Gu Long's from the Perspective of Quantitative Stylistics], *Qinghua daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 清華大學學報(哲學社會科學版), 5 (2014), 135-47 (p. 142).

<sup>32</sup> Dai Ruoyu 戴若愚 and Chen Lin 陳林, 'Shede zhidao lun haoyuqing shediao yingxiongzhuan yingyizhong shanjiande heguixing' 捨得之道:論郝玉青《射雕英雄傳》英譯中刪減的合規性 [The Art of Deletion: The Compliance of Anna Holmwood's Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* with Translation Norms], *Waiguo yuwen* 外國語文, 3 (2019), 117-23 (p. 120).

<sup>33</sup> Song Weijie, 'Jin Yong's Methods of Imagining China', *Chinese Literature Today*, 2 (2019), 77-83 (p. 78).

<sup>34</sup> Liu Weiying 劉衛英 and Wang Li 王立, *Jinyong xiaoshuo muti ji zhongwai bijiao yanjiu* 金庸小說母題及中外比較研究 [Themes in Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels and A Comparison between China and the West] (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Tian Xiaofei, 'The Ship in a Bottle: The Construction of an Imaginary China in Jin Yong's Fiction' in *The Jin Yong Phenomenon: Chinese Martial Arts Fiction and Modern Chinese Literary History*, ed. by Huss Ann and Jianmei Liu (Youngstown, New York: Cambria Press), pp. 219-40 (p. 221).

the group can seek psychological comfort.<sup>36</sup> In China, the image has arguably attracted readers with different values and beliefs, and has become the main charm of Cha's novels.

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<sup>36</sup> Song Weijie 宋偉傑, *Cong yule xingwei dao wutuobang chongdong jin yong xiaoshuo zai jiedu* 從娛樂行為到烏托邦衝動 金庸小說再解讀 [From Entertainment Activity to Utopian Impulse: Reinterpreting Jin Yong's Novels] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1999), p. 80.

## Chapter Five: An Early Translation

### 5.1 Introduction

#### 5.1.1 A Brief Introduction to *Xueshan Feihu*

*Xueshan Feihu*, like Cha's other novels, first appeared as a newspaper serial in 1959 and was published as a single volume later. It consists of ten chapters, and tells a story about vendetta which involves the offspring of four families. The novel is set in the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) when Li Zicheng tried to overthrow the Ming Emperor. Wu Sangui was a general dispatched by the Ming Emperor to fight against the Manchus. However, Wu opened the gates to the Manchus and then joined Manchu forces to fight against Li. Li was defeated and retreated to Jiugong Mountain in Wuchang Prefecture. Li, protected by one of his bodyguards Hu, managed to escape and then disguised himself as a monk until he passed away. However, the other three bodyguards Miao, Fan and Tian misunderstood that Hu betrayed Li and killed him. Therefore, endless fighting and revenge happened among the descendants of the four bodyguards. Another thread through the story is that different parties attempt to claim possession of the treasure left by Li Zicheng. The treasure can be found with the help of Li's poniard and map.

The novel has a unique kind of narration that cannot be found in other works by Cha. The main characters involved in the vendetta do not appear directly in the text. The vendetta is told by different people from different perspectives. One character's story may be repeated, continued, supplemented or even negated by another's narration. Readers, through connecting relevant clues, are able to construct the story and then test their hypotheses during the reading process. Without a definite ending, the novel finishes at the point when Hu Fei, also known as "Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain", has to make a difficult decision whether to raise his weapon to strike Phoenix Miao or not. This suspense holds the readers' interest and leaves room for readers' imagination and creativity.<sup>1</sup> As Olivia Mok puts it, translating this novel into English enables English-speaking readers to appreciate the "oriental mysticism" and "feats of strength" in the original.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5.1.2 Extant English Translations of *Xueshan Feihu*

To date, there have been two English translations of *Xueshan Feihu*. One is *Flying Fox*

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<sup>1</sup> Olivia Mok, 'On Translating Jin Yong's Martial Arts Fiction', *Journal of Macrolinguistics*, 5 (1994), 70-79 (p. 72).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

of *Snow Mountain: A Novel of the Martial Arts*, which was published in four successive issues in a New York-based bimonthly magazine *Bridge* in 1972. Its translator Robin Wu is a Chinese-American. Wu's translation is an abridged one. His first three issues cover the first five chapters of the Chinese original while the fourth issue summarises the main content of the remaining five chapters. Though it is the first translation of Cha's novel, Wu's translation has been ignored by researchers. It is only mentioned in Li Quan's review<sup>3</sup> and Lai Tzu-yun's thesis.<sup>4</sup> Few attempts have been made to analyse Wu's translation. The reasons for this phenomenon seem to be that firstly, Wu's abridged translation cannot reflect the panorama of the Chinese source text; secondly, a comparative reading reveals that Wu makes some obvious mistakes in his translation. For example, Wu mistakes the Ming Dynasty for the Manchu regime, and says that the Manchu emperor hanged himself.<sup>5</sup> However, the Manchu emperor that Wu refers to is in fact the Ming Emperor. Wu also mistranslates “主母” (Zhumu) as the mother of the master.<sup>6</sup> *Zhumu* is, instead, the master's wife. Wu's mistakes distort the key background information in the original and make his translation lose credibility to some extent. Thirdly, the magazine *Bridge* ceased publication in 1985. As magazines are arguably easier to be ignored by most readers than books and Wu's translation is spread across four issues, it becomes difficult for readers to access Wu's translation.

The other English translation of *Xueshan Feihu* is *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* by Olivia Mok which was first published by the Chinese University Press in 1993. Mok's translation, different from Wu's, is a full rendition of the source text. Her translation, as she puts it, “follows as closely as possible the original”.<sup>7</sup> By the time Mok took up her translation, Cha's novels had become an integral part of Hong Kong's cultural world. Mok provided the reasons for translating this novel: she believed that being a major genre of contemporary Chinese literature and a means to disseminate Chinese cultural values, martial arts novels deserved to be translated. Her translation was also motivated by the challenges and difficulties offered by *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*.<sup>8</sup>

Compared with Wu's translation, Mok's translation attracted more attention from researchers both inside and outside China. In China, some studies focus on Mok's translation strategy, which has been termed as “explicitation”,<sup>9</sup> others look at her methods of translating certain aspects of the novel, including historical and cultural

<sup>3</sup> Li Quan 李泉, ‘Yingyu shijie Jin Yong wuxia xiaoshuo yijie yu yanjiu’ 英語世界金庸武俠小說譯介與研 [The Translations and Studies on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels in the English-speaking World], *Guizhou shehui kexue* 貴州社會科學, 6 (2015), 96-101 (p. 97).

<sup>4</sup> Lai Tzu-yun, ‘Translating Martial Arts Fiction, with Reference to the Novels of Jin Yong’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 1998), p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Robin Wu, ‘*Flying Fox of the Snowy Mountain. Bridge, Part II*’, *Bridge*, 3 (1972), 36-44 (p. 41).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2018), p. XXVI.

<sup>8</sup> Olivia Mok, ‘Martial Arts Fiction: Translational Migrations East and West’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Warwick, 1998), p. 199.

<sup>9</sup> Lu Jingjing 盧晶晶, ‘Xueshan feihu yingyi mingxihua celue’ 《雪山飛狐》英譯明晰化策略[Explicitation in the English Translation of *Xueshan Feihu*: The Way to Translate Martial Arts Novels], *Xi'an waiguoyu daxue xuebao* 西安外國語大學學報, 1 (2014), 126-29 (p. 126).



elements<sup>10</sup>, or chivalric spirit.<sup>11</sup> Xiao Caiwang further discusses how the ideology and poetics in the target culture influenced Mok's translation methods.<sup>12</sup> In the English-speaking world, quite a few reviewers highly rate Mok's translation: Robert E. Hegel believes that her translation gives foreigners "a taste of the best of the fiction".<sup>13</sup> Hua Laura Wu maintains that Mok's translation is "lucid, readable, and faithful to the narrative rhythm of the original storyteller".<sup>14</sup> Robert Chard regards the translation as a significant contribution to the martial arts novel, a neglected area in the West, and her translation achieves both intelligibility and the richness of original flavour.<sup>15</sup>

It can be seen that current studies attempt to offer some insight into the translation of martial arts novels and illustrate the significance of introducing such a Chinese literary genre into the English-speaking world. However, little has been done to explore the dissemination and reception of Mok's translation, which will be the focus of this chapter.

## 5.2 Investigating *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*

### 5.2.1 The Translator

As stated in Chapter Three, different agents are involved in the translation process and contribute to the production, dissemination and reception of the translation. To examine how *Xueshan Feihu* is disseminated in the Anglophone world, the translator Olivia Mok, a key agent for this translation, will be discussed. As *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* is the first book-length translation of Cha's novels, how the translator made efforts to introduce this novel as a Chinese literary genre to the English-speaking culture deserves attention.

What makes Mok stand out among the translators of Cha's works is her combination of theoretical research and translation practice. Mok was a lecturer at City University of

<sup>10</sup> Zhou Zhangqin 周章琴, Lu Jingjing 盧晶晶, 'Xueshan feihu yingyiben zhong lishi wenhua fanyi tanjiu' 《雪山飛狐》英譯本中歷史文化翻譯探究 [A Study on the Translation of Historical and Cultural Elements in *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*], *Haiwai yingyu* 海外英語, 24 (2017), 147-48 (p.147).

<sup>11</sup> Wei Ying 魏穎, 'Jin Yong wuxia xiaoshuo yingyi zhong xiayi jingsheng de zaixian' 金庸武俠小說英譯中“俠義”精神的再現 [The Representation of the Spirit of "Xia" in the English Translation of Jin Yong's Wuxia Novels] (unpublished doctoral thesis, Xibei Shifan Daxue, 2013), p. 38

<sup>12</sup> Xiao Caiwang 肖才望, 'Wuxia xiaoshuo yingyi huodong zhong de yishi xiagtaihe shixue yi mojinping xueshan feihu yiben weili 武俠小說英譯活動中的意識形態和詩學——以莫錦屏《雪山飛狐》譯本為例 [Ideology and Poetics in the English Translation of Martial Arts Novels: A Case Study of Olivia Mok's *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*], *Yunnan nongye daxue xuebao shehui kexue ban* 雲南農業大學學報 (社會科學版), 4 (2012), 107-10 (p. 107).

<sup>13</sup> Robert E. Hegel, 'Review: *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* by Jin Yong; Translated by Olivia Mok'. *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, 16 (1994), 203-04 (p. 204)

<sup>14</sup> Hua Laura Wu, 'Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain (review)', *China Review International*, 1 (1995), 144-47 (p. 147)

<sup>15</sup> Robert Chard, 'Jin Yong: *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (Translated by Olivia Mok)', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. University of London*, 3 (1996), 606-07 (p. 606)

Hong Kong when she embarked on the translation of *Xueshan Feihu* (雪山飛狐) in 1985.<sup>16</sup> Later she pursued her PhD studies at the University of Warwick from 1993 to 1998, focussing on the translational migration of martial arts novels and the specifics of translating *Xueshan Feihu* into English. Her translation, a pioneering work introducing martial arts novels to the English-speaking world, constituted the micro-level study of her thesis. It was Olivia Mok's studies that furthered the research into the translation of martial arts novels. Based on her translation practice with *Xueshan Feihu*, Mok explored various topics with regard to the English translation of martial arts novels and published a series of research articles.<sup>17</sup>

Arguably, Mok is a scholarly translator whose research played an important role in shaping her translation and her translation served as a key study case for her research. Her studies on martial arts novels include her investigation of the history and development of martial arts novels as a literary genre, her survey of the dissemination of martial arts novels in both Asian and Anglophone countries, and her identification of issues unique to the translation of martial arts novels.

In order to familiarise her readers with martial arts novels, Mok provided a great deal of information about the genre. She traced the origin of martial arts novels to the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–906), indicating that the literary genre boasts a long history. She claims martial arts novels are a kind of popular literature but “verging on serious literature”.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps in Mok's view, linking martial arts novels with serious literature can improve their literary position, thereby making them deserving scholarly attention. In addition, Mok highlights the large number of Chinese readers from all walks of life “not only in Hong Kong but also in the overseas Chinese community”.<sup>19</sup> She attributes the great popularity of martial arts novels to the fact that readers can readily identify themselves with martial arts heroes who depend on their own strength to confront an adverse society.<sup>20</sup> Though Mok narrows the scope of the themes in martial arts novels and some of her arguments remain questionable, her work does provide an understanding of martial arts novels which were a new literary genre for target readers, and her contributions cannot be understated when martial arts novels were introduced to the English-speaking world in the 1990s.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> According to staff newsletter (Issue 279) released by City University of Hong Kong, Olivia Mok retired in 2009.

<sup>17</sup> The academic articles that Mok has published on the translation of martial arts novels include:  
Olivia Mok, ‘Translating Martial Arts Fiction: Some Problems and Considerations’, *Tamkang Review*, 1 (1993), 117-28

———, ‘Cultural Opaqueness in Martial Arts Fiction’, *Translatio*, 3-4 (1994), 294-99

———, ‘On Translating Jin Yong's Martial Arts Fiction’, *Journal of Macrolinguistics*, 5 (1994), 70-79

———, ‘What's Wrong with My Translation? Notes on Translating Martial Arts Fiction into English’, in *Cross Cultural Transfers, Working Papers*, ed. by Heloisa Gonçalves Barbosa (Warwick: Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Warwick, 1994), pp. 62-69

———, ‘Strategies of Translating Martial Arts Fiction’, *Babel*, 1 (2001), 1-9

———, ‘Translational Migration of Martial Arts Fiction East and West’, *Target*, 13 (2001), 81-102

———, ‘Translating Appellations in Martial-Arts Fiction’, *Perspectives*, 10 (2002), 273-81

<sup>18</sup> Olivia Mok, ‘Translating Martial Arts Fiction: Some Problems and Considerations’, *Tamkang Review*, 1 (1993), 117-28 (p. 118).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2018), p. XXIII.

<sup>21</sup> Other English translations of martial arts novels had existed before *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*. For

Of equal importance is Mok's examination of the dissemination of martial arts novels, namely their "translational migration" both in the East and the West.<sup>22</sup> Mok argues that a great number of martial arts novels have made inroads into Asian countries such as Mongolia, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia where their translations act as an innovatory force for creating new literary models and enriching indigenous literature. In sharp contrast, martial arts novels in English translation were relegated to an "extremely peripheral" position due to the long-standing dominant position of Anglo-American literature.<sup>23</sup> Employing Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, Mok's study, which adopts a descriptive approach, illustrates that the position of martial arts novels as translated literature can assume a primary position in one literary system but a secondary position within another, which is largely dependent on "the cultural power of the source system".<sup>24</sup> Her survey of translational migration of martial arts novels in Asian countries provides new data on case studies for polysystem theory from a non-European context, which would address Gentzler's criticism that polysystem theory has "a tendency to generalize, especially with so little data on which to base conclusions, most of which are drawn from a very unique and specific culture".<sup>25</sup> It further verifies Even-Zohar's hypothesis that the normal position of translated literature tends to be peripheral.<sup>26</sup> When it comes to martial arts novels in translation, this hypothesis may be true in the Anglophone literary world, but it cannot be applied to most Asian countries where the situation is just the other way around.

It is Mok's research on the generic difficulties in translating martial arts novels that offers insights into translation practice. When translating *Xueshan Feihu*, Mok identified various kinds of problems regarding the translation of martial arts novels from Chinese to English, which can be divided into six categories: address terms, genre-specific terms, jargon and slang expressions, martial arts-specific terms, filmic fighting scenes, moves and martial feats.<sup>27</sup> These issues are unique to the translation of martial arts novels, and related to the "cultural connotations of linguistic devices". Mok insists that the translation should reflect the historical setting of this novel, namely the mid-eighteenth century when the Chinese empire was under the imperial rule of the Manchus.<sup>28</sup> Though Mok used her *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* for illustration, the principle also applies to translating other martial arts novels whose historical contexts are an integral part. Significantly, Mok also provides feasible solutions for her identified problems. For instance, when translating address terms, translators should

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example, Robin Wu's *Flying Fox of Snow Mountain: A Novel of the Martial Arts* was published in four successive issues in a New York-based bimonthly magazine *Bridge* in 1972. Robert Chard's *Blades from the Willows*, the English translation of *Liuhu Xiayin* (柳湖俠隱) by Huanzhulouzh, was published by Wellsweep in 1991. However, neither Wu nor Chard has published any articles to discuss this Chinese literary genre.

<sup>22</sup> Olivia Mok, 'Translational Migration of Martial Arts Fiction East and West', *Target*, 13 (2001), 81-102 (p. 81).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>24</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, 'Laws of Literary Interference', *Poetics Today*, 1 (1990), 53-72 (p. 66).

<sup>25</sup> Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* revised edn (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001), p. 124.

<sup>26</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', in *The Translation Studies Reader* 4th edn ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 191-96 (p. 195).

<sup>27</sup> Olivia Mok, 'Translating Martial Arts Fiction: Some Problems and Considerations', p. 122.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

interpret them in the right contexts. As for the translation of martial arts moves, Mok advises that translators should find out what the names stand for and then relabel them in English. They sometimes need to be as creative as the original writer in coining new words and inventing new expressions.<sup>29</sup> Though the scope of Mok's study remains to be widened as she mainly devotes herself to investigating *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, Mok has done pioneering work in the field of translating martial arts novels. Her studies have drawn attention to the genre and her recommended translation methods are of great practical value.

Mok also proposed that the translation of some terms requires close examination throughout the translation process, and translators need to make full use of the resources available to allow for the changing situation so as to work out the most suitable translation. Mok recalls how she managed to find a suitable translation of “*Xueshan Feihu*” (雪山飛狐), the Chinese title of the novel and *Bao Shu* (寶樹, literally precious tree), the name of a villainous character in the novel. “Flying fox” means either a kind of bat in Singapore or an aerial conveyor belt, so it may lead to misunderstanding if “flying fox” is chosen to translate “*feihu*”, literally a fox that can fly in Chinese which acclaims the hero's ability to run fast. In light of this, Mok chose “fox volant” instead.<sup>30</sup> The choice of the word “volant” is interesting, because it is a very rare term, thus adding a touch of exoticism to the title in English. *Bao Shu*, literally “precious tree” in Chinese was first translated as “Bush”, which Mok considered as a good transliteration at first. However, “Bush” is prone to remind the target readers of George Bush, President of the United States at that time. To avoid such confusion, “Tree” was finally decided as the translation of “*Bao Shu*”.<sup>31</sup>

To facilitate the dissemination of her translation, Mok utilised the influence of notable figures at that time. For example, the foreword of her translation was written by Tsim Tak Lung, a renowned educator, writer and commentator in Hong Kong. The preface was authored by Magret Ng, who is a politician, barrister, writer and columnist, and has studied Cha's novels.<sup>32</sup> Mok's close rapport with the editors who had “incredible patience” enabled the publication of her translation, which she mentions in her acknowledgements.<sup>33</sup> She also referred to reviews about her translation written by scholars including Robert Chard, Adrian Hsian and Hua Laura Wu to illustrate the generic difficulties in translating martial arts novels.<sup>34</sup> It can be seen that Mok connects herself with other agents involved in the translation process including scholars, editors and reviewers.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Olivia Mok, ‘Cultural Opacity in Martial Arts Fiction’, *Translatio*, 3-4 (1994), 294-99 (p. 295).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Margret Ng's Chinese name is Wu Aiyi 吳靄儀. Her representative studies on Cha's novels include the following monographs: *Jin Yong Xiaoshuo De Nanzi* 金庸小說的男子 (Hong Kong: Mingchuang chubanshe, 1989), *Jinyong Xiaoshuo De Nüzi* 金庸小說的女子 (Hong Kong: Mingchuang chubanshe, 1989), *Jin Yong Xiaoshuo De Qing* 金庸小說的情 (Hong Kong: Mingchuang chubanshe, 1990) and *Jin Yong Xiaoshuo Kan Renshen* 金庸小說看人生 (Hong Kong: Mingchuang chubanshe, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, p. XV.

<sup>34</sup> Olivia Mok, ‘Translational Migration of Martial Arts Fiction East and West’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 1998), pp. 209-11.

## 5.2.2 Translation Strategy

Mok claims that she aimed to “bring Jin Yong’s work to life for a Western audience”. In order to achieve this, she adopted a “fluent translation strategy” throughout the text.<sup>35</sup> According to Lawrence Venuti, this strategy requires “a laborious effort of revision and much stylistic refinement”, and it can produce “the effect of transparency”, making the target readers identify the translation with the source text and provoking an illusion of the authorial presence.<sup>36</sup> This strategy is domestication that Venuti later elaborated on, which he argued was “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home”.<sup>37</sup> Here Venuti suggests that domestication can perform a political function, making the translation conform to the norms of the target culture and concealing the cultural otherness in the source text.

Mok highlights that the overriding translation strategy she adopted was “extensive rewriting”, or “recreative translation”, which is shown in “much stylistic refinement” and “rich and colourful language” as well as “a major restructuring of the different components of a sentence”. She maintains that it was extensive rewriting that enhanced the readability of her translation.<sup>38</sup> Judging from her statement, it appears that Mok adopted a domestication strategy. But in the meanwhile, she also claims that she endeavoured to retain the “Chineseness” at all costs. The “Chineseness” refers to the cultural elements that give martial arts novels their peculiar flavour.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, in the introduction to her translation, Mok emphasises that she has tried to capture as much as possible “the flavour and spirit of a classic martial arts fiction”.<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to ask whether a foreignization strategy might have been preferable. If the original flavour or the spirit of the novel is to be kept in translation, perhaps a foreignization strategy might be more useful. Foreignization as defined by Friedrich Schleiermacher, is where “the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him”.<sup>41</sup> Venuti regards foreignization as a strategic cultural intervention which is “highly desirable” today, as it “sends the readers abroad” and “seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation”.<sup>42</sup> Setting its political and ethical implications aside, foreignization, according to the arguments made by Schleiermacher and Venuti, plays an essential role in retaining the foreign cultural elements in the source text. Indeed, for those elements that are deemed “cultural opaqueness” in the source text such as the background information, appellations and jargon, Mok has attempted to represent the original flavour of the novel, so basically

<sup>35</sup> Olivia Mok, ‘Strategies of Translating Martial Arts Fiction’, *Babel*, 47 (2001), 1-9 (pp. 2-3).

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> Olivia Mok, ‘Strategies of Translating Martial Arts Fiction’, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, p. XXVI.

<sup>41</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, ‘On the Different Methods of Translating’, in *The Translation Studies Reader* 4th edn ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2021), 51-71 (p. 56).

<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*, p. 20.

she employs foreignization to translate these elements.

Overall, domestication is generally used if the translator expects to enhance the readability and receive a good reception of his/her translation, while foreignization highlights the cultural differences in the source text. When translating a literary work, the two strategies are often used in a combined way and they form a continuum. This is the case for *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*. When discussing her translation strategy, Mok only selects some translation samples that conform to the writing norms of the target literature and it seems that she avoids discussing those that contain peculiar cultural elements for which she employs the foreignization strategy. She hardly mentions how the fluent translation strategy or creative rewriting contributes to presenting the “Chineseness” of the novel. It thus seems inappropriate to say the translation strategy of this novel is domestication, which is reflected in the “fluent translation”, “extensive rewriting” or “creative translation” in Mok’s words.

Thick translation, a concept proposed by Kwame Anthony Appiah, can provide insights into understanding Mok’s translation strategy. According to Appiah, thick translation is “translation that seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context”.<sup>43</sup> The purpose of adopting this translation is to describe the contexts of literary works, to raise the target readers’ awareness of cultural differences, and to engender respect for others.<sup>44</sup> It can be observed that thick translation is put forward based on some ethical considerations. Though Appiah advocates thick translation when translating African proverbs, his concept can also be used to refer to any target text with a large amount of explanatory material, of which annotation and glosses are two representative forms. As shown in the following section, paratextual elements are another crucial form of explanation. Like Appiah, Mok puts great emphasis on the context of the novel as well and endeavours to retain this by utilising the paratexts and enriching the translated text.

Mok’s introduction, one of the key paratextual elements, contributes significantly to placing the novel in a specific historical context. She first traces the history of martial arts novels to the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907), and then she mentions that Cha’s novels are set in a traditional Chinese context.<sup>45</sup> In this way, Mok provides the background information for martial arts novels as a literary genre and indicates the vital role of contexts in understanding Cha’s works. As regards this specific novel, Mok offers the following contextual information:

The story takes place in the Changbai Range in coldest Manchuria, one winter's morning in 1781. By that time the vast Chinese Empire had come under the imperial rule of the Manchus. The Manchus, a nomadic tribe from Manchuria who ushered in the Qing Dynasty in the mid-seventeenth century, held sway over the country from 1644 to 1911. The Manchus brought an

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<sup>43</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, ‘Thick Translation’, *Callaloo*, 4 (1993), 808-19 (p. 817).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 818.

<sup>45</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, p. XXIII.

end to the Ming Dynasty and the rule of the Chinese Empire by the Han Chinese.<sup>46</sup>

The names of the place and the dynasty, as well as the exact years and the confrontation between Manchus and the Han Chinese, provide the target reader with rich information about the novel. In a sense, they make the translation “thicker” and extend the reading process of the novel. Perhaps unconsciously, the target readers will be guided by such extratextual information which serves as a backdrop to the story. The list of main characters and the relationship tables merit attention as well. Along with their English names and brief introductions, Mok provides their corresponding Chinese names in traditional Chinese characters. It appears that Chinese characters are unnecessary in an English translation whose target readers are non-Chinese. Standing in parallel with the English words, traditional Chinese characters are likely to associate the translation with the source text and create a sense of reading Cha’s novels in the source culture. With the development of the plots, more characters appear in the novel. The relationship tables enable the readers to understand various stories that intersect in the novel which involve a great number of characters and they contribute to contextualising the novel as well.

Mok endeavours to present the socio-political dimensions of the novel by adhering to the expressions in the source text and adding necessary explanatory information. For example, in Chapter 5 of the novel, one sentence in the servant Quad’s narration reads: “這秘密起因于李闖王大順永昌二年，那年是乙酉年，也就是順治二年” (This secret took place in Li Dashing King Dashun Yongchang the second year, that year is Yi Chou year, namely Shunzhi the second year).<sup>47</sup> To be exact, that year is 1645 in Chinese history. A concise translation could be “The secret took place in 1645”, which is easier and more accessible to the target reader. However, this concise translation fails to provide the contextual information conveyed by the source text, which indicates the turbulence at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty (AD 1644-1911). It is well acknowledged that each of Cha’s novels relates to a period in traditional China, so his way of outlining the historical and political contexts cannot be neglected. In view of this, Mok’s translation is “The incident took place in the second year of the Reign of Yongchang in the Dashun Dynasty of the Dashing King, being the year Yi You, or the second year during the Reign of Emperor Shunzhi under the Tartar rule”.<sup>48</sup> Her translation explicates the relationship between the name of the emperors and their reigned period, brings out the extended meaning of these terms in translation and bridges the cultural gap between the source text and the target readers. Adhering to the expressions in the source text and supplying necessary background information, Mok’s translation succeeds in enhancing the historical atmosphere contained in the novel, thus enabling a more comprehensive reading of the story.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. XXIV.

<sup>47</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Xueshan Feihu* 雪山飛狐 [Flying Fox on the Snowy Mountain] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1994), p. 113.

<sup>48</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, p. 188.

Thick translation used by Mok can also be found in translating elements unique to martial arts novels. *Hukou* (虎口), literally “Tiger’s Mouth”, a special part in the palm, frequently appears in the description of fighting scenes. Mok’s translation is “the Tiger’s Mouth, the web between his thumb and first finger”.<sup>49</sup> Mok keeps the original expression and adds the necessary information to explain where this part is. Paralytic points, special places in the body, once touched, may cause a person to lose the ability to move or feel great pain. While translating the names of these paralytic points, Mok not only provides their literal translations but also recourses to paratextual illustrations to show their exact locations in the body. To pursue a fluent reading experience, Mok dispensed with the in-text footnotes. Instead, she added information to her text and provided paratextual elements.

Here are two examples in which the translator translated terms unique to martial arts novels. They can help understand her translation strategy.

#### Example 1

ST: 苗人鳳，你不肯占人半點便宜，果然稱得上一個“俠”字。

(Miao Renfeng, you do not take any advantage of others, you really deserve the character “*xia*”).<sup>50</sup>

TT: Phoenix, you do not take advantage of others. You believe in fair play. You are indeed the embodiment of high principles and chivalric spirits, and you have the honor of a true knight-errant running in your blood.<sup>51</sup>

#### Example 2

ST: 當下奔到自己房中，取了當年在江湖上所用的紫金刀。

(Immediately, he rushed to his own room, fetched the purple gold sword that he used when he was at the rivers and lakes.)<sup>52</sup>

TT: Thereupon, he rushed to his own room, grabbed the broadsword, forged with purple of Cassius, puce in colour, wield by him when an outlaw but lying disused since.<sup>53</sup>

In Example 1, Mok offered her own interpretation of the concept “*xia*”, a distinctive feature of martial arts fiction. By applying thick translation and adding her own explanations, the translator made the meaning of “*xia*” more concrete so that the target readers can understand the meaning of Gully Hu’s remarks and then grasp the main theme of this martial arts novel. In Example 2, “紫金刀” (purple gold sword) is a kind of broadsword used for fighting. By referring to the paratextual section “Chinese Weapons” provided by the translator, readers are able to know what a broadsword looks

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>50</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Xueshan Feihu* 雪山飛狐 [Flying Fox on the Snowy Mountain] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1994), p. 89.

<sup>51</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, p. 144.

<sup>52</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Xueshan Feihu* 雪山飛狐 [Flying Fox on the Snowy Mountain], p. 51.

<sup>53</sup> Olivia Mok, p. 76.



like. In the target text, Mok described this weapon in detail. she explicated the size, material and colour of the sword, which enriched target readers' knowledge about martial arts weapons. As regards “江湖” (rivers and lakes), a term that refers to a world isolated and independent of reality,<sup>54</sup> Mok explained this by using a more specific word “outlaw”. As the two examples illustrate, when translating unique terms that comprise the generic difficulties in translating martial arts novels, Mok adds her own explanations to make them more concrete, thus alleviating the target readers' load of comprehension. Thick translation enhances the accessibility of her translation and contributes to its reception in the target culture.

With a great deal of extra information added to the target text, the strategy that Mok used makes her translation much “thicker” than the source text: the translation is made up of 379 pages, whereas the Chinese text consists of 226 pages. Though the linguistic differences between English and Chinese may also be attributed to this phenomenon, the thick translation strategy is the main reason. As a scholarly translator, Mok combines her research with translation and offers a considerable number of explanatory materials for her translation. Consequently, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* becomes a piece of “scholarly translation” which incorporates various research achievements concerning the work and martial arts novels. It seems that by adopting thick translation the translator attempts to elevate the literary status of martial arts novels in the target culture, but on the other side, her intended readership of the translation seems to be narrowed to the educated readers.

### 5.2.3 Paratext Analysis

In Hong Kong, the new edition of *Xueshan Feihu* was published by Ming Ho Press in 1976. In Mainland China, its new edition was published by Sanlian Shudian Press in 1994. Mok embarked on translating *Xueshan Feihu* in the 1980s, and her translation closely follows the sentences and chapter division of the Ming Ho edition. It can thus be judged that the new edition published by Ming Ho is the source text on which *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* is based. The two Chinese versions are the same in the content of the text, each of which is composed of three works: *Xueshan Feihu*, *Yuanyang Dao* (The Mandarin Duck Swords) and *Baima Xiao Xifeng* (The White Horse Neighs the West Wind). The English translation, however, comprises only one novel *Xueshan Feihu*. To better understand how Cha's works are disseminated in the source culture and the target culture respectively, the earlier Ming Ho Chinese edition and Mok's translation are selected for a comparative paratextual study. Rather than describing all the paratextual elements in the source text and translation, the study focuses on relevant elements related to the dissemination and reception of this novel in both cultures.

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<sup>54</sup> Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Qianggu wenren xiake meng* 千古文人俠客夢 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018), p.140.

## About the Author

As Figure 1 shows, in the Ming Ho edition, both the front cover and the copyright page show Louis Cha's pen name Jin Yong 金庸 right below the novel's title.<sup>55</sup> Louis Cha used his pen name "Jin Yong" when he began to write his first martial arts novel *Shujian Enchou Lu* in 1955 and he continued to adopt this pen name until he finished his last novel *Lu Ding Ji* in 1972. Therefore, his pen name "金庸" is more familiar to Chinese readers than his original Chinese name "查良鏞" (Zha Liangyong), and the Ming Ho edition only uses his pen name, without any mention of his original Chinese or English name. The English translation, on its front cover and the copyright page, also adopts Cha's pen name. However, in the short biography of the author on the back cover, his pen name and English name are mentioned together: Jin Yong (Louis Cha). The English readers thus know that "Jin Yong" and "Louis Cha" refer to the same person. Still, the exact relationship between the two names remains unclear. In addition to a brief introduction of Cha which highlights his literary achievements, the translation also prioritises five comments that praise Cha on Page 382. Corresponding with the selected praising comments is a list of Cha's martial arts novels on Page 381.

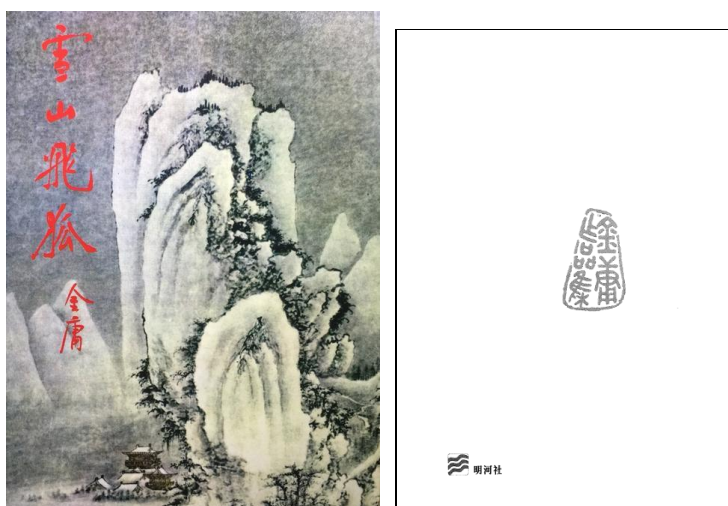


Figure 1 The Front and Back Covers of the Ming Ho Chinese Source Text

<sup>55</sup> Unless specified, all photos of the translations discussed in this thesis were taken by myself.

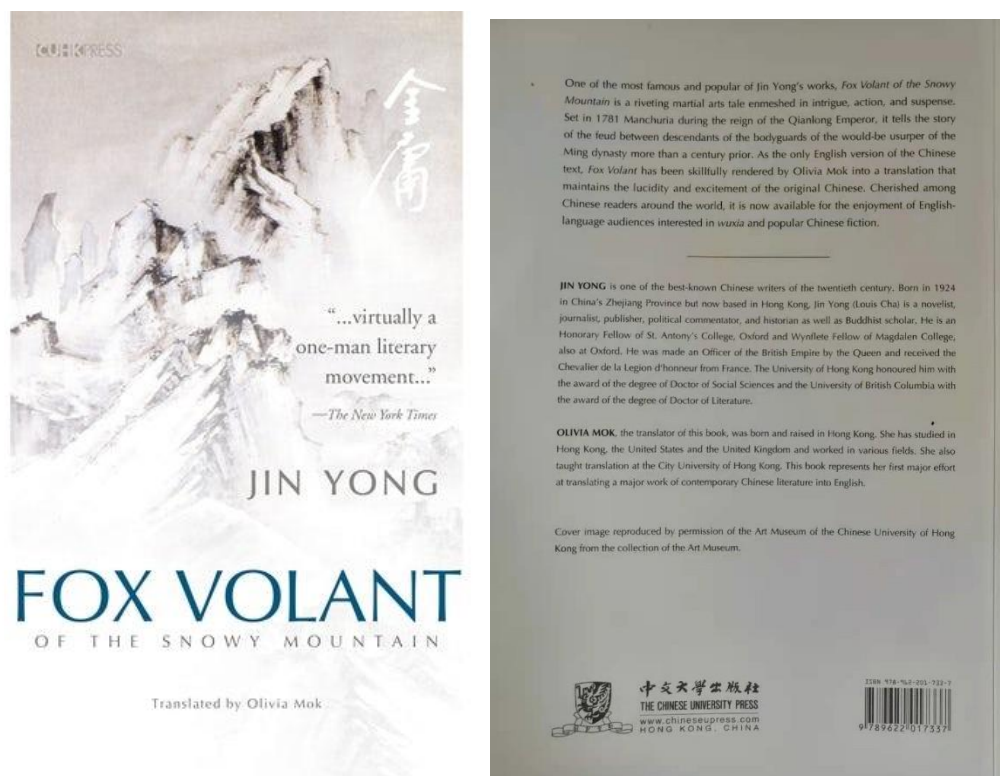


Figure 2 The Front and Back Covers of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*

The English translation provides more information about the author for the English language readers. The high status of the original author is accentuated in the translation by the brief biography, blurbs and a list of his works. However, the relationship between the author's different names is not clarified. In contrast, the Chinese Ming Ho version provides little information about the author. Cha was popular in Hong Kong at that time, so there was no need to introduce him to Hong Kong readers.

## About the Translator

Paratexts in the English translation help us gain some information about the translator. As shown in Figure 2, the translator's name is clearly printed at the bottom of the front cover: "Translated by Olivia Mok". On the back cover, there is a one-paragraph introduction about her. Readers thus know that she is a Hong Kong native, and she is a translator and academic. This differs from the ideas of the translators' "invisibility" which is described by Lawrence Venuti.<sup>56</sup> Mok shows visibility in her translation, and she does more than simply transfer the languages, as has been discussed above. Yet a comparison shows that paratextual elements about the translator are fewer than those about the author, so the information about the translator seems quite limited to the target readers.

<sup>56</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 1.

## About the Story

As mentioned previously, the Ming Ho Chinese version consists of three novels, which are all set in the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912). The pottery sculpture of a general holding a sword offers an inspiration for Cha to write *Xueshan Feihu*, in which Li Zicheng's poniard serves as a key clue to finding the treasure. Five illustrations are about the Qing's Yongzheng Emperor (1678-1735) and his calligraphy. There are also five pictures of cultural relics which are believed to be the products of the Kingdom of Gaochang, where the third novel *Baima Xiao Xifeng* (The White Horse Neighs the West Wind) is set. These pictures are mostly obtained from museums, and they are aimed at familiarising the Chinese readers with the historical context in which the three novels are set. It is noteworthy that Robin Wu's abridged translation "Flying Fox of Snow Mountain" is appended before the Chinese text, and with a brief explanation "[This translation] was published in four successive issues of the bimonthly *Bridge* in New York." Wu's translation, originally a translated text, becomes a paratext in this Chinese edition. It functions as a synopsis for the novel *Xueshan Feihu*. Compared with the original novel, Wu's English translation is much shorter and offers a simple version of this novel for some Hong Kong readers who are interested in reading literature in English. Wu's translation also indicates how Cha's works are disseminated outside China.

In Mok's translation, all pictures concerning the historical context in the Chinese version disappear. The paratextual elements in the translation are only related to one novel *Xueshan Feihu* rather than three. The translator not only abandons all the paratexts of the source text but also adds new ones. For example, in the "Introduction" of the translation, Mok briefly introduces the literary genre of martial arts novels, summarises the main plot of the novel, and indicates her main translation strategy. With the English readers in mind, the translation also provides a map of the Qing Empire, pictures of Chinese weapons, along with a list of main characters and genealogical tables of the martial arts schools. It can be seen that from the outset, the translation strives to improve the novel's accessibility to the uninitiated readers. Both in the source text and the translation, inserted in each chapter is an illustration which reflects the main plot. A glance at the illustrations in the same chapter shows that those in the source text are quite simple and do not show the characters' expressions, while those in the translation are more elaborate and depict the character's expressions vividly. These inserted pictures are a visual means that help interpret the text. They facilitate readers' understanding of the novel, as they directly show people's lifestyle and dress, which cannot be obtained from merely text reading. The functions that these illustrations perform may vary among different readers. For Hong Kong or Chinese readers, the visual elements may merely work as a decoration, as readers have access to other martial arts novels and films. For English readers who have quite limited access to other resources, the illustrations not only provide information regarding the chapters but also serve as a device to attract the reader's interest. This explains why the illustrations in the original are relatively simple while those in the translation are more delicate. In the

translation, the three-snowflake symbol “\* \* \*” is adopted in seven chapters. The symbol suggests that the sections published underneath are not closely connected to the previous part or form part of a flashback. This kind of symbol, which cannot be found in the Chinese original, assists the target readers in drawing together the threads of the story on the one hand but makes the implicit clues in the source text overt on the other hand. Cha’s unique way of narration in this novel may not be reflected in the translation due to such means of explication.

Paratexts in both the source text and the translation contribute to the target readers’ understanding of the novel. Paratextual elements in the source text provide much information about the historical context where the story is set, while those in the translation give more clues about the story. The paratexts are selected for different target readers.

### About the Publisher

The publisher plays an essential role in marketing a book. From 1975 to 1981, Ming Ho Publications, a commercial press, published the complete works of Louis Cha, which included all his 15 works in 36 volumes. In this case study, Mok’s translation was published by the Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, an academic publisher aimed at academic readers.

On the front covers, the two publishers chose a picture which shows a range of steep mountains coinciding with the description of the place in the novel: “The summit stood erect, like a tower amidst the neighbouring peaks, impassably steep and precipitous”.<sup>57</sup> The covers play a significant role in interpreting the themes of the novel. The mountain in the Chinese source text is more distinct as it has fewer words beside it compared with that in the English translation. In addition, the picture in the Chinese version is composed by Tang Di (1296-1364), a painter in the Yuan Dynasty.<sup>58</sup> The picture is in a traditional Chinese style which is more alien to Western readers, while the one on the cover of the English translation is a depiction from the collection of Art Museum of the Chinese University of Hong,<sup>59</sup> which has a closer resemblance to modern Western art. It could be argued that the choice of the picture on the front covers takes the target readers into account.

On the back cover of the source text, there is a stamp which reads “Compilation of Jin Yong’s works” and the publisher’s name. In contrast, on the back cover of the translation, besides the brief introductions of Jin Yong and Olivia Mok and the publisher’s name, there is a blurb on the top. The blurb uses words like “riveting”, “the only English version”, “skillfully”, “lucidity” and “excitement” to accentuate the quality of the novel and its English translation, though its statement that Mok’s

<sup>57</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, p. 43.

<sup>58</sup> See “The Explanations for the Pictures” in Ming Ho Edition.

<sup>59</sup> See the back cover of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*.

translation is the only English version is incorrect and neglects Wu's translation. The blurb indicates that the academic Chinese University Press views the novel as popular literature, but it published the translation nevertheless. The publisher's marketing practice can be understood from the following aspects: firstly, the original author had gained a reputation in Chinese literary circles at that time while he remained unknown to most English language readers. The same is true of the status of his novel in the two systems. Secondly, Ming Ho published the Chinese original along with other novels by Cha as a whole collection, so it could not solely rely on this novel to promote sales. In contrast, the translation was Cha's first and only novel in English at that time, so it needed more marketing work. Thirdly, book covers, though an important means for publishers to market their books, are not the only marketing device. A commercial publisher has a more sophisticated network for marketing and distributing than an academic one. It need not rely solely on the blurbs to market the book.

### 5.2.4 Reviews of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*

In order to understand how the translation has been received in the Anglophone world, two types of reviews will be examined below: literary reviews which are written by academic scholars and published in journals or newspapers, and popular reviews which are written by general readers and are posted either on Amazon or on the reading community Goodreads.

#### Literary Reviews

As martial arts novels were still a new literary genre to English-speaking readers in the 1990s, most literary reviews first outline the theme, history and development of martial arts novels in Chinese literature and then highlight the pioneering work that Mok did to introduce the novel.

Hua Laura Wu claims that martial arts fiction has “both ancient and recent antecedents in its literary genealogy”, and they are closely connected with historiography, poetry and drama that acclaim what they term knight-errantry. Wu states that knight-errantry includes qualities such as “altruism and justice, personal loyalty and mutual trust, honour and fame, physical and moral courage, and a daunting defiance of the laws of the land and the conventions of society”.<sup>60</sup> Wu's view is quite similar to James Liu's analysis of “chivalrous temperament” which is reflected in eight aspects.<sup>61</sup> Both of them try to explain knight-errantry in a more accessible way. Wu argues that classical tales, oral stories and vernacular romances are the literary predecessors of martial arts novels, while martial arts novels appeared only in the twentieth century.<sup>62</sup> After a detailed discussion of Cha's innovative writing skills, Wu turns to Mok's translation,

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<sup>60</sup> Hua Laura Wu, 'Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain (review)', *China Review International*, 1 (1995), 144-147 (p. 144).

<sup>61</sup> James J.Y. Liu, *The Chinese Knight-errant* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 4-6.

<sup>62</sup> Hua Laura Wu, 'Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain (review)', p. 145.

which she says “delivers a timely service to the burgeoning genre by introducing its best writer to a wider, non-Chinese reading public and to academia”.<sup>63</sup> The word “burgeoning” suggests the increasing popularity of martial arts novels in the source culture, and Wu’s remarks indicate that the target readers can include both general and educated readers. Mok’s translation is considered “of a high standard, being lucid, readable and well-paced, and truthful to both the original text and the narrative rhythm of the original story-teller”, and it helps guide a reader who is unfamiliar with this particular genre. It is worth noting that Wu appreciates the “prefatory materials”, namely the peritexts provided by Mok, which offer useful insight and guidance. Wu puts forward her opinion on translating the Chinese term “*Jianghu*” (江湖, lakes and rivers). Wu prefers to use “martial brotherhood” rather than “outlawry” or “outlaw”, as the latter adopted by Mok has a narrow scope. Though Wu’s article was published as a book review, the review part only appears in one paragraph.

Robert Chard’s review which was published a year later focuses more on Mok’s translation. Chard opines that though martial arts novels have won mass popularity in China, they receive little attention in the West.<sup>64</sup> Chard’s remarks indicate the different positions of martial arts novels in different literary systems. He provides a great deal of useful information about the existing translations of martial arts novels, which include Mok’s *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, John Minford’s translation of the first two chapters of *Lu Ding Ji*, and Graham Earnshaw’s *The Book and The Sword*. It should be noted that Chard published *Blades from the Willows* in 1991, which is the English translation of *Liuhu Xiayin* (柳湖俠隱), a martial arts novel written by Huanzhulouzhuzhu during the Republican Era (1912-1949). Chard’s review gives a brief survey of the available translations and shows that martial arts novels were being introduced to the English literature. When discussing Mok’s translation, Chard like Wu emphasises the crucial role of peritexts such as the list of the main characters, genealogical tables of martial arts schools and illustrations of weapons in improving the accessibility of the novel to the target readers. Chard points out that the translations of some terms including *qing gong* (輕功, literally “light arts”) *nei gong* (內功, literally “inner power”) and *jianghu* (江湖, literally “rivers and lakes”) are not satisfactory and pose great challenges to the target readers’ understanding. But overall, Chard values Mok’s translation, as it achieves a balance between “intelligibility” and “the richness and flavour of the original” and succeeds in “bringing Jin Yong’s work to life for a Western audience”. Chard also highlights the important role that this translation plays in introducing a new literary genre and views it as “an auspicious beginning” of translating all of Cha’s works into English.<sup>65</sup>

In comparison, Robert E. Hegel, who acknowledges the difficulties of translating this novel including names of martial arts names, weapons, and references to Chinese history and philosophy, discusses the reception of Mok’s translation with reservation.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Chard, ‘Jin Yong: *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (Translated by Olivia Mok)’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. University of London*, 3 (1996), 606-07 (p. 606).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.607.

Hegel maintains that Mok's use of archaic and exotic terms and her tendency toward literal translation make the novel "slow to read" and may disappoint the target readers who prefer plot to style.<sup>66</sup> Hegel seems to imply that the differences between the Chinese and English novels affect the reception of Mok's translation. Hegel notes the unique writing techniques of this novel which have been discussed in the previous section of this chapter: the conflicting, even contradictory narrations of the same event by different characters are just like the well-known Japanese film *Rashomon*, and its indeterminate ending is the most enchanting part of the story.<sup>67</sup> However, Hegel only mentions these techniques rather than elaborating on them. How the extraordinary narration and ending have influenced the reception of the novel will be further explored when analysing popular reviews.

## Popular Reviews

On Amazon, only the latest edition of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* published in 2020 is now being sold. As the first edition was first published in 1993, the number of reviews may be limited in terms of the time range. Nevertheless, the reviews can still show various factors that affect the reception of the English translation. The book received a rating of 4.2 out of 5, suggesting that it has gained a positive response from the buyers.<sup>68</sup> A close reading of the reviews reveals that Cha's literary achievements and status in the source culture contribute significantly to the high rating of the translation. A reviewer named Reader-718 urges others to buy the books whether they are fans of martial arts novels or are new to the genre. He regards the novel as "the highest quality writing", and appreciates the "brilliant, tense, action-packed and absorbing" storylines. This reviewer also highlights Cha's efforts to put the names of various places in China in the novel, thus enabling him to "tour the whole country" when reading the novel. It seems that the reviewer treats Mok's translation as if it were written by Cha himself or believes that the fine qualities of Cha's writing are reflected to a great extent in Mok's translation.

In contrast, another reviewer named chungie is aware of the differences between Cha's writing and Mok's translation. Chungie claims that the translator did a great job "capturing most of what Jin Yong wrote in Chinese", which suggests the stylistic consistency between the source text and the translation. Chungie stresses the generic differences between martial arts novels and the Western fantasy fiction, which may produce a different reading experience among the target readers. As for his/her own reading experience, chungie claims that he/she experienced the same joy that his/her Chinese friends enjoyed when they read the novel in Chinese. Other reviewers describe

<sup>66</sup> Robert E. Hegel, 'Review: *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* by Jin Yong; Translated by Olivia Mok'. *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, 16 (1994), 203-04 (p. 204).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> All the reviewers' opinions in this section are quoted from the website: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Fox-Volant-Snowy-Mountain-New-ebook/product-reviews/B08K8MC2ZT/ref=cm\\_cr\\_dp\\_d\\_show\\_all\\_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all\\_reviews](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Fox-Volant-Snowy-Mountain-New-ebook/product-reviews/B08K8MC2ZT/ref=cm_cr_dp_d_show_all_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all_reviews) [accessed 20 February 2024]



their reading experience as well. For example, Mdefeo deems the translation “highly engaging” while “numero duo” opines that the translation is an “entertaining” book. These views manifest that the reading experience has greatly influenced the reception of the translation.

Some reviewers, however, have a negative view about the translation though they value the Chinese source text. A reviewer named eachtrannach regards the novel as a great, “well-crafted” thriller and considers that the novel owes a lot to the Japanese film *Rashomon*, which is repeatedly mentioned and plays a key role in interpreting the novel. As for the translation, eachtrannach points out that its style is “a lot duller” than other translations of Cha’s works and the use of exotic, complicated words makes it “an academically accomplished translation”. In addition, the reviewer believes that Mok’s use of “outlaw” does not match the established language of martial arts novels. Eachtrannach’s review serves as a typical example of how a general reader reacts to an academic translation of a martial arts novel. Eachtrannach’s review also shows that the target readers’ knowledge of martial arts novels has been growing, which enables them to read the translations critically. Another reviewer named Conan P shares a similar view that the story is “packed with great characters, awesome fight scenes and unexpected twists”, but the translation is poor, as the translator clearly lacked knowledge of martial arts terminology. But Conan P does not provide any example to illustrate this lack of knowledge, so his/her comment is not convincing. Eachtrannach’s and Conan P’s reviews imply that a novel, which is highly appreciated in the source culture, may gain a different status in the target culture after translation, which is subject to a myriad of factors.

It should be noted that one’s rating on Amazon does not necessarily match the comments. For example, neither eachtrannach nor Conan responds to Mok’s translation positively, but both of them give a four-star rating. Taking this phenomenon into consideration, it would be more helpful to combine the rating and the analysis of reviews when discussing the reception of the translation.

If reviews on Amazon provide how the translation in the latest edition has been received among buyers in the target culture, then reviews on the reading community Goodreads involve a wide range of readers that are not just confined to the buyers. As long as one reader registers an account on Goodreads, he/she can post a review about a book. On Goodreads, the overall rating of the book is 3.86, which is lower than that on Amazon. Goodreads presents readers’ ratings, the number of ratings and their percentage in detail, which is presented in Table 1.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> The data was collected on the website:

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1288260.Fox\\_Volant\\_of\\_the\\_Snowy\\_Mountain?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=3Z1T5n76X2&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1288260.Fox_Volant_of_the_Snowy_Mountain?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=3Z1T5n76X2&rank=1) [accessed 20 February 2024]

Table 1 Ratings of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* on Goodreads

Rating	Number of Rating	Percentage
5 stars	175	27.9%
4 stars	236	37.6%
3 stars	176	28%
2 stars	38	6%
1 star	3	0.5%

It is evident that the translation has received more ratings (628 in total) on Goodreads than on Amazon (33 in total). The four-star rating has the highest percentage of 37.6%, while on Amazon the five-star rating accounts for 58%. This shows that as more readers are surveyed, the rating becomes lower instead. Moreover, the five-star rating and the three-star rating account for roughly 30% respectively, suggesting opinions about the book are quite varied on Goodreads.

The reviews deal with various topics regarding the novel and the translation.<sup>70</sup> The intricate relationship between martial arts novels and related movies can be found. The success of martial arts films has stimulated novel reading. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a movie that was directed by Ang Lee and made its debut in 2000, is frequently mentioned. Both Duckie and Wayne Turmel believe that if one likes the film, they should read this novel. As for the writing techniques, FanZ and Nick Burns use expressions like “fabulous story-telling” or “masterful story-telling” to accentuate the narrative techniques employed in the novel, which remind readers of the well-known Japanese film *Rashomon*, as both adopt different angles from different characters to tell the story. This analogy extends the notion of intertextuality from an intersemiotic perspective. In this case, intertextuality is not only reflected in “the relations obtaining between a given text and other texts which it cites, absorbs, prolongs, or generally transforms”,<sup>71</sup> but also the interaction between different media: a written text and an audiovisual cinematic work. It is the form, namely the narrative techniques, rather than the content that establishes the intertextuality between the novel and the film.

As for the numerous fighting scenes in the novel, opinions vary. Only Alice Poon who is a Hong Kong writer, considers they are “engrossing”. Other reviewers like Jeffrey Powanda, Jacob and Anthony, hold the diametrically opposite view that the fighting scenes are “tedious” and “kinda boring”.

The indeterminate ending has provoked discussions among readers as well. Gao Yiming, a Singaporean, regards the ending as “a master stroke-what makes the book one of a kind”. However, quite a few readers do not think so. Jeffrey Powanda is “disappointed at the cliffhanger ending”; Maria Freeman claims that the book has “an abrupt ending”

<sup>70</sup> The cited reviews are taken from here:

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1288260.Fox\\_Volant\\_of\\_the\\_Snowy\\_Mountain?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=3Z1T5n76X2&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1288260.Fox_Volant_of_the_Snowy_Mountain?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=3Z1T5n76X2&rank=1) [accessed 20 February 2024]

<sup>71</sup> Gerald Prince, *A Dictionary of Narratology* revised edn (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), p. 47.

which cost it a star in her rating; and Sushu feels that the novel “just ends at the climax” and that’s why it got four points. Generally, the ending of the novel is highly appreciated among Chinese communities as it shows Cha’s innovative writing skills. In the postscript of *Xueshan Feihu*, Cha expresses that the ending is a mystery without a clear result, which can stimulate the readers’ imagination. Though numerous readers have urged Cha to provide a definite ending since its publication, Cha prefers to keep the ending unchanged.<sup>72</sup> But when translated into English, the ending does not seem to achieve a similar effect. Another key issue is the characterisation in the novel. Jacob maintains that there is “little to know” in terms of character development. Sharing the same view, Anthony comments that “there simply wasn’t enough characterisation to fully develop the characters”. In addition, both Joe Tingle and Nick Burns complain about so many characters in this novel who are difficult to remember. Though Cha puts great emphasis on the description of the characters by saying “the content of the novel is the characters”,<sup>73</sup> his portrait of the characters in this novel is ambiguous, as all the characters appear in quick succession and remain unchanged throughout the story.

Jim Peterson’s review offers insights into understanding Mok’s translation and its reception. Peterson emphasises the crucial role of the translator’s peritexts such as the diagram of weapons, the picture of paralytic points and the translator’s introduction in making the novel accessible to Western readers. He also tries to explain the drawbacks of the translation from the perspective of the translator’s identity. In his view, Mok’s identity as a Hong Kong native who was raised in a bilingual context led to the fact that her translation “does not always sound native” to readers who grew up in an English-speaking country. Mok opines that Cha uses “the pseudo-archaic language” writing in the vernacular but inclining towards the classical.<sup>74</sup> To imitate Cha’s writing style, Mok chose some archaic words such as “pneuma” and “myrmidon”, which sound rather strange and make little sense to the target readers. Since its publication, Mok’s translation has connected Cha and the target readers and aroused their interest in Cha’s works. As Jeffrey Powanda acknowledges, reading the translation led him to learn Chinese in order to read the original works. Patrick argues that martial arts novels are difficult to translate into English given their reference to and deep roots in traditional Chinese culture. This is just the “Chineseness” that Mok has expounded on. He adds that this novel is suitable in length for those who would like “a glimpse of this immensely popular writer (Louis Cha) and the *wuxia* genre”, and it will not overwhelm the readers at the outset. Patrick’s comments resonate with Margret Ng’s view that the shorter martial arts novels are more “manageable” to translate.<sup>75</sup> It could be argued that the length of the source text is a key factor to consider when introducing martial arts novels to the English-speaking readers, particularly at the early stage.

On X, topics such as paratexts provided by the translator, the main character, the unique

<sup>72</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Xueshan Feihu* 雪山飛狐 [Flying Fox on the Snowy Mountain], p. 227.

<sup>73</sup> See the preface for the new revised edition of Cha’s novels that were published by Guangzhou Publishing House in 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, p. XXIV.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XV.

narration in the novel and reading experience have attracted much attention. one user named “Forestofglory New fic for #EndOTWRacism!” showed an interest in the paratexts by commenting “there’s some fun front matter” and she posts the paratexts of “Chinese weapons”, “Paralytic Points” and “Main characters” in Mok’s translation.<sup>76</sup> This tweet reflects that the translator’s paratexts have played an active role in attracting the readers and facilitated their understanding of the novel. Interestingly, another user named heta.studio drew a picture of Yidao Hu’s wielding a sword, one main character in the novel. The style of the drawing is quite similar to that of the illustration used in Chapter Nine of the translation, which vividly depicts Yidao Hu’s extraordinary martial arts skills. Heta.studio also posted a 30-second video to show how he/she completed the drawing. The drawing and its video can be regarded as by-products of Cha’s novels, which manifest how a target reader interpreted novel’s theme through other forms of arts. The user named Zara acclaimed the novel as “a thrilling wuxia tale of revenge and hidden secrets” and highlighted the unique narration technique which unfolded the story “through shifting perspectives”. Zara’s remarks that “Jin Yong weaves martial arts, mystery, and destiny into a gripping adventure”, on the other hand, suggest the reading experience of Cha’s works accounts for their popularity.

Compared with literary reviews, popular reviews offer more insights into the factors that affect the reception of Mok’s translation. To mention but a few, Cha’s high literary status in the source culture has contributed considerably to the dissemination of the translation. As for the translation style, it seems a bit too academic and does not generate the expected reading experience for general readers. This indicates the striking differences between the author’s style and the translator’s style. The reviews also highlight the role of other media especially martial arts movies in drawing the readers’ interest to the novel. It is interesting to notice that some elements in the source text which are highly valued such as the fighting scenes and the indeterminate ending do not receive the same response from the English-speaking audience. Though these discussions are based on the popular reviews of one translated work *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, they are likely to shed light on the translation and reception of Cha’s other novels, since all his works share something universal in terms of the themes, the language, the plot development and the portrayal of characters.

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<sup>76</sup> Reviews on X are collected from [https://x.com/search?q=fox%20volant%20of%20the%20snowy%20mountain&src=typed\\_query](https://x.com/search?q=fox%20volant%20of%20the%20snowy%20mountain&src=typed_query) [accessed 3 April 2025]

## Chapter Six: A Translation of Cha's Most Controversial Novel

### 6.1 Introduction

*Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記, Cha's final novel with an unconventional character and themes, occupies an essential position in Cha's works.<sup>1</sup> Chen Mo claims that the uniqueness of this novel is that it is like both history and romance.<sup>2</sup> Kong Qingdong further explains that the novel combines realism which reflects the dark side of Chinese society during the reign of the Kangxi Emperor (r.1661-1722), and romanticism which is shown in the vivid description of the main character Wei Xiaobao's journeys across the country.<sup>3</sup> Ni Kuang argues that *Lu Ding Ji* is the peak of Cha's writing career and ranks it as the top of Cha's novels.<sup>4</sup> As the novel was translated into English in the 1990s, an investigation of its translation can contribute to understanding how Cha's novels have been translated and received in the target culture. This chapter, as a case study of *The Deer and The Cauldron*, aims to analyse how this translation entered the English-speaking world and how readers responded to it.<sup>5</sup> After briefly introducing the novel and its English translation, this chapter examines the translator and his translation strategy, then it explores the paratexts of the translation which plays a significant role in introducing the novel to a new literary system. Paratexts can shed light on how the publisher and the translator endeavour to present the novel to the target readers. Finally, the chapter studies the reviews from different sources to understand how the novel has been received by different readers in the target culture. Readers' opinions will be further analysed and compared to highlight some key issues concerning the reception.

#### 6.1.1 *Lu Ding Ji*: Cha's Last but Most Controversial Novel

Before examining its English translation, it is necessary to introduce the novel's main character and themes in order to gain insights into its literary values.

*Lu Ding Ji* was written and serialised in the newspaper *Ming Pao* between 1969 and 1972. Later the novel was published in book form in 1981. It has been revised twice by Cha: the revised edition in 1985 and the new revised edition in 2006. The five-volume novel covers almost the whole reign of the Kangxi Emperor (r.1661-1722). It mainly

<sup>1</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記 [The Deer and The Cauldron] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> Chen Mo 陳墨, *Jin Yong xiaoshuo shangxi* 金庸小說賞析 [Appreciating Jin Yong's Novels] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 1999), p. 315.

<sup>3</sup> Kong Qingdong 孔慶東, 'Lu Ding Ji de sixiang yishu jiazhi' 《鹿鼎記》的思想藝術價值 [Philosophical and Artistic Values of *Lu Ding Ji*], *Huawen wenxue* 華文文學, 5 (2005), 18-23 (p. 23).

<sup>4</sup> Ni Kuang 倪匡, *Wo kan Jin Yong xiaoshuo* 我看金庸小說 [My Reading of Jin Yong's Novels] (Chongqing: Chongqing Daxue Chubanshe, 2009), pp. 74-77.

<sup>5</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

narrates the life adventures of Wei Xiaobao 韋小寶 (“Trinket” in the English translation), an intelligent but illiterate young man who was born in a brothel in Yangzhou. Trinket is involved in numerous events including court conspiracies, secret societies against Manchu rule, quelling the revolt of Wu Sangui, ruler of Yunnan feudatory, and claiming control over Taiwan and signing the Treaty of Nerchinsk with Russia. Trinket gradually accumulates wealth and gains fame and power, and even develops a friendship with the young emperor. His adventure is interwoven with his romantic encounters with different women, and he manages to marry seven wives. Yet eventually, Trinket retreats to seclusion with his seven wives as he finds it painful to make a choice between the emperor and the secret society which attempts to overthrow the Qing government.

Since its publication, the characters and themes of the novel have attracted much attention. Trinket has been discussed widely by scholars and critics. For instance, Ni Kuang attributes the success of Cha’s novels mostly to his characterisation, and Trinket is one of the most successful characters in all of Cha’s novels, as he is free and unrestrained, and true to his feelings all the time.<sup>6</sup> In his hierarchical classification of characters in Cha’s novels, Ni thinks highly of Trinket and places him in the first place.<sup>7</sup> Trinket differs considerably from traditional heroes in that he does not have exceptional martial arts skills and sometimes employs methods that are not so aboveboard to achieve his goals. As Hamm puts it, Trinket can be regarded as the antithesis of Cha’s previous heroes as he does not travel the typical road of martial arts and moral education.<sup>8</sup> Trinket is “a brat from the brothel of Yangzhou” with a glib tongue and naked self-interest and his acquisition of seven wives is “erotic”.<sup>9</sup> Cha once emphasised the importance of creating characters in martial arts novels and tried to avoid writing about the same kind of characters repeatedly.<sup>10</sup> Cha even acknowledges in the postscript of the novel that Trinket’s virtues are at odds with tradition and cautions the readers about Trinket’s negative traits.<sup>11</sup> Luo Qi further argues that Trinket fills the novel with elements that run counter to martial arts novels not only in characterisation but also in his role in developing the plots.<sup>12</sup> Luo maintains that Trinket serves as a connection between the imperial court and the martial arts world, which helps widen the novel’s scope and develop the plot.<sup>13</sup>

In terms of the novel’s themes, there exist various opinions. Quite a few scholars associate Trinket with the society that the novel describes. For example, Liu Weiying and Huang Yanyan regard *Lu Ding Ji* as an ‘atypical’ novel because it features the

<sup>6</sup> Ni Kuang 倪匡, *Wo kan Jin Yong xiaoshuo* 我看金庸小說 [My Reading of Jin Yong’s Novels], p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), p. 200.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記 [The Deer and The Cauldron] (Beijing: sanlian shudian, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>12</sup> Luo Qi 羅麒, ‘Lun ludingji de fanwuxia tezheng’ 論《鹿鼎記》的“反武俠”特徵 [On the ‘Anti-Wuxia’ Characteristics of *Lu Ding Ji*], *Jiangnan luntan* 江漢論壇, 7 (2009), 122-25 (p. 122).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-24.

legendary character Trinket whose ascent from poverty to riches reflects the dark side of human personality and the abuse of power in society.<sup>14</sup> Other researchers interpret the theme from Cha's perspectives on different ethnic groups in China. As Cha asserts in the prologue, his views about different ethnic groups have changed significantly. In the early stage of his writing, Cha regarded the Han people as the orthodox rulers of China. In his later works, however, he suggests that all ethnic groups should be treated equally, and *The Deer and The Cauldron* is a representative novel to express this idea.<sup>15</sup> The ambiguity of Trinket's father is likely to illustrate Cha's ethnic equality. At the end of the novel, when Trinket asks his mother Wei Chunfang, a prostitute in a brothel in Yangzhou, about his father, Wei replies that Trinket's father can be a man from any ethnic group in China, such as Han, Mongolian or Hui, but she denied furiously that he was a "foreign devil".<sup>16</sup> Wei's response confirms that Trinket is a Chinese descendant, so Trinket can embody traits of a Chinese character to some extent. Meanwhile, Wei's answer supports the coexistence of Han and non-Han peoples.

Some scholars attempt to understand the theme of the novel from the perspective of relations between Han and non-Han peoples. Li Haoyue claims that by describing ethnic wars and unity, Cha mainly expresses his concerns about non-Han peoples in this novel.<sup>17</sup> Weijie Song further argues that dualism between Han Chinese and non-Han peoples reflects the social and cultural crises during the dynastic transition (from the Ming Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty in this novel).<sup>18</sup> Here Song discusses the inheritance and development of Chinese traditions from the dynamics among ethnic groups in China. Han Yunbo, while paying enough attention to the relations between Han Chinese and non-Han peoples, states that the novel, full of metaphor and symbolism, is relevant to life, society, politics and history. This makes the novel distinctive among Cha's novels as well as in modern Chinese literature.<sup>19</sup> Undoubtedly, Trinket and ethnic relations reflected in the novel are closely connected: Trinket's ambiguous or "hybrid" identity in Song's terms<sup>20</sup> and his life adventures are inextricably related to different ethnic groups in China. Indeed, Trinket serves as a starting point to address this issue revealed in the novel. In addition to Trinket and its theme of ethnic relations, this novel has evoked debates on other issues regarding martial arts literature, such as genre, presentation of human nature, interactions between Han and non-Han peoples, and the relationship between history and fiction.

<sup>14</sup> Liu Weiyang 劉衛英, and Huang Yanyan 黃豔燕, 'Lu Ding Ji yibu linglei de wuxia xiaoshuo jianping hanyunbo jinyong miaoyu ludingji juan' 《鹿鼎記》:一部另類的武俠小說——兼評韓雲波《金庸妙語〈鹿鼎記〉卷》 [Lu Ding Ji : An Unconventional Martial Arts Novel and a Review of Jin Yong's Smart Words in Lu Ding Ji by Han Yunbo], *Liaocheng daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexue ban* 聊城大學學報(哲學社會科學版), 6 (2003), 69-71 (p. 69).

<sup>15</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記 [The Deer and The Cauldron], p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>17</sup> Li Haoyue 李皓月, 'Lun jinyong xiaoshuo de minzuguan' 論金庸武俠小說的民族觀 [On the Ethnic Perspectives in Jin Yong's Novels], *Lilun guan cha* 理論觀察, 1 (2008), 130-31 (p. 130).

<sup>18</sup> Weijie Song, 'Jin Yong's Method of Imagining China', *Chinese Literature Today*, 8 (2019), 77-83 (p. 77).

<sup>19</sup> Han Yunbo 韓雲波, *Jinyong miaoyu ludingji juan* 金庸妙語 《鹿鼎記》卷 [Jin Yong's Smart Words in Lu Ding Ji] (Fuzhou: haichao sheying yishu chubanshe, 2001), p. 179.

<sup>20</sup> Song Weijie 宋偉傑, *Cong yule xingwei dao wutuobang chongdong jinyong xiaoshuo zai jiedu* 從娛樂行為到烏托邦衝動: 金庸小說再解讀 [From Entertainment Activity to Utopian Impulse: Reinterpreting Jin Yong's Novels] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1999), p. 163.

### 6.1.2 The English Translation: *The Deer and The Cauldron*

The prologue and the first two chapters of *Lu Ding Ji* were translated by John Minford and published in the journal *East Asian History* in 1993.<sup>21</sup> *East Asian History* is an academic journal launched by the Australian National University which publishes scholarly research on various aspects of historical studies in East Asia.<sup>22</sup> Along with the two chapters is the translator's introduction which explains the popularity of Cha's works and martial arts novels at large, offers a brief biography of Cha, and summarises the main contents of *Lu Ding Ji*.<sup>23</sup> The translation and the introduction consist of 100 pages, accounting for two-thirds of this issue. Minford's translation enables the novel to make its first entry into the English world. However, published in an academic journal with numerous notes and figures,<sup>24</sup> it seems that by reading the translation one can access aspects of Chinese culture. The journal, published only twice a year, offered a taster of the novel and did not continue to serialise Minford's translation of the remaining chapters. Different from the daily newspaper where Cha serialised his novels, the journal is not an ideal medium to publish the whole translation.

Minford's translation of the whole novel was published by Oxford University Press in three volumes in 1997, 1999 and 2002 respectively. Following *Fox Volant of Snowy Mountain* by Olivia Mok, *The Deer and The Cauldron* is Cha's second novel that has been translated into English. In terms of its publisher, Minford's translation is published by a university press, suggesting that the translation motivation of Minford is academic rather than commercial and his intended readers are educated instead of the common readers. Compared to the previous translation in the journal, the volume includes a wider range of paratexts, which provide insightful information about the translation and will be examined in detail in this chapter. It is well known that Minford has translated the last forty chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*. *Hong Lou Meng* is a 120-chapter novel which depicts a tragic world including the love between the hero Jia Baoyu and his female cousin Lin Daiyu, the vicissitude of life, the prosperity and decline of noble families, and the miserable fate of numerous people from the underclass. The novel has made a significant breakthrough both in ideas and writing skills in classic Chinese literature. As regards writing techniques, the novel adopts the multi-thread networking structure instead of the traditional single-thread one.<sup>25</sup> Importantly, *Hong Lou Meng* has reflected various aspects of Chinese culture including poetry, drama, painting, and traditional Chinese medicine.<sup>26</sup> If translating *Hong Lou Meng* introduces a broad range

<sup>21</sup> John Minford, 'The Deer and the Cauldron-Two Chapters from a Novel by Louis Cha', *East Asian History*, 5 (1993), 1-100.

<sup>22</sup> See the homepage of the journal's website: <https://www.eastasianhistory.org> [Accessed 15 October 2022]

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp.1-14.

<sup>24</sup> There are 40 notes and 6 figures in total in the translator's introduction.

<sup>25</sup> Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈, *Zhongguo wenxue shi disijuan* 中國文學史 第4卷 (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), pp. 356-71.

<sup>26</sup> Hu Wenbin 胡文彬, *Hongloumeng yu zhongguo wenhua lungao* 紅樓夢與中國文化論稿 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2005), p. 6.



of Chinese culture to English-speaking readers, then Minford's *The Deer and The Cauldron* enables the target readers to appreciate the *wuxia* culture in particular. According to Guo Yucheng's research, the *wuxia* culture had its trace in some historical records in *Records of the Grand Historian* 史記 written by the historian Sima Qian (c. 145 – c. 86 BC), then it was reflected in different works such as poems, romances and novels.<sup>27</sup> James J.Y. Liu mentions numerous martial arts heroes in Chinese drama, implying that drama is another form to represent martial arts culture.<sup>28</sup> An examination of these dramas, however, reveals that most of them are based on previous literary works, especially fiction. Therefore, *wuxia* culture and martial arts fiction are closely related, as the latter is one essential part of the former. The motivation for Minford's translation of *Lu Ding Ji* is in accordance with that of *Hong Lou Meng*. It is also worth noting that Cha participated in the translation and authored a preface for Minford's translation. Cha's role in the translation will be further explored in the following section.

## 6.2 Investigating *The Deer and The Cauldron*

### 6.2.1 The Translator

The works that Minford chose to translate depend a lot on his perspective on Chinese culture. Minford has underlined the essential role of translated literature in disseminating the source culture. He claimed in an interview that he attempted to present the best pieces of Chinese literature to the world through translation as Chinese literature constitutes parts of Chinese culture and belongs to the whole human society.<sup>29</sup> In 2020, Minford edited an anthology of literary works entitled “*The Best China*”, which was published by The Chinese University Press. This anthology, a collection of essays by Hong Kong writers, explains what Minford means by “the best pieces”. These essays represent “one of the finest traditions in Chinese culture: the tradition of creativity, of the freedom of thought, freedom of spirit and freedom of the imagination”. These works embody “the spirit” of Hong Kong literature.<sup>30</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Four, Cha's martial arts novels have the above characteristics and are an essential component of Hong Kong literature, so they can present the best part of Chinese culture according to Minford's statement. Yan Jiayan's research illustrates that Cha's novels contain diverse schools of traditional Chinese culture including Confucianism, Mohism, Buddhism and Taoism.<sup>31</sup> Most heroes in Cha's novels, for instance, Chen Jialuo in *Shujian Enchou Lu* 書劍恩仇錄 and Yang Guo in *Shendiao Xialü* 神雕俠侶, risk their

<sup>27</sup> Guo Yucheng 郭玉成, ‘wuxia wenhua de lishi chuancheng yu xinshidai fazhan’ 武俠文化的歷史傳承與新時代發展 [Martial Arts Culture: Historical Inheritance and Development in the New Era], *Wuhan tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 武漢體育學院學報, 6 (2019), 50-58 (p. 52).

<sup>28</sup> James J.Y. Liu, *The Chinese Knight-errant* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> Zhu Zhenwu 朱振武, Min Fude 閔福德, ‘Nachu zuihaode zhongguo zhuzhenwu fangtan minfude’ 拿出“最好的中国”——朱振武访谈閔福德 [Presenting “The Best China”: Zhu Zhenwu Interviews Minford], *Dongfang fanyi* 東方翻譯, 1 (2017), 50-56 (p. 56).

<sup>30</sup> John Minford, *The Best China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2020), p. XVI.

<sup>31</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jinyong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), p. 104.

lives to do chivalric things, which is in line with the principle of serving people in Confucianism and Mohism; once they achieve their goals, they usually give up fame and fortune, and lead a reclusive life, which accords with the teachings of Buddhism and Taoism. Chen Mo provides a more thorough analysis of the cultural components contained in Cha's novels covering more specific areas such as traditional Chinese medicine, painting, calligraphy and poems. Chen maintains that one can learn Chinese culture by reading Cha's novels.<sup>32</sup> Chinese culture in Chen's words is an idealised form, mainly referring to some unique fields which help define the Chinese identity but remain exotic to the target readers.

## 6.2.2 Translation Strategy

The length of this novel poses a challenge to the translator. Minford spent up to ten years translating the novel. The Chinese source text is composed of five volumes with approximately 1,474,000 characters. In terms of its content, the novel is filled with complex historical contexts and distinctive Chinese cultural elements which could become an obstacle to the target readers' understanding. The translator had to work out suitable solutions to these problems.

In addition to translating the novel, Minford edited it as well. *The Deer and The Cauldron* only contains 28 chapters while *Lu Ding Ji* has 50. Minford has obviously condensed the original. Wu Yuguang, by means of comparative reading, discovers that for the latter 40 chapters of the original, Minford condensed two or three chapters in the source text into one in the translation.<sup>33</sup> This kind of condensation is employed when the plots in several chapters of the original work are closely related, thus making the translation more concise and compact. Even though Cha revised his works twice, repetition in his plot is still one obvious shortcoming of his works. Chen Mo has discussed this issue in his analysis of Cha's novels.<sup>34</sup> Xu Yuan provides the reasons for the repetition: the long but tight-scheduled writing process, the limitation of Cha as an individual writer, and the readers' needs in a commercial society.<sup>35</sup> That is to say, serialisation in newspapers leads to inconsistency and redundancy in Cha's novel fundamentally. Hard as he tried, Cha did not eradicate all the repetition after his two revisions. In addition, readers' need for entertainment made it difficult for Cha to balance readability and artistry in his writing. It is thus reasonable that the translator avoided this kind of repetition in translation.

<sup>32</sup> Chen Mo 陈墨, *Jinyong xiaoshuo yu zhongguo wenhua* 金庸小说与中国文化 [Jin Yong's Novels and the Chinese Culture] (Nanchang: baihuazhouwenyi chubanshe 1999), p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Wu Yuguang 吴玉光, 'Ludingji yingyiben de bianyi celue chutan' 《鹿鼎记》英译本的编译策略初探, *Waiyu jiaoyu yanjiu* [A Preliminary Study of the Trans-editing Strategy in the English Translation of *Lu Ding Ji*] 外语教育研究, 3 (2015), 40-44 (p. 43).

<sup>34</sup> Chen Mo 陈墨, *Jin Yong xiaoshuo yishu lun* 金庸小说艺术论 [On the Art of Jin Yong's Novels] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 1999), p. 224.

<sup>35</sup> Xu Yuan 徐渊, 'Jin Yong Xiaoshuo de qingjie quexian' 金庸小说的情节缺陷 [Flaws in the Plot of Jin Yong's Novels], *Xi'an lianhe daxue xuebao* 西安联合大学学报, 4 (2004), 68-71 (p. 70).

Minford's translation strategy can be termed "trans-editing", which includes both translation and editing. "Trans" here is short for "translation". According to Lai Yu's definition, trans-editing, as the name implies, combines translation with editing. It requires that the translator should have not only a good command of the target language and relevant expertise but also sufficient editorial experience.<sup>36</sup> Liu Lifan and Huang Zhonglian propose that structural adjustments are one of the fundamental aspects of trans-editing.<sup>37</sup> Adjusted chapters in *The Deer and The Cauldron* are typical examples. Trans-editing exhibits the translator's active participation and creativity in the translation process. It implies that, since editing is an essential part of this strategy, modifications frequently happen in translation. Trans-editing aims to accommodate the taste of the target readers. Where the translation will be published is another factor that necessitates trans-editing. Cha started his own newspaper and in order to increase his readership, he serialised his novels. Cha actually preferred his novels to be long enough to keep readers' interest. When the novel was published in book form by Sanlian Shudian in 1994, it consisted of five volumes. If fully rendered in English, the novel would have been too lengthy. Therefore, Minford has considered the needs of both the target readers and the publisher, and his trans-editing works as a feasible strategy for translating lengthy martial arts novels. In the preface of the translation, Cha read Minford's translation and expressed his gratitude to the translator.<sup>38</sup> This implies that the author has approved the translation strategy.

Here is one example in the text which shows Minford's trans-editing strategy.

### Example 3

ST: 韋小寶忙道:“不會的, 不會的。大丈夫一言既出, 那個馬難追。”小郡主道:“駟馬難追! 什麼叫那個馬難追?” 韋小寶道:“那個馬比駟馬跑得還要快, 那個馬都追不上, 駟馬自然更加追不上了。”

小郡主不知“那個馬”是什麼馬, 將信將疑, 道:“那個馬難追, 倒是第一次聽見。” 韋小寶道:“那你就學了這個乖。這玩意兒有趣得緊呢, 一隻公的, 一隻母的。”

(Wei Xiaobao instantly said, "I won't, I won't. Once a gentleman has said something, that horse can't catch up." The Little Countess said, "A cart pulled by four horses can't catch up! What do you mean by 'that horse can't catch up'?" Wei Xiaobao said, "That horse runs faster than four horses. As that horse can't catch up, four horses naturally can't even catch up.")

The Little Countess did not know what kind of horse "that horse" is. Half-convinced and half-doubted, she said, "'That horse can't catch up' is the first time I have ever heard". Wei Xiaobao said, "Then you learned it. The kick-knacks are very interesting, one is male, the other is female.")<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Lin Huangtian 林煌天, *Zhongguo fanyi cidian* 中國翻譯詞典 [Dictionary of Translation in China] (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997), p. 45.

<sup>37</sup> Liu Lifan 劉麗芬, and Huang Zhonglian 黃忠廉. *Bianyi de jiben yuanze* 編譯的基本原則 [Basic Principles of Trans-editing], *Zhongguo keji fanyi* 中國科技翻譯, 1 (2001), 42-43 (p.42).

<sup>38</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. VIII.

<sup>39</sup> Jin, Yong 金庸, *Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記 [The Deer and The Cauldron] (Beijing: sanlian shudian, 1994), pp. 397-98

TT:

‘I promise I will!’ said Trinket. ‘By my plight and troth!’

The Little Countess hesitated.

‘Well, don’t you want to know about the kick-knacks?’ asked Trinket. ‘They’re very cute. One’s a boy, one’s a girl...’<sup>40</sup>

Example 3 is selected from the translation of the dialogue between Trinket and the Little Countess. There is a Chinese proverb which goes “Once a gentleman has said something, a cart pulled by four horses cannot catch up with it.” This proverb is used to stress the reliability of a gentleman’s words. Trinket knows nothing about this proverb, as he is illiterate. But he plays jokes with the Little Countess by discussing which kind of horse with her. If the translator chooses to translate the discussions about the horse, they need to add explanations at length and the translation may still seem difficult for the target readers to understand. Therefore, Minford abandoned this part in translation. It merits attention that the translator also added some sentences to ensure the fluency of narration. He added “by my plight and troth” to show how seemingly serious Trinket’s promise was. A rhetorical question “don’t you want to know about the kick-knacks?” is added to start a new topic and raise the readers’ interest. Meanwhile, the dialogues between the two characters are represented in short paragraphs, which conforms to the writing forms of the target literature. Arguably, Minford not only cut out some portions in the source text, but also edited the text, thus keeping the narration going without abruptness.

When dealing with distinctive Chinese cultural elements contained in the novel, the translator may have the following choices: adding footnotes in the text, adopting paratexts for the explanation, or just omitting them. As mentioned above, Minford intends to introduce Chinese culture in his translation, and it is unlikely that he would choose the last option. Adding footnotes can help achieve his purpose, but too many footnotes may hinder the reading process and diminish interest in reading the novel. As a result, Minford made use of the paratexts and endeavoured to introduce these elements which are unfamiliar to the target readers.

### 6.2.3 Paratext Analysis

As seen in Chapter Three, Genette defines paratexts as “a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations”.<sup>41</sup> He mentions that the function of paratexts is to present the text by surrounding and extending it. Thus, paratexts guarantee the text’s presence and are crucial to the text’s reception and consumption of the text.<sup>42</sup> Based on their spatial relationship with the

<sup>40</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The Second Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

text, Genette classifies paratexts into two kinds: peritexts which are in the same location as the text, and epitexts which are situated outside the book.<sup>43</sup> As this chapter intends to study how the translation entered the target culture, we will focus on peritexts that are more related to the translation. The peritexts of *The Deer and The Cauldron* can be further divided into three categories based on their providers: the publisher's peritexts; the translator's peritexts; and the author's peritext.

## The Publisher's Peritexts

To increase sales, publishers tend to employ eye-catching front covers as a tactic to capture the interest of the intended readers, and the same applies to translated works. As seen in Figure 3, on the translation's front covers are three paintings: the first depicts Manchu acrobats performing on horseback; the second shows the Yongzheng Emperor (r.1722-1735) as a hermit; the third portrays a group of ladies sitting leisurely on a boat in the lake in the Qing Dynasty. The original paintings are currently collected at the Palace Museum in Beijing. All the three paintings remind readers of the lives of upper classes or royal family members in the Qing Dynasty, which corresponds with the historical settings of the novel. Exotic with bright colours, these covers are likely to attract the target readers' eyes.

In contrast, the front covers of the Chinese original released by Beijing Sanlian Press in 1994 feature only one painting about the Kangxi Emperor's southern tours, which symbolises the peak of material abundance and cultural prosperity in the Qing Dynasty. Sanlian Shudian, a then state-owned publisher, served the communist party's political purpose. Cha met with the communist leader Deng Xiaoping in 1981 and the ban on his novels was lifted later, and Sanlian Shudian published Cha's complete works at the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>44</sup> The covers of the Chinese text *Lu Ding Ji* familiarise Chinese readers with the golden age under the reign of the Kangxi Emperor and the Qianlong Emperor (r.1736-1796), and they seem to play an active role in resonating with Chinese people from all walks of life. The colours of the paintings are heavy and dark, giving a sense of grandeur and solemnity. The translation, in contrast, was not affected by such political factors, as the Hong Kong branch of Oxford University Press was not in the control of the communist party at that time. The publisher had more freedom in the cover design of the translation, so it chose more interesting pictures reflecting different aspects of life in the Qing Dynasty, and the colours were bright and diverse, consistent with the themes of the three paintings.

The cover shows that the Chinese original is a martial arts novel written by Louis Cha, giving the target readers a general understanding of both the genre and the author. They do not compare martial arts novels to any English literary genre. The publisher thus arguably suggests that the martial arts novel is a new literary form in English and

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>44</sup> Fu Guoyong 傅國湧, *Jinyong zhuan* 金庸傳 [The Biography of Jin Yong] (Beijing: Shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 2003), p. 313.

prepares readers for a different reading experience. The expressions “translated and edited by John Minford” and “a martial novel by Louis Cha” are also printed on the cover, making both the translator and the author visible. Along with the English title and name, Louis Cha's pen name “金庸” and the Chinese title “鹿鼎記” also appear, though in a light colour. This creates a sense of antithesis, and reminds the target reader again that this is a translation. The publisher includes a brief introduction to both Cha and Minford on the jacket flaps of the back cover. The introduction states that this English translation has been authorised by Cha,<sup>45</sup> suggesting the author was consulted before the translation was published. The three volumes make up an integral whole, as indicated by the ordinal numbers. In contrast, each volume of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, the English translation of Cha's another novel *Shediao yingxiong zhuan*, includes a subtitle on the front cover, such as *A Hero Born*, *A Bond Undone*, *A Snake Lies Waiting* and *A Heart Divided*, showing the relevant independence of each volume.

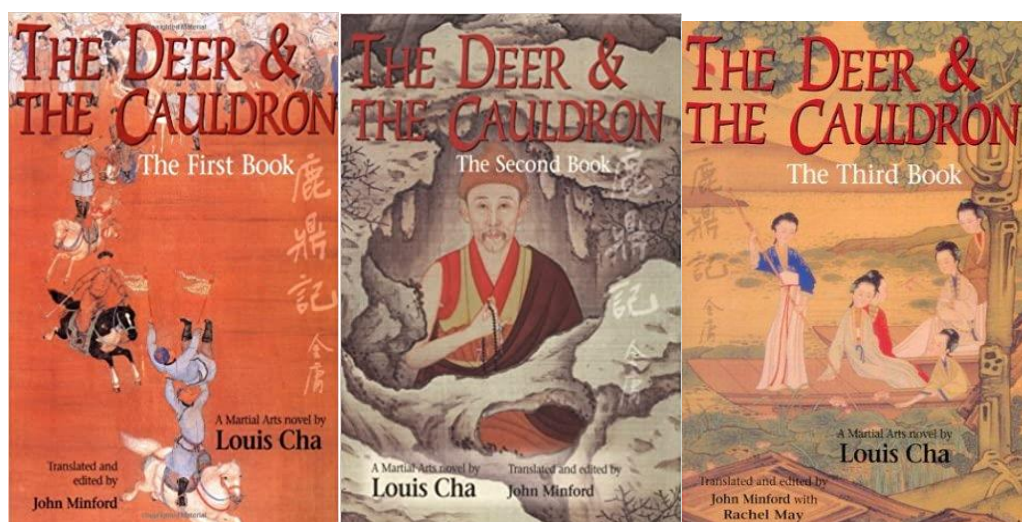


Figure 3 The Front Cover of *The Deer and The Cauldron*

The back covers with excerpts and blurbs play a significant role in familiarising the readers with the novel and furthering the publisher's promotion goals. Each back cover is made up of three components: a synopsis of the volume, an excerpt and blurbs. The synopsis is presented in a striking manner in red capitalised letters. It is one or two sentences with an ellipsis at the end in order to encourage readers to read the novel in detail. The excerpts are taken from the prologue, Chapter 11 and Chapter 21 respectively. The first excerpt is from the words of a literary scholar in the novel named Lǚ Liuliang who explains the cultural significance of “deer” and “cauldron” in the title, meaning “fighting each other to become Emperor”.<sup>46</sup> The excerpt sheds light on the connotations of the novel and gives the necessary information for readers' understanding. The second excerpt is Cha's description of how Trinket cunningly postpones his meeting with the Empress Dowager who wants to kill him. Trinket's psychological activities such as “The Old Whore's after me again!” and his utterances

<sup>45</sup> See the introduction of Louis Cha on the back covers of the three volumes.

<sup>46</sup> See the back cover of *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book*

“At Her Majesty’s service” and “Of Course! Of Course!” show how Trinket quickly responded to such a threatening situation.<sup>47</sup> This excerpt is designed to further raise readers’ interest by concluding with the line “something that will interest you greatly...”. The third excerpt is Trinket’s words when he names an unidentified island, reflecting his sense of humour. In the source text, Trinket gives the island a name based on the rules of *Pai Gow*, a game similar to Mahjong. In the translation, Minford abandons the comparison of a war to a game. Instead, Trinket likens the war to a meal by saying “War is a bit like a meal”,<sup>48</sup> thus creating a similar effect of amusement. The selection of excerpts for each volume demonstrates that the publisher tries to grasp the reader’s interest by presenting an image of a quick-witted and humorous Trinket in front of them.

Blurbs on the back cover are another important marketing device employed by publishers. The same five blurbs appear in each volume, as shown in Table 2. The blurbs are positive reviews about either the writer or the novel. Treglown praises the Chinese novel as “one of the world’s bestselling books”. *Newsweek* compares the humorous elements in the novel to Monty Python, a British comedy group. This comparison brings the novel closer to the readers and suggests that readers will enjoy it. Besty Horn expresses her opinion about the translation which has won her over. She says that after reading the novel, she is now “a convert” and “might just have to add Trinket to my repertoire”. Horn’s words demonstrate the appeal of the novel. Both Stefan Hammond and Sheryl WuDunn think highly of Cha and his literary achievements.<sup>49</sup> Of the five blurbs, only Horn expresses her feelings after reading the translation, while the other four focus more on martial arts novels in general and Cha, and barely mention Minford’s translation. Therefore, these blurbs offer rather limited information about the English translation. Concerning the issue of genre, *Newsweek* and Horn refer to Cha’s works as martial arts novels just as the front cover shows, while WuDunn uses “chivalry and romance”.

Table 2 Blurbs on the Back Cover of *The Deer and The Cauldron*

Author	Identity	Where the review appears
Jeremy Treglown	biographer, cultural historian and critic	<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i>
		<i>Newsweek</i>
Betsy Horn	Singer	
Stefan Hammond	Writer	
Sheryl WuDunn	Writer	<i>The New York Times</i>

The cover, as an essential peritext of translations, can have an impact on the readers.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> See the back cover of *The Deer and The Cauldron: The Second Book*

<sup>48</sup> See the back cover of *The Deer and The Cauldron: The Third Book*

<sup>49</sup> Stefan Hammond states that ‘Louis Cha’s so seminal, I don’t even know who number two is’. While Sheryl WuDunn believes that ‘Cha is virtually a one-man literary movement...his thirty-six volumes of chivalry and romance mesmerizing both Chinese peasants and foreign academics alike’.

<sup>50</sup> Shang Ruiqin 商瑞芹, Liu Zhaolong 劉昱龍, ‘Meng de zai jiexi hanying duizhaoban hongloumeng de neifuwenben yanjiu’ 夢的再解析:漢英對照版《紅樓夢》的內副文本研究 [Reinterpreting the Dream: A Study on the Peritexts of the Bilingual *Hong Lou Meng*], *Shandong waiyu jiaoxue* 山東外語教學, 2 (2020), 114-23 (p.

Wu Ping argues that the cover of a translation is multimodal in nature, which is an interaction between visual modes and verbal ones.<sup>51</sup> In this case, the cover which combines both images and languages offers different perspectives. The image on the front cover focusses more on the historical context of the novel, while the verbal elements on the back cover show selected extracts from the novel.

## The Translator's Peritexts

Peritexts provided by Minford include the translator's introduction, translator's note, important dates in the historical background, glossary of people and places, general glossary of terms, and note on pronunciation.

The translator's introduction and note provide insightful details about the author, the context of the novel, the main content of each volume, the translation strategy and process. Minford outlines Cha's life, discusses the historical settings of the novel, and summarises its main contents. As for the purpose of his translation, Minford hopes that "some English-speaking readers will be able to share a little of the enormous pleasure his novels have given to millions of Chinese readers".<sup>52</sup> More importantly, Minford points out that both Louis Cha and David Hawkes, Minford's father-in-law who is well known for translating the first eighty chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*, have contributed to the translation, though their names do not appear as translators.<sup>53</sup> Cha's and Hawkes' contributions to the translation have been ignored in current studies, as most people tend to assume that Minford translated this novel all by himself.<sup>54</sup>

The note specifies which parts of the novel have been condensed. Minford makes it clear that the second ten-chapter volume is abridged from Volume 2 and Volume 3 of the Chinese original while the third volume is abridged from Volume 4 and Volume 5 of the source texts. The guiding principle of his condensation is "to retain as much as possible of Trinket, his words, personality, and feelings".<sup>55</sup> In this regard, Minford is likely to adopt a similar approach to Cha who values the portrait of characters. Moreover, the note also adds that Minford's late wife Rachel May assisted him in editing the second and third volumes. Therefore, numerous participants have been involved in the translation and editing processes, and their close coordination has made the translation possible.

Other peritexts offered by the translator have been designed to further assist readers'

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117).

<sup>51</sup> Wu Ping 吳平, 'Luotuo xiangzi yiben fengmian de duomotai fuji fanyi yanjiu' 《駱駝祥子》譯本封面的多模態符際翻譯研究 [A Study of the Covers of the Translations of *Luotuo Xiangzi*: A Multimodal Intersemiotic Perspective], *Zhejiang daxue xuebao renwen shehuiban* 浙江大學學報(人文社會科學版), 2 (2020), 144-53 (p. 146).

<sup>52</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. XIV.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. IX.

<sup>54</sup> When mentioning *The Deer and The Cauldron*, most scholars tend to assume that it is a translation by John Minford himself, see Chen Gang (2006), Wu Yuguang (2015), Li Quan (2015), Han Shuqin (2020), Zhang Leizi (2021).

<sup>55</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The Third Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. XI.



understanding of the novel. Important dates provide the historical context in which the novel is situated, and each is listed in chronological order to highlight significant historical events in the Qing Dynasty. These dates enable readers to gain a clear timeline and link the chronology of different chapters of the novels. As there are so many people and places in the novel and it is difficult to remember them all, a list of terms is provided as a reference. The list mainly deals with distinctive cultural elements in the novel. Like his translation of the last forty chapters of *Hong Lou Meng*, Minford does not adopt in-text footnotes for an explanation, as they would be lengthy and could impede the reading process. The dates and the term list provide detailed background information about the novel. The two appendices, together with the translator's introduction and notes, contribute to readers' further understanding of the novel. Since pronunciation is not the focus of translation and it hardly affects readers' understanding, the translator places the note on pronunciation at the end of the peritexts.

With the help of these peritexts, Minford's translation seems to be a "thick translation" in Appiah's words, which locates the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context by means of annotations and glosses.<sup>56</sup> Though the term was used to refer to the translation strategy of African proverbs at the outset, Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie argue that "thick translation" can be used to refer to any target text which contains numerous explanatory materials including footnotes, glossaries or an extended introduction.<sup>57</sup> "Thick translation" can make the target readers respect the source culture and appreciate the way that people from other backgrounds think and express themselves.<sup>58</sup> The target readers are thus able to know more about the history and culture of the Qing Dynasty by these peritexts provided by the translator. With some notes on the real person's names and historical events, the translation appears to provide the exact historical context of the novel, and tries to make the readers feel that the stories in the novel were true.

## The Author's Peritexts

Of the four novels that have been translated into English, *The Deer and The Cauldron* is the only one for which Cha provides his peritexts. The author's peritexts are found only in Volume 1, which consists of two parts: Cha's Chinese calligraphy of dedication and his preface.

The author's peritexts reveal more information about the author, the translator and the roles they have played in the translation. Cha in his calligraphy points out that the translation was dedicated to Professor Liu Ts'un-yan on the occasion of Liu's eightieth birthday. Liu proposed the project and encouraged both the author and the translator

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<sup>56</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Thick Translation', *Callaloo*, 4 (1993), 808-19 (p. 817).

<sup>57</sup> Mark Shuttleworth and Moira Cowie, *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997), p. 171.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

enormously.<sup>59</sup> Liu was Minford's supervisor when the latter pursued his PhD at Australian National University from 1977 to 1980. Minford's thesis investigates his translation of the last forty chapters of *Hong Lou Meng. The Deer and The Cauldron* shows the continuous influences that Liu had on Minford's academic and translation career.

Cha's preface contributes to a general understanding of martial arts novels among target readers. In his preface, Cha tries to familiarise the target readers with the history, development and characteristics of martial arts novels. He points out that martial arts fiction is a long-existing Chinese literary genre which can be traced back to the Western Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 9 AD). As mentioned in Chapter One, Cha, in the preface of his complete works published by Sanlian Shudian in 1994, holds the opinion that martial arts fiction derives from the short tales written in classic Chinese during the Tang Dynasty (618–906). Different periods in the two prefaces show that Cha is not so certain about the origin of Chinese martial arts novels. Cha is a novelist rather than a historian of novels. His view about the history of martial arts fiction is quite personal, as it always mingles with his accounts of life or writing experience and lacks the support of evidence. Cha traces the origin of martial arts fiction to an earlier period in the preface to elevate the status of this genre, which had been ignored for quite a long time in Chinese literary history. Indeed, Cha had quite an ambivalent attitude towards martial arts fiction. On the one hand, in the preface of both the source text and the translation, he glorifies the genre by tracing it back to an early period. On the other hand, Cha in some interviews admits that martial arts fiction is recreation-oriented and cannot be viewed as a type of pure literature.<sup>60</sup> Pure literature, a term borrowed from the Japanese word “純文学” (literally pure literature), here refers to a kind of literature mainly for art's sake, and does not intend to amuse the readers, thus contrasting with popular literature.<sup>61</sup> Cha seems to have realised the low status of martial arts fiction in the history of Chinese literature. Cha later distinguishes martial arts fiction from literary genres of English literature in terms of their embedded religious beliefs: the former has “no pronounced religious sense” while the latter is strongly influenced by “the Christian faith”.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. I.

<sup>60</sup> Zhou Jun 周俊, ‘Lun gangtai xinpai zuojia de wuxia xiaoshuoguan yi jinyong liangyusheng gulong weili’ 論港臺新派作家的武俠小說觀——以金庸、梁羽生、古龍為例 [Perspectives on Martial Arts Novels from New School Writers in Hong Kong and Taiwan: A Case Study of Jin Yong, Liang Yusheng, and Gu Long], *Huanghai xueshu luntan* 黃海學術論壇, 1 (2013), 191-200 (p. 194).

<sup>61</sup> Zhang Jian 張健, ‘Chunwenxue zawenxue guannian yu zhongguo wenxue pipingshi’ 純文學、雜文學觀念與中國文學批評史 [The Concepts of Pure Literature and Miscellaneous Literature and the History of Chinese Literary Criticism], *Fudan xuebao shehui kexueban* 復旦學報(社會科學版), 2 (2018), 80-91 (p. 80).

<sup>62</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book*, pp. VII -VIII.

## 6.2.4 Reviews of *The Deer and The Cauldron*

### Literary Reviews

Literary reviews tend to first introduce Louis Cha, the novel and then evaluate Minford's translation. One anonymous review published on Yellowbridge claims that *The Deer and The Cauldron* is "not representative of the genre (martial arts novels)" and the three-volume translation is too lengthy to be "accessible".<sup>63</sup> In terms of its genre, Cha admits in his preface that he hopes to create a "somewhat unconventional novel", and *The Deer and The Cauldron* turns out to be "a very strange novel", a novel he has never imagined writing.<sup>64</sup> Even though the translator has reduced a considerable portion of the source text, the reviewer still thinks the translation is too long, so he would rather recommend *The Book and The Sword*.

Scott Crawford devotes himself to introducing the novel. He intends to bring Cha closer to English-speaking readers and considers that Cha, who combines romantic narrative and historical erudition in his novels, "perhaps most resembles Alexandre Dumas and Robert Louis Stevenson".<sup>65</sup> This corresponds with Yan Jiayan's opinion when Yan compares Cha and Dumas in terms of the relationship between history and fiction in their novels.<sup>66</sup> Chen Mo maintains that by employing this technique, Cha makes his novels both convincing and impressive.<sup>67</sup> Crawford describes Trinket as "a streetwise rogue", and "a gambler". Crawford only uses one short paragraph to summarise the main content of the novel but elaborates on the cultural meaning of the novel's title. Finally, he mentions the occasional peculiar translations such as "by the blazing balls of tofu!" and "hot-piece mama" which make the novel elusive. M. A. Orthofer's review is more detailed. He regards *Sutra in Forty-Two Sections* as the thread of the whole novel, and Trinket meets different kinds of people during his search for the set of books such as the old eunuch Hai Goong-gong, the Empress Dowager, the Kangxi Emperor, Helmsman Chen.<sup>68</sup> Orthofer also discusses Trinket's interaction with different women, "an appealing aspect of the novel", most of whom married him eventually. As regards the translation, Orthofer believes that the fighting scenes are "genuinely exciting", and the Kungfu skills on display are "impressive", or rather "fantastical-sounding". At the same time, he also points out that one problem of the translation lies in the condensation which makes the storylines "thinned out" and several adventures "pared back and rushed".

<sup>63</sup> See: <https://www.yellowbridge.com/literature/deer-cauldron-review.php> [accessed on 10 September 2022]

<sup>64</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book*, p. VII.

<sup>65</sup> Scott Crawford, 'The Deer and The Cauldron by Louis Cha', <<https://asianreviewofbooks.com/content/the-deer-and-the-cauldron-by-louis-cha>> [accessed on 10 September 2022]

<sup>66</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jin Yong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 135.

<sup>67</sup> Chen Mo 陳墨, *Jin Yong xiaoshuo shangxi* 金庸小說賞析 [Appreciating Jin Yong's Novels] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 1999), p. 315.

<sup>68</sup> M. A. Orthofer, 'The complete review's Review' <[https://www.complete-review.com/reviews/jin\\_yong/deer\\_and\\_cauldron.htm](https://www.complete-review.com/reviews/jin_yong/deer_and_cauldron.htm)> [accessed on 10 September 2022]

Literary reviews played a significant role in introducing Minford's translation to the English-speaking world. Literary reviewers attempted to familiarise the target readers with necessary background information about the author and the novel, which performs a similar function as peritexts. These reviewers highlighted some negative consequences caused by the translator's trans-editing strategy. On the other hand, literary reviews published in newspapers and magazines are rather limited in number, with similar topics discussed. In addition, literary reviews of the translation are mainly published in newspapers and magazines and they can hardly be found in academic journals. It is, therefore, not sufficient to merely rely on literary reviews to understand how the novel has been received in the target culture.

## Popular Reviews

Popular reviews of the translation appear either on shopping websites or online communities. Compared with literary reviews, they arguably have a much wider range of readers and reflect various opinions concerning different aspects of the translation. Here we will analyse reviews on the websites Amazon and Goodreads.

On Amazon, each volume can be sold separately, or the three volumes can be sold as a whole set. Buyers can rate the book and post their reviews after their purchase. As shown in Table 3, except for Volume 3, the other two volumes' ratings are above 4.<sup>69</sup> Volume 1 has the most reviews, which indicates that it has drawn much more attention from readers than the other two volumes.

Table 3 Reviews of *The Deer and The Cauldron* on Amazon

Item	Average Rating	Number of Reviews
Volume 1	4.4	11
Volume 2	4.1	4
Volume 3	3.7	6
3-volume Set	4.3	8

Most readers share their experiences of reading Volume 1.<sup>70</sup> SongJ views this novel as “a wonderfully entertaining book”. Ben Robertson believes that this volume is “a lot of fun and can be enjoyed on an adult level and a child's level”. Taisou comments that Trinket will fill your hours with “amazement, laughter, gasps of ‘what’”. An anonymous customer claims that the translation “lives up to all my hopes and expectations”, and he/she is looking forward to reading other translations by John Minford. Some reviews also show that Minford's previous achievements have laid a good foundation for the reception of this novel. Roof admits that he bought this volume because he had read Minford's *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* published by Penguin Classics which he enjoyed “immensely”, and he thinks that the novel is “fine, exciting and well-paced”.

<sup>69</sup> The data was from the website [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) [accessed 10 September 2022]

<sup>70</sup> Reviews of Volume 1 on Amazon can be found on the website: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/0195903234/ref=cm\\_cr\\_othr\\_d\\_show\\_all\\_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all\\_reviews](https://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/0195903234/ref=cm_cr_othr_d_show_all_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all_reviews) [accessed 10 September 2022]

Roof's statement indicates that Minford's previous extraordinary literary translations and their renowned publisher have contributed considerably to the publication and reception of this novel. Ceigna questions the content of the novel such as Trinket's polygamy and doubts whether Minford's condensation has no effect on the consistency of the story.

Positive feedback continues in the reviews of Volume 2.<sup>71</sup> Linxh thinks highly of the translation. He believes that it is "the best among the complete set" as it portrays how Trinket develops into his true self. He recommends this volume as "a must-read for any martial arts book lovers". Taisou praises the second volume and gives a similar review as the first volume and he is "waiting for Oxford to put out the third part of this book". David H. Hil thinks that the 'most glaring weakness' of the novel is too many girls in Trinket's life, and he finds the characterization is "one-dimensional and utterly predictable", but he still rates the novel four stars as it is entertaining. Like Taisou, he is also eager for the last volume. Reviews of the first two volumes focus more on the novel's entertainment and the portrait of characters, with little attention paid to the translation strategy and its consequences.

Reviewers' opinions about Volume 3 differ considerably.<sup>72</sup> H. Jones believes this volume is still a "great story, great translation", but her conclusion is based on her husband's reading experience. Hdb mentions the function of peritexts provided by Minford such as the glossary and maps, and praises the translator's work: "John Minford did an excellent job on the translation, explaining just enough context without getting dry". A. Mon rates this volume just one star, and he considers the translation boring, as it is "bogged down and loses all Chinese flavours and intricacies". Mon's view may be a little extreme. As we have discussed above, the translator has used peritexts to explain Chinese cultural elements contained in the novel. On the whole, the Chinese elements in the original novel are retained in translation so Mon's remarks are not so justified. In contrast, KGBeast and David C. Johnson adopt a more balanced view. KGBeast argues that the story is "wonderfully told, but unfortunately cut".<sup>73</sup> Johnson holds the view that although there are some "slips", the readability of the set is "excellent". Compared with reviews of the former volumes, reviews of Volume 3 deal with more issues with the translation, such as the translator's peritexts, the conveying of foreignness, the translator's translation strategy and translation style.

Most reviews of this first edition published in paperback discuss the quality of the book.<sup>74</sup> Vikram Patel finds his Volume 3 missing some pages. An anonymous reviewer

<sup>71</sup> Reviews of Volume 2 on Amazon can be found on the website: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Deer-Cauldron-Second-Book/dp/0195903250/ref=sr\\_1\\_6?keywords=the+deer+and+the+cauldron&qid=1663189075&sr=8-6](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Deer-Cauldron-Second-Book/dp/0195903250/ref=sr_1_6?keywords=the+deer+and+the+cauldron&qid=1663189075&sr=8-6) [accessed 10 September 2022]

<sup>72</sup> Reviews of Volume 3 on Amazon can be found on the website: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/0195903277/ref=cm\\_cr\\_othr\\_d\\_show\\_all\\_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all\\_reviews](https://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/0195903277/ref=cm_cr_othr_d_show_all_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all_reviews) [accessed on 10 September 2022]

<sup>73</sup> KGBeast's review was written in German, and there is a link below his review which provides its English translation.

<sup>74</sup> Reviews of the set on Amazon can be found on the website: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/product->

claims that the wrapping and package for this set are “horrible”. S. Rogers reminds the buyers that this set is “a paperback edition” rather than a hardcover one as advertised on the website. These reviews suggest that extra-textual factors can also affect the reception of the translation. In this case, these factors have affected the publisher’s second promotion of the novel: though the contents remain unchanged, the paperback edition has disappointed most readers eventually due to its poor quality and false advertisement.

On Goodreads, the average rating for each volume is above 4 as shown in Table 4, implying that the three volumes have been well received by English-speaking readers in general.<sup>75</sup> Reviews on Goodreads are more than those on Amazon as anyone can post a review after he registers a Goodreads account. Volume 1 still gets the most reviews among the three volumes.

Table 4 Reviews of *The Deer and The Cauldron* on Goodreads

Item	Average Rating	Number of Reviews
Volume 1	4.28	23
Volume 2	4.37	8
Volume 3	4.14	8

A number of positive reviews of Volume 1 appear.<sup>76</sup> Paula believes the novel will “surprise you if you have preconceptions of the martial arts style”. Paula’s remarks again show that the novel is different from a traditional martial arts novel. Gary Fong comments that the characters are “memorable”, the storyline is “funny and entertaining” and the translation is “smooth and contextual”. Interestingly, some reviewers suggest a close connection between the TV dramas and the novel: Kathy Chung reads the novel after watching “the drama series that was based on this book” as a child, Chung then evaluates the translation. Chung may be bilingual and may have spent her early life in the Cantonese regions of China. Jeffrey Powanda compares the novel to “those funny 90s Hong Kong movies”. This is a new point in the study of Minford’s translation. Arguably, adapted TV series or films have played a significant role in disseminating Cha’s novels as Hao Liqiang’s research shows.<sup>77</sup> Huang Xiaoyan even holds that they have contributed to the canonization of Cha’s novels.<sup>78</sup> It is not unusual that many readers first watch TV series and films, and then they get to know Cha and his works. Furthermore, they read his novels or their translations. However, some readers give low ratings. Mizuki regards the novel as “an anti-historical romance” and she does not like

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[reviews/0190836059/ref=cm\\_cr\\_othr\\_d\\_show\\_all\\_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all\\_reviews](#) [accessed on 10 September 2022]

<sup>75</sup> The data was from the website: [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com) [accessed on 10 September 2022]

<sup>76</sup> Each of the cited reviews will be taken from here:

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552705.The\\_Deer\\_and\\_the\\_Cauldron?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=nGqTmcofGt&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552705.The_Deer_and_the_Cauldron?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=nGqTmcofGt&rank=1) [accessed on 10 September 2022]

<sup>77</sup> Hao Liqiang 郝利強, ‘Jin Yong wuxia xiaoshuo de dianying gaibian yu haiwai yijie chuanbo yanjiu’ 金庸武俠小說的電影改編與海外譯介傳播研究 [A Study of Cinematic Adaptations, Overseas Translation and Dissemination of Jin Yong’s Martial Arts Novels], *Dianying pingjie* 電影評介, 16 (2019), 69-71(p. 69).

<sup>78</sup> Huang Xiaoyan 黃曉燕, ‘Jin Yong xiaoshuo jingdianhua yanjiu’ 金庸小說經典化研究 [A Study on the Canonization of Jin Yong’s Novels] (unpublished doctoral thesis, Zhejiang University, 2021), p. 111.

it. Mizuki does not further explain why she makes such a classification, but her views show that the genre of this novel does affect its reception.

Sean M Puckett feels that the novel is just like “Tom Sawyer was written in China for Chinese audiences” and he insists that the translator is imitating Mark Twain’s style. Puckett is the first one to compare this novel to Mark Twain’s work and his opinion shows the characteristics of Cha’s style. Cha’s stylistic similarity to other writers merits attention. In his conversation with Ikeda Daisaku, Cha admitted he has been greatly influenced by Alexandre Dumas.<sup>79</sup> Yan Jiayan explains that both of them are full of imagination, and skilled at developing plots and creating varieties of characters.<sup>80</sup> In addition, Cha has been referred to as “China’s Tolkien”.<sup>81</sup> In terms of its reception, when a new literary genre is introduced to another culture, the target readers tend to compare the style of a translation to that of some works in the target culture. In a similar vein, the author is often likened to someone whom the target readers are familiar with.

Reviews of Volume 2 indicate that it is better than Volume 1, opposite to the result on Amazon.<sup>82</sup> Phong Ho thinks the first volume is a “slow start” while the second one, “light, fun and straightforward”, is really a “page-turner”. Similarly, Kione gives this volume five stars and feels it is “getting better and better”. Kathy Chung maintains that the second volume is where Trinket’s “flirtatious nature” is portrayed and it is “even better than Volume 1”. Though no reviews discuss the translator translation strategy, it suggests that trans-editing plays an essential role in improving the reading experience, as condensation makes the plot more connected and quickens the pace of the narration. Eric Etcovitch’s review reflects the key role that the translator’s peritexts play in his reading. He finds “there are so many characters in this story” and it is hard for him to keep track, while the character listing is of help to him. Whether the peritexts have worked can be testified by readers’ reviews. In this case study, the functions of peritexts have been appreciated by the target readers.

Most reviewers argue that the third volume is inferior to the previous two, especially in the portrait of the characters.<sup>83</sup> David compares it with *The Book and The Sword* and concludes that it is “not as exciting and well written” as the latter, and its characters are “not well portrayed”. In contrast, the characters in *The Book and The Sword* are more “realistic”. Phong Ho and Kathy Chung attribute their relatively low ratings to two aspects of its contents: Trinket’s growth and the serious problems facing him. Reviews

<sup>79</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, Chitian Dazuo 池田大作, *Tanqiu yige canlan de shiji* 探求一個燦爛的世紀 [Searching a Bright Century] (Hong Kong: Ming Ho Press, 1998), p. 298.

<sup>80</sup> Yan Jiayan 嚴家炎, *Jinyong xiaoshuo lungao* 金庸小說論稿 [Essays on Jin Yong’s Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), p. 142.

<sup>81</sup> Jonathan Y. H. Hui, ‘A Serendipitous Comparison? Jin Yong and J. R. R. Tolkien: Genre, Prosimetrum and Modern Medievalism East and West’, *Comparative Critical studies*, 18 (2021), 285-307 (p. 285).

<sup>82</sup> Each of the cited reviews will be taken from here:  
[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552698.The\\_Deer\\_and\\_the\\_Cauldron?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=nGqTmcofGt&rank=2](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552698.The_Deer_and_the_Cauldron?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=nGqTmcofGt&rank=2) [accessed on 10 September 2022]

<sup>83</sup> Reviews of Volume 3 on Goodreads can be found on the website:  
[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552709.The\\_Deer\\_and\\_the\\_Cauldron?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=nGqTmcofGt&rank=3](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552709.The_Deer_and_the_Cauldron?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=nGqTmcofGt&rank=3) [accessed on 10 September 2022]

of volume 3 are not as differentiated as those on Amazon, and reviewers still focus more on the portrait of characters on which they base their judgement.

The republication of *The Deer and The Cauldron* by Oxford University Press in 2018 has received attention from quite a few X users.<sup>84</sup> Asian Books Blog introduced the three-volume in their X account and posted a link for a blog written by Minford.<sup>85</sup> In the guest blog, Minford recalled the days when he embarked on the translation of this novel, and introduced Cha, the main plot and characters of this novel. Asian Books Blog's review aims to promote the translation by directing readers to Minford's reflections on this novel and his translation. Other reviewers on X pay more attention to the portrayal of Trinket and the position of this novel in Cha's oeuvre. Asian Review of Books regarded Trinket as "the antihero of this epic" and below the tweet they provided a link for a longer review of this translation that provided more information about the translation, Cha and Trinket.<sup>86</sup> A user named Mingry explained the meaning of the novel's title and then quoted the Indian actor Aamir Khan's words "if we like the hero in it, we will like Firangi". *Firangi* is an Indian Hindi language film released in 2017, whose main character Mangatram shares striking similarities with Trinket. A comparison between the two characters establishes a cross-medial link between the novel and the film. Notably, Mingry juxtaposed the picture of Aamir and *The Deer and The Cauldron*, trying to attract other users' attention. Carl Zha maintained that this novel was Cha's last book and "his style and worldview totally changed from previous book". Zha's remarks indicate the unique position of this novel among Cha's works and it is the remarkable difference between this novel and other works that urged her to "definitely save" it.

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<sup>84</sup> Reviews on X are collected from:

[https://x.com/search?q=The%20Deer%20and%20the%20cauldron&src=typed\\_query](https://x.com/search?q=The%20Deer%20and%20the%20cauldron&src=typed_query) [[accessed 3 April 2025]

<sup>85</sup> See <https://x.com/asianbooksblog/status/1050585382167801859> [[accessed 3 April 2025]

<sup>86</sup> See <http://asianreviewofbooks.com/the-deer-and-the-cauldron-by-louis-cha/> [accessed 3 April 2025]



## Chapter Seven: A Popular Success

### 7.1 Introduction

Cha's debut novel, *Shujian Enchou Lu* was serialised between 8 February 1955 and 5 September 1956. It played an essential role in the popularity of the New School. In the first two or three weeks, the serialisation of this novel did not provoke a strong response from the readers, but after a month, it started to receive attention due to its intricate plot and Cha received large numbers of letters from a wide range of readers including bank managers, lawyers, and university lecturers every day.<sup>1</sup> Its success gave Cha great confidence and encouraged him to write other martial arts novels. *Shujian Enchou Lu* is frequently mentioned in the history of martial arts novels, and it is generally acknowledged as an early representative work of the New School.<sup>2</sup> Cha revised the novel twice and made it appear in book form. Its first revised version was published by Hong Kong's Ming Ho Press in 1976, Taiwan's Yuan-Liou Publishing House in 1980, and Beijing's Sanlian Shudian Press in 1994. Its second revised edition was published by Hong Kong's Ming Ho Press in 2005, Taiwan's Yuan-Liou Publishing House in 2006, and Guangzhou Publishing House in 2005. Graham Earnshaw traced his translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu* into *The Book and The Sword* to his accidental reading of a notice in both English and Chinese in the lobby of the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong in 1973.<sup>3</sup> He translated the novel in the 1980s and posted part of his translation on his website.<sup>4</sup> Earnshaw's translation was published in book form by Oxford University Press in 2004. Earnshaw cooperated closely with Cha and John Minford in the translation process. Cha read Earnshaw's translation and Minford, who had translated Cha's *Lu Ding Ji*, edited the translation together with his wife Rachel May.

A translation is primarily conceived and formed by the translator, and the translator's role can never be neglected. The translator is never a neutral mediator in the process of communication. On the contrary, as Maria Tymoczko puts it, the voice and stance of the translator are reflected in a translation and contribute to the ideological construction

<sup>1</sup> Fu Guoyong 傅國湧, *Jin Yong Zhuan* 金庸傳 [The Biography of Jin Yong] (Beijing: Beijing shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 2003), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> See Wang Hailin 王海林, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shilue* 中國武俠小說史略 [A Brief History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 178; Luo Liqun 羅立群, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shi* 中國武俠小說史, p. 276; Lin Yao 林遙, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shihua* 中國武俠小說史話 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels], p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> Earnshaw provided the background information about how he embarked on the translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu* in his book review online: [https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword](https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword) [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>4</sup> The translation can be accessed on Earnshaw's website: <https://earnshaw.com/writings/books/the-book-the-sword> [accessed 20 April 2024]

of the text.<sup>5</sup> Tymoczko's view shows that the translator is playing an active role in the translation process. Thus, it would be beneficial to study the translators in order to understand their translations. Earnshaw distinguishes himself from other translators of Cha's works in his multiple identities. Olivia Mok is an academic who has translated *Xueshan Feihu* into *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*; Minford is a translator and sinologist who makes efforts to introduce the Chinese culture to the world through his prolific literary translations; Anna Holmwood is a literary agent and translator, and Gigi Chang is now working as a professional translator of martial arts novels and plays. It is evident that the other translators' activities are mainly related to literary translation and they scarcely involve themselves in other fields such as journalism, writing and music. In comparison, Earnshaw does not confine himself only to translation, his professions cover a wide range of areas in which he has made outstanding achievements. Moreover, in translating the novel, Earnshaw cooperated with Cha and Minford closely, which made the publication of his translation possible. This chapter will focus on the translator, including Earnshaw's rich life experience and the diverse professions he engaged in, his translation strategy and his cooperation with Cha and John Minford. It then attempts to analyse paratexts and reviews, thus shedding light on how the novel entered the target culture and readers' response to the translation. Key issues discussed in the reviews will also be highlighted in order to offer some insight into the translation of martial arts novels.

### 7.1.1 *Shujian Enchou Lu*: Cha's First Novel

*Shujian Enchou Lu* could be considered as the starting point of Cha's writing career and it occupies a unique position among all of Cha's works. Before we move to its English translation, it is necessary to look at its main themes and salient literary values.

As Cha writes in the postscript of the novel, *Shujian Enchou Lu* was based on the rumour in Haining County, Zhejiang Province that the Qianlong Emperor (r.1736-1796) was actually a son of Chen Gelao, a high-ranking official in the imperial court. The Yongzheng Emperor (r.1722-1735) played a trick on Chen, and replaced Chen's son with his daughter. As Chen was Han Chinese, the Qianlong Emperor was a descendant of Han rather than Manchu. Chen Jialuo, another son of Chen Gelao, was the leader of Red Flower Society, a secret organisation attempting to overthrow Manchu rule and restore the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Chen Jialuo naively believed that the emperor would join the society after learning his real identity. Yet, the Qianlong Emperor did not have the intention to restore the rule of the Ming at all. He pretended to follow Chen's advice and even married Hasli, a young lady of exceptional beauty from the Hui minority. Hasli was truly in love with Chen and eventually sacrificed herself in order to send the message to Chen that the emperor would attempt to kill him. Chen led the Red Society Heroes to escape the trap devised by the Qianlong Emperor. After paying tribute

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<sup>5</sup> Maria Tymoczko, 'Ideology and the Position of the Translator: In What Sense is a Translator "in between"?', in *Apropos of Ideology: Translation Studies on Ideology: Ideologies in Translation Studies* ed. by Maria Calzada Pérez (Manchester: St Jerome), pp. 181–201 (p.183).

at the tomb of Hasli, Chen rode towards the western regions for life as a recluse.

The character portrayals have attracted considerable attention from readers. According to Feng Qiyong's analysis, Chen Jialuo, the main character, has an extraordinary appearance and remarkable martial arts skills, but he mixes revolution with his brotherhood with the emperor, turning his ambition into an illusion.<sup>6</sup> As Ni Kuang aptly puts it, Chen intended to change Qianlong from a Manchu emperor to a Han emperor, which indeed would bring no benefits to the latter at all.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, he seems irresolute in his relationship with the sisters Huo Qingtong and Hasli. These drawbacks in his personality largely lead to failure in both his career and love. On the other hand, this kind of characterisation makes the hero seem more authentic and colourful, different from the perfect stereotypes in previous novels by other authors. In Luo Liqun's words, the tensions in the hero's personality reflect the author's creativity.<sup>8</sup> These tensions allow for in-depth interpretations of the characters and promote plot development.

Various love stories are described in the novel and Cha leaves the interpretations of these stories to his readers. For instance, Wen Tailai and Luo Bin supported each other in times of peril, and they could be regarded as a good match. Zhou Qi first looked down upon Xu Tianhong because Xu usually tackled difficulties in a roundabout way, which was not so frank and righteous from Zhou's perspective. After fighting enemies together and taking care of each other, Zhou gradually changed her attitude toward Xu and married him. Their personalities were indeed complementary to each other. The family was always the priority in Xu's life, and he would never pursue the goal of the Red Flower Society at the expense of his newly-born son, who was held hostage by his opponent. In contrast, Chen Jialuo did not cherish Hasli, his true love so much. He even persuaded her to become the emperor's concubine in order to achieve his political ambition. As a result, Hasli lost her life and their story ended in a tragedy. Though romantic relationships became an essential component in martial arts novels in the Republican Era (1912-1949), it is Cha who elevated love in martial arts novels to a new height. Zhuang Guorui points out that the various love stories in Cha's novels are a way adopted by Cha to explore the depth of human personality.<sup>9</sup> Lü Ying argues that the description of love is one fundamental theme in Cha's novels, which reflects Cha's understanding of the nature of love.<sup>10</sup> Chen Shanzhen goes further and states that love

<sup>6</sup> Feng Qiyong 馮其庸, 'Lun Shujian Enchou Lu' 論書劍恩仇錄 [On *Shujian Enchou Lu*], *Beijing shifan daxue xuebao shehui kexueban* 北京師範大學學報 (社會科學版), 5 (1997), 66-73 (pp. 68-69).

<sup>7</sup> Ni Kuang 倪匡, *Wo kan Jin Yong xiaoshuo* 我看金庸小說 [My Reading of Jin Yong's Novels] (Chongqing: Chongqing Daxue Chubanshe, 2009), p. 27.

<sup>8</sup> Luo Liqun 羅立群, *Zhongguo wuxia xiaoshuo shi* 中國武俠小說史 [A History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels] (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2008), p. 288.

<sup>9</sup> Zhuang Guorui 莊國瑞, 'Lun Jinyong wuxia xiaoshuo dui xiaqing de kaituo' 論金庸武俠小說對“俠情”的開拓 [On the Development of "Xia Sentiment" in Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], *Zhejiang xuekan* 浙江學刊, 6 (2019), 32-43 (p. 32).

<sup>10</sup> Lü Ying 呂映, 'Wenshijian qing wei hewu jin yong xiaoshuo aiqing zhuti de wenhua jiedu', 問世間, 情為何物——金庸小說愛情主題的文化解讀 [Ask the World, What is Love? A Cultural Interpretation of the Love Theme in Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], *Zunyi shifan xueyuan xuebao* 遵義師範學院學報, 2 (2006), 19-22 (p. 19).

stories in Cha's novel show Cha's ideal of love and his advanced ideas about women such as the representation of the female characters' consciousness and discourse in love.<sup>11</sup> These opinions tend to highlight the essential role of love in interpreting Cha's novels. According to Liu Fangzheng's survey which was conducted among the readers of Cha's novels, 13.8 per cent of the respondents held that the moving description of love stories was one key reason for the popularity of Cha's novels.<sup>12</sup> This finding suggests a close link between love stories and the range of readership.

Some studies concentrate on the similarities between this novel and other works, and the connection between Cha and other novelists. Cha's debut novel *Shujian Enchou Lu* was significantly influenced by other works. In his conversation with Daisaku Ikeda, Cha admitted that he learnt from *Shuihu Zhuan* 水滸傳 (*The Water Margin*) when writing this novel.<sup>13</sup> Xu Fuchang states that *The Water Margin*, a hero romance, can be regarded as a martial arts novel.<sup>14</sup> Chen Mo labels it as "the first peak in martial arts novels".<sup>15</sup> Though Chen Pingyuan holds a conservative view that "half" of *The Water Margin* is a martial arts novel, he insists that the novel has exerted great influences on the description of fighting scenes in *xiayi gongan xiaoshuo* 俠義公案小說 (chivalric court-case fiction), the most prominent type of martial arts novels in the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912).<sup>16</sup> The similarities between the two novels can be observed both in details and themes. In the description of fighting against ferocious animals, Chen Jialuo's combat with a pack of wolves reminds readers of Wu Song in *The Water Margin* fighting the tiger. In terms of the theme, He Qiubin argues that both novels acclaim the heroes' rebellion against the rulers, though their struggle ends in failure.<sup>17</sup> Besides *The Water Margin*, influences from other martial arts novels have also been examined. Ni Kuang identifies that the beginning of *Shujian Enchou Lu* is strongly influenced by the first paragraph of *Wohu Canglong* 臥虎藏龍 (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*), another martial arts novel by Wang Dulu, a renowned writer in the Republican Period.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Chen Shanzhen 陳善珍, 'Jinyong wuxia xiaoshuo zhong de aiqing gushi jiedu' 金庸武俠小說中的愛情故事解讀 [An Interpretation of the Love Stories in Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], *Chongqing wenli xueyuan xuebao shehui kexueban* 重慶文理學院學報 (社會科學版), 5 (2008), 23-26 (p. 25).

<sup>12</sup> Liu Fangzheng 劉方政, 'Jinyong wuxia xiaoshuo duzhequn diaocha' 金庸武俠小說讀者群調查 [A Survey of the Readers of Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan* 中國現代文學研究叢刊, 8 (2012), 58-64 (p. 59).

<sup>13</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, Chitian Dazuo 池田大作, *Tanqiu yige canlan de shiji* 探求一個燦爛的世紀 [Searching a Bright Future] (Hong Kong: Ming Ho Press, 1998), p. 371.

<sup>14</sup> Xu Fuchang 徐富昌, 'yingxionghu xiakehu daokouhu wuxia xiaoshuo shijiao xia de shuihuzhuan jiedu' 英雄乎? 俠客乎? 盜寇乎? ——武俠小說視角下的《水滸傳》解讀 [Heroes? Knight-errants? Bandits? —An Interpretation of *Shuihu Zhuan* from the Perspective of Martial Arts Novels], *Qinghua daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 清華大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), 3 (2017), 60-77 (p. 60).

<sup>15</sup> Chen Mo 陳墨, *Xinwuxia ershijia* 新武俠二十家 [Twenty Writers of the New School Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing, Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1992), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Qianggu wenren xiake meng* 千古文人俠客夢 [The Knight-errant Dream of the Literati through the Ages: A Study of the Typology of Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1992), p. 47.

<sup>17</sup> He Qiubin 何求斌, 'Xi shujian enchou lu dui shuihuzhuan de jiejian' 析《書劍恩仇錄》對《水滸傳》的借鑒 [An Analysis of the Influences of *Shuihu Zhuan* on *Shujian Enchou Lu*], *Hubei shifan xueyuan xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 湖北師範學院學報 (哲學社會科學版), 6 (2009), 56-60 (p. 58).

<sup>18</sup> Ni Kuang 倪匡, *Wo kan Jin Yong xiaoshuo* 我看金庸小說 [My Reading of Jin Yong's Novels] (Chongqing: Chongqing Daxue Chubanshe, 2009), p. 27.

Lu Dongji, after comparing *Shujian Enchou Lu* with *Wohu Canglong*, concludes that Cha learned from Wang and made the main characters' love end in a tragedy. Based on Wang's achievements in the description of fighting scenes, Cha made further progress: the weapons in *Shujian Enchou Lu* were more diversified and the martial arts moves were more detailed.<sup>19</sup> Cha was once Liang Yusheng's colleague when working at *The New Evening Post*, and he could have read Liang's serialised novels in the newspaper. Liang's two serialised novels *Longhu Dou Jinghua* and *Caomang Longshe Zhuan* are both set in the background of the late Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), and Liang integrates history into fiction. Some researchers maintain that Cha imitated Liang's treatment of history and fiction at his early stage of writing.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Cha further developed this aspect in his writing, which will be analysed in the following section. From *Shuihu Zhuan* to *Wohu Canglong*, from Wang Dulu to Liang Yusheng, it could be argued that striking similarities are shown between this novel and previous works, indicating the connection between the New School Martial Arts Novels and their predecessors.

### 7.1.2 The English Translation: *The Book and The Sword*

*Shujian Enchou Lu* was translated into *The Book and The Sword* by Graham Earnshaw in the 1980s, and then parts of Earnshaw's translation appeared on his website later before they were published in book form. The translation online is composed of an introduction to the background of the novel and three excerpts of the translation.<sup>21</sup> In the introduction, Earnshaw rates Cha as "the biggest-selling author by far in the world of Chinese novels". He praises Cha's remarkable literary achievements by stating his novels "transcend anything attempted before in Chinese literature". In terms of the dissemination of Cha's novels, Earnshaw stresses that they have been "re-published in a number of Asian languages, including Japanese and Vietnamese" and all Cha's novels have been adapted for Television series and films. Earnshaw's translation may have been largely prompted by the popularity of Cha's works in Asian countries and he attempts to introduce "the exotic flavours" of the novel to the English-speaking readers. Earnshaw also mentions his translation strategy and purpose. He deems it "necessary to simplify some elements of the story in order to make it more acceptable to an English-reading audience". He justifies his translation strategy by claiming "Mr Cha agreed with my approach".<sup>22</sup> The introduction suggests that the translator made such changes to cater to the tastes of the target readers, and Cha involved himself in the translation

<sup>19</sup> Lu Dunji 盧敦基, 'xiaqing yu wugong jinyong wuxia xiaoshuo de chuangxinxing jidacheng shujian enchoulu yu wohu canglong de bijiao yanjiu' 俠情與武功:金庸武俠小說的創新性集大成——《書劍恩仇錄》與《臥虎藏龍》的比較研究 [Chivalric Emotion and Martial Arts Skills: The Innovative Integration in Jin Yong's Wuxia Novels — A Comparison between *Shujian Enchou Lu* and *Wohu Canglong*], *Dongyue luncong* 東嶽論叢, 12 (2017), 12-19 (p. 12)

<sup>20</sup> See the online article, which mentions the combination of history and fiction in Liang's and Cha's works: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1630143699698895163&wfr=spider&for=pc> [accessed 10 February 2023]. There is also an online podcast which discusses how Cha learnt from Liang in this aspect: <https://www.ximalaya.com/sound/165331287> [accessed 10 February 2023].

<sup>21</sup> The excerpts consist of three parts, which are taken from the first three chapters of *The Book and The Sword*. The translation on the website corresponds with the translation in book form as follows: Part 1 is from Page 4 to Page 25, Part 2 is from Page 53 to Page 81, and Part 3 is from Page 113 to Page 142.

<sup>22</sup> See the website: <https://earnshaw.com/writings/books/the-book-the-sword/intro> [accessed 20 April 2024]

process in the hope of gaining a wider readership.

As Figure 4 shows, Earnshaw's website posts a picture of the front cover of his translation in book form and provides a link to the book sold on Amazon.<sup>23</sup> *The Book and The Sword* was published in book form by Oxford University Press in 2004.

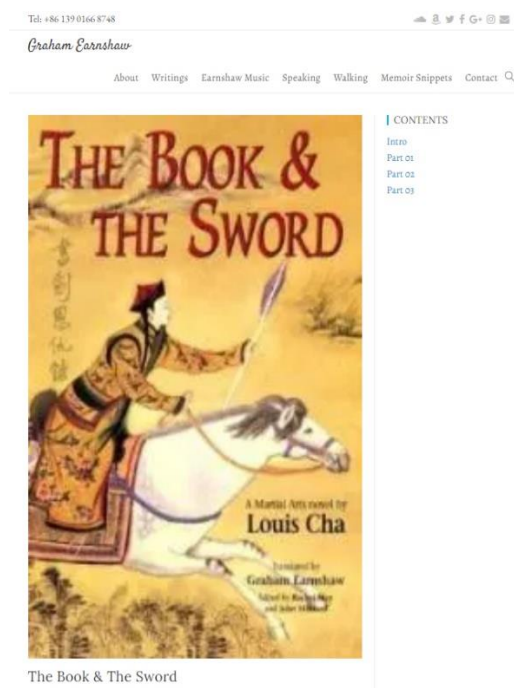


Figure 4 The Front Cover of *The Book and The Sword* on Earnshaw's Website

Published by the same press, the layout of the translation is quite similar to that of *The Deer and The Cauldron*. It is worth noting that John Minford, translator of *Lu Ding Ji* 鹿鼎記, together with his wife Rachel May, edited Earnshaw's translation. Minford's edition is first reflected in the division of each chapter, as each part of the translation on the website is a lengthy text, while each chapter in *The Book and The Sword* has been further divided into smaller sections. For example, Part 1 on the website is made up of three sections in the book with subtitles "Knights in Pairs", "Uighurs and Guards", and "Black Gold Gorge", each section covering almost the same number of pages. Earnshaw's website shows his translations at the early stage. Though the translation on Earnshaw's website has been frequently mentioned,<sup>24</sup> it remains underexplored. More attention has been given to the translation in book form and few attempts have been made to discuss the relationship between the two translations. The translation on the website can be considered as another version of the translation in book form, as the former is still a draft and underwent significant changes before its formal publication. Jeremy Munday argues that manuscripts can offer insights into the creative process of literary translation and the translator's decision-making.<sup>25</sup> In this case, identifying

<sup>23</sup> See the website: <https://earnshaw.com/writings/books/the-book-the-sword> [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>24</sup> See Wang Shaoxiang and Su Yilin (2010), p.97; Long Shangzhen (2011), p.15; Tao Fangfang (2013), p.17; Tang Jie (2015), p.140; Zhang Jinxin (2015), p.13.

<sup>25</sup> Jeremy Munday, 'The Role of Archival and Manuscript Research in the Investigation of Translator Decision-

differences between the two translations can shed light on the dynamics of the translation process and the active roles played by the translator and the editor.

## 7.2 Investigating *The Book and The Sword*

### 7.2.1 The Translator

#### 7.2.1.1 Earnshaw's Various Professions

A brief introduction to Earnshaw appears on the back cover of the translation, which mentions that he is editor-in-chief of a news agency named Xinhua Finance, managing director of SinoMedia, a media company, and writer of several books.<sup>26</sup> Even the two-sentence-long introduction discloses the various professions in which Earnshaw has engaged himself. The long biography on the website offers a detailed account of Earnshaw's life, revealing his diverse professions further.<sup>27</sup> The biography indicates that Earnshaw lived in China for many years and has done numerous jobs, including being an entrepreneur, a journalist, a writer, a translator, a singer and a compere. On his website, Earnshaw divides his achievements into eight sections and *The Book and The Sword* falls into the "writings" category.<sup>28</sup> It seems that Earnshaw does not intend to highlight his only translation, as he put it together with many other books he authored, such as *On Your Own in China* and *The Great Walk of China*. Nearly all his writings aim to present different regions of China to English-speaking readers and *The Book and The Sword* is no exception. The novel depicts the vast areas of China along with the characters' various adventures, ranging from Zhejiang Province in the south to the Uighur region in Central Asia, from the imperial capital to cities in the lower reaches of the Yellow River. Based on Earnshaw's categorisation, it could be concluded that the novel first serves as a guidebook which enables readers to appreciate the diversified sceneries in China.

#### 7.2.1.2 Earnshaw's Cooperation with Cha and Minford

Earnshaw and Cha kept in touch with each other after their first meeting in 1979 and Cha gave him the Chinese name “格文” (Gewen). Earnshaw's Chinese surname “晏” (Yan) is the same as his Cantonese teacher's.<sup>29</sup> Earnshaw translated the novel while Cha was still alive. He could have contacted Cha and gained the author's approval in

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Making', *Target*, 25 (2013), 125-39 (p. 126).

<sup>26</sup> See the back cover of *The Book and The Sword*.

<sup>27</sup> See <https://earnshaw.com/about> [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>28</sup> See <https://earnshaw.com/> [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>29</sup> Fu Chuan 付川, 'Wo yanzhong de yangewen' 我眼中的晏格文 [Yan Gewen in My Eyes], *Huaren shijie* 華人世界, 2 (2011), 82-85 (p. 82).

terms of copyright issues before he set about the translation project. Earnshaw states that Cha agreed with his approach, implying that Cha had read his translation. Therefore, Cha has authorised Earnshaw's translation in some sense. On the other hand, Minford's influences on Earnshaw can be detected in the editing and the selection of paratextual elements of his translation. Minford translated *Lu Ding Ji* and made his three-volume *The Deer and The Cauldron* published in 1997, 1999 and 2002 respectively. As Minford's translation appeared earlier than Earnshaw's and Minford provided his editing work, it is quite possible that Minford refined Earnshaw's translation based on his experience of translating martial arts novels. As will be shown later, similar paratextual elements exist in their translations of Cha's novels, which demonstrate the close cooperation between the translator and the editor.

## 7.2.2 Translation Strategy

The translation strategy is largely decided by the purpose. In order to make the novel more acceptable to an English-reading audience, Earnshaw insisted that it was necessary to simplify some elements of the story. As a consequence, Earnshaw made his translation much shorter than the source text. *Shujian Enchou Lu* is a two-volume novel with twenty chapters while the translation consists of only one volume with nine chapters. Earnshaw has rewritten the original novel by shortening and restructuring the source text. Tao Fangfang illustrates how Earnshaw employed numerous techniques to rewrite the source text such as omission, simplification and paraphrasing.<sup>30</sup> Hua Liang, on the other hand, shows how Earnshaw's own ideology and the dominant ideology at that time are reflected in the translation. Specifically, Hua maintains that Earnshaw's use of "chivalrous" or "knight" is greatly influenced by his own sense of responsibility and courage, and his translation approach is largely decided by his awareness of the target readers, while Earnshaw's selection of works for translation and retaining of Chinese cultural elements are mainly determined by the dominant ideology of the society at that time when China was eager to present its economy and culture to the world.<sup>31</sup> Tao's and Hua's research adopts the notion of rewriting to analyse Earnshaw's translation. But rewriting in their studies serves as a theoretical framework to explain the changes that Earnshaw made in the translation, and to show his different translation techniques. Rewriting seems a little broad to describe Earnshaw's translation strategy.

Earnshaw's translation strategy is "simplification" as he claims on his website. On the macro level, he simplified the plot of the story, thus making his translation more concise than the source text. Table 5 shows that each chapter in the translation is an abridgement

<sup>30</sup> Tao Fangfang 陶芳芳, 'Gaixie yu wenhua rentong shujian enchoulu yingyiben yanjiu' 改寫與文化認同：《書劍恩仇錄》英譯本研究 [Rewriting and Cultural Identity: A Study on the English Translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu*] (unpublished master's thesis, Zhejiang Gongshang University, 2013), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Hua Liang 花亮, 'Cong shujian enchou lu yingyiben kan yishi xingtai dui zhongguo wuxia yizuo de caokong' 從《書劍恩仇錄》英譯本看意識形態對中國武俠譯作的操縱 [On the Manipulation of Ideology on the Translation of Chinese Martial Arts Novels from the English Translation of *Shujian Enchou Lu*], *Xuzhou shifan daxue xuebao zhexue shehui kexueban* 徐州師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), 3 (2011), 77-80 (p. 77).



from two chapters in the source text, except Chapter 6 which includes four chapters of the source text. On the micro level, he deleted all the notes at the end of Chapters 8, 10 and 20.<sup>32</sup> These notes are insignificant to the development of the plot, but they arguably pose a challenge to the target readers' understanding and impede their reading experience, as they contain much trivial information about the historical background or the anecdotes. Tang Jie illustrates that Earnshaw simplified the depiction of fighting scenes which contains numerous weapon names and allusions. Earnshaw also omitted quite a few descriptions of natural sceneries in the source text.<sup>33</sup>

Here are two examples selected from the source text and the target text to illustrate Earnshaw's simplification strategy.

#### Example 4

ST: 王維揚心想：“他化解我這三招柔中帶剛，火手判官名不虛傳。”兩人不敢輕敵，又盤旋一周。張召重搶進一步，左腿橫掃。王維揚躍起避過，雙掌向他面門按去。張召重左腳踢出，已暗伏“空擊蒼鷹”、“樹梢擒猴”兩招。王維揚雙掌按處，將這二招消於無形。兩人棋逢敵手，各展絕學，攻合併鬥，轉瞬間已拆了三四十招。

(Wang Weiyang thought, “He tackled my three moves that blend softness with strength; ‘Fire Hand Judge’ is truly deserved.” The two didn't dare to underestimate each other and circled around once more. Zhang Zhaozhong rushed one step forward, sweeping his left leg. Wang Weiyang leaped to avoid it, raising both palms to strike towards his face. Zhang Zhaozhong kicked out with his left foot, secretly hiding the moves “Strike the Grey Eagle in the Sky” and “Catch the Monkey at the Top of the Tree”. Wang Weiyang pressed with both palms, resolving these two moves without a trace. The two, evenly matched in skill, each displayed their ultimate techniques. Attacking and counterattacking, they had already exchanged thirty to forty moves in a flash.)<sup>34</sup>

TT:

‘He avoided those blows of mine with ease,’ Earth-Shaker Wang thought. ‘Fire Hand Judge is no misnomer.’

Suddenly, Zhang stepped forward and swept his left leg across at Wang, who jumped clear off the ground to avoid it and countered with a fist aimed at Zhang's face.

They were evenly matched and fought close and fast.<sup>35</sup>

In Example 4, the source text describes the fight between Wang Weiyang and Zhang Shaozhong in detail. When this section was translated into English, the translator

<sup>32</sup> The notes at the end of the three chapters provide relevant historical background information about the characters or events mentioned in these chapters.

<sup>33</sup> Tang Jie 唐潔, ‘Wuxia xiaoshuo fanyi zhongde yishi xingtai he shixue yi ensha shujian enchou lu yiben weili’ 武俠小說翻譯中的意識形態和詩學——以恩沙《書劍恩仇錄》譯本為例 [Ideology and Poetics in the Translation of Martial Arts Novels: A Case Study of Earnshaw's *The Book and The Sword*], *Shandong nongye gongcheng xueyuan xuebao* 山東農業工程學院學報, 4 (2015), 140-42 (pp. 141-42).

<sup>34</sup> Jin, Yong 金庸, *Shujian enchou lu* 書劍恩仇錄 [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge] (Beijing: sanlian shudian, 1994), p. 344.

<sup>35</sup> Graham Earnshaw, *The Book and The Sword* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 246.

simplified it considerably. Cha depicted the intense fighting scene by using four sentences while Earnshaw only used one sentence. Earnshaw did not translate the last two sentences, so his description seems incomplete. As for the last sentence, Earnshaw expressed its main meaning in a concise way. Through simplification, the description of the fighting scenes in the source text failed to be rendered in a full manner.

### Example 5

ST: 余魚同道：“我這十套曲子，你今日聽定了。在下生平最恨阻撓清興之人，不聽我笛子，便是瞧我不起。古詩有雲：‘快馬不須鞭，拗折楊柳枝。下馬吹橫笛，愁殺路旁兒。’古人真有先見之明。”橫笛當唇，又吹將起來。

(Yu Yutong said, “These ten songs of mine, today you must listen to them. I in my life hate those who obstruct the elegant interest most, if you do not listen to my flute, you then despise me. One ancient poem goes, ‘a swift horse does not need a whip, [I] break off the willow twigs, off the horse I play the flute, saddening those standing by the roads.’ The ancient people really have the foresight.” He put the flute to his lips, and started to play again.)<sup>36</sup>

TT: ‘You really ought to listen to these ten songs of mine,’ said Yu. He put the flute to his lips, and started to play once more.<sup>37</sup>

Yu Yutong is adept at using his flute as a weapon in fighting. Unlike other martial arts heroes in the novel, Yu is a well-educated scholar. In Example 5, Yu quoted a poem in his dialogue with his opponent Zeng Tunan to stress the importance of flute playing. A comparative reading of the source text and the target text reveals that the translator omitted the poem and Yu’s subsequent remarks. Earnshaw’s simplification makes the translated text much shorter. As the quotation of the poem is a unique way to present Yu’s erudition and personality, the strategy of simplification affects the portrait of the character Yu substantially. The portrayal of Yu’s image thus became notably flattened and lacked the depth presented in the source text. An analysis of Example 4 and Example 5 shows that on the one hand, the simplification strategy makes the translation more accessible to the target readers and quickens the pace of narration. On the other hand, it omits quite a considerable portion of the source text, thus altering the description of fighting scenes and the portrait of characters.

It can be observed that Earnshaw’s simplification is reflected in a wide range of aspects of the novel, but its guiding principle is to make the language more concise and accessible while keeping the overall plot unchanged. At the textual level, Earnshaw adopts a simplification strategy which is reflected in his restructuring of the novel and his treatment of notes in certain chapters.

Table 5 Chapters in *Shujian Enchou Lu* and Their Corresponding Chapters in *The Book and The Sword*

<sup>36</sup> Jin, Yong 金庸, *Shujian enchou lu* 書劍恩仇錄 [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge], pp. 144-45.

<sup>37</sup> Graham Earnshaw, *The Book and The Sword* ((Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 97.

<i>Shujian Enchou Lu</i>	<i>The Book and The Sword</i>
Chapter 1	Chapter 1
Chapter 2	
Chapter 3	Chapter 2
Chapter 4	
Chapter 5	Chapter 3
Chapter 6	
Chapter 7	Chapter 4
Chapter 8	
Chapter 9	Chapter 5
Chapter 10	
Chapter 11	Chapter 6
Chapter 12	
Chapter 13	
Chapter 14	
Chapter 15	Chapter 7
Chapter 16	
Chapter 17	Chapter 8
Chapter 18	
Chapter 19	Chapter 9
Chapter 20	

### 7.2.3 Paratext Analysis

Compared with the translation posted on the website, the translation in book form has more paratextual elements. Kathryn Batchelor argues that the translated text can be considered as a text in its own right, with its own paratexts.<sup>38</sup> In some sense, studying the paratexts of *The Book and The Sword*, a translated literary work, is not so different from studying the paratexts of an original work. According to Genette's classification, paratexts are composed of peritexts which are in the same location as the text and epitexts which are located outside the book.<sup>39</sup> The peritexts will be the research focus as they share the same location as the translation and can reveal more information about the latter. Specifically, the peritexts of *The Book and The Sword* can be divided into two types according to their providers: the publisher's peritexts and the translator's peritexts.

#### The Publisher's Peritexts

According to Gérard Genette's definition, the publisher's peritexts are the whole zone

<sup>38</sup> Kathryn Batchelor, *Translation and Paratexts*, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, p. 2.

of the peritext that is the direct and principal responsibility of the publisher.<sup>40</sup> That is to say, the publisher is the producer of this kind of peritexts. The publisher's peritexts serve the marketing purpose and attempt to increase the sales of the books. The covers are the main peritexts where the intention of the publisher can be uncovered. As shown in Figure 5, the publisher selected a painting by Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766) as the front cover. Castiglione was an Italian painter who spent more than fifty years in China and produced numerous paintings for the court of the Qing Dynasty. His paintings attract much attention from the Western audience who are curious about China's social life at that time. Most of his paintings are now kept in the Palace Museum in Beijing.

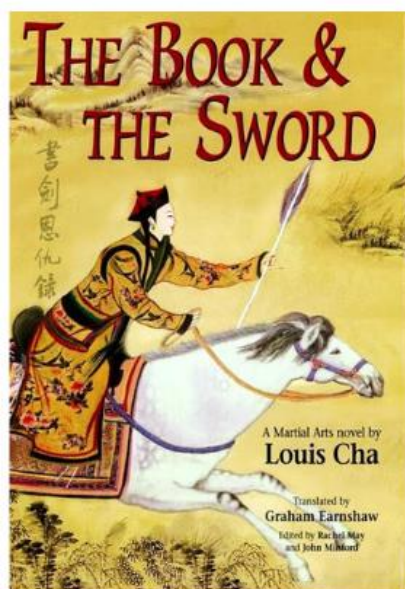


Figure 5 The Front Cover of *The Book and The Sword*

This picture portrays a woman who is the Qianlong Emperor's consort, riding a horse and holding an arrow in her left hand, with mountains in the distance. Indeed, it is part of a painting which depicts the Qianlong Emperor hunting in the wild accompanied by his Uighur concubine, who is passing the arrow to him to add his zest for hunting. The concubine is the prototype of the Fragrance Princess, namely Hasli in this novel. The original painting shows the harmonious relationship between the two and indicates the patriarchal dominance of the emperor as well. In the picture selected for the front cover, only the concubine is left and the emperor has been edited out. The picture is full of bright colours with vivid portraits of the dress, movements and facial expressions of the character, juxtaposing scenes from both far and near. Genette suggests that the cover's colour can indicate the type of the book.<sup>41</sup> Yellow is the main colour of the cover, and its cultural significance merits attention. According to Liu Yinuo's research, the colour yellow has a strong sense of nobility and authority in Chinese costumes and it is since the Sui Dynasty (581-618) that yellow has been the colour of the emperor's court

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 24

dresses.<sup>42</sup> However, the yellow covers are traditionally associated with detective fiction in the target culture. With the figure in the centre, the painting gives a clue about the content of the novel, implying to the readers that this book may tell stories about the royal families. Consequently, the colour of the cover is prone to strike the target readers and arouse their curiosity. The Chinese title “書劍恩仇錄” and its English translation both appear on the cover, with the former in a smaller font size. More information about the book is revealed through the phrases on the lower right of the cover. These phrases demonstrate that this book is “a martial arts novel by Louis Cha”, and it is “translated by Graham Earnshaw” and “edited by Rachel May and John Minford”. Thus, different participants and their contributions to the translation are made clear. Earnshaw regards Cha’s works as “Kung Fu novels/epics”, which can be found either in the introduction on his website,<sup>43</sup> or in the article he wrote for the *South China Morning Post* in 2018.<sup>44</sup> But on the cover, “martial arts novel” rather than “Kung Fu novel” is used to refer to this novel. John Christopher Hamm argues that “martial arts novels” is a convenient though less ideal translation for the Chinese term *Wuxia xiaoshuo* 武俠小說.<sup>45</sup> Kung Fu refers to the skills achieved through training and practice, so Kung Fu novels seem to emphasise the fighting skills or abilities of the heroes. As discussed in Chapter One, *wuxia xiaoshuo* contains two essential components: *wu* (martial prowess) and *xia* (chivalry), and *xia* has rich cultural connotations. Kung Fu reflects quite limited elements in this kind of literary genre, and seems to be an inaccurate term. The term “martial arts novels” was used by Minford in his translation of two chapters of *Lu Ding Ji* which was published in *East Asian History* in 1993.<sup>46</sup> With Minford’s great achievements in literary translation and his high status as a translator, “martial arts novels/fiction” is being gradually accepted by the target audience. As the term “a martial arts novel” appears on the cover of a previous translation *The Deer and The Cauldron*, it is understandable that the same publisher would like to keep consistent when it comes to *The Book and The Sword*.

The back cover, as Figure 6 shows, includes a synopsis of the volume, an excerpt and two blurbs.

<sup>42</sup> Liu Yinuo 刘一诺, ‘Huangse zai zhongguo fuzhuang zhongde wenhua yiyi ji diwei tanxi’ 黄色在中国服装中的文化意义及地位探析 [An Analysis of the Cultural Significance and Status of Yellow in Chinese Clothing], *Yishu yu sheji* 艺术与设计, 6 (2015), 101-02 (p. 102).

<sup>43</sup> Earnshaw refers to Cha’s novels as ‘Kung-fu epics’ on his website, see <https://earnshaw.com/writings/books/the-book-the-sword/intro> [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>44</sup> Earnshaw describes Cha’s works as ‘kung fu novels’ in the article, see Graham Earnshaw, ‘I translated Chinese writer Louis Cha ‘Jin Yong’. Here’s why he never caught on in the West’, <[https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2171127/i-translated-chinese-writer-louis-cha-jin-yong-heres-why-he-never?module=perpetual\\_scroll\\_0&pgtype=article&campaign=2171127](https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2171127/i-translated-chinese-writer-louis-cha-jin-yong-heres-why-he-never?module=perpetual_scroll_0&pgtype=article&campaign=2171127)> [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>45</sup> John Christopher Hamm, ‘The Marshes of Mount Liang Beyond the Sea: Jin Yong’s Early Martial Arts Fiction and Postwar Hong Kong’, *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, 1 (1999), pp. 93-123 (p. 93).

<sup>46</sup> John Minford, ‘The Deer and the Cauldron-Two Chapters from a Novel by Louis Cha’, *East Asian History*, 5 (1993), 1-100 (p. 2).

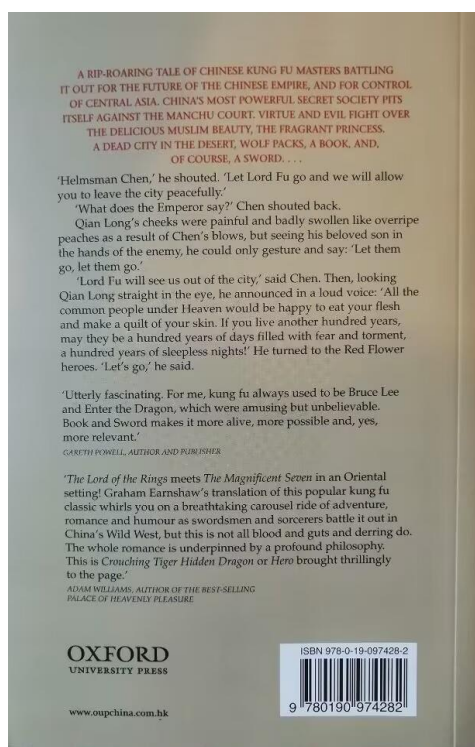


Figure 6 The Back Cover of *The Book and The Sword*

The words in the synopsis, such as “rip-roaring”, “most powerful”, “the delicious Muslim beauty” are to attract readers’ attention. In this regard, the synopsis plays an active role in constructing diversified images of the novel in readers’ minds. The excerpt is from the end of the novel, depicting how Helmsman Chen confronted his opponent the Qianlong Emperor and led the heroes of Red Flower Society to break the emperor’s siege. The dialogue between Chen and the emperor reflects the two figures’ personalities: Chen is righteous, undaunted and intelligent, while the emperor is timid, cunning and hypocritical. The selected dialogue encourages the readers to read more about the novel and find out what exactly happened to these characters through a detailed reading.

The two blurbs not only work as marketing devices but also reflect how the novel was received. For example, Gareth Powell is a British fantasy writer. He evaluates the novel from the aspect of Kung Fu. He compares the novel with Bruce Lee and his Kung Fu film *Enter the Dragon*, stating Kung fu in the novel is “more alive, more possible and more relevant”.<sup>47</sup> Powell attempts to link two different media: one is the audio-visual film and the other is the written text. Powell’s analogy implies that the description of the fighting scenes and the martial arts skills possessed by the heroes in the novel would profoundly absorb readers. Adam Williams’s review mentions more films: *The Lord of the Rings*, a series of three fantasy adventure films directed by Peter Jackson from 2001 to 2003, based on a novel of the same name written by J. R. R. Tolkien; *The Magnificent Seven*, an American western action film directed by John Sturges in 1960 and then remade by Antoine Fuqua in 2016; *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, a martial arts

<sup>47</sup> See the back cover of *The Book and The Sword*.

movie directed by Ang Lee in 2000; and *Hero*, a martial arts movie directed by Zhang Yimou in 2002. Williams seeks to familiarise the readers with the novel through his analogy with popular films. This kind of comparison, on the one hand, is a tactic to attract readers' attention and narrows the cultural distance between the novel and its intended readers. On the other hand, it could cause some misunderstandings, as Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is a fantasy, a different genre from martial arts novels. As Hong Diao argues, martial arts novels do possess some fantastic elements, but it is a genre in its own right.<sup>48</sup> Williams's promotional statement also reversed the historical relationship between martial arts novels and their cinematic adaptations. *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*, and *Hero* are films adapted from martial arts novels and both appeared decades later than *The Book and The Sword*. Williams claims that the novel can be considered as a film "brought thrillingly to the page",<sup>49</sup> which unconsciously distorts the fact that martial arts literature precedes its visual forms.

### The Translator's Peritexts

Earnshaw provides different peritexts to assist readers' comprehension, including important dates in the historical background, a list of characters and dates, a general glossary of terms and notes on pronunciation.

Important dates as the first category of the translator's peritexts play an essential role in providing information about the historical background. Notably, there is an explanation that tells us that the novel took place during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor, around the years between 1758 and 1760. Of all the seven entries, only two are within this period. Other entries provide information about broader historical contexts such as when the Yongzheng Emperor (r.1722-1735) came to the throne, the birth of the Qianlong Emperor, Manchus' occupation of Tibet, and the extermination of the Dzungars. These important dates enable readers to locate the novel in the course of Chinese history, creating an interaction between reality and imagination. As the novel portrays a great number of characters, it would pose a great challenge to the readers who may have difficulty in identifying them and are likely to get lost. A list of characters is provided for readers' convenience. On the list are 87 characters in total, each accompanied by a very brief introduction. The nine-page list contributes considerably to the understanding of the novel as it offers information about both the main and minor characters in the novel and illuminates their relationships.

Following the list of characters is a glossary of terms. This glossary helps readers understand various culturally-loaded items in the novel. These terms can be divided into three categories: (1) martial arts skills, such as Black Sand Palm Kung Fu, Drunken Boxing, Inner Force and vital point; (2) societies or organisations which existed in Chinese history, such as Red Flower Society, Security Agency, and Kazakhs (Turkic-

<sup>48</sup> Hong Diao, 'A Survey and Critique of English Translations of Jin Yong's Wuxia Fictions' in *Understanding and Translating Chinese Martial Arts*, ed. by Dan Jiao, Defeng Li, Lingwei Meng and Yuhong Peng (Singapore: Springer, 2023), p. 51.

<sup>49</sup> See the back cover of *The Book and The Sword*.

speaking Muslim ethnic group); (3) items used in daily life such as Dragon Well (a kind of Chinese tea), Kang (heated bed-platforms), Koumiss (fermented mare's milk) and Piba (a Chinese musical instrument). All these items would be difficult for the target readers to understand if they only appear in the text without any explanation. Meanwhile, the length of the explanations for the terms is noteworthy. The explanation of each item is only one or two sentences long and offers the readers quite a basic idea. Compared with the first three peritexts, a note on pronunciation is placed at the end of the peritexts. Pronunciation hardly affects readers' comprehension of the written text. Nevertheless, it provides some insights into the acoustic characteristics of the Chinese language, adding foreign elements to the translation.

Earnshaw did not add an introduction to his book. Only on his website can we find his brief introduction, which summarises Cha's literary achievements, the main content of the book and his translation strategy. Earnshaw's introduction which would usually be the peritext, turns out to be an epitext located outside the book. His introduction is a peritext of his translation on his website. The reason why Earnshaw discarded his introduction for his book remains unknown, but an introduction incorporated into his book would arguably help to facilitate readers' comprehension of both the original novel and the translation. The introduction shows how the same material changed from the peritext of the translation on the website to the epitext of the translation in book form while performing the same function of interpreting the text.

A comparative reading of the source text and the translation reveals that the title of each chapter has undergone significant changes. Every title of the twenty chapters in the source text is a Chinese couplet, which is a pair of lines of the same length, with corresponding characters having the same lexical category. Different from the English couplet in which the last word of the first line needs to rhyme with that of the second line, the Chinese couplet does not stress rhyming so much. Couplets are commonly used in traditional Chinese novels such as *Xi You Ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the West*), *Shui Hu Zhuan* 水滸傳 and *Hong Lou Meng* 紅樓夢, in order to summarise the main content of each chapter and create a sense of symmetry and beauty. Cha inherited this writing technique and applied it to this novel. However, translating such couplets into English may be rather challenging due to the difference between the two language systems and some difficulties seem insurmountable such as the metaphor, the rhyme, and the word limit. In view of this, Earnshaw did not translate the chapter titles into couplets. He put together all the subtitles which are noun phrases in each chapter. These noun phrases reveal the main content in an accessible way, but undoubtedly aesthetic elements of the chapter titles in the source text are lost in translation. Between faithfulness to the original form and comprehensibility, the translator chose the latter in his translation of chapter titles.

Earnshaw's peritexts are similar to Minford's. The note on pronunciation, in particular, is exactly the same which is reflected in the selected examples of Chinese letters and characters. This indicates that Minford may well have influenced Earnshaw



considerably in the types of peritexts. But Earnshaw is more concerned about his target readers. He is quite cautious about the quantities of his peritexts and tries not to overwhelm the readers.

Both the publisher and the translator provide a considerable number of peritexts in an attempt to make the translation accessible to the target readers. In order to know whether these peritexts work and how *The Book and The Sword* has been received among its readers, it is necessary to examine its reviews.

## 7.2.4 Reviews of *The Book and The Sword*

### Literary Reviews

The available literary reviews usually give a brief introduction to the main content of the novel and then encourage readers to read it. They also deal with some aspects of Cha's writings. An anonymous review published on YellowBridge mentions the translation posted on the website, its book form and Minford's editorial work. The review was written shortly after the publication of the translation, judging from the statement "The book finally became available earlier this year".<sup>50</sup> The third paragraph of the review outlines the stories in the novels including Helmsman Chen's encounter with "the two beautiful Uighur sisters" and his "painful choices between love for a woman and love for a country".<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, the review also compares the novel to martial arts films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Hero* in terms of its pace, which implies the novel can create an extraordinary feeling just like watching the films.

The review points out that Cha has a good knowledge of Chinese history, and "has interwoven several real-life personalities of the time",<sup>52</sup> indicating that reality and imagination are integrated in the novel. This remark focuses on the role of history in Cha's works. Hamm argues that the Hong Kong School martial arts literature differs from its Taiwan counterpart in historical settings.<sup>53</sup> The first sentence of *The Book and The Sword* establishes the specific historical setting: "in the sixth month of the eighteenth year during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor".<sup>54</sup> In short, historical novels are novels set in the past but the authenticity of history does not matter so much to this kind of novel. Each of Cha's novels has a very specific historical setting. For example, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* is set in the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644); *Legend of the Condor Heroes* is situated in the late Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279); and *The Deer and The Cauldron* involves the period in the reign of the Kangxi Emperor

<sup>50</sup> See <https://www.yellowbridge.com/literature/book-sword-review.php> [accessed 20 April 2024].

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> John Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and The Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 75-76

<sup>54</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shujian Enchou Lu Shang* 書劍恩仇錄 (上) [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2009), p. 5.

(r.1661-1722). Locating stories in historical periods can engender real-life feelings among the readers. Xu Yuan illustrates that historicity extends the breadth of martial arts novels, which enables the characters to exist in two worlds: the “Rivers and Lakes” (the imagined spatial world exclusive to martial arts heroes) and the secular world. Aesthetically, historicity contributes to the image construction of martial arts heroes, who pursue individual freedom and rescue common people from suffering.<sup>55</sup> Lin Baochun maintains that it is difficult to categorise Cha’s novels as historical novels or martial arts novels due to their strong sense of history.<sup>56</sup> Since history is essential in establishing the setting and developing the plots, and it has become an integral component, Cha’s novels may be described as “historical-martial arts novels”, a hybrid of the two kinds of novels. In the end, the reviewer recommends the “much more accessible” *The Book and The Sword* rather than *The Deer and The Cauldron* to the readers, as the latter consisting of three volumes is too lengthy.<sup>57</sup> In the preface of *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, Margret Ng holds a similar view that longer martial arts works are complex and challenging for translators, whereas the shorter ones are more manageable.<sup>58</sup> The two cases show that when translating martial arts literature, the length of the work should be taken into account. Readers sometimes need to wait for a long time to read the whole translation of a long novel. For instance, the first volume of *The Deer and The Cauldron* was published in 1997 and the third appeared five years later. The first volume of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* was published in 2018 while its last volume was not available until 2021, even though the last two volumes were collaboratively translated.

Another review written by Michael Orthofer concentrates on the main content of the novel.<sup>59</sup> It first introduces the four main female characters: Li Yuanzhi, Huo Qingtong, Hasli, and Zhou Qi. Then it highlights Helmsman Chen’s love with Huo and Hasli, and numerous adventures in the novel. In terms of the translation, Orthofer points out that there is obvious editing of the text, but he disagrees with Earnshaw’s omission and insists that “a full reproduction of it [the novel] might have been easier to grasp”.<sup>60</sup> Compared with his introduction to the novels, Orthofer’s discussion of the translation occupies a disproportionately small part and only mentions Earnshaw’s translation strategy.

Literary reviews mainly discuss the novel’s content and literary achievement, with little attention paid to how Earnshaw’s translation has influenced its reception in the target culture. Popular reviews, on the other hand, could complement literary reviews and

<sup>55</sup> Xu Yuan 徐淵, ‘Lun wuxia xiaoshuo de lishixing’ 論武俠小說的歷史性 [On the Historicity of Martial Arts Novels], *Xinan daxue xuebao shehui kexue ban* 西南大學學報 (社會科學版), 1(2019), 143-52 (pp. 150-51)

<sup>56</sup> Lin Baochun 林保淳, ‘Wuxia xiaoshuo yu lishi’ 武俠小說與歷史 [Martial Arts Novels and History], *Taiyuan xueyuan xuebao shehui kexueban* 太原學院學報(社會科學版), 1 (2020), 83-103 (p. 92).

<sup>57</sup> See <https://www.yellowbridge.com/literature/book-sword-review.php> [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>58</sup> Olivia Mok, *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2018), p. XV.

<sup>59</sup> See [https://www.complete-review.com/reviews/jin\\_yong/book\\_and\\_sword.htm](https://www.complete-review.com/reviews/jin_yong/book_and_sword.htm) [accessed 20 April 2024]

Michael Orthofer founded *Complete Review* in 1992, which is a literary website known for reviews of novels in English translation, and most reviews on the website are written by Orthofer.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

reveal more information about the reception of the novel as a translated literary work in the English-speaking world.

## Popular Reviews

On Amazon's US website, the hardback of the translation is now being sold.<sup>61</sup> As Table 6 shows, the book has received a 4.2 rating indicating a positive response from the buyers.<sup>62</sup> Notably, Earnshaw, the translator, has also posted a "review". His five-star rating is for the source text rather than for his own translation. He recalled his experience of comparative reading of English and Chinese in a notice in the lobby of the Mandarin Hotel, Hong Kong, which is regarded as "a simple path" to the translation of the kung fu novel *The Book and The Sword*.<sup>63</sup> He rated Louis Cha as "a giant" and considered "there are no other authors of his stature in modern Chinese popular literature". Earnshaw then outlined the genesis of the novel, and his "omit or simplify, but not add" translation approach. Earnshaw's review serves arguably as an advertisement for his translation, as it is related more to the background information of his novel and it repeatedly mentions that the translation approach has obtained Cha's approval. He even compares Cha to Charles Dickens, Ian Fleming and Tom Clancy combined, which admittedly sounds a bit exaggerated. Here an analogy between Cha and other famous English-speaking writers is used in order to shorten the cultural distance between Cha and the target readers. Meanwhile, it highlights Cha's literary status to increase his readership in the target culture. Earnshaw's opinion is fundamentally decided by his purpose: he arguably attempts to draw the readers' attention to his translation. In contrast, another two long reviews focus more on the specific aspects of the translation. Francis Pettit lists both the strengths and drawbacks of the novel by comparing it with *The Deer and The Cauldron*. He deems the glossary helpful to the readers, which reinforces the positive role played by the translator's peritexts. His opinion about the novel is that "the story takes a long time to get going", but when it does, it is "hard to put down". Maria Tom holds a similar view as regards the story in the novel: "The story is slow to get started". This shows one typical characteristic of Cha's writing. Even though Earnshaw has omitted considerable parts of the novel in his translation, readers can still notice the slow pace of the plot development at the beginning, which substantially stems from Cha's own writing style.

<sup>61</sup> The data was from the website [https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword](https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword) [accessed 20 April 2024]. The paperback edition of the translation published in 2018 are also sold on Amazon's UK website: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Book-Sword-Martial-Novels-Louis/dp/0190974281/ref=sr\\_1\\_6?crid=379RRDBF8SGPW&keywords=the+book+and+the+sword&qid=1677953136&srefix=the+book+and+the+sword%2Caps%2C73&sr=8-6](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Book-Sword-Martial-Novels-Louis/dp/0190974281/ref=sr_1_6?crid=379RRDBF8SGPW&keywords=the+book+and+the+sword&qid=1677953136&srefix=the+book+and+the+sword%2Caps%2C73&sr=8-6) [accessed 20 April 2024], which has got a 4.9 rating, but no reviews by the English-speaking customers can be found. Therefore, reviews on Amazon's US website were chosen for analysis.

<sup>62</sup> The data was collected on the website: [https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword](https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword) [accessed 20 April 2024]

<sup>63</sup> All the reviewers' opinions in this section are quoted from the website: [https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword#customerReviews](https://www.amazon.com/Book-Sword-Louis-Cha/dp/0195907272/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1388997982&sr=1-1&keywords=book+and+the+sword#customerReviews) [accessed 20 April 2024]

As for the translation of martial arts fighting scenes, Pettit feels they are “repetitive”. There are a considerable number of descriptions of fighting scenes in Cha’s novels, and how to translate them into English has drawn attention from scholars.<sup>64</sup> Yet these studies hardly explore how the translation of martial arts skills and fighting scenes has actually been received among the target readers. Pettit’s view that the description of fighting scenes in the translation is repetitive urges translators to tackle this issue in an effective way in the future.

In addition, other topics such as the portrait of characters and television series are discussed. In terms of characterisation, a reviewer named “grad student” claims that Chen is portrayed “a bit too positively” though he prefers the “infantalized” Hasli. Erik C. Pihl has noted “the long list of characters” at the front of the novel, and he argues the interesting characters keep readers’ attention. Both reviewers highlight the advantages of the portrait of characters, which correspond with Cha’s own statement that characterisation is a high priority in his writings.<sup>65</sup> Maria Tom remarks at the end of her review that reading the novel helped her decide whether to buy the 1976 TVB drama adaptation starring Adam Cheng. Her review reflects that martial arts novels are closely connected with their cinematic adaptations. If readers are satisfied with a novel, they might be tempted to watch the film version, thus appreciating the novel from a different perspective. It shows one direction in the dissemination of martial arts novels: from written texts to cinematic adaptations.

Table 6 Reviews of *The Book and The Sword* on Amazon

Average Rating	Number of Reviews	Topics mainly discussed
4.2 out of 5	11	Translation Characters Plot Louis Cha Television Series

On Goodreads, the average rating of the book is 3.92 out of 5, which is a little lower than that on Amazon. Goodreads posts readers’ ratings in detail, which is shown in Table 7.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Zhang Xuefei 張雪飛, ‘Cong yuyi fanyi he jiaoji fanyi shijiao kan wushu zhaoshi he wuda changmian fanyi yi ludingji yingyiben weili’ 從語義翻譯和交際翻譯視角看武術招式和武打場面翻譯——以《鹿鼎記》英譯本為例 [Translating Martial Arts Moves and Fight Scenes from the Perspectives of Semantic and Communicative Translation: A Case Study of *The Deer and The Cauldron*], *Haiwai yingyu* 海外英語, 13 (2019), 180-81 (p. 180).

<sup>65</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shujian Enchou Lu Shang* 書劍恩仇錄 (上) [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> The data was collected on the website: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552708/reviews?reviewFilters={%22workId%22:%22kca://work/amzn1.gr.work.v1.pzuTpzMhKvJESA1vq2aIXQ%22,%22after%22:%22MTUxLDE1NzMzMjMwMjA3OTQ%22}> [accessed 20 April 2024]

Table 7 Ratings of *The Book and The Sword* on Goodreads

Rating	Number of Rating	Percentage
5 stars	194	31%
4 stars	236	37%
3 stars	151	24%
2 stars	37	5%
1 star	6	<1%

It can be observed that the novel has received more ratings (624 in total) on Goodreads than on Amazon. Furthermore, the ratings above 2 stars are more evenly distributed, each accounting for approximately 30% of the total number of readers who rated. There are also more reviews on Goodreads (61 in total) than on Amazon, which are likely to provide more information about how the novel has been appreciated by the target readers.

Various topics about the novel have been discussed.<sup>67</sup> In terms of the portrait of the characters, David thinks that the characters are “well drawn”. Celya expresses that her favourite part is “at the very beginning when major characters were introduced”, but at the same time, she points out that there are so many characters and it is difficult to decide who is the leading one. In a similar vein, Chee Sheng also mentions that the big list of characters is confusing and makes one wonder who is the protagonist of the novel, and Viet Phuong considers character description in the novel “indistinguishable”. Only Roanne shows his extreme dislike of Chen Jialuo by citing his conversations with Huo Qingtong and Hasli. Indeed, it is Chen’s irresolute personality that contributes to the development of the plot. These views combined offer a critical analysis of the portrait of characters. On one hand, it shows that the huge number of characters has negatively affected readers’ comprehension. On the other hand, the main character Chen remains the focus of discussion. As for the fighting scenes, readers seem to enjoy reading them. Eddie states that the combat scenes are described “to the tiniest details” and the clashes of weapons and martial arts skills of each character are portrayed “with the perfect phrase”. Wan Peter highlights martial arts action which is entertaining. Alex2739 maintains that the “great explanation” of fighting scenes enables him to comprehend the action reaction of a fight. Even Roanne, who considers Chen Jialuo “the crying bit of filth”, values the fighting scenes. These views demonstrate that Earnshaw’s translation of fighting scenes seems to be successful. Other reviewers appreciate the novel on the whole. Christy Oshima points out that Cha has “an unbelievable gift of mixing history with fantasy” and the novel has “action, kung fu, mystery, romance and raw, true emotion”. Besty states that the story is written in a different manner “distinctly differently” from Western literature, yet she does not elaborate on her point. She seems to make her judgement merely based on her feelings after reading the translation,

<sup>67</sup> Each of the cited reviews will be taken from here:

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/552708/reviews?reviewFilters={%22workId%22:%22kca://work/amzn1.gr.work.v1.pzuTpzMhKvJESA1vq2aIXQ%22,%22after%22:%22MTUxLDE1NzMzMjMwMjA3OTQ%22}>  
[accessed 20 April 2024]

indicating the unique characteristics of martial arts novels, a Chinese literary genre. Ellen Kelpner compares the novel with other novels by Cha and regards it as “not Jin Yong’s best”, and will delete it from her “Currently Reading” list. Viet Phuong finds nationalism in the novel, which indiscriminately degrades Manchu characters but elevates Han characters as “obnoxious”, and suggests Cha’s other much better books. In Cha’s early works, the rule of the Han Chinese is considered normal, but this view gradually changes and equal relations among ethnic groups in China dominate his later works, especially in *The Deer and The Cauldron*,<sup>68</sup> If readers could read more novels by Cha, they would discern the change of his thoughts and view Cha’s works not only as literary products but also as a process of development.

The influence of martial arts films on novels is one topic for discussion as well. Chris’s love for martial arts movies made him choose to read the novel. Mindy suggests that watching a Chinese kung fu movie such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* helps to get the gist of the book. This view indicates that the visual cinematic actions can complement readers’ understanding of the fighting scenes in the novel; that is, helping them to picture the scenes in their minds. Kyle describes his reading experience of the novel as watching “a Shaw Brothers Kung Fu movie”. Shaw Brothers is a Hong Kong-based film company which was established in 1958 and it produced numerous Kung Fu movies in the latter half of the twentieth century. The above reviews reveal the role of films in encouraging readers to read novels and in facilitating comprehension. It could be said that films tend to affect the audience more effectively through their audio-visual movements at a rapid pace. Reviews on Goodreads, in contrast with those on Amazon, reflect another direction in the dissemination of Cha’s novels: from cinematic adaptations to written texts. After analysing reviews both on Amazon and Goodreads, it can be concluded that the interaction between the two forms is bilateral and mutual: they promote the dissemination of each other in an imperceptible way. Martial arts novels and their cinematic adaptations work together in the process of dissemination and sometimes it is difficult to tell whether readers have their first access to the novels or the movies.

Earnshaw’s translation strategy has attracted the attention of the reviewers. Anthony Tumiwa reminds us that the translation is an abridged version, so many stories and plots have been removed. Wuxia Wanderings also points out that the translation is an abridged version and consequently some detailed descriptions which are “the hallmark of Jin Yong’s writing” are missing. Eddie notices that the novel lacks a lot of parts as a translation and he uses “江湖” (Rivers and Lakes), a term in martial arts novels that refers to an imagined world paralleled to the secular society,<sup>69</sup> to illustrate the untranslatability in martial arts novels due to culturally specific elements. Another reviewer named An insists that martial arts novels are translated poorly into English

<sup>68</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shujian Enchou Lu Shang* 書劍恩仇錄 (上) [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge], p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Qianggu wenren xiake meng* 千古文人俠客夢 [The Knight-errant Dream of the Literati through the Ages: A Study of the Typology of Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018), p. 140.

due to both cultural differences and language differences, and she holds the view that “some of the magic of the original feels lost in translation”. Reviewers seem to be unanimous in the negative result of Earnshaw’s simplification. Besty’s opinion about the translator’s peritexts is worth mentioning. She “appreciated the glossary at the beginning and the pinyin pronunciation tip list”, which implies that the translator’s peritexts are helpful for this reader’s comprehension of the novel.

On X, various aspects of the translation are discussed as well, including the portrayal of characters, the reading experience, Cha’s writing skills and Earnshaw’s translation strategy.<sup>70</sup> Alice Poon expressed that she never liked the Qianlong Emperor but the main character the Fragrant Princess made “a lasting impression” on her mind. Hesta.studio posted their drawing for the novel, in which the Qianlong Emperor and Chen Jialuo appeared side by side against the backdrop of a scroll and two swords. This drawing accentuates the antithesis of the two main characters in the novel, and interprets the themes of novel in another form of arts. The reading experience really matters to Ash, who read *The Book and The Sword* because he/she “greatly enjoyed” the beginning of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. This shows that the success of one translation can encourage the target readers to read other translations of Cha’s works, which may be published earlier. Zara pointed out one salient writing technique employed by Cha who “weaves martial arts, history, and intrigue into a thrilling adventure.” Deacon Daniel shared a similar view by stating “Jin Yong’s planting of his books amongst active historical events is something that makes them unique”. Zara and Daniel’s words reflect that Cha’s treatment of history in his writing has received the target readers’ attention and it has become a key factor that affects the reception of his works. K John, by comparing the different depictions of Manchu in *The Book and The Sword* and *The Deer and The Cauldron*, argued that Cha’s patriotism and nationalism changed over time. This shows that readers can further understand Cha’s thoughts by reading more works. As for the translation strategy, Alice Poon mentioned that Graham Earnshaw explained his approach to translating Jin Yong’s first novel *The Book and the Sword* and she provided the link of Earnshaw’s article that he wrote for the South China Morning Post, an English-language newspaper based in Hong Kong.<sup>71</sup> In the article, Earnshaw stated that he translated “pretty much the whole thing”, but his statement is questionable, as Earnshaw did cut out a significant portion of the source text.

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<sup>70</sup> The data were collected from:

[https://x.com/search?q=The%20book%20and%20the%20sword%20jin%20yong&src=typed\\_query&f=top](https://x.com/search?q=The%20book%20and%20the%20sword%20jin%20yong&src=typed_query&f=top) [accessed 3 April 2025].

<sup>71</sup> The link for Earnshaw’s article is: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2171127/i-translated-chinese-writer-louis-cha-jin-yong-heres-why-he-never> [accessed 3 April 2025].

# Chapter Eight: A Collaborative Translation

## 8.1 Introduction

*Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* 射雕英雄傳, the first novel of Cha's "Condor Shooting" trilogy, is regarded as Cha's representative work.<sup>1</sup> Cha manifests his writing characteristics in this novel, including his frequent engagement with Chinese history, the complex plotting, multifaceted characters and psychological adventures.<sup>2</sup> In 2018, MacLehose Press in the UK published *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, the first full English translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*. Different from the university presses, MacLehose Press is a commercial publisher targeted at a wide but educated audience. The translation consists of four volumes: *A Hero Born* was translated by Anna Holmwood and published in 2018; *A Bond Undone* by Gigi Chang in 2019; *A Snake Lies Waiting* by Anna Holmwood and Gigi Chang in 2020; and *A Heart Divided* by Gigi Chang and Shelly Bryant in 2021. Through translation, Anglophone readers are able to access this work.

Current studies of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* mainly focus on the translation strategies utilised,<sup>3</sup> or the role of the translator,<sup>4</sup> with few attempts made to discuss its reception as translated literature. Yet there are questions to be addressed about the English translations: What is their position in the English literary system? How were they received by the target readers? What insights are offered in relation to the translation of martial arts novels? This chapter examines the translators, their translation strategy, the paratexts and the reviews of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. Through data analysis and comparison, this chapter aims to study how *Legends of the Condor Heroes* is translated, disseminated and received in the English-speaking world. As a case study of the translation of another novel by Cha, this section intends to contribute to the overall aims of the thesis.

<sup>1</sup> Liu Yi 劉毅, 'Shediao yingxiong zhuan zai xifang de yijie chuanbo: xingdongzhe wangluo yizhegguanxi yu fanyi celue' 《射雕英雄傳》在西方的譯介傳播:行動者網路、譯者慣習與翻譯策略 [A Study of the English Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* from the Perspective of Actor-network Theory], *Jiefangjun waiguoyu xueyuan xuebao* 解放軍外國語學院學報, 2 (2022), 58-65 (p. 60).

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Dai Ruoyu 戴若愚, Chen Lin 陳林, 'Shede zhidao lun haoyuqing shediao yingxiongzhuan yingyizhong shanjiande heguixing' 捨得之道:論郝玉青《射雕英雄傳》英譯中刪減的“合規性” [The Art of Deletion: The Compliance of Anna Holmwood's Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* with Translation Norms], *waiguo yuwen* 外國語文, 3 (2019), 117-23 (p. 117).

<sup>4</sup> Zhang Mi 張汨, 'Haoyuqing yizhe guanxi xingcheng jiqi dui fanyi xingwei de yingxiang yanjiu' 郝玉青譯者慣習形成及其對翻譯行為的影響研究 [Research on the Formation of Anna Holmwood's Translator Habitus and Its Influences on Her Translation], *Waiguo yuyan wenxue* 外國語文學, 3 (2020), 305-14 (p. 305).



## 8.2 Investigating *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

### 8.2.1 The Translators

As illustrated in other case studies of the previous chapters, different agents including the translator, the editor, the publisher and the reviewers play their roles in translating and disseminating Cha's novels. Among various agents involved in the project *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, the translators worked as a team and played a prominent role, as they initiated the project and actively participated in the promotion of their translation, thus contributing significantly to the successful dissemination of this novel in the Anglophone world.<sup>5</sup> As will be revealed in this section, the three translators worked collaboratively with each other. Furthermore, they made more efforts to synergise with other agents such as the publisher, the editor and the target audience who have greatly impacted the translation and this kind of interaction can offer more insight into the interaction among a myriad of agents involved in translating Cha's works.

The four-volume translation was completed by three translators who worked as a team: Anna Holmwood, Gigi Chang and Shelly Bryant. Notably, *A Hero Born* has been included on the list of "The 100 Best Fantasy Books of All Time" by Time Magazine in 2020.<sup>6</sup> Whether Cha's novels can be considered fantasy remains to be further discussed, but this title nevertheless indicates that the translation has been generally well-received in the Anglophone world. It is the translators' cooperation that makes *Legends of the Condor Heroes* accessible to the target readers in the shortest period.<sup>7</sup> As for different volumes of this translation, the translators managed to write in one voice and keep the stylistic consistency "at various syntactic and lexico-grammatical levels", which has been examined in Diao Hong's empirical corpus-based study.<sup>8</sup> The following section will centre on the role that each translator has played in accomplishing this translation project.

#### 8.2.1.1 Anna Holmwood: Project Initiator and Literary Agent

As the principal translator and project initiator, Holmwood played a crucial role, which

<sup>5</sup> According to one lecture delivered by Gigi Chang in 2014, the total sales figure of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* and *A Past Unearthed* (the first volume of *Return of the Condor Heroes*) which includes paper books, ebooks and audiobooks has reached 100,000. Considering the first volume of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* was published in 2018, this figure is really impressive. See <https://app.jiaxingren.com/webDetails/news?id=227038&tenantId=46&uid=63db81c80a5abd77b2935453> [accessed 24 March 2024]

<sup>6</sup> See <https://time.com/collection/100-best-fantasy-books/> [accessed 20 Feb 2024]

<sup>7</sup> *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* was published in 1993, eight years after Mok embarked on the translation; the last volume of *The Deer and The Cauldron* was published in 2002, nine years after Minford published his translation of the first two chapters in *East Asian History* in 1993; The one-volume *The Book and Sword* published in 2004 took Earnshaw nearly four years to finish the translation, according to his review on Amazon.

<sup>8</sup> Diao Hong, 'Homogenized Literary Co-Translation: *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone*', *Across Languages and Cultures*, 23 (2022), 92-110.

is reflected in setting the basic strategy for the translation, organising the translation team, dealing with the copyright of Cha's works and finding the appropriate publisher.

Born in Sweden, Holmwood studied modern history at University of Oxford from 2003 to 2006. After graduating with a bachelor's degree, she continued to pursue her MPhil in modern Chinese studies at University of Oxford China Centre, during which she went to Peking University as an exchange student. In 2009, she went to Department of Chinese at National Taiwan Normal University and studied ancient Chinese poetry and classical Chinese. In 2010, she was admitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies and pursued her second Master's degree in Chinese Literature. Holmwood's research is closely connected with Chinese history and literature and her stay in Mainland China and Taiwan enabled her to improve her Chinese proficiency and laid a solid foundation for her later translation activity.

As the translator of the first volume, Holmwood sets the basic strategy for translating the whole novel. Her translation of characters' names, her way of introducing the main characters as well as the notes on the text are adhered to throughout the next three volumes. She tried to achieve stylistic consistency between her translation and Chang's by offering suggestions to the latter, thus ensuring a smooth transition between the first two volumes. According to Chang's recollection, Holmwood did "a close line edit" of the first few pages of Chang's sample which served as the beginning part of the second volume.<sup>9</sup> As a result, Chang revised her draft based on Holmwood's advice and managed to maintain similarity in translation style from the outset.

To finish the project on time, Holmwood worked with other translators and established the team, all of whom were interested in Cha's works and possessed the bilingual proficiency required. When asked why she decided to cooperate with other translators, Holmwood replied that "it can be a lonely job without a network of peers, where so much crucial information is shared".<sup>10</sup> Working with other translators may be an enriching experience and can render the work less tedious, but the main factor for Holmwood was the massive workload, which made it difficult to finish the translation on her own in four years. In the winter of 2014, she met Chang in Shanghai to discuss the possibility of co-translating *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*, and Chang agreed without hesitation. Indeed, due to the amount of work, Holmwood had to change her original plan. At first, she was going to translate "the odd numbers", namely the first and third volumes, while Chang would work on "the even numbers", that is, the second and fourth volumes.<sup>11</sup> However, "as circumstances in life changed and she didn't have as much time to work on Volume 3 as expected", she cooperated with Chang for *A Snake Lies Waiting*.<sup>12</sup> In November 2018, Holmwood went to Singapore to attend the 21st

<sup>9</sup> Gigi Chang, 'Writing in One Voice: Thoughts and Memories on Co-Translating Jin Yong's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*' in *Understanding and Translating Chinese Martial Arts* ed. by Dan Jiao, Defeng Li, Lingwei Meng and Yuhong Peng (Singapore: Springer, 2023), pp. 117-35 (p. 120).

<sup>10</sup> See <https://nineteenquestions.com/2018/12/18/anna-holmwood/> [Accessed 20 February 2024].

<sup>11</sup> Qu Jingfan, 'Anna Holmwood: Open the Door to the International Market Further' <<http://dzzy.cbbr.com.cn/resfile/2018-09-28/23/23.pdf>> [Accessed 20 February 2024].

<sup>12</sup> Gigi Chang explained the changes to the plan in her email to me on 4 February 2024.

Singapore Writers Festival. There she met Shelly Bryant who was also a translator working on Chinese literature. Holmwood invited Bryant to join the existing translation team for the fourth volume.<sup>13</sup> Holmwood's sound relations with the other two translators enabled the team to come into being.

Compared with her part in translating the novel, Holmwood's efforts to tackle the copyright issues of the English translation and find the appropriate publisher merit more attention. Before setting about the translation project, she had worked as a literary agent for a number of agencies including Johnson & Alcock, The Grayhawk Agency and Andrew Nurnberg. As Diao observes, her profession as a literary agent enabled Holmwood to feel the "pulse" of the literary market.<sup>14</sup> That is, she was well aware of what kind of works could become bestsellers and how to promote Chinese literature to the English-speaking market. Together with another literary agent Peter Buckman, she succeeded in obtaining the rights to translate *Condor Heroes* with Cha's representatives.<sup>15</sup> Then she provided a long sample translation for several potential publishers. Among all the shortlisted publishers who showed interest, Holmwood finally chose to work with Christopher MacLehose. In her view, MacLehose has "a great eye" and working with him would be "extremely exciting".<sup>16</sup> Arguably, Holmwood considered the factors of promotion and dissemination and this London-based press has advantages in these aspects. Different from the academic publishers of the previous English translations, MacLehose Press is a commercial one, which was more adept at promotion and could potentially help her translation gain a wide readership.

### 8.2.1.2 Gigi Chang: Emerging Translator and Public Speaker

Another translator Gigi Chang actively engaged in a number of interviews, lectures and public events covering various topics concerning *Legends of Condor Heroes*.<sup>17</sup> These activities provided first-hand material to investigate the translated text as well as the translation process. When interviewed by Xu Xueying shortly after the publication of *A Bond Undone*, Chang recounted how she read Cha's source text and Holmwood's translation in order to achieve the stylistic consistency between the first volume and the second one.<sup>18</sup> Chang also revealed more information about her views on translation

<sup>13</sup> Shelly Bryant shared how she met Holmwood and joined the team on a podcast: <https://nuvoices.com/2021/11/03/nuvoices-podcast-66-translating-jin-yongs-legends-of-the-condor-heroes-with-gigi-chang-and-shelly-bryant/> [Accessed 20 February 2024].

<sup>14</sup> Diao Hong, Translating and literary agenting: Anna Holmwood's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, *Perspectives*, 6 (2022), 1059-1073 (p. 1062).

<sup>15</sup> See <https://nineteenquestions.com/2018/12/18/anna-holmwood/> [Accessed 20 February 2024]. "Condor Heroes" in Holmwood's words refers to the trilogy which consists of three novels: *Legends of the Condor Heroes* (*Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* 射雕英雄傳), *Return of the Condor Heroes* (神雕俠侶 *Shendiao Xialü*) and *Heaven Sword, Dragon Sabre* (倚天屠龍記 *Yitian Tulong Ji*).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> In her email to me on 4 February 2024, Chang provided me a list which consisted of 28 events that she participated in regarding *Legends of the Condor Heroes*.

<sup>18</sup> Xu Xueying 徐雪英, Zhang Jing 張菁, 'Cong Jinyong shexiao yingxiong zhuan yingyi kan zhongguo wenhua ruhe zouxiang shijie' 從金庸《射雕英雄傳》英譯看中國文化如何走向世界 [Examining the Globalization of

and how her translation is influenced by other disciplines. Chang states that she prefers the “sense-for-sense translation” to “word-for-word translation” and highlights the significant influence of cinematic techniques on her translation.<sup>19</sup> Her conversation with Lin Chen shortly after the publication of the fourth volume, on the other hand, offers more information about the translation process, such as how she and Bryant joined the team, how the team aligned their translation objectives and how she revised her drafts based on feedback from the main editor Paul Engles and subeditors.<sup>20</sup>

Chang has been invited to deliver lectures on her translating *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* at academic institutions in Mainland China, Macau, Australia and the United Kingdom. These lectures, which are mainly targeted at educated readers, aimed to raise scholarly interest in the English translation of Cha’s martial arts novels and deepen research in the field. Chang also took on a series of public events to share her experience of translating the novel. Compared with academic lectures, public events are held in a more accessible way and their audience is more varied, most of whom are general readers. It can be assumed that Chang’s activities enabled the translation to gain a wider readership both in the source culture and in the target culture, thus contributing to its dissemination across the world.

### 8.2.1.3 Shelly Bryant: Team Booster and Theme Interpreter

An analysis of Bryant’s role offers insights into a more in-depth understanding of the translation project. As a writer, researcher and translator, Bryant is interested in modern Chinese literature and has translated a considerable number of works by different authors.<sup>21</sup> Sharing a similar interest in Chinese literature and gaining sufficient experience in translation made her cooperation with Holmwood and Chang possible. After the publication of the fourth volume, Bryant did two podcasts together with Chang and shared her experience of translating it. This can be regarded as a kind of promotion from the translator’s side in a digital form.<sup>22</sup> In the first podcast, Bryant mentioned that she joined “the existing team” when the translation of the first three volumes had been completed, so she needed to follow what Holmwood and Chang had established.<sup>23</sup> This means Bryant made great efforts to integrate her translation into the whole project, thus ensuring consistency between the last volume and the first three.

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Chinese Culture through the English Translation of Jin Yong’s *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan*], *Zhejiang Xuekan* 浙江學刊, 3 (2020), 42-53 (pp. 44-46).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>20</sup> Chen Lin, ‘Translating Jin Yong’s Wuxia World into English: An Interview with Gigi Chang’, *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, 8 (2021), 331-41 (pp. 332-34).

<sup>21</sup> For a full list of Bryant’s writings and translations, one can refer to her website: <https://shellybryant.com/> [accessed 20 February 2024]

<sup>22</sup> The podcasts named “Translating Jin Yong’s Legends of the Condor Heroes with Gigi Chang and Shelly Bryant” are available online: <https://nuvoices.com/2021/11/03/nuvoices-podcast-66-translating-jin-yongs-legends-of-the-condor-heroes-with-gigi-chang-and-shelly-bryant/> [accessed 20 February 2024].  
<https://nuvoices.com/2021/11/17/nuvoices-podcast-67-translating-jin-yongs-legends-of-the-condor-heroes-with-gigi-chang-and-shelly-bryant-part-2/> [accessed 20 February 2024].

<sup>23</sup> See <https://nuvoices.com/2021/11/03/nuvoices-podcast-66-translating-jin-yongs-legends-of-the-condor-heroes-with-gigi-chang-and-shelly-bryant/> [accessed 20 February 2024].

In Bryant's view, the presentation of women in the novel could cause some discomfort among the target readers, especially the main character Lotus Huang. Inspired by Chang's treatment of Cyclone Mei, another female character in the novel, Bryant ultimately made Lotus in her translation "appear fickle and manipulative".<sup>24</sup> Being aware of the connotations of words in different cultural contexts, Bryant tried to reconstruct Huang's image in her translation. In addition to sharing her translation experience, Bryant noted one phenomenon regarding the reception of the whole translation. The bilingual Chinese-English readers levelled "vocal criticism" at the translation while the response from the English-language readership was "generally positive".<sup>25</sup> In response to the translation of the names, one of the most hotly debated topics, Bryant argued that Holmwood has "addressed it quite thoroughly" and urged the readers to go further so as to explore issues that are "of central concern to the discourse of English-language readers today". In Bryant's opinion, these issues are the main themes of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* including identity, gender and power dynamics, which deserve more attention. Moving a step further, she develops these themes in detail in the main body of her essay.<sup>26</sup> Of the three translators, Bryant pays special attention to the reception of the four-volume translation and she has realised the importance of the key themes in affecting the reception. Her interpretation of the novel's themes could be deemed as an attempt to steer the focus of the target readers when they approach the translation.

It should be noted that the above discussion focuses on the most prominent role that each translator has played. During the whole translation process, their roles were not so clearly cut and overlapped with each other sometimes. For instance, the three translators all contributed to the dissemination of the translation after its publication through various public events. Holmwood and Chang also expressed their views about the themes of Cha's novels, though in a simpler manner. Nor did their roles remain unchanged all the time. Since the publication of the third volume, Chang, instead of Holmwood, seems to have attracted more attention and played a more vital role in promotion. On the whole, studying the prominent role of each translator can shed new light on the various aspects of this project, including its initiation, translation process, publication, dissemination and reception, thereby contributing to addressing the research questions of this thesis.

## 8.2.2 Translation Strategy

Collaborative translation enabled this novel to be made accessible to the English-speaking readers in a short period.<sup>27</sup> Collaborative translation, in its narrow sense,

<sup>24</sup> Shelly Bryant, 'The Reader in Jin Yong's *Condor Heroes*' in *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Modern Chinese Literature in Translation* ed. by Cosima Bruno, Lucas Klein and Chris Song (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), pp. 289-99 (p. 293).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 289.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 291-93.

<sup>27</sup> Collaborative translation is also referred to as "co-translation" (Liang and Xu 2015; Diao 2022), but the former is

refers to the phenomenon of two or more translators working together to produce a translation. However, in real situations, cooperation does not just exist between translators. More often than not, translators are connected with other agents who also get involved in the translation process, such as the publisher and the editor. The same holds true for this case study. In view of this, the concept of collaborative translation should be grasped in a broader sense. As Sharon O'Brien argues, collaborative translation can occur "between translators and any one of these other agents or between two or more translators" and she proposes that collaborative translation is the situation when two or more agents operate in some way to produce a translation.<sup>28</sup> Using "agents" instead of "translators", O'Brien includes a wider range of participants involved. Thus, her definition can better illustrate how different agents interact with each other and exert influence on the translation. Considering the objects of research, it makes more sense to adopt O'Brien's definition for my thesis.

The reasons for adopting collaborative translation can be various and case-specific in different situations. In terms of efficiency, the translation task can be divided among multiple translators, each of whom can focus on specific sections of the text and accelerate the process. Sometimes due to linguistic challenges and specialised knowledge, collaboration between different translators can help address these problems collectively and ensure the quality of translation. For instance, when translating the Chinese classic *Hong Lou Meng* into English, Yang Xianyi was responsible for understanding the source text which contains an enormous number of cultural elements and working on the drafts. Then his wife Gladys Yang contributed to polishing Yang's drafts. In the case of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, Gigi Chang, a Hong Kong native had advantages in understanding Cha's novels while the other two translators with English as their mother tongue could make their translation cater to the aesthetic requirements or "horizon of expectations" of the target readers. As Liang and Xu argue, works collaboratively translated by translators from two countries are not only faithful to the author's intention and style but also conform to the expression of the target language, thus enhancing the comprehensibility of the translation.<sup>29</sup> In addition, collaborative translation enables the translators to receive continuous feedback from their peers who can be regarded as the initial readers of the translation. Based on the feedback, the translators may reach an agreement about some issues and improve their translation accordingly. Similar interests in one author's work also make the

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more widely adopted in Translation Studies (St. André 2010; O'Hagan 2011; Rybicki and Heydel 2013; Washbourne 2013; Lesch 2014; Tsai 2020; Yu 2022). To emphasise the cooperative nature among the agents involved in the translation process, the term "collaborative translation" is adopted throughout the thesis. In recent years, some attempts have been made to reconceptualise the term. For example, "translaboration" is coined to "bring translation and collaboration into open conceptual play with one another" (Alfer, 2017:285), while "shared translation" is used in theatre translation to illustrate the fact that translators share the process of translation with scripters (Decroisette, 2017: 49). As the thesis focuses on the book-form translations of Cha's novels, these new terms seem to be of little help to explain the phenomenon under study, so they will not be further explored in my thesis

<sup>28</sup> Sharon O'Brien, 'Collaborative translation' in *Handbook of Translation Studies Volume 2* ed. by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010), pp. 17–20 (p. 17)

<sup>29</sup> Linxin Liang and Mingwu Xu, 'Analysis of the Mode of Translation from the Perspective of Co-Translation', *Translation Review*, 92 (2015), 54–72 (p. 64).

collaborative translation possible. In this case study, the three translators all loved reading Cha's novels and wanted English-speaking readers to share the "rip-roaring fun" of reading Cha's novels just like the Chinese readers.<sup>30</sup>

According to Zielinska-Elliott and Kaminka's study, there are generally three types or "models" of collaborative translation: collaboration between a translator and the author; between the author and a group of translators; and between two or more translators working on the same text.<sup>31</sup> This classification attaches much importance to the author's role in collaborative translation. However, it neglects the collaboration between translator(s) and other agents in practice, which forms another model of collaborative translation. In this case study, the author Cha passed away when Holmwood embarked on the translation project, so there was no possibility of collaboration between the author and the translator(s). An examination of how the translation was conducted shows that collaborative translation in this case mainly had two models: one among the three translators and the other between the translators and other agents, especially the publisher and the editor.

Collaboration between the translators ensured their stylistic consistency and accelerated the working pace of their project. Before Chang started, she first worked with Holmwood in an attempt to unify their opinions about Cha's works and the target audience of their translation. They both agreed that Cha's novels were "rip-roaring fun" and "once you start reading, you cannot stop". Their target readership included both "novices" who had never encountered Cha or martial arts novels, and "masters" who knew Cha's works quite well. They wanted to share or recreate their fun, and "unputdownable" reading experience with the target readers.<sup>32</sup> When she carried out her translation task, Chang received feedback from Holmwood about her translation draft, and she polished it accordingly thus ensuring their stylistic similarity. Bryant, when presenting the character Lotus Huang, depended "heavily" on the decisions that Holmwood and Chang made for the characters because she needed to make her rendering of Huang "consistent across the work".<sup>33</sup>

The following are two translation examples selected from different volumes, which reflect how Holmwood and Chang collaborated to maintain consistency between their translations.

#### Example 6

穆易不再說話，緊了緊腰帶，使招“海燕掠波”，身子躍起，向那公子疾撞過去。那公子知他怒極，不敢怠慢，擰過身軀，左掌往外穿出，“毒蛇尋穴手”往他小腹擊去。穆

<sup>30</sup> Gigi Chang, 'Writing in One Voice: Thoughts and Memories on Co-Translating Jin Yong's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*', p. 122.

<sup>31</sup> Anna Zielinska-Elliott and Ika Kaminka, 'Online Multilingual Collaboration: Haruki Murakami's European Translators' in *Collaborative translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age* ed. by Anthony Cordingley and Céline Frigau Manning (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 167-91 (p. 169).

<sup>32</sup> Gigi Chang, 'Writing in One Voice: Thoughts and Memories on Co-Translating Jin Yong's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*', p. 122.

<sup>33</sup> Shelly Bryant, 'The Reader in Jin Yong's *Condor Heroes*', p. 293.

易向右避過，右掌疾向對方肩井穴斬下。

(Mu Yi did not speak any more. He tightened his sash, executed the move “Seagull Skimming the Waves”, leapt into the air, charged swiftly towards the young man. That young man knew that he was extremely angry and did not dare to be careless. He turned his body and struck his left palm outward, used “Venomous Snake Seeking Its Hole” to hit his lower abdomen. Mu Yi dodged to the right and struck his right palm down quickly toward the Jianjing Point of his opponent.)<sup>34</sup>

TT: Mu Yi adjusted his sash and leapt into a Seagull Skims the Sea. The young man responded with a blow to the old man’s belly, in a Poison Snake Seeks the Cave. Mu Yi dodged this attack and struck with his left palm at the young man’s shoulder.<sup>35</sup>

#### Example 7

ST: 梁子翁的大弟子截住了他退路，雙掌一錯，喝道：“小賊，跪下了！”施展師門所傳關外大力擒拿手法，當胸抓來。郭靖見他全力出抓，胸腹盡露，便左腿微屈，右臂內彎，右掌劃了個圓圈，呼的一聲，向外推去，正是初學乍練的一招“亢龍有悔”。那人反抓回臂，要擋他這一掌，喀喇一聲，手臂已斷，身子直飛出六七尺之外，暈了過去。

(Liang Ziwen’s eldest disciple blocked his retreat route, crossed his palms, and shouted, “Little thief, kneel down!” He then executed the Power Catch technique which was taught by his master can could be found outside the border, and grabbed him by the chest. Guo Jing saw he struck out with full force, and his chest and abdomen were completely exposed. Guo slightly bent his left leg, curved his right arm inward. He circled with his right palm, whoosh! He pushed outward. This is just the move “Haughty Dragon Has Repentance” that he had just learned and practiced. That man pulled back his arm to block his palm. With a cracking sound, his arm had already been broken, and his body flew six or seven feet away. He fainted.)<sup>36</sup>

TT :

But Greybeard Liang’s lead protégé was faster.

“Kneel, thief!”

He grabbed Guo Jing by the chest in a Power Grapple technique usually only found in China’s north-eastern borderlands.

Guo Jing bent his left knee and raised his right arm until not quite straight. He traced a circle with his right hand, exhaled and pushed.

He aimed the Haughty Dragon Repents at his attacker’s torso.

The man pulled back to block.

*Crack!* The bone in his arm snapped. The force of the thrust threw his body back several paces, where he crumpled in a heap.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Jin, Yong 金庸, *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* 射雕英雄傳 [Legend of Eagle Shooting Heroes] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2013), p. 213.

<sup>35</sup> Anna Holmwood, *A Hero Born: Legends of the Condor Heroes I* (London: MacLehose Press, 2018), p. 288.

<sup>36</sup> Jin, Yong 金庸, *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* 射雕英雄傳 [Legend of Eagle Shooting Heroes], p. 369.

<sup>37</sup> Gigi Chang, *A Bond Undone: Legends of the Condor Heroes II* (London: MacLehose Press, 2019), p. 130.



Examples 6 and 7 are taken from Volume 1 and Volume 2 respectively, with the former translated by Holmwood and the latter by Chang. Both examples depict the fighting scenes and reflect the common techniques adopted by the two translators when tackling the fighting scenes in the source text. In the source culture, the fighting scene in Cha's novels plays a significant role in creating the fun of reading among their readers. As mentioned earlier, the two translators have reached an agreement that they will endeavour to reproduce the fun of reading in their translations. Rather than summarising the description, the translators opted to present the fighting scene to the target readers in detail. They both used short sentences and avoided obtruse vocabulary. They relied on various English verbs to demonstrate how the fighting was performed. In addition, they translated the terms of martial arts moves literally, but their translations do not hinder readers' comprehension. Similarities in translating fighting scenes show how the two translators cooperated with each other and made efforts to enable the target readers to experience the fun of reading Cha's novels in a consistent way.

The consistency is reflected not only between volumes but also within one volume, as the third volume and the fourth one are the results of the collaborative work of two translators. Collaboration and stylistic consistency between different volumes have been examined in Diao Hong's research,<sup>38</sup> but collaboration within one volume remains underexplored. Questions regarding consistency within one volume may include: What was the exact division of labour within one volume? As Chang can be regarded as a common collaborator with the other two translators, has she found any differences between Holmwood's translation and Bryant's? How are the two types of stylistic consistency related to each other? To answer these questions, researchers need to collaborate with the translators and collect key first-hand data by examining the translation drafts, studying records of idea exchanges among the translators, or conducting interviews with them.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the translated text, collaboration between translators is shown in their joint efforts to promote Cha's works or their translations among the target readers. Diao's study shows that Holmwood's and Chang's public statements about Cha's martial arts novels in a multitude of speeches and interviews are "essentially identical".<sup>40</sup> Specifically, they both highlight the universal attractiveness of Cha's works and appreciate the stories he tells, arguing that reading them should be a good experience. Notably, they are both supportive of the promotional slogan that compares *Legends of the Condor Heroes* to "A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*", which appears on the front cover of each volume and has provoked much debate.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Chang and Bryant, in order to promote the translation, jointly participated in a series of events

<sup>38</sup> Diao Hong, 'Homogenized Literary Co-Translation: *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone*', p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> I once emailed Chang about the division of labour in Volume 3 and Volume 4. Chang replied "although to start with each of us has our own 'chunk', we worked on each other's portion and the published result is definitely a collaborative effort" (15 October 2021). However, Chang did not provide any further details.

<sup>40</sup> Diao Hong, 'Homogenized Literary Co-Translation: *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone*', p. 92.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp.102-103.

to share their experience with the audience.<sup>42</sup>

Collaboration between the translators and other agents such as the publisher and the editor cannot be understated. As the project initiator, Holmwood chose MacLehose Press to publish the translation because she realised the importance of promotion for a work. It turns out that this publisher does pay special attention to the promotion, which is shown in the analysis of the publisher's peritexts in the following section. If Holmwood's collaboration with the publisher benefitted the dissemination of the translation, then Chang's collaboration with Paul Engles, the editor in charge of the *Condor Heroes* series, was of great help to the refinement of her translation. Chang mentioned that guided by Engles' notes on her sample translation at the early stage, she reshaped her translation.<sup>43</sup> When Engles received Chang's final draft, he would "comb through the whole text, word by word, making comments and suggestions and asking questions".<sup>44</sup> Engles' detailed editorial work was of essential importance to guarantee the quality of the translation and he worked with the translators throughout the whole process. He was involved in the storytelling and character presentation in the translation, and helped the team "maintain the bigger picture" and "catch smaller things".<sup>45</sup> It can be observed that the editor has played a significant role in shaping the translation, which is often neglected in current studies. Engles' engagement with the translation process has only been revealed through the interviews with the translators. Research on the collaboration between the translators and editors would be more comprehensive if Engles himself could offer more details on his involvement in the collaboration.

It is worth mentioning that the two kinds of collaboration among the agents involved in this case are not operating separately or self-standing. On the contrary, the "internal" collaboration among the translators and the "external" connections between the translators and other agents are intertwined and benefit from each other throughout the whole process. With the team of translators acting at the centre, these agents jointly contribute to disseminating *Legends of the Condor Heroes* around the Anglophone world.

### 8.2.3 Paratext Analysis

#### The Publisher's Peritexts

Peritexts are a common means employed by the publisher to try and attract readers in

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<sup>42</sup> Their jointly participated activities include: "A Conversation with Shelly Bryant on Translating *Legends of the Condor Heroes*" held by Literary Shanghai in August 2019; a panel discussion named "The Joys and Perils of Translating Jin Yong's Novels" at the Singapore Translation Symposium held by Singapore Book Council in September 2021; and the NüVoices podcast "Translating *Jin Yong's Legends of the Condor Heroes* with Gigi Chang and Shelly Bryant" in November 2021.

<sup>43</sup> Gigi Chang, 'Writing in One Voice: Thoughts and Memories on Co-Translating Jin Yong's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*', p. 121.

<sup>44</sup> Chen Lin, 'Translating Jin Yong's Wuxia World into English: An Interview with Gigi Chang', p. 334.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

order to promote the sales of the book.<sup>46</sup> As is shown in Figure 7, the book covers contain images with bright colours, such as the condor, the sword, the snake or the ship. These images relate to the content of each volume, evoke the themes of the novel, and stimulate readers' interest. The English translation, like the Chinese original, is also divided into four volumes, and each volume is given a title: "A Hero Born", "A Bond Undone", "A Snake Lies Waiting" and "A Heart Divided". These titles are not only parallel and eye-catching but also imply each volume's theme. Noteworthy is a comment from the *Irish Times* at the bottom of the front cover of each volume, which compares the novel to "A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*". *Lord of the Rings* is a hugely successful fantasy novel written by J. R. R. Tolkien between 1937 and 1949. Set in the Third Age of Middle-earth, the novel is a saga in which a group of heroic little people, the Hobbits, and a range of other creatures endeavour to save their world from an evil magician. *Lord of the Rings* has become one of the world's best sellers, with over 150 million copies sold.<sup>47</sup> The cover compares this martial arts novel to an English fantasy novel which is familiar to many English readers. This approach could be seen as an attempt to reduce the resistance that *Legends of the Condor Heroes* might encounter when it is first introduced into the new literary system.

However, the two novels belong to different literary genres respectively and they deal with different themes. The original Chinese novel tells a story about a hero named Guo Jing born in the Song Dynasty (A.D. 960-1279), who is not particularly intelligent and is often stubborn, but is kind-hearted and works hard to acquire martial arts skills. After having experienced various perilous adventures, he matures both in martial arts skills and psychology, and gains a deep understanding of what it means to be a martial arts master. Through analogy, the original literary genre martial arts novel is equated with an English fantasy novel, which not only bridges the distance between the source text and the target readers but also implies the popularity of Cha's works.

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<sup>46</sup> Shang Ruiqin 商瑞芹 and Liu Zhaolong 劉墨龍, 'Meng de zai jiexi hanying duizhao ban hongloumeng de nei fuwenben yanjiu' 夢的再解析：漢英對照版《紅樓夢》的內副文本研究 [Reinterpreting the Dream: A Study on the Peritexts of the Bilingual *Hong Lou Meng*], *Shandong waiyu jiaoxue* 山東外語教學, 2(2020), 114-23 (p. 121).

<sup>47</sup> Vit Wagner, 'Tolkien Proves He's Still the King' <https://web.archive.org/web/20110309035210/http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/article/203389> [accessed 16 June 2024].

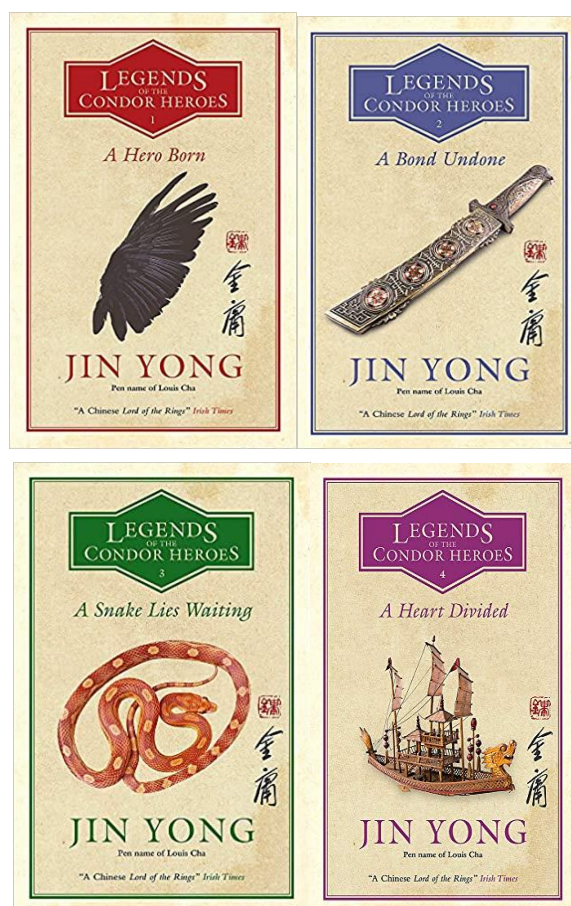


Figure 7 The Front Cover of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

Blurbs on the back cover also reflect how the translation is promoted. In all, there are six blurbs on the back cover of the four volumes. All sentences are taken from reviews in mainstream publications, such as *The Guardian* and *The New Yorker*. Some comments praise the author Jin Yong as “one of the world’s most beloved writers”, or “the most widely read Chinese writer”, while others highly commend his creation of “an enchanting world”, “[a] fairy tale” or “a stirring epic”.<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that the sentences are taken out of context, and it is worth asking who the reviewers are and what they said originally. Exploring the context and reviewers of these blurbs can reveal a certain range of readers, the translation’s literary position, and its interaction with other English literary genres.

Table 8 Blurbs on the Back Cover of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

Blurb Writers	Identity	Where the review appears
Ken Liu	a science fiction and fantasy writer and translator	Introduction in the Folio Society edition of <i>A Hero Born</i>
Nick Frisch	Asian-studies doctoral candidate at Yale’s graduate school	<i>New Yorker</i>

<sup>48</sup> See the blurbs on the back covers of the four-volume *Legends of the Condor Heroes* published by Maclehorse Press.

Marcel Theroux	a novelist, documentary maker and journalist	<i>Guardian</i>
Fonda Lee	a science fiction and fantasy author	
Jamie Buxton	book writer and reviewer	<i>Daily Mail</i>
Antonia Senior	a writer and journalist	<i>The Times</i>

Table 8 sheds light on the identities of the reviewers, most of whom are writers. They depict *Legends of the Condor Heroes* from their perspectives and compare the Chinese original either to fantasy or epic in English literature. However, most blurbs do not always show the writers' overall opinions. For example, Ken Liu's words come from his introduction in the Folio Society Edition of *A Hero Born*. This edition, illustrated by Ye Luying and introduced by Ken Liu, was based on the MacLehose Press edition and was published in 2019. Published in hardback with a very high price, it is targeted at a specific audience who will buy it for collection.<sup>49</sup> The publication of *A Hero Born* by the Folio Society indicates that it can be deemed a classic in the target culture. Liu translated the sci-fi *San Ti* 三體 written by Liu Cixin into *The Three Body Problem* and his translation won the Hugo Award for the best science fiction in 2015. In this introduction, Liu points out that comparing Jin Yong's works to Tolkien risks causing wrong expectations among the target readers, so he urges the audience to reset their expectations and try to appreciate Jin Yong's works on other terms. Having lived in both China and the United States, Liu is aware of the differences between Chinese martial arts novels and English fantasy fiction, and he encourages English readers to read the translation so as to experience "an enchanting world unlike anywhere you've ever been".<sup>50</sup> It can be said that Liu does not agree with the idea of comparing the novel to *Lord of the Rings* and concedes that Jin Yong, who is very popular in the Sinophone world, is unknown to English readers.<sup>51</sup> Li Quan, a Chinese scholar on the reception of Cha's novels in the English-speaking world, also expresses a similar view, stating that Jin Yong's works are not as well received in the English-speaking world as in China.<sup>52</sup> Both Ken Liu and Li Quan's views form a sharp contrast with most Chinese scholars who believe that Louis Cha's novels are beginning to go global.<sup>53</sup> Even among educated writers and scholars, opinions about the reception of Cha's novels vary remarkably. Yet their statements are not supported with evidence and appear more like personal opinions. Therefore, to understand the reception of Louis Cha's works in the Anglophone world, it is not sufficient to only rely on these comments, and more

<sup>49</sup> The Folio Society Edition of *A Hero Born* is priced at £65 on its official website: <https://www.foliosociety.com/uk/a-hero-born-legends-of-the-condor-heroes.html> [accessed 11 September 2024]

<sup>50</sup> Ken Liu's introduction can be found online: <https://reactormag.com/get-a-sneak-peek-at-the-folio-society-illustrated-edition-of-a-hero-born/> [accessed 11 September 2024]

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Li Quan 李泉, 'Yingyu shijie Jin Yong wuxia xiaoshuo yijie yu yanjiu' 英語世界金庸武俠小說譯介與研究 [The Translations and Studies on Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels in the English-speaking World], *Guizhou Shehui Kexue* 貴州社會科學, 6 (2015), 96-101 (p. 96).

<sup>53</sup> Shan Chang 單暢, 'Jin Yong wuxia xiaoshuo yingyi de qishi' 金庸武俠系列小說英譯的啟示 [Insights from the English Translation of Jin Yong's Martial Arts Novels], *Liaoning shifan daxue xuebao shehui kexueban* 遼寧師範大學學報(社會科學版), 2 (2015), 248-52 (p. 248).

empirical work is needed.

A further examination of the original reviews shows that the focus of reviewers shifts in the blurbs. Nick Frisch's comment is taken from his article published in *The New Yorker*, which covers Jin Yong's personal life and writing career, Holmwood's translation and political allegories in Jin's novels. His original sentence is "Holmwood's translation offers the best opportunity yet for English-language readers to encounter one of the world's most beloved writers".<sup>54</sup> The focus of Frisch's statement is the English translation rather than Jin Yong. Yet the publisher only selected "one of the world's most beloved writers" as the blurb, thus changing Frisch's focus. Marcel Theroux, after having briefly introduced the characters and plot, highly rates Holmwood's translation which is "gripped by the unashamed narrative zest and primary-coloured fairytale world", and regrets having encountered the novel so late.<sup>55</sup> Theroux's review is about the novel, but the blurb steers the focus to the author too. Fonda Lee, who is a Canadian-American sci-fi and fantasy writer, believes that Jin Yong's works belong to the fantasy genre. Her view contrasts sharply with Ken Liu's. Lee was born and raised in Canada and she seems to have had little access to the original Chinese works by Jin Yong as well as to the cultural context in which martial arts novels are imbedded. Liu was born and raised in China in his early years and then moved to the United States and began his writing career. Liu is also a translator of science fiction. Lee and Liu, though both share Chinese origins, have different views about Cha's martial arts novels.

Jamie Buxton's original sentence in *The Daily Mail* reads: "The tale is like every fairy tale you've ever loved, imbued with jokes and epic grandeur. Prepare to be swept along as our champion gallops towards his nemesis and destiny — without ever quite understanding what either is",<sup>56</sup> while the blurb becomes "[l]ike every fairy tale you've ever loved. Prepare to be swept along", which stresses the experience of reading the work. *A Hero Born* is one of the fantasy novels that Buxton introduces in the newspaper. But here he compares *A Hero Born* to a fairy tale which is a story about magic and fairies, intended for children. Here "fairytale" indicates the kaleidoscopic, imaginary world created in the novel. English readers who have never read martial arts novels could be confused by the genre of martial arts novel: is it fantasy, fairy tale, or both? Antonia Senior states that *A Hero Born* is "a stirring epic". Here "epic" should be understood as a book which is long enough to contain lots of actions, plots and emotions.

An analysis of blurbs reveals that the publisher endeavours to introduce Jin Yong and his works to the English-speaking world by selecting positive comments from reviews.

<sup>54</sup> Nick Frisch, 'The Gripping Stories and Political Allegories of China's Best-selling Author' <<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-gripping-stories-and-political-allegories-of-chinas-best-selling-author>> [accessed on 5 September 2021]

<sup>55</sup> Marcel Theroux, 'A Hero Born by Jin Yong Review – The Gripping World of Kung Fu Chivalry', <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/mar/16/hero-born-kung-fu-chivalry-wuxia-jin-yong-legends-condor-heroes-translation>> [accessed on 5 September 2021]

<sup>56</sup> Jamie Buxton, 'Fantasy', <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/books/article-5451005/FANTASY.html> [accessed on 5 September 2021]

They also show that in the anglophone world views about the martial arts novel vary: some compare it to fantasy, others liken it to fairy tale. The blurbs are only positive comments about the novel or the writer, and they are all very short, which is mainly due to the purpose of the publisher and the constraint of space.

## The Translator's Peritexts

Anna Holmwood wrote an introduction to the first volume, which clarifies the historical context in which the novel is set. She then mentions Jin Yong and values the story as one “full of heart and of remarkable physical prowess”.<sup>57</sup> Holmwood explains some key concepts in martial arts novels, including “*jianghu*” (江湖 rivers and lakes) and “*wulin*” (武林 the forest of martial arts), both of which are metaphors for a community of martial arts.<sup>58</sup> However, her understanding of the two concepts are inaccurate, as *jianghu* is a more generalized expression for the geographic and moral margins of settled society,<sup>59</sup> or a world isolated and independent of reality,<sup>60</sup> while *wulin* refers to the world of martial arts and it consists of various schools.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, *jianghu* has a larger scope than *wulin*, and the two concepts cannot be interchangeable. Holmwood endeavours to arouse interest by her narrative technique in the introduction, where she imitates the tone of a storyteller like Old Zhang in Chapter One so as to bring the target readers closer to the historical context of the novel. Yet her statement that “*Legends of the Condor Heroes* spans twelve volumes, split into three larger epics consisting of four volumes each” may confuse readers, as *Legends of the Condor Heroes* is a four-volume English translation.<sup>62</sup> In fact, what Holmwood refers to is the trilogy of “Condor Shooting”, which is composed of three novels: *Legends of the Condor Heroes*; *The Giant Eagle and Its Companion*; and *The Heaven Sword and the Dragon Sabre*. It is undeniable that the translator's work has facilitated the novel's entry into the target culture, but on the other hand, her misunderstandings of some key concepts and the Chinese source text are likely to affect the target readers significantly.

Holmwood also provides information about the main characters that appear in the book so that readers can refer to the information and obtain a better idea of the relationships among characters. Though she endeavours to elucidate the relationship among the main characters, she does not point out that Yang Kang and Wanyan Kang are indeed the same person. Holmwood makes an effort to express the connotations of the characters' names and reveal their personalities. For example, Bao Xiruo, Yang Kang's mother, is translated as “Charity Bao”, implying that she is caring. Ouyang Ke, master of White Camel Mount, is rendered as “Gallant Ouyang” to show his licentiousness. This way of

<sup>57</sup> Anna Holmwood, *A Hero Born: Legends of the Condor Heroes 1* (London: Maclehorse Press, 2018), p. IX

<sup>58</sup> Anna Holmwood, *A Hero Born: Legends of the Condor Heroes 1*, p. XI

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), p. 75.

<sup>60</sup> Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, *Qianggu wenren xiake meng* 千古文人俠客夢 [The Knight-errant Dream of the Literati through the Ages: A Study of the Typology of Martial Arts Novels] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2018), p. 140.

<sup>61</sup> Christopher Hamm, *Paper Swordsmen: Jin Yong and the Modern Chinese Martial Arts Novel*, p. 64.

<sup>62</sup> Anna Holmwood, *A Hero Born: Legends of the Condor Heroes 1* (London: Maclehorse Press, 2018), p. VIII.

translating characters' names suggests that the translator intends the readers to grasp the characters' personalities easily so that they can quicken the reading pace of the novel.

In addition to the introduction, Holmwood provides historical or cultural information in appendices. These appendices complement the introduction and enable a better understanding of the text. In Appendix I, Holmwood traces the history of the term "martial arts". Notably, she illustrates the connection between martial arts, ancient philosophies and religions.<sup>63</sup> Here she tries to place martial arts novels within the broad Chinese cultural context. In Appendix II, Holmwood explains the reason she chose the word "condor" instead of "eagle" to translate the character "*diao*" 雕 in the original title is that many English-speaking readers have known the series by this name through TV and film.<sup>64</sup> Notes on the text can be found in Appendix III. For example, characters from the names of the two main characters, Guo Jing and Yang Kang, "Jing" 靖 and "Kang" 康 (serenity and vitality), when combined, refer to the capture of the Song emperor, Qin Zong, by the Jurchen in 1127, marking the end of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). This event is vital for a proper understanding of the novel's context and its characters. Therefore, a note is added here to elaborate the "Jingkang Incident". These appendices show that the translator deems it necessary for the target readers to gain basic knowledge about this kind of literary genre and some contextual information about this novel. In-text explanations would greatly affect the reading experience, so Holmwood chose appendices to provide such information.

In the translated text, Holmwood employs paratexts to make her translation conform to the norms of target writing. Each chapter in the translation is divided into several parts by Arabic numbers and some parts are further divided when considered necessary. For example, Holmwood divides the first chapter into five parts and the fifth part is further divided into five sections. The divisions make the relationships between different parts easier to understand. Without divisions, the translations could seem tedious and difficult for the target readers to grasp the intricacies of the plot lines.

Holmwood is cautious about the amount of her added materials. Neither the introduction nor the appendix exceeds three pages. In contrast, *The Deer and The Cauldron* by John Minford has an introduction and notes which are more than ten pages.<sup>65</sup> Minford's translation is published by the academic publisher Oxford University Press. Hence the target readership is likely to be people more accustomed to reading a lot of notes and interested in Chinese history and culture. Holmwood's translation is published by the commercial publisher MacLehose Press for educated readers who might be interested in martial arts novels and will read them for entertainment. Different target readers result in the different paratexts of the two translations.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp.381-82.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.385.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Koh, 'A Trinket for the West: will Louis Cha Win over Readers in English?' *Newsweek*, 11 May 1998, p.61.



In sum, this shows that currently martial arts novels are still a new literary genre to the target readers, so the translator employs paratexts to explain some key concepts, provide necessary background information, and elucidate the plots of the novel. The translators' peritexts facilitate the novel's entry into English literature at the first stage, which manifests that the translator's efforts are more than producing the translated texts. Studying the translator's peritexts enables us to examine the translator from another perspective and further illuminate Holmwood's role in bringing the translation to the English-speaking readers.

## 8.2.4 Reviews of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*

As regards the reception of the novel in the Anglophone world, reviews can provide useful information. Readers are an integral part of the reception of a work and their role is increasingly recognised in the shift of concern from author and text to reader in literary studies. Reviews can show readers' opinions and the reception of a work to a great extent. Though Ye Chengcheng<sup>66</sup> and Zhang Mi<sup>67</sup> have both examined readers' reviews of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* to reveal the reception of the translation, they only focus on the first volume *A Hero Born* and failed to reflect the reception of the whole novel in the English-speaking world.

### Literary Reviews

Reviews published in newspapers are mostly positive about Louis Cha, his literary achievements and the English translation. As is mentioned above, blurbs are often taken from reviews in newspapers or magazines, which tend to focus on introducing Cha, the main characters and the basic plot and appraising the English translation. In terms of reviews in mainstream newspapers, Marcel Theroux describes Cha as China's Tolkien who aims to conquer Western readers.<sup>68</sup> Jamie Buxton describes Guo Jing the hero in the novel as "doughty".<sup>69</sup> Nick Frisch not only gives details about Jin Yong's life and career, but also thinks highly of Holmwood's translation of martial arts moves which manoeuvre between translation and transliteration and keep the original pace of narration mostly intact.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Ye Chengcheng 葉鉞鉞 and Deng Gaosheng 鄧高勝, 'Shediao yingxiong zhuan zai yingyu shijie de yijie yanjiu' 《射雕英雄傳》在英語世界的譯介研究[A Study of the Translation and Introduction of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* in the English-Speaking World], *Waiguo yuyan yu wenhua* 外國語言與文化, 1 (2019), 115-24 (p. 115)

<sup>67</sup> Zhang Mi, 張汨 and Wang Zhiwei 王志偉, 'Jin Yong shediao yingxiongzhuan zai yingyu shijie de jeishou yu pingjia' 金庸《射雕英雄傳》在英語世界的接受與評價[The Reception and Evaluation of Jin Yong's *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* in the English-Speaking World], p.19.

<sup>68</sup> Marcel Theroux, 'A Hero Born by Jin Yong Review – The Gripping World of Kung Fu Chivalry', <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/mar/16/hero-born-kung-fu-chivalry-wuxia-jin-yong-legends-condor-heroes-translation>> [accessed on 5 September 2021]

<sup>69</sup> Jamie Buxton, 'Fantasy' <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/books/article-5451005/FANTASY.html>> [accessed on 5 September 2021]

<sup>70</sup> Nick Frisch, 'The Gripping Stories and Political Allegories of China's Best-selling Author' <<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-gripping-stories-and-political-allegories-of-chinas-best-selling-author>> [accessed on 5 September 2021]

Reviews in magazines tend to offer a brief introduction to one volume of the novel. Nell Keep believes *A Bond Undone* enables English-speaking readers to enjoy the *wuxia* genre.<sup>71</sup> In contrast, he views *A Hero Born* as *wuxia* fantasy genre.<sup>72</sup> The two different terms referring to both volumes suggest Keep is aware that there are differences between fantasy and *wuxia* genre and the pair cannot be simply equated. Some anonymous reviews appeared in the *Kirkus Reviews*,<sup>73</sup> and they do a similar job: introducing the novel and encouraging readers to buy it. Both *Booklist* and *Kirkus Reviews* are magazines which review a considerable number of books in just one issue. Therefore, their reviews are usually short, less than 400 words so they can only provide succinct information. It would appear that reviews in both newspapers and magazines show that the target readers include some who favour both Cha and his works. However, few reviews compare the Chinese original and the English translation, probably due to their limited command of the Chinese language.

Compared to other English translations of Jin Yong's novels, there are few reviews of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* which have been published in academic journals. As this translation is newly published, the number of readers is still limited. Furthermore, academics are not a major component of its intended target readers, as the translation avoids giving too much historical or cultural information which needs pages of explanation or notes and its language is plain and accessible.

The literary reviews reflect a limited range of target readers and their opinions. They tend to hold positive views about Cha and the translation, expecting it to receive a warm welcome in the Anglophone world. But still, they indicate some factors that affect the reception, such as Cha's high literary status, the difference between martial arts novels and fantasy and the date of publication.

## Popular Reviews

Reviews in newspapers and magazines alone are not enough to gain a complete picture of the target readership and the reception. Popular reviews are thus another source for study, which includes those on shopping websites and online communities. Buyers can rate and post their reviews on Amazon,<sup>74</sup> one of the largest online shopping websites in the English-speaking world. Readers can also rate and post their reviews on Goodreads, one of the largest reading communities in the world.<sup>75</sup> Compared with the literary published reviews, popular ones tend to be even shorter, but they reveal more information about the readers and their opinions.

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<sup>71</sup> Nell Keep, 'A Bond Undone', *Booklist*, 11(2020), p. 32

<sup>72</sup> Nell Keep, 'A Hero Born', *Booklist*, 22(2019), 42-44 (p. 42).

<sup>73</sup> See 'Jin Yong: *A Hero Born*', *Kirkus Reviews*, 15 July 2019,

'Jin Yong: *A Bond Undone*', *Kirkus Reviews*, 15 Jan. 2020.

<sup>74</sup> The data are obtained from the website: [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) [accessed 30 Aug 2022]

<sup>75</sup> The website is: <https://www.goodreads.com/>

On Amazon, the rating for each volume is above 4 stars suggesting this novel has a relatively high level of reception among English readers.<sup>76</sup> The buyer's reviews tell us about how the novel is received in the English-speaking world. Only after one's purchase can a book be given a product review, so reviews on Amazon are written by the buyers, and their views vary a lot. Some buyers think highly of the translation. For example, Mike Mellor considers the novel “a real page-turner with martial arts integrated into the history of Genghis Khan and the Song Dynasty”, and Michael states “This is a great translation for those who enjoy the colourful world of wuxia painted by Louis Cha”. On the other hand, buyers who gave the novel a low rating explain the reasons. For example, some doubt the label “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” and think “comparisons to Tolkien are absurd”, others find the characters are “superficial”, “the descriptions of the fights boring” and say that they were not “hooked by the plot”. In addition, one review talked about the translation style, saying that “the matter-of-fact style of writing just didn't engage my interest in the story”. Reviews on Amazon raise issues regarding the genre and how to deal with some specific aspects of martial arts novels in translation such as the fighting scenes and the portrayal of characters, which are more specific compared with the literary reviews.

On Goodreads, each volume has been rated and reviewed by the readers as well. As Table 9 shows, the first volume has an average rating of 3.98 while the rest three are rated above 4 stars, indicating a good reception as well.<sup>77</sup> The number of reviews on Goodreads far exceeds that on Amazon and shows different opinions.

Table 9 Reviews of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* on Goodreads

Volume	Average Rating	Number of Reviews
<i>A Hero Born</i>	3.98	1013
<i>A Bond Undone</i>	4.37	223
<i>A Snake Lies Waiting</i>	4.29	103
<i>A Heart Divided</i>	4.45	99

Some issues discussed in the reviews merit attention. One reviewer maintains that the novel is incredibly suspenseful, funny, and exciting. Another reviewer disagrees with comparing the translation to a “Chinese *Lord of Rings*”, and her original “enormous” expectations were not met after reading. She will “definitely” not continue reading this series.<sup>78</sup> This suggests that the false analogy on the cover can lead to some misleading expectations about the translation's genre. If the expectations are not met after reading, readers will feel disappointed and will not read the following volumes. Lauren Stoolfire also attributes her low rating to the genre, but claims that she may enjoy the story in another format. Ilias Stroulis thinks the novel has “a childish plot with thin

<sup>76</sup> Reviews from Amazon are cited from the website: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/1848667922/ref=cm\\_cr\\_unknown?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all\\_reviews&filterByStar=five\\_star&pageNumber=1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/1848667922/ref=cm_cr_unknown?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all_reviews&filterByStar=five_star&pageNumber=1) [accessed 30 Aug 2022]

<sup>77</sup> The data were obtained from the website: [www.goodreads.com/](http://www.goodreads.com/) [accessed 22 July 2024]

<sup>78</sup> Reviews of *A Hero Born* on Goodreads are cited from the website: [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/31117072-a-hero-born?from\\_search=true&from\\_srp=true&qid=KuWDId9YSA&rank=1](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/31117072-a-hero-born?from_search=true&from_srp=true&qid=KuWDId9YSA&rank=1) [accessed 22 July 2024]

worldbuilding and lots and lots of boring tedious kung fu battles”, which reflects that this target reader does not value the fighting scenes so much. As Dai Ruoyu and Chen Lin point out, martial arts moves frequently appear in this kind of writing and are usually appreciated by Chinese readers. Yet their English translations do not conform to the aesthetic expectations of the target reader.<sup>79</sup> As an integral part of the novel, martial arts moves and fighting scenes in the Chinese original aim to achieve aesthetic effects and render thrills among the readers. When these elements are translated into English, however, they become repetitive and monotonous and have little to do with the plot. Moreover, it is difficult for the target readers to understand how they are exactly performed. Reviews reflect the recurrent problems in the translation: how to deal with the original’s literary genre and the martial arts moves.

Compared with the previous three translations of Cha’s novels, more reviews of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* are found on X, which can be attributed to the work’s recent publication and the translator’s and publisher’s efforts to promote the work.<sup>80</sup> Gigi Chang and MacLehose Press tweeted shortly after *A Hero Born* was published. Notably, Chang drew other users’ attention to the kindle and audio forms of the translation by providing their links on Amazon. Folio edition of the translation, which is often overlooked in reviews elsewhere, has been frequently mentioned on X. The Folio Society posted a short video to show this edition which featured “a foil-blocked illustrated binding and a striking slipcase”. In another tweet, the Folio Society highlighted that the introduction in this edition was authored by Ken Liu, the award-winning science fiction writer. Abebooks praised this edition as “gorgeous”. Charlotte Patterson posted four pictures of this edition after she received it from the “amazing” delivery of the publisher.

Quite a number of users compared the translation to fantasy works, and their words were in line with “A Chinese *Lord of the Rings*” on the front cover of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. To name but a few, Quercus Book regarded the publication of *A Hero Born* as “the Chinese Tolkien, in English for the first time”. This comment is not so precise, as Cha’s other novels has been translated and published in English earlier. Bards Alley Bookshop quoted the fantasy writer D. J. LeMarr’s comments that reading Cha’s works “has the same flow and feel of Tolkien”, which reflects how target readers feel after reading Cha’s novels. Reading experience has been revisited by other users. According to the quotations from LeMarr, reading Cha’s novels is like “watching a Jackie Chan movie...whimsical and fun”. Another user named “Dad with a Pen Paper & Dice” shared a similar view about the reading experience: “it reads like a Chinese Kung Fu movie”. C. A. Cerilli after reading the first volume, concluded that Cha was

<sup>79</sup> Dai Ruoyu 戴若愚, Chen Lin 陳林, ‘Shede zhidao lun haoyuqing shediao yingxiong zhuan yingyi zhong shanjian de heguixing’ 捨得之道:論郝玉青《射雕英雄傳》英譯中刪減的“合規性” [The Art of Deletion: The Compliance of Anna Holmwood’s Translation of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* with Translation Norms], *Waiguo yuwen* 外國語文, 3(2019), 117-23 (p. 121).

<sup>80</sup> In my study, reviews of *A Hero Born*, which can best represent the reception of the 4-volume, are selected for analysis: [https://x.com/search?q=a%20hero%20born%20jin%20yong&src=typed\\_query&f=top](https://x.com/search?q=a%20hero%20born%20jin%20yong&src=typed_query&f=top) [accessed 3 April 2025].

able to capture everything he loved about wuxia films in the written word. Some reviews reflect that description of fighting scenes in the translation plays a crucial role in creating such reading experience. The Lily Cafe remarked that it is the fighting scenes that made the readers keep reading and reminded them of the old Chinese Kung Fu movies. Sara Conde posted a review written by Mari Davis who believed that the battle scenes were so vividly described that readers could see them in their mind eyes. Mari even asserted that if Hollywood decided to make a movie out of this novel, Holmwood's description of fighting scenes could work as the script for the director, which suggests the success of Holmwood's translation of fighting scenes. In contrast, discussions about character portrayal, plots and translation strategy could hardly be found regarding *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, which implies that in-depth reading of the translation is still lacking among the target readers on X.

Exploring both literary reviews and popular reviews shows the relatively complete readership of the translation. Readers in the target culture include both educated writers and readers who read martial arts novels for fun. The former seems to be monolithically positive about the translation while the latter expresses different opinions about specific aspects in the novel. Examining the two kinds of reviews can reveal how *Legends of the Condor Heroes* has been received in the target culture and find out the reasons behind its reception.

## Chapter Nine Conclusion

This thesis, by examining the available book-form translations, shows the trajectory of the dissemination of Cha's novels in the Anglophone world. In the source culture, Cha's novels were first serialised in newspapers and read for amusement in the 1950s, then they became increasingly popular in China and Sinophone communities and led to the birth of various accompanying products such as cinematic adaptations, comic books and video games, which further promoted the dissemination of Cha's works. It can be argued that the popularity of Cha's works in the source culture contributed to their introduction to the English-speaking world in which their English translations play a significant role.

Translators' work contributes significantly to bringing Cha's novels to the readership in another culture. With the translators as the research focus, the thesis first examined their translation strategies. My study by no means intends to find the best translation strategy to translate Cha's novels, nor does it attempt to favour one over another. Instead, it seeks to explore the reasons for using different strategies and show how these strategies affect the dissemination and reception of Cha's works in the target culture. It shows that translators adopted different translation strategies which depended on various factors such as the translator's identity and preferences, the purpose of the translation, the length of the source text and the requirements from the publisher. It also suggests that the translation strategy can affect the reception. Overall, Mok's thick translation seems to have made her translation overly academic so it failed to generate the reading experience that the Chinese readers have when they read Cha's novels. Though Minford's trans-editing and Earnshaw's simplification make their translations more concise, they cut out a large portion of the source texts, thereby distorting Cha's novels to a great extent. As the analysis of reviews in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven shows, some readers are aware of the changes in the plot, character description and pace of narration caused by Minford's and Earnshaw's translation strategies. In comparison, collaborative translation in *Legends of the Condor Heroes* makes the novel present before the target readers in full and seeks to create a similar experience of reading Cha's novels, originally a type of popular literature that was read for fun, among the English-speaking readers. A comparative study of the four translations suggests that collaborative translation works best, as it can present Cha's novels, most of which are quite lengthy, in a full manner and enable the translators to complete the translation in a relatively short period. As a matter of fact, collaborative translation has been widely employed to translate martial arts novels on websites such as WuxiaSociety so as to make more translations available and accelerate cross-cultural dissemination.

As the case studies show, paratexts help the target readers to understand Cha's novels by offering necessary background information and contexts. Paratexts also include the

translators' peritext, blurbs and reviews in mainstream media. Furthermore, by examining the paratexts of the translations, the thesis reveals the roles that different agents have played in disseminating Cha's works. The production of paratexts involves a wide range of agents including the translator, the author and the publisher, making paratexts a zone for their interaction. Research on paratexts uncovers agents who were once neglected but closely connected with the translations. To mention but a few, Cha, the author, participated in the translation process of *The Book and The Sword* by agreeing with Earnshaw's approach,<sup>1</sup> and he also involved himself in *The Deer and The Cauldron* by providing his "long-suffering and generous support".<sup>2</sup> David Hawkes, Minford's father-in-law contributed many chapters of *The Deer and The Cauldron*. Rachel May, Minford's wife, provided editing work for both *The Deer and The Cauldron* and *The Book and The Sword*. Liu Ts'un-yan, Minford's PhD supervisor encouraged Minford to embark on the translation project *The Deer and The Cauldron*. To attract more readers to purchase the translations, the publishers made use of educated readers' positive comments about Cha and his works that appeared in mainstream newspapers, as illustrated in the cases of *The Deer and The Cauldron*, *The Book and The Sword* and *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. Though the cooperation among them may vary from one case to another, the four case studies demonstrate that it is their joint efforts that managed to bring Cha's works to the target readers. Probing into their roles through paratext analysis incorporates more agents into my research who are not limited to the translator and it highlights the importance of the agent-driven and process-oriented research, which traces "the genesis of the products called translations",<sup>3</sup> that is, how the English translations of Cha's novels came into being.

Based on the average ratings on Goodreads which covers a wider range of readers, among the translations of Cha's four novels, *Legends of the Condor Heroes* receives the highest rating with the largest number of raters, while *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* published earliest has the lowest average rating with the smallest number of raters. This finding indicates that so far *Legends of the Condor Heroes* has gained the best reception among the target readers while *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* is just the opposite. It should be noted that the four translations were produced in different periods, ranging from the 1990s to the 2020s. The circumstances in which these translations were produced also influenced their reception. Over the last 30 years, not only has social media evolved and played a significant role in the reception of these translations, but global tastes have changed. Martial arts novels have shifted from being unknown and confined to a small group of readers to something that has acquired a kind of cult status around the world, fuelled by cinema, the Internet, comics and video games.

An analysis of the reviews of the translations illuminates various factors that have affected the reception. The findings of my study imply that the factors can be mainly classified into two types: the extratextual factors and textual ones. The former is

<sup>1</sup> See <https://earnshaw.com/writings/books/the-book-the-sword> [accessed 20 April 2024].

<sup>2</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. XIII.

<sup>3</sup> Hélène Buzelin, 'Unexpected Allies: How Latour's Network Theory Could Complement Analyses in Translation Studies', *The Translator*, 2 (2005), 193–218 (p. 215).

associated with the agents involved and the broad socio-cultural contexts in which the translations are produced and consumed, while the latter deals with various aspects of the translated texts. It should be noted that the two kinds of reviews complement each other in explaining the reasons with some overlaps. Literary reviews can illuminate the reasons from the perspective of educated readers. There exists a pattern in these literary reviews: they tend to first introduce Cha and his literary contributions and then focus on the translations. Overall, the reviewed work receives a positive evaluation in the end. Arguably, Cha's high literary status and his remarkable literary achievements in the source culture largely affect these reviewers' opinions, resulting in their seemingly unanimous response. It merits attention that literary reviews also discuss some textual factors, though in a rather general and simple way. These factors are concerned with the translation of unique terms, the length of the novel, the portrait of characters and the translation strategies.

In comparison, popular reviews written by a wider range of readers uncover more reasons and show different or even opposing opinions. While the specific reasons may vary from one translation to another, some of them recur and are shared by all the case studies. One salient extratextual factor is the influence of cinematic adaptations of martial arts novels such as Ang Lee's award-winning movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* released in 2000, which contributed to the dissemination of the four translations. Techniques employed in the Japanese film *Rashomon* were constantly compared with the unique narration in *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*, suggesting cross-medial intertextuality between the two. It can be concluded that these filmic works contribute to the shaping of the "horizon of expectation" of the target readers, thus affecting the reception of the translations. Interestingly, popular reviews in the case of *The Book and The Sword* suggest that martial arts novels can in turn affect the dissemination of their cinematic adaptations. It would thus be more insightful to examine the interplay between the two media for the reception studies on Cha's novels rather than concentrate on the unidirectional influence.

The identity of the translator constitutes another key factor. Minford's established fame and remarkable achievements in translation drew the target readers' attention in the case of *The Book and The Sword*, while Mok's identity as a Hong Kong native could explain the negative response to her translation among the target readers. Other translators' identities do not receive much attention from the target readers. In addition, the reception is affected by the translator's and the publishers' efforts to facilitate target readers' understanding of Cha's works, which are reflected in the peritexts they provided. The translator's peritexts which offered necessary background information prove helpful for readers to understand Cha's novels. To narrow the cultural gap and highlight the shared characteristics between martial arts novels and fantasy, the publisher of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* selected a comment from *Irish Times* that likened *Legends of the Condor Heroes* to *Lord of the Rings*. Though this analogy provoked much debate, it fostered the dissemination of this translation.



The target socio-cultural context in which the translations were disseminated and consumed cannot be ignored when analysing the factors that affect their reception. The context has undergone remarkable changes since the 1990s. At the early stage, martial arts novels were a totally new genre to the target readers and the channels for their dissemination were quite limited. Books in print form were the main source for the target readers to access martial arts novels. The emergence of the Internet and the digital technologies which became publicly accessible in the mid-1990s have transformed the way people access information and interact with each other. In a similar vein, they exert great influences on the translation and reception of Cha's works. More English translations of martial arts novels are available online. On WuxiaSociety, most works written by Cha have been translated into English.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, with the help of digital technology, reading books are not confined to the print forms alone. On amazon, each volume of *Legends of the Condor Heroes* is accompanied with the audio form, which is narrated by Daniel York Loh.<sup>5</sup> The audio forms not only bring a new reading experience of the novel, but also extend the scope of the readers, as it enables those who are blind and visually impaired to access Cha's novels as well. It can be said the Internet and digital technologies make Cha's novels appear in various forms and the target readers are thus more likely to be exposed to this Chinese literary genre. Therefore, changes in the target context contribute to increasing readers' interest in martial arts novels. The target readers are becoming more and more familiar with this kind of Chinese literature.

Of equal importance is the transformation of socio-cultural context in the source culture. Since 2006, the Chinese government has launched the project of the Chinese culture going global, in an attempt to enhance its competitiveness and present a new national image to the world.<sup>6</sup> Martial arts, which are composed of various aspects including literature, tourist attractions, and movies, are believed to contain rich cultural connotations and serve as a window to Chinese culture.<sup>7</sup> Projects of translating martial arts products into English and relevant studies have been financed by the National Social Fund of China (NSSFC), a government-sponsored funding programme aimed at supporting research in the humanities and social sciences.<sup>8</sup> The government's current support for martial arts culture sharply contrasts with its attitude in the 1950s when the Communist Party seized the power and was urgent to consolidate its reign across the

<sup>4</sup> See <https://wuxiasociety.com/translations/#jin-yong> [accessed 3 April 2025].

<sup>5</sup> Daniel York Yoh is a writer, performer, filmmaker and musician. More information about him can be found on his website: <https://www.danielyorkloh.com/about> [accessed 3 April 2025]. So far, he has narrated nearly 50 works to produce their audio versions:

<https://www.audible.com/search?searchNarrator=Daniel+York+Loh> [accessed 3 April 2025]

<sup>6</sup> The project was put forward in "The Outline of the National 11th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development" (國家“十一五”時期文化發展規劃綱要). The full text in Chinese can be accessed on the government's website: [https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2006/content\\_431834.htm](https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2006/content_431834.htm) [accessed 3 April 2025]

<sup>7</sup> Youyi Huang, 'Introduction: A Note on the Popularity and Importance of Chinese Martial Arts and Their Translation' in *Understanding and Translating Chinese Martial Arts* ed. by Dan Jiao, Defeng Li, Lingwei Meng and Yuhong Peng (Singapore: Springer, 2023), VII- IX (pp. VIII-IX).

<sup>8</sup> Representative programmes about martial arts that NSSFC funded include "Translation and Reception of Chinese Wuxia Fiction in the English-Speaking World" with the approval number 17CZW058 in 2017, "Hypertextual Narrative in Wuxia Online Games" (17BZW169) in 2017, "Discourse Construction in the Translation of Chinese Martial Arts" (20BYY074) in 2020, "The Evolution of the Heroine Images in Chinese Martial Arts Films" (22FYSB036) in 2022.

country. Arguably, state approval fosters a favourable social environment for the development of martial arts novels in the source culture, thereby paving the way for its dissemination beyond China.

Popular reviews disclose a variety of textual factors as well. Some representative ones can offer valuable insight into the translation of Cha's novels. The portrait of the characters has drawn readers' attention and become a repeatedly discussed topic, which resonates with Cha's statement that he prioritises characterisation in his writing.<sup>9</sup> However, reviews about *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* and *The Book and The Sword* show that characters in Cha's novels seem to lack depth and remain superficial, as it is often difficult to tell who the protagonists are due to the numerous characters and the characters' personalities do not undergo significant changes with the development of the plots. The fighting scenes, which are an integral part of Cha's novels and are enjoyed by most Chinese readers, hold little appeal for the target readers. They unexpectedly become repetitive and tedious in translation, which suggests that their translation does not meet the expectations of the target readership.

Together with the description of the fighting scenes, one frequently mentioned factor is the reading experience. This experience, in Gigi Chang's words, is the joy of reading Cha's works, namely, the "rip-roaring" fun and "unputdownable" feeling owned by the readers in the source culture.<sup>10</sup> Whether this kind of reading experience has been successfully recreated in translation deserves attention. It turns out that the reading experience varies from one translation to another, largely depending on the translation strategy and the translation style. Based on the analysis of the reviews, Mok's thick translation made her translation too academic for most readers. Earnshaw's simplification and Minford's trans-editing connected the plots of the stories more closely and quickened the narration pace, but they cut out a considerable portion of the novels at the same time. Adopting a collaborative translation strategy, the translators of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* gave a full rendition of the source text and attached great importance to the joy of reading Cha's works in English. They endeavoured to create "a multisensory cinematic experience" in translation.<sup>11</sup> Specifically, they employed techniques from cinematography including undercranking, fast cutting, zoom-in shots and extreme long shots, thus creating the "cinematic texture" in literary translation.<sup>12</sup> In addition, a close reading of the texts shows that short sentences frequently appear in their translation, thus pushing forward the plots of the stories and accelerating the reading speed. Unlike Mok's translation, archaic words are scarcely found throughout the text so the translation is fluent to read and becomes accessible to a wider audience.

<sup>9</sup> Jin Yong 金庸, *Shujian Enchou Lu Shang* 書劍恩仇錄(上) [Book and Sword, Gratitude and Revenge] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2009), p.1.

<sup>10</sup> Gigi Chang, 'Writing in One Voice: Thoughts and Memories on Co-Translating Jin Yong's *Legends of the Condor Heroes*' in *Understanding and Translating Chinese Martial Arts* ed. by Dan Jiao, Defeng Li, Lingwei Meng and Yuhong Peng (Singapore: Springer, 2023), pp.117-35 (p.122).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.129.

<sup>12</sup> Diao Hong, 'Cinematic Literary Translation: The Case of *A Hero Born*', *Translation Studies*, 17 (2024), 135-51 (p.135).

The findings of this thesis demonstrate how the theoretical framework has informed and benefited my study. The theories indicate the object of study from the outset. Paratext theory proves helpful to identify the key peritextual elements, which shed light on the entry of Cha's works into the target culture and illuminate the roles played by different agents in disseminating Cha's works. Polysystem theory enables me to examine Cha's translations as an entity in the target literary polysystem and investigate how they have interacted with other literary and non-literary polysystems. Drawing on polysystem theory, this thesis explores translation strategies in different translations within the broad socio-cultural context, moving beyond the conventional text-based analysis. The translation strategies discussed in my thesis also test the assumptions of polysystem theory that the normal position of translated literature is peripheral and the translation strategy is influenced by this status. As regards Cha's novels in English translation, their position is secondary in the target literary polysystem and accordingly the translators adopted strategies to make their translations more acceptable to the target readers. Reception theory, which includes both Jauss's theory and Iser's, offers insights when examining how Cha's works have been received in the target culture. By considering both the broad socio-cultural context and the specific textual factors in review analysis, this study underscores the advantage of integrating the two branches of reception theory. Overall, translation strategy, paratexts and reviews are interrelated and essential to understand Cha's works in English translation. The research findings highlight the strength and applicability of integrating the three theories in the study of the English translation of Cha's works. This study further indicates that this theoretical framework can serve as a useful guidance for future research on the translation and dissemination of martial arts novels.

This thesis has investigated the existing officially published translations of Cha's novels.<sup>13</sup> It has endeavoured to show how the translations entered the Anglophone world. It also pays attention to different versions of one translation over time and illustrates the process through which the book-form translations came into being.

While exploring the genesis of these translations, my study has investigated different translations of the same novel. Robin Wu's *Flying Fox of Snow Mountain: A Novel of the Martial Arts*, a "much condensed, albeit distorted and truncated" translation of *Xueshan Feihu*,<sup>14</sup> was the first attempt to translate Cha's work and its role in introducing Cha's novels to the English-speaking world cannot be overlooked. *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain* can be regarded as a continuing endeavour to translate the novel as Mok does not consider Wu's translation as "a serious effort at translation".<sup>15</sup> Also noteworthy is "Eagles and Heroes", the English translation of the

<sup>13</sup> It is not unusual that one translation is the research focus in most PhD theses. For example, Mok's thesis (1998) discusses specifics of translating *Xueshan Feihu* by focussing on *Fox Volant of the Snowy Mountain*; Fei Yuying's research (2007) is a case study of *The Deer and The Cauldron* and Diao Hong's work (2021) focuses on *A Hero Born* and *A Bond Undone*, the first two volumes of *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. There are a large number of articles that deal with one translation, as exemplified in Chapter Two.

<sup>14</sup> Olivia Mok, 'Martial Arts Fiction: Translational Migrations East and West' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Warwick, 1998), p.79.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.80.

first chapter of *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* done by Minford and Sharon Lai in 1997. This translation was collected in *The Question of Reception: Martial Arts Fiction in English Translation*, an outgrowth of the Lingnan Symposium held in 1996. Minford mentioned this translation in the translator's introduction of *The Deer and The Cauldron*.<sup>16</sup> Instead of treating each translation as a self-standing and isolated entity, my study demonstrates how one translation correlates with another, either in a perceptible or unnoticeable way.

Secondly, my study highlights the roles of different agents and sheds light on the shaping of these translations. While studying the translated texts is necessary for the research project, it proves more rewarding to probe into the process of translating Cha's novels. This thesis investigates how different agents, or key actors, who were involved in the translation process, affected the translation, dissemination and reception of Cha's novels. As the case studies show, the publishers had more say in the paratexts of the translations, especially the design of book covers. The publishers examined in this thesis can be classified into two types: academic and commercial. From the outset, they had different audiences in mind. Nevertheless, their audiences have changed over time due to the rise of social media and different expectations of translated works. This led to a change in the publisher's nature. MacLehose has now become a relatively highbrow press that publishes "the very best, often prize-winning, literature from around the world".<sup>17</sup> The writers of the blurbs, the literary reviewers and the popular reviewers, who evaluated the book and expressed their opinions, affected the reception of these translations. Arguably, one agent's role can become primary while other agents' roles may seem peripheral at different stages of the translation. The four case studies also remind us that the role played by the same agent is not always the same. One agent may assume multiple roles subject to the situation. For instance, Cha wrote a preface for *The Deer and The Cauldron*, so he became a peritext provider. Minford, the translator of *The Deer and The Cauldron* worked as an editor of *The Book and The Sword*. Holmwood contributed to *Legends of Condor Heroes* at its early stage by working as a literary agent and project initiator. Exploring the roles played by different agents offers insight into the dynamics of the translation process. Through this way, my study proposes an agent-driven and process-oriented approach to the translations of Cha's novels, thus unveiling the broad socio-cultural contexts in which these agents are situated.

Thirdly, this thesis has utilised different theories and methodologies in related disciplines. The method of classifying the paratextual elements in the translations of Cha's novels is inspired by Genette. However, it is worth noting that paratext theory adopted in this thesis deviates from the prototype that Genette proposed, since he regards the translation as a paratext of the source text. A comparison of the source text's paratexts and the translation's paratexts is conducted, thus illuminating how paratexts

<sup>16</sup> John Minford, *The Deer and The Cauldron: The First Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. XIII.

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.maclehosepress.com/landing-page/maclehose-press/maclehose-press-company-information/> [accessed 11 September 2024]

work in different cultural contexts. Drawing on Even-Zohar's work on the position of translated literature, this thesis provides data which go beyond the European realm to test the validity of polysystem theory. It concentrates more on the relationship between the position of Cha's works in the English-speaking world and their translation strategies, taking into consideration various socio-cultural factors. The thesis borrows both from Jauss's theory which highlights readers' "horizon of expectations" and Iser's which emphasises the interplay between the text and individual reader. By integrating the two branches of reception theories, this study tries to explain the reasons for the reception from both macro and micro perspectives.

The integration and application of these theories have contributed to both Literary Studies and Translation Studies. With regard to Literary Studies, it highlights the importance of translated literature, which has long been overlooked in the field. As this study illustrates, Cha's novels in translation interact with other literary forms within target literary system, and it is through this interaction that Cha's works are disseminated and received. Translated literature thus deserve recognition and should not be excluded from the realm of Literary Studies. Translated literature needs to be revisited as its role evolves over time. The diachronic paratextual analysis introduces a historical dimension to studying literary works and draws scholars' attention to the significance of non-verbal elements in literary works. Furthermore, the focus on various agents underlines the crucial role played by human actors in the production and reception of literature. The shift from the finished product to the process of creation and consumption points out new directions for future research on literary works.

The application of the theoretical framework also enriches Translation Studies, especially the field of literary translation. While paratexts are an integral part of translated works and offer valuable insight into the translation process, they have been largely neglected in existing studies on Cha's novels in translation. By uncovering the information embedded in paratexts and exploring its role in disseminating Cha's works in the target culture, my thesis shows how paratextual studies can deepen the research on literary translation. Furthermore, exploring the reception of Cha's works in translation provides new research avenues for literary translation. Through the analysis of collected reviews, my study proposes a feasible approach to examining the reception of translated literature in the target culture. Reception, which is increasingly recognised as a key aspect of translated works, offers a valuable perspective on evaluating translation practices in contemporary context.

This thesis suggests some avenues that may further refine the data collection and research methodology. Collecting and comparing translation drafts before publication could deepen the research. Studying the translation drafts could shed light on the translation process and the decision-making of the translators. For instance, Chang in her recollection of translating *Shediao Yingxiong Zhuan* illustrated how her translation improved based on the feedback from Holmwood and Engles.<sup>18</sup> Chang showed the

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<sup>18</sup> Gigi Chang, 'Writing in One Voice: Thoughts and Memories on Co-Translating Jin Yong's *Legends of the Condor*

changes for improvement by presenting her two drafts. This comparative approach can be applied to other translations of Cha's works, such as *The Book and The Sword*. It is noteworthy that nowadays translation drafts exist not only in the conventional form of hardcopy but also in various digital formats. Chang stated that she did her work on Microsoft Word and made use of its Comment function.<sup>19</sup>

Due to the research focus and space constraints, this thesis only devotes itself to the English translations of Cha's novels officially published in book form. There are some areas which need further exploration. As mentioned in the introduction, *Shendiao Xialü* is being translated into *Return of the Condor Heroes* with its first volume *A Past Unearthed* published recently. The study would be more comprehensive if it could conduct a case study of *Return of the Condor Heroes*. Along with the book-form translations, a considerable number of online translations are currently available, which considerably foster the dissemination of Cha's works in the digital age. It would be interesting to discuss the relationship between the officially published translations and these online translations and explore how they jointly contribute to the dissemination of Cha's works. Apart from the written texts, various multimodal translations of Cha's novels remain underexplored. Multimodal translations of Cha's novels include audiovisual translation, game localisation, comics and museum exhibitions which combine images, sounds and writings. As Christopher John Taylor puts it, the interaction between verbal elements and the visual, acoustic, kinetic and other semiotic modes is crucial to conveying meaning.<sup>20</sup> In light of this, research into the translation of Cha's works could take these multimodal translations into account.

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*Heroes*', pp.120-21.

<sup>19</sup> Chen Lin, 'Translating Jin Yong's Wuxia World into English: An Interview with Gigi Chang', *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, 8 (2021), 331-41 (p. 334).

<sup>20</sup> Christopher John Taylor, 'Multimodality and Audiovisual Translation' in *Handbook of Translation Studies Volume 4* ed. by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Johan Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013), pp.98-104 (p.100).

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